

Blake Alcott

The Rape of Palestine

A Mandate Chronology

Vol. 1 & 2

Blake Alcott

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A Mandate Chronology**

Vol. 1



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ISBN:

978-3-347-88234-8 (Print – Hardcover)

978-3-347-88236-2 (PDF)

978-3-347-88584-4 (ePub)

Version: 1.02 – 20230322

This work is available in print and various digital formats in **OpenAccess**. Additional information is available at: <https://blakealcott.jimdofree.com/publications/>.

dedicated to
the Palestinians
and to
Eddie Thompson (1952-2023)

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Annex

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How to use this book

This book gives a *chronology* of the dialogue, such as it was, between Palestinians and their British ‘Mandatory’ rulers from the World War I years up until May 1948. It consists of 490 **entries** arranged by date. Nerds or insomniacs might read it straight through even though, taken in long doses, it induces not only tedium but also sadness and outrage. But most will use it as a reference book. That, in turn, allows it to be very long. Individual entries, on the other hand, have a digestible average length of just under three pages. Sixteen entries take up between 7 and 15 pages.

Its reference-book character has forced me to put quite a bit of detail into each entry so that they can be read as stand-alones presupposing little or no prior knowledge. While anyone reading through a set of consecutive entries would know, for instance, that Musa Kazem al-Husseini was head of the Arab Executive Committee or that Malcolm MacDonald was at the time the Colonial Secretary, I usually spell it out.

The title of each entry is preceded by its number, and on the right margin is its date. Entries usually deal with a document, statement, manifesto, letter, or report, often directly from Palestinians to British or vice versa, but sometimes to third parties or simply the whole world and likely to be heard or read by the other side.

Almost 100 entries are marked with asterisks (*). They comprise the most important milestones for the Palestine–Britain story and taken together can be read consecutively as a long book. To give a rough meta-narrative the entries are divided into 27 ‘sections’, given in bold and numbered I – XXVII.

The book succeeds to the extent that it can:

1. identify by name each entry’s main document or encounter (e.g. a statement of policy, a speech, talks, protocols, manifestos, agreements, correspondence, or indeed non-verbal political action or protest);
2. give a date, or occasionally a range of dates, for the document or encounter;
3. tell you who was transmitting and who was receiving;
4. give some context;
5. tell you where to find the document; and
6. give the primary source and/or its treatment in the secondary literature.

I often add textual analysis and normative comments.

A chronology is by definition not organised by theme. But I often try to connect themes by giving within my text, in brackets, e.g. [>100], entries dealing with the same material or people. The book contains a **Theme Index** describing 42 themes and the entries which touch on them. There is no places-and-names index, but using the online book one can *search* for any name or word; if one is reading the printed book, which is available on demand in two volumes, one can search using the online PDF, Web or ePub versions.

The entries’ contents consist of as much **original text** as possible, most of which is presented in somewhat smaller font and indented. Shorter quotations are presented “within

quotation marks in the same font and paragraph”. The **punctuation** following quotations within the text almost always *follows* the quotation marks, as in the example in this paragraph.

As for **footnote numbers** in the text, I keep them close to the material or quotation being cited, with the result that they are often mid-sentence. Almost all footnotes consist only of bare citations and page numbers. Some are followed by ‘all citations’ or ‘all quotations’, meaning that the footnote gives the major source and its range of page numbers, while the specific page (p) or section (§) numbers are in parentheses within the text. Since I hate **endnotes**, I’ve made sure the printed and PDF versions of the book use footnotes.

I also usually give some historical **context** and often my own **analysis** or paraphrases of the quoted texts. Sometimes an entry is opened or closed with a normative evaluation of what was going on, written either by one of the many established commentators on the Mandate period or by me.

To **navigate** around in the electronic book or PDF open the navigation pane on the left by clicking on the *bookmark* icon, then skip when you want to a different entry by clicking on it. To **return** to where you left off, take the long route, in PDF, of >View, >Page Navigation, >Previous View (not ‘Previous Page’) or the short route of Alt (on your keyboard) + *left arrow* (a PDF icon at the top).

In addition to the ‘entries’, **‘events’** are interspersed chronologically in italics after many entries. Their dates are on the left in bold, then a quotation or paraphrase describes the event. About half the events have been taken verbatim from the chronology *100 Years of Palestinian History* published by PASSIA in 2001 and edited by Mahdi Abdul Hadi (Abdul Hadi 1997); for these I don’t use quotation marks and give no footnotes. Others are in inverted commas, with their footnotes giving the source. Still others are in brackets, meaning either I am paraphrasing a footnoted source or, where there is no footnote, am writing based on general knowledge.

The book’s ‘Annex’ has six further **sections**:

1. a chapter called **What the book is not** – due to my choice of focus and the limitations of my knowledge
2. the **Bibliography**
3. **16 Appendices**
4. the **Theme Index**
5. **Acknowledgments**
6. my **Conclusions**

Under **‘primary sources’** I understand books by eyewitnesses and records held by academic institutions and governments, for example:

1. Sources at the British National Archives are abbreviated according its cataloguing system: ‘CAB’ stands for ‘Cabinet Paper’ (most CAB documents are accessible online at <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>), ‘CO’ for ‘Colonial Office’, ‘FO’ for ‘Foreign Office’, ‘WO’ for ‘War Office’, ‘T’ for Treasury, and ‘PREM’ for Prime Minister’s Office.
2. ‘Cmd.’ stands for ‘Command Paper’, meaning an important document stating the British Government’s policy issued by ‘command’ of the King, usually put to Parliament for approval or

rejection. If a Command Paper is a major 'Statement of Policy' it is called a 'White Paper', a designation I use only for the 1922 'Churchill', the 1930 'Passfield' and the 1939 'MacDonald' Statements of Policy. The 1937 'Peel' and the 1938 'Woodhead' Reports, for instance, while major studies of Britain's problem, are not White Papers; they were however accompanied simultaneously by separate Command Papers adopting as Government policy the recommendations of the Reports.

3. Quotations from Hansard, the record of speeches in Parliament, are given according to date, House (Commons or Lords) and volume number; instead of the usual 'p' and 'pp' for page numbers, 'c' and 'cc' quaintly give column numbers.
4. When the citation of a primary source is followed by citation of a secondary source, this always means that one can find there more detail and analysis, and often means that that secondary source made me aware of the primary document in the first place.
5. Some citations are of a secondary source only. Others give the secondary source but add 'citing _____', meaning one of two things. Either I did not find the point important enough to warrant a time-consuming verification of the reference, or I couldn't find the cited primary source (usually within the National Archives). I welcome readers' help in finding the original sources.

I of course do not know what documents, if any, the U.K. Government has either destroyed or holds away from public view at Hanslope Park – or what Cabinet deliberations were deliberately not even minuted.¹

As for the spelling – the **transliteration** – of Arabic names and words, in line with my idea of English readability my rendering is both arbitrary and almost always without diacritical marks. Accepting the advice of some Arabic-speaking friends I write for instance 'Husseini' rather than 'Husayni', 'Awni' rather than 'Auni', and 'Moslem' rather than 'Muslim' – just to give three examples. When an Arabic name or word (e.g. 'Muslim') is within a quotation I sometimes change it to my usual spelling, sometimes not; otherwise, I try to use one spelling only in order to ease searches within the electronic versions.

In this book **Palestine** refers to the territory congruent with Mandate Palestine and with today's West Bank, Israel and Gaza Strip – between the river and the sea. Its surface area is about 2,600,000 hectares (ha.). South Africa, by comparison, covers 122,000,000 ha., while England, Scotland and Wales together cover 10,081,200 and Wales alone 2,073,500 ha. The Gaza Strip covers 36,500 ha. 1 hectare = 10 dunums.

Although putting images into one's brain alongside words and fantasies is essential, I show no photographs. Almost all interesting related photos are accessible online. Sites such as Palestinian Journeys, Palestine Remembered, Palestine Photo Project or the British Mandate Jerusalem Photo Library are rich in pictures. No source, though, is superior to Walid Khalidi's *Before Their Diaspora*, a chronological collection of 427 pictures from the same time period and often of the same people, events and places.² (It also contains eighteen pages chronologically recording events.)

¹ See Cobain 2016, pp 112-15, 141, 143, 148-49.

² Khalidi 1984.

As sources of knowledge, as well as for their inspiration, the works of post-Nakba Palestinian historians, many of them relatively unknown, are invaluable. For me researching this book has meant getting to know better, through the written word, the feelings and views of Palestinians; they and their words and deeds have enriched my privileged life.

The book is dedicated to the great majority of Palestinians, namely those who have been imprisoned, exiled, wounded, insulted, robbed, driven crazy and ignored. It is also dedicated to those who died and will die for Palestine.

If the book clarifies Mandate history, it might contribute to the reclamation of a reunited Palestine to which any Palestinian could return as a citizen of the democratic state of Palestine and regain ownership of their land, other property, and the polity governing Palestine.

I. Before the Balfour Declaration

What was the historical context of Britain's takeover of Palestine in order to help realise the Zionist vision? I sketch it in my first 15 entries, of which the most important are: number 4, lining up the Arab opponents of Zionism; number 8, revealing the plan for the realisation of Zionism penned by British politician Herbert Samuel; and number 15, collecting the thoughts of Zionism's only powerful opponent, British politician Lord George Curzon.

The establishment of a Jewish colony in Syria and Palestine had been mooted off and on during the 19th century. According to anti-Zionist Jewish Briton Lucien Wolf two very early examples were Napoleon's idea in 1798 of a small Jewish state in Palestine and the talks on that project in 1841/1842 between Britain's Consul in Damascus, Charles Henry Churchill, and British-Jewish leader Moses Montefiore.³ In 1919 Wolf wrote:

Until the Zionist movement was founded twenty years ago there was scarcely any symptom of a Jewish desire for international action on their behalf in the Palestine question. This was not for want of opportunity or even for want of suggestion from others. In 1840, when Mehemet Ali was driven out of Palestine and Syria by the Powers, the future of Palestine was open for discussion. ... [U]ntil the time of Herzl all the most prominent protagonists of Zionism were Christians.⁴

On the topic of early British support for the idea of using Palestine as a place for settling European Jews, Abdul-Wahhab Said Kayyali has written a useful survey relying, *inter alia*, on Theodor Herzl's *Diaries*.⁵ (Kayyali, whose 1978 history is required reading, was assassinated in Beirut in December 1981.) The next major political initiatives, for the understanding of which Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*) is essential reading,⁶ would be the Zionist Congresses starting in 1897, Herbert Samuel's 1914/15 vision of Zionism in Palestine which he sent to his fellow Cabinet members [8], and the 1917 Balfour Declaration [16].

The pattern for native (indigenous) statements opposing Zionism, many recorded in this chronology, was set as of around 1880 by Arabs in Beirut who called for independence from the Ottoman Empire for Iraq, Egypt, and Syria, 'Syria' meaning the areas today iden-

³ Wolf 1919, pp 102-07, 119-22.

⁴ Wolf 1919, pp 102-03.

⁵ Kayyali 1977.

⁶ Herzl 1896.

tified as Lebanon, Syria, historic Palestine, and Jordan. Both George Antonius⁷ and Abdelaziz A. Ayyad⁸ provide histories of this formative period of the Arab and Palestinian independence movements, the steady theme of simple independence entailing opposition to British-Jewish plans for a Zionist entity on the Eastern Mediterranean coast. Another critical overview of early historical writings on Palestine starting during the Ottoman period all the way up to the 1980s, categorised into the genres of 'Call to Battle' and 'Affirmation of Identity' and dealing with many of the secondary sources I have used, is given in a short work by Beshara B. Doumani.⁹ My first entry bears the date 1899.

Walid Khalidi writes this about the Palestine of farmers, artisans, businessmen, civil servants and professionals around the beginning of the 20th century:

The Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, formed a proud and vibrant community that had already crossed the threshold of an intellectual and national renaissance. They shared and reflected the cultural and political values of the neighboring Arab metropolitan centers. For centuries they had had trade links with Europe and contact with Europeans who came as Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. For decades they had been exposed to modernizing influences as a result of the educational and medical work of European and American Christian missions. Service in the European and Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire had widened their horizons. The Palestinians were as deeply entrenched in their country on the eve of the Zionist venture as any citizenry or peasantry anywhere.¹⁰

⁷ Antonius 1938, pp 42-55, 79-100.

⁸ Ayyad 1999, Ch. 2.

⁹ Doumani 1992.

¹⁰ Khalidi 1984, p 33.

Thus, Arabs wishing independence from the Ottoman Empire were active before the Young Turk reform of 1908, before the start of organised Zionism in 1897, and even before the start of Jewish colonisation around 1881.¹¹ Butrus al-Bustani for instance, in addition to publishing an Arabic dictionary and seven volumes of an encyclopaedia, founded the newspaper *Nafir Suriyya* already in 1860 and the fortnightly journal *al-Jinan* in 1870, both with Arab nationalist content.¹² George Antonius dates the beginning of the “Arab national movement” in the years between 1857 and 1868 with the founding of secret societies whose nationalist placards appeared in the 1870s and 1880s, while its “first organised effort” was started in 1875 by five young Christians “who had been educated at the Syrian Protestant College in Bairut”; Antonius’s father-in-law Faris Nimr Pasha, the Lebanese owner of *al-Muqtataf* newspaper in Cairo [4], could later name from memory the 22 activists who pasted those placards.¹³ First among these groups was the Syrian Scientific Society:

Begun by Christians, it soon included around 150 patriots of all religions, and later people living in Constantinople and Cairo, ‘united... in an active partnership for a common end. ... [I]t was the cradle of a new political movement’.¹⁴

These activists also demanded official use of Arabic, freedom of expression and a local rather than an Ottoman military.¹⁵

Ahmed Urabi’s near-successful unyoking of British rule over Egypt in the early 1880s, according to letters from British travellers to the British Ambassador in Constantinople, evoked “strong sympathy with Arabi [Urabi]” in Syria and amongst “the whole Mussulman sect.”¹⁶ Urabi’s arrest by the British had triggered “riots and excitement in Jerusalem and Jaffa.”¹⁷ Against this background of Syrian, and more specifically Palestinian, desire for self-rule, the sale of land to Zionists was seen as a tangible long-term threat to their eventual sovereignty¹⁸, and accordingly protests against displacement by the new

¹¹ Antonius 1938, pp 25–90; Barbour 1946, pp 44–87; Tibawi 1969; Mandel 1976; Said 1979, pp 7–22, 94–97; Hourani 1991, pp 270–324, *passim*; Muslih 1988; Seikaly 1995, pp 17–39; Smith 1996, pp 1–51; Khalidi 1997, pp 35–144; Ayyad 1999; Pappé 2004, pp 14–40; Beška 2007; 2016; Hammond 2009; Abu-Manneh 2011; Campos 2011; Fishman 2011; Jacobson 2011.

¹² Abu-Manneh 1980, p 293; Antonius 1938, pp 47–51; Jeffries 1939, p 26.

¹³ Antonius 1938, pp 79–81.

¹⁴ Antonius 1938, p 53.

¹⁵ Antonius 1938, pp 53–54, 79–89, 108–10, 119; Kayyali 1978, pp 14–15; Ayyad 1999, pp 33–41.

¹⁶ FO 226/204, dispatches of 23 September and 10 October 1882.

¹⁷ Kayyali 1978, p 15, citing FO 226/204.

¹⁸ Mandel 1976, pp 102–07, 132; Kayyali 1978, pp 17–18.

landowners started already in 1886, leading to an official petition of complaint from Palestinians to Ottoman authorities in 1891¹⁹. In 1897 an Arab committee in Jerusalem in fact achieved a several-year ban on such sales.²⁰

One Palestinian who perceived and objected to the threat of colonisation, not from Ottomans or privileged Western powers but from Europeans desiring a Jewish state in Palestine, was Jerusalem Mayor Yusuf al-Khalidi. To Zadoc Kahn, Chief Rabbi of France, al-Khalidi on 1 March 1899 sent **a letter** containing both fulsome praise of Jews and his opinion on Zionist policy:

In theory, Zionism is an absolutely natural and just idea on how to solve the Jewish question. Yet it is impossible to overlook the actual reality, which must be taken into account. Palestine is an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and today it is inhabited by non-Jews. ... By what right do the Jews want it for themselves? ... The only way to take it is by force using cannons and warships. ... Even if Herzl obtained the approval of the Sultan Abdülhamit II for the Zionist plan, he should not think that a day will come when Zionists will become masters of this country. It is therefore necessary, to ensure the safety of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, that the Zionist Movement, in the geographic sense of the word, stops. ... Good Lord, the world is vast enough, there are still uninhabited countries where one could settle millions of poor Jews who may perhaps become happy there and one day constitute a nation. ... But in the name of God, let Palestine be left in peace.²¹

Crucially, this letter detached the Jewish question from Palestine: Why Palestine, where Palestinians already lived? It also captured the essence of the Palestine disaster by denying Jewish claims to ownership of Palestine and foreseeing bloodshed for 123 years and counting. Al-Khalidi's original letter to Kahn, to be sure, also contained the following passage:

Who can challenge the rights of the Jews in Palestine? Good Lord, historically it is really your country.

Rashid Khalidi however points out that it is illegitimate to quote this passage out of context, the context being the passages already quoted above.²²

¹⁹ Mandel 1976, pp 39-40; Kayyali 1978, p 17; Suárez 2016, p 29.

²⁰ Mandel 1976, p 55; Kayyali 1978, p 17; Smith 1996, p 34; Beška 2007, pp 24-26.

²¹ Beška 2007, pp 28-29; also Khalidi 1997, p 75, citing Manna, *A'lam Filastin*, p 160.

²² Khalidi 2020, pp 4-5.

2. Nejib Azouri's Réveil de la Nation

1905

Following an article in *al-Manar* by Rashid Rida in 1902 warning of Jewish aims for sovereignty in Palestine, in 1905 **Nejib Azouri**, a Maronite Catholic who founded the *Ligue de la Patrie Arabe* in Paris²³, **wrote a book**, *Réveil de la Nation Arabe dans l'Asie Turque*, in which he predicted war between Jews and Arabs for control of Palestine and called for independence from the Ottomans:

There is nothing more liberal than the [*Ligue de la Patrie Arabe's*] program. The league wants, before anything else, to separate the civil and the religious power, in the interest of Islam and the Arab nation, and to form an Arab empire stretching from the Tigris and the Euphrates to the Suez Isthmus, and from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea. ... The mode of government will be a constitutional sultanate based on the freedom of all the religions and the equality of all the citizens before the law.²⁴

His vision was of the unity of Greater Syria and Iraq, governed “constitutionally”.

Prophetically, he observed:

Two important phenomena, of the same nature, but opposed, are emerging at this moment in Asiatic Turkey. They are the awakening of the Arab nation and the latent effort of the Jews to reconstitute on a very large scale the ancient kingdom of Israel. These movements are destined to fight each other continually until one of them wins.²⁵

Blocking the publication and sale of Azouri's book-length plea for an independent, equal rights-based country were the Ottomans, British, French and Zionists. Azouri himself was sentenced by Sultan Abdul Hamid to death for treason. Other banned books suggesting “a repressed or gurgling scream” for independence, according to Anbara Salam Khalidi, were Abdulrahman al-Kawakibi's *Umm al-Qura* and *Tabai al-Istihdad (Mother of Cities and Characteristics of Tyranny)*.²⁶

11 August 1905 [*The movement of Jews and other so-called 'undesirable immigrants' from Eastern Europe (mainly) to Britain is drastically curtailed by the U.K. Aliens Act.*]

2 April 1906 [*In South Africa, twelve rebels caught during the Bambatha Rebellion are executed in Natal with the approval of Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies Winston Churchill.*]²⁷

²³ Also Robson 2011, pp 27-29.

²⁴ Laqueur & Rubin 1984, p 5; also Smith 1996, p 35; Khalidi 1997, p 28; Beška 2007, pp 40-43.

²⁵ Quoted by Alam 2009, p 31.

²⁶ Khalidi 1978, p 36.

²⁷ Ngcukaitobi 2018, pp 91-92.

3. A Report to Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman 1907

Very often cited by Arab researchers, but not for instance by Lucien Wolf (1919), **an anonymous report dated 1907** purportedly contained the advice to His Majesty's Government (HMG) to establish an anti-Arab, pro-Western state in or around Palestine in order to protect UK interests. Like part of Herbert Samuel's seminal 1915 pro-Zionist paper to the Cabinet [>8], it is said to have argued not only from Jewish, but explicitly from British, self-interest. To what extent Arabs and the British were at loggerheads in the first place during this time period, by the way, is a question needing some unorthodox research.

According to Palestinian researchers Anis Sayegh and Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, however, nobody has ever seen this report, allegedly written by "a secret 'colonial conference'... held in London in 1905-07, at the initiative of the British Conservative Party" and sent to Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman.²⁸ In addition to its widespread mention in the literature, the two reasons for nevertheless mentioning it here are 1) that what it purportedly proposed actually happened, in the form namely of the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 [>16], and 2) that it was employing the dubious argument that a non-Arab or even anti-Arab entity in Palestine would be in Britain's imperial, colonial or economic interest. With or without this document, it is in any case at least possible that the general topic was explicitly discussed within the UK Government a full ten years before the Balfour Declaration. Partly because the UK's Public Records Office, now its National Archives, has been known to hide or destroy documents, and because other documents were for decades officially suppressed, e.g. papers pertaining to the McMahon-Hussein correspondence [>10], the Sykes-Picot pact [>12], the Hogarth message [>21], the King-Crane report [>59], the Palin report [>88], the Cavendish Committee report [>167], and High Commissioner Chancellor's Memorandum [>218], it might be worth continuing the search for this phantom document.

²⁸ Saleh 2017, use Search function.

According to Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, the Hebrew periodical *Hashiloah* “[d]uring the first decade of the twentieth century... published scores of articles dealing with the Arab national movement (using this exact term!)...”²⁹ This national movement was necessarily against Zionism, whichever European powers militarily sponsored it. With the Young Turk liberalisation of 1908, many newspapers and commercial or political associations were founded by educated indigenous Ottoman citizens who understood and opposed Zionism, having followed its development at least since Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* of 1896 and the Basel Zionist Congress of 1897. Moreover, the general ideal of self-determination was well-known to anyone; more concretely, a liberal, anti-colonial ideology had been adopted by many who had read the books and journals mentioned in the first two entries above [>1; >2] and/or belonged to one of the secret nationalist societies.

Many nationalists had attended one of the US-American Protestant high schools such as the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut or Robert College in Istanbul³⁰, and/or one of the private schools with modern curricula operating as of around 1906, mainly in Jerusalem, including the Ottoman School founded in 1897³¹. Libraries such as *al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya* in Jerusalem and the *Haziriyya* Library in Damascus, as well, contain or contained writings on Arab nationalism and Zionism.³² The view that it was only in hindsight that indigenous Arabs realised that a European settler-colonial project was in store for them³³ is not supported by the evidence. Palestinian Mohamed Osman wrote to Churchill from Port Said already on 9 April 1921 identifying this specifically *settler-colonialism*. [>101] According to John Quigley, in fact, “As early as 1891 Zionist leader Ahad Ha’am wrote that the Arabs ‘understand very well what we are doing and what we are aiming at.’”³⁴

Based on a handful of secondary scholarly and eyewitness works,³⁵ here is a list of some key politicians and journalists (with their journals in parentheses), some of them Ottoman parliamentarians, who kept tabs on the growing Zionist movement:

Sheikh Ahmad Tabbara (*al-Ittihad al-Uthmani*); Kamal Abbas (*al-Haqiqa*); the Bustani and Zazigi families; Muhammad Tahir al-Husseini, Said al-Husseini and others from that family,³⁶ Daud Barakat (*al-Ahram*); Yusuf al-Khalidi and Ruhi al-Khalidi;³⁷ Rashid Rida (*al-Ma-nar*); Emir Amin Arslan; Hafiz Bey al-Said, Ahmed Riza, Ahmad al-Arif and Mohammad al-

²⁹ Beit-Hallahmi 1992, p 69; also Weir 2014, pp 102-03.

³⁰ But see Salt 2019, pp 50-53.

³¹ Peel 1937, Ch II §1; Khalidi 1978, p 36; Nakhleh 1991, pp 50-52; Khalidi 1997, pp 48-51.

³² Khalidi 1997, p 43.

³³ E.g. Pappé 2002/2010, p 140.

³⁴ Quigley 1990, p 4.

³⁵ Antonius 1938; John & Hadawi 1970a, 1970b; Ingrams 1972; Mandel 1976; Khalidi 1978; Khalidi 1981; Tan-nous 1988; Seikaly 1995; Khalidi 1997, pp 19, 38-59, 119-44; Huneidi 2001; Beška 2007, 2014; Pappé 2002/2010.

³⁶ Beška 2007, pp 23-26; Pappé 2002/2010.

³⁷ Beška 2016a.

Shanti (*al-Iqdam* – all hanged by the Ottomans in May 1916 in Beirut along with Ali Umar Nashashibi); Najib (Nejib) Azouri [-2]; Aref al-Aref (*Suriyya al-Janubiyya*); Muhammad Hassan al-Budayri; Khalil al-Sakakini;³⁸ Najib Nassar (*al-Karmil*);³⁹ Shukri al-Asali;⁴⁰ Muhammad Kurd Ali (*al-Muqtaba*); Jamal al-Din al-Afghani; Salim Ali Salam; Issa al-Issa and Yusuf al-Issa (*Filistin, al-Asmai*);⁴¹ Faris Nimr (*al-Muqtataf* and *al-Muqattam*, father of Katy, George Antonius's wife⁴²); Muhammad Musa al-Maghribi (*al-Munadi*); Fares al-Khoury; Awni Abdul Hadi (*al-Muntada al-Adabi*); Rafiq Bey al-Azem and Haqqi Bey al-Azem; Ibrahim Najjar; Faidi Alami (Musa's father and Jerusalem Mayor 1906-09); and Tahir al-Jazairi.

Rashid Khalidi gives an analysis of the content of ten newspapers which sprung up after the 1908 liberalisation, all with information and opinion critical of Zionism – five in Beirut, two in Cairo and one each in Haifa, Yaffa, and Damascus.⁴³

Mustafa Kabha provides a list of approximately 50 newspapers which appeared starting before World War I and up until 1939; his Index gives the page numbers, for each paper, on the topic 'British Mandate'. Some were handwritten, some were owned and written by Moslems, some by Christians, some were close to either the Palestine Arab Congress and its Arab Executive Committees, some close to political parties, some independent, and virtually all were anti-Zionist (whatever their positions on how closely to work with the Mandatory). As of October 1919 the British usually allowed censorship-free freedom to publish.⁴⁴

Early political groups that saw the prospects for Arab freedom actually diminish under the Young Turks⁴⁵ included *Al-Ikhaa Al-Arabi* (Arabic Brotherhood); *Hizb Al-'Ard* (Party of the Land); *Al-Fatat* (Youth Society); *Al-Lamarkaziyeh*; *Hizb Al-Islah* (Arab Reform Party); *al-Muntada al-Adabi* (The Literary Association, or Club, founded in Istanbul in 1908 or 1909 and present in Haifa as of 1911); the Nablus Committee (1913); the Palestine Chamber of Commerce; and by 1914 *al-Jamiyya al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Society of Khayriyya), *Jamiyyat al-Ikha wal Afaf* (Association of Brotherhood and Purity), *Shirkat al-Iqtisad al-Falastini al-Arabi*, and *Shirkat al-Tijara al-Wataniyya al-Iqtisadiyya* (Arab Palestinian Economic Association).⁴⁶ Somewhat later many Young Men's Moslem Associations would arise.⁴⁷

The Society for Resisting the Zionists at *al-Azhar* University in Cairo declared it would "oppose the Zionists by all possible means", while on 7 July 1914 the newspaper *al-Iqdam* published a "summons" asking "Do you wish to be slaves to the Zionists who have come

³⁸ Beška 2015; also Robson 2011, pp 29-32, 94-96.

³⁹ Beška 2011.

⁴⁰ Beška 2010.

⁴¹ Beška 2016; also Robson 2011, pp 34-35, 71, 76, 87-89.

⁴² See Boyle 2001, pp 146-48.

⁴³ Khalidi 1997, pp 123-42; also Mandel 1976, p 44; Said 1979, p 12.

⁴⁴ Kabha 2007.

⁴⁵ See Boyle 2001, pp 36-37, for a list of ways in which Arabs were denied political power.

⁴⁶ Kayyali 1978, p 33; Khalidi 1978, pp 36ff; Tannous 1988, p 25.

⁴⁷ Ayyad 1999, pp 119-20; Matthews 2006, pp 58-59, 73; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 28-29.

to kick you out of your country, claiming that it is theirs?”⁴⁸ Feminist ideas in Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine were put into words by Malad Hifni Nasif, May Ziadeh and Zaynab Fawwaz.⁴⁹ The roles of local Arabic-speaking Sephardic Jews, by the way, such as Shimon and Esther Moyal, Nissim Malul and Albert Antébi, were anti-Ottoman but ambiguous and ultimately pro-Zionist, in general embracing a ‘political parity’ vision – that is, Palestinian-Jewish co-ownership of Palestine.⁵⁰

Again, politically-minded Arabs had read Herzl’s 1896 book, followed the World Zionist Congresses⁵¹, read newspaper reports from Cairo and Beirut of further Zionist meetings⁵², and read proclamations of political intent by Max Nordau, Menachem Ussishkin, Arthur Ruppin and others; and by 1901 many peasants as well as members of the educated class knew of Zionism’s plan to turn Palestine into a Jewish state⁵³. Works by Zionists were moreover published in Arabic: for instance, first in *al-Karmil* and later as a book, Najib Nassar translated into Arabic and commented upon the entry on Zionism in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, and Issa al-Issa, in his newspaper *Filistin*, in 1914 translated parts of Ussishkin’s *Our Program*.⁵⁴ 1911 saw the organisation of strong anti-Zionist activity in Jaffa⁵⁵, and in January 1912 Shimon Moyal perceived a “spirit of enmity [that began] to gain a foothold among the masses because of the influence of the antagonistic press”⁵⁶. Emanuel Beška shows that even before the 1908 liberalisation of the press the anti-Zionist nationalism of people such as Muhammad Tahir al-Husseini, Yusuf al-Khalidi, Emir Amin Arslan, Rashid Rida, and Nejb Azouri “laid a solid basis for those who succeeded them”⁵⁷. Well before 1914, that is, had emerged “the embryo of the Palestinian demand for self-government and self-determination.”⁵⁸

Lebanese-born Najib Nassar in 1911 published the 65-page book in Arabic *Zionism: Its History, Aims and Importance*, identifying Zionism as “a racist movement that aims to replace the Palestinians in the Holy Land”, which to my knowledge has never been published in English.⁵⁹ Nassar himself lived in Tiberias and Haifa, where in 1908 he founded the newspaper *Al Karmil*; he also aided the founding of a Palestinian nationalist student

⁴⁸ Kayyali 1978, pp 34, 35.

⁴⁹ Khalidi 1978, p 44.

⁵⁰ Mandel 1976, pp 189-93; Khalidi 1997, pp 123-24, 130-31, 134; Jacobson 2011, pp 168-72; Norris 2013, p 21; Beška 2016, pp 47-51, 65-68.

⁵¹ Kayyali 1978, pp 17-18; Khalidi 1997, pp 58, 111; Beška 2007.

⁵² Beška 2016, pp 125-26.

⁵³ Mandel 1976, pp 42-43, 104-06, 212; Khalidi 1997, pp 94, 121.

⁵⁴ Beška 2014a.

⁵⁵ Palumbo 1987, p 10.

⁵⁶ Beška 2014, p 63.

⁵⁷ Beška 2007, p 44.

⁵⁸ Khalidi 1997, p 142.

⁵⁹ *al-Sihyuniyya: Tarikhuha, gharaduha, ahamiyyatuha*. Beška 2014, p 58, gives the reference in note 36 as ‘Haifa: Matba’at al-Karmil bi-shari’ Dayr ar-Rum, 1911’. Also Mandel 1976, pp 107-08; Kayyali 1978, p 27; Khalidi 1997, p 87; PASSIA 2001, p 15; Beška 2014a.

society in Beirut (*al-Shabiba al-Nabulsiyya*) as well as a “mixed Muslim and Christian society in Haifa called *al-Muntada al-Adabi* (The Literary Association), whose objectives were openly nationalist and secretly anti-Zionist.”⁶⁰

According to Anbara Khalidi, in 1913-14 there were as well

attempts made to draw attention to [the] danger... of Zionist activities ... at a time when most writers were preoccupied with the question of Arab rights. I recall that the newspapers of 1913 and 1914 would make direct references to the ambitions of Zionism and its methods. Thus, over a number of days, the newspaper *al-Mufid* published editorials by Dr Muhammad Mahmasani (who had obtained a doctorate in law from the Sorbonne and who was one of the martyrs hanged in August 1915 [the first ‘convoy’ of hangings, the second occurring on 6 May 1916]) treating the issue of Zionism... He uncovered the activities of its agents and representatives [amongst the Arab community] in buying land from farmers at very tempting prices, and in establishing a Jewish foothold in the country by all devious means possible.⁶¹

The Balfour Declaration a few years later was not a surprise for many affected people.

1908 *The Palestinian journal Al-Carmel [Al-Karmil] is founded in Haifa by Najib Nassar to oppose Zionist colonization.*

1908 *Palestinian deputies from Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nablus and Acre, elected to the Ottoman parliament in Constantinople, warn against the ‘Judaification’ of the country.*

16 March 1908 *Clashes between Palestinians and Zionist immigrants in Jaffa result in one Palestinian dead and 13 Jews wounded.*

1908 *Al-Muqtabas, a Damascus-based newspaper, is founded. Under editor Mohammed Kurd Ali the newspaper is to become influential and join the campaign against Zionism.*

4 December 1908 *Al-Ahram, the Egyptian newspaper, calls on the Jews to renounce their foreign citizenship and to become loyal Ottoman citizens. Furthermore, the newspaper cautions that should the Jews be allowed to concentrate in large numbers in one territory, they might be encouraged to establish a state of their own.*

March 1909 *Najib Nassar criticizes the Arabs who emigrate from Palestine in Al-Carmel. In the same year Al-Carmel is closed down twice due to its anti-Zionist stance.*

early June 1909 *Hafez Bey As-Said, a Deputy from Jaffa, inquires at the Ottoman Chamber if Zionism is compatible with the interests of the Empire and demands that Jaffa seaport be closed to Jewish immigrants. This marks the first time that the Zionist issue is raised in the Ottoman Parliament.*

1909 *Al-Mufid, a representative newspaper that advocates the cause of Arabism, is founded in Beirut by Abdul Ghani Al-Uraysi and Fuad Hantas. Soon to become an influential daily, Al-Mufid strongly opposes Zionism and condemns Arab landlords who sell their land to Zionists.*

⁶⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 34; also Robson 2011, pp 32-34.

⁶¹ Khalidi 1978, p 54; also Zuaytir 1958, p 30; Boyle 2001, p 63.

July 1909 Five members of the Ottoman Parliament, including a Palestinian Deputy from Jerusalem, meet with British Zionist leader Sir Francis Montefiore in London to voice their concern about the political objectives of Zionism.

1910 Najib Nassar, editor of Al-Carmel, is instrumental in setting up an association in Haifa 'to take forceful steps to persuade the government to prohibit the sale of land to the Jews'; he organizes an anti-Zionist conference in Nablus.

March-April 1910 In Constantinople, Arab deputies, especially Ruhi Bey Al-Khalidi, lead a campaign for new legislation against Jewish immigration into Palestine.

5. Ottoman Parliamentarians speak

1909-1914

In the Parliament elections of 1896, 1908, 1912 and 1914 fourteen different Palestinians were sent to Istanbul to represent the districts of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nablus, Acre and Gaza: Yusuf Dia al-Khalidi, Ruhi al-Khalidi, Saeed el-Husseini, Hafez al-Saeed, Ahmad al-Khamash, Asad al-Shukayri, Othman Nashashibi, Ahmad Arif el-Husseini, Haidar Tuqan, Ragheb Nashashibi, Faidi al-Alami, Tawfiq Hamad, Amin Abdul Hadi and Abdul Fatah al-Saadi.⁶²

In an interview with the Hebrew newspaper *ha-Zevi* on 1 November 1909, Palestinian Member of the Ottoman Parliament Ruhi al-Khalidi

expressed concern that Zionist colonization would inevitably lead to the expulsion of Arabs from the places they had inhabited for centuries. He did not forget to evoke historical circumstances and the fact that it was not the Arabs who had [some 1900 years earlier] driven the Jews out of Palestine.⁶³

Similarly, it was not the Arabs who were persecuting Jews in Europe.

The Zionist threat was well-grasped:

On 16 May 1910 Azmi Bey, the new *Mutasarrif* of Jerusalem, wrote: 'We are not xenophobes; we welcome all strangers. We are not anti-Semites; we value the economic superiority of the Jews. But no nation, no government could open its arms to groups making proclamations everywhere and aiming to take Palestine from us. The political domination of the Jews in this country belongs to the realm of childish dreams, but as long as they even talk about it, we shall not tolerate their economic advancement. Were they to abandon these utopias and give proof of their Ottomanism, then all these difficulties and restrictions would fall away like magic.'⁶⁴

This was an early example of the theme that for Palestinians, opposition to Zionism did not mean opposition to Jews, nor to immigrants ("strangers") who came with no political program of eventual domination by their ethno-religious group; the issue for these intellectuals and political activists was *political* self-determination.

When issues concerning Palestine and Zionism – in particular land sales – arose in parliament MP Ruhi al-Khalidi spoke at length in the following manner against Zionism:

The Jews are a great people and the country benefits from their expertise, wealth, schools and knowledge, but they should settle in other parts of the Empire and should acquire Ottoman nationality. ... Just as I am an anti-Zionist, I am not an anti-Semite, which is proved by the letters sent here by the rabbi of Izmir and other rabbis who oppose Zionism. ... The

⁶² Nakhleh 1991, p 24.

⁶³ Beška 2014, pp 4-5; also Gribetz 2018, pp 306, 324-25 & *passim*; Mandel 1976, pp 182-86, 205, 215.

⁶⁴ Mandel 1976, p 104.

Zionists' aim, [...] is to settle numerous Jews in Iraq and Syria to form a Jewish kingdom having Jerusalem as its centre. ... [I oppose] this Zionist danger that endangers Palestine in particular.⁶⁵

MPs Said Hussein and As-Shukri al-Asali also spoke up⁶⁶, the latter saying in a long speech that was printed in full on 31 May 1911 by the Damascus newspaper *Al-Muqtabas*:

One of the essential decisions of the Zionists is to take possession of the Palestinian land by purchase before any other activity and subsequently the transition from political intentions to their materialization. They have pursued this plan and have begun to acquire lands by paying several times the value of the land, evoking the desire of the owners to sell [it]. They do not enter a village as long as one Muslim or Christian remains in it and they try to drive them out of it and then they arrive in it and in this manner the village becomes Jewish. There are no members of other nationalities and its owners keep their foreign citizenship.⁶⁷

"The Zionists," said al-Asali, "came to Palestine 'solely to expel the poor Arab peasants from their land, and to set up their own government.'⁶⁸ He added, "I am young and my soul desires high positions, but you can be sure that I prefer suspension from my office and losing my future to agreeing with the sale of my homeland to the enemy of my nation and my state."⁶⁹ This man indeed "lost his future" on 6 May, 1916, when he was executed in Marjeh Square in his hometown of Damascus by Ottoman ruler Jamal Pasha.⁷⁰ Jamal as Jerusalem Military governor also charged Aref Al-Husseini, the Mufti of Gaza, and his son Mustafa with conspiracy and hanged them outside Jaffa Gate.⁷¹

The MPs from Palestine demanded a blocking of Jewish immigration and in answer to a Jewish boycott of the Arab economy they called for a boycott of Jewish goods. During the 1914 elections, candidates Said Hussein, Ragheb Nashashibi and Salim Hussein spoke against Zionism in principle, as did many others such as Khalil al-Sakakini, Faydi Alami and Jamal al-Husseini.⁷²

Non-Palestinian MPs also spoke out:

Ismail Hakki Bey declared [on 27 February 1911] that the Zionist aim was to found a Jewish state in Palestine once a Jewish majority was achieved there... When he quoted some recent Zionist resolutions, Tâlat Bey interrupted to remark that the Zionist Congress was not a secret. ... Halil Bey, Minister of the Interior, in 1911 said, 'Regarding Jewish immigration, it is the exclusive choice of Palestine which gives rise to doubts.'⁷³

⁶⁵ Khalidi 1997, pp 80-83, 31-32, 68; Beška 2014; 2016a; Gribetz 2018, p 327; see also: Mandel 1976, pp 77, 106-113; Fishman 2011.

⁶⁶ Beška 2010; 2014; Pappé 2002/2010, pp 144-45.

⁶⁷ Beška 2010, pp 248, 249.

⁶⁸ Mandel 1976, pp 106, 87-89.

⁶⁹ Beška 2014, p 57.

⁷⁰ Beška 2010, p 253.

⁷¹ Khalidi 1997, pp 137-39.

⁷² Kayyali 1978, pp 35-38; Beška 2015.

⁷³ Mandel 1976, pp 98, 102.

Halil Bey's point was that had the desire of many Jews to leave Europe not been tied to a cultural-religious political program, they might well have opted to make their colonies in East Africa or Argentina.

At any rate the public record showed no indigenous support for Zionism, in fact the opposite:

[I]n May 1911 the Palestinian reformist Sulayman al-Taji al-Farouqi issued the following premonitory warning, so amazing for a people which some say at that time had no awareness of its national identity: 'Zionism is the danger menacing our homeland ... It heralds our exile and our expulsion from our homes and our properties!'⁷⁴

One central document is a manuscript in the al-Khalidiya Library in Jerusalem which MP Ruhi al-Khalidi for some reason did not publish before his death in 1913, entitled *As-Siyunizm aw al-mas'ala as-sahyuniya* (Zionism, or the Zionist Question); to date there is to my knowledge no English translation.⁷⁵ The book evidently reported on the Zionist Congresses, distinguished between Zionist and non-Zionist Jews, and Dr. Ruhi "provided his readers with a list of all the Jewish colonies, the area of each colony, its original name in Arabic, and from whom the land was bought."⁷⁶

8 January 1911 *The South African Native National Congress is formed (soon to be renamed the African National Congress, ANC).*

January 1911 *'The sale of al-Fūla by Iliyās Sursuq to the Zionists can be undoubtedly labelled as the most important event that formed the attitude of Arab public opinion towards Zionism prior to World War I. In January 1911 the affair was closed and the village al-Fūla was replaced by the Jewish settlement of Merhavia.'*⁷⁷

1911 *After the guardian of the Abu Madyan Waqf (the Mughrabi Quarter) complains that Jews have placed chairs on the pavement before the Western Wall, the Administrative Council of Jerusalem... decides that it is not permissible to place there any articles which could be 'considered as indications of ownership.'* [also >198; >199; >202; >245]

19 August 1911 *Ottoman National Party head Suleiman At-Taji Al-Farouqi writes in the Beirut newspaper Al-Mufid that Zionism in Palestine is becoming a government within a government with its own laws, courts, flag, school system etc. and that Palestinians are threatened with poverty and eviction in the face of wealthy and educated Jewish immigrants.*

14 November 1911 *Al-Jamiyya Al-Arabiyya Al-Fatat (The Young Arab Society) is officially founded by a group of Muslim Arabs... in Paris, among them Awni Abdul Hadi and Rafiq At-Tamimi. The main aim is to work for the administrative independence of the Arab lands from Ottoman rule, and to 'raise the Arab umma to the level of living nations.'*⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Sanbar 2001, p 90.

⁷⁵ Khalidi 1981, p 73; Khalidi 1997, pp 82-83; Beška 2014.

⁷⁶ Kayyali 1978, p 23.

⁷⁷ Beška 2010, pp 241, 243; 2014, pp 55-58.

⁷⁸ Boyle 2001, pp 50-52.

8 February 1912 Al-Mounadi weekly newspaper, owned by Said Jarallah and edited by Mohammed Musa Moghrabi, is launched with the aim of confronting Zionist politics.

1912 A young Arab, Maruf Al-Arnaut, writes the first fictional work in Arabic about Zionism: The Maid of Zion.

April 1912 Five Palestinian Deputies from Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, and Acre are elected to the Ottoman Parliament.

September 1912 Arab students from Palestine establish the Al-Alam Al-Akhdar (The Green Flag) society in Constantinople. ... Among the founders are Bassem Bseiso, Mustafa Al-Husseini and Shukri Gushih. The society issues the journal Lisan Al-Arab.

3 January 1913 An Al-Carmel editorial assesses four years of efforts in fighting Zionism praising some Deputies like Shukri Al-Assali and Ruhi Khalidi while attacking others who sold land while pretending to be nationalists.

18-23 June 1911 The 1st Arab National Congress meets in Paris, presided over by the Syrian Abdul Hamid Az-Zahrawi. The participants representing Iraq (2), Syria, Lebanon and Palestine (19) and Arabs living in the USA (3) stress provincial liberty, administrative autonomy of each Arab province, the adoption of Arabic as an official language, and democracy as the means for correcting the 'decay' of the endangered Ottoman Empire.

late July 1913 'At the end of July [1913], al-Karmil proposed that another Arab Congress be held, this time in Nablus, to discuss means of combatting the "Zionist threat". The proposal was seconded in Falastin by a contributor from Nablus and backed by al-Mufid (Beirut) and al-Muqtabas (Damascus).'⁷⁹

August 1913 In the wake of heightened local patriotism and in order to counter the 11th Zionist Congress, an anti-Zionist Arab Congress meets in Nablus and calls upon the Ottomans to put an end to selling land by open auction. Conferees include Abdul Fattah Tuqan, Kamil Hashim, Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, Hasan Hammad and Nimr An-Nabulsi.

⁷⁹ Mandel 1976, p 173.

6. General Summons to the Palestinians

7 July 1914

A **comprehensive tract, or “General Summons”**, with the title ‘The Zionist Danger’ was printed in *al-Karmil* on 7 July 1914,⁸⁰ just before international attention switched to World War I. It asked:

Do you wish to be slaves to the Zionists who have come to kick you out of your country, claiming that it is theirs?... Are you, Muslims, Palestinians, Syrians, Arabs, happy at this? (1) Apply pressure on the Government to act in accordance with its law stipulating that it is completely forbidden to sell *miri* (state) lands to foreigners. (2) Try to develop local (*wataniyah*) trade and industry. Do not trade except with your own people, as they (the Zionists) do because they do not trade with the Muslim and the Christian. (3) Do not sell them your lands and use your power to prevent the peasant from selling. Henceforth, scatter the land agents and revile them. (4) Be concerned to stop, by all means you can, the stream of migration from and to Palestine. (5) Demand of your *awqaf* to found Arab religious schools and also other schools for crafts, agriculture and science. (6) Trust in God and in yourselves; do not trust in the Government because it is occupied with other things. Strive that Arabic will be the language of instruction in schools. (7) You must implant in the hearts of the local population, especially the youth, love of agricultural work, of trade and industry.⁸¹

Beneath the “General Summons” *Al-Karmil* urged its readers: “You should not blame the Zionists as much as you should blame the leaders of your country and government officials who sell them lands and act as their brokers.”⁸² When the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* propounded a similar fundamental anti-Zionist message the Ottoman government’s answer was to close it down for seven weeks starting on 20 April 1914.⁸³

Such agitation in print had gone on for years. Two or three years earlier, for instance, 150 Arabs had sent a **petition to newspapers** and to the highest officials in Istanbul, concretely demanding an end to immigration and land sales; the same demands filled telegrams from Beisan political leaders to the regional government in Beirut.⁸⁴ In 1911 the Ottoman National Party (*al-Hizb al-Watani al-‘Uthmani*) addressed a leaflet to the indigenous people:

Zionism is the danger which encompasses our homeland; [Zionism] is the awful wave which beats [our] shores; it is the source of the deceitful acts which we experience like a down-pour and which are to be feared more than going alone at the dead of night. Not only this; it is also an omen of our future exile from our homeland and of (our) departure from our homes and property.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ *Al-Karmil*, Issue 444, pp 1-2.

⁸¹ Kayyali 1978, pp 35-36.

⁸² Kayyali 1978, p 36.

⁸³ Beška 2016, pp 68-74.

⁸⁴ Kayyali 1978, p 26; also Mandel 1976, pp 102-04.

⁸⁵ Kayyali 1978, p 26, citing *ha-Herut* newspaper of 24 May 1911; also Khalidi 1978, p 54.

The Palestinians foresaw “a fate... similar to that of the American Indians.”⁸⁶ It is remarkable that “exile from our homeland” was foreseen so early. Palestinian women added their voices through the two societies *Jam’iat al-Ihsan al-‘Am* (Society for General Charity) and *Jam’iat Yaqzat al-Fatat al-‘Arabiyya* (Society for the Awakening of the Arab Girl).⁸⁷

late March 1914 In an interview with Al-Iqdam Khalil Sakakini warns that the Zionist goal is to own Palestine and to divide Al-Ummah Al-Arabiyya.⁸⁸

11 April 1914 Filastin reports on economic pressures exerted by the Zionist Anglo-Palestine Bank against Palestinian merchants who have signed an anti-Zionism protest telegram and are forced to withdraw their signatures before the bank lifts its boycott of them.

5 May 1914 Fata Al-Arab reports about a new Society for Resisting the Zionists (Jamiat Muqawamat Sahiyuniyin) founded by Palestinian students at Al-Azhar University.

27 July 1914 British troops invade Dublin and begin to disarm Irish rebels. [As Chief Secretary for Ireland 1887-1891, Arthur Balfour similarly repressed Irish nationalists.]

22 November 1914 Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi returns to India after 21 years in South Africa and begins a non-violent campaign against British rule.

⁸⁶ Kayyali 1978, p 38.

⁸⁷ Kayyali 1978, pp 34-35.

⁸⁸ Also Beška 2015, p 46.

7. Kitchener & Storrs to Hussein

late autumn 1914

War Secretary Herbert Kitchener on 24 September 1914 gave Ronald Storrs, Oriental Secretary in Cairo, the requested permission to offer Hejaz ruler Sharif Hussein and his son Abdullah money and protection against outside aggression in return for help against the Germans and their allies Ottoman Turkey. On 31 October Kitchener sent his greetings to Abdullah via Storrs and promised:

If Arab nation assist England in this war England will guarantee that no intervention takes place in Arabia and will give Arabs every assistance against external foreign aggression.⁸⁹

We do not know if Kitchener would have regarded the British takeover of Palestine in 1917/1918 as “foreign aggression”, because he died at sea on 5 June 1916.

Whatever the northern boundaries of the “Arab nation” Kitchener referred to, and barring foreign aggression for instance by France or England itself, according to this promise, after Turkish/Ottoman departure, “Arabia” would be free. Hussein was equally interested in gaining the Caliphate, some control over Syria (which included Palestine, Transjordan and the Lebanon), and political/military independence.⁹⁰ In December 1914, moreover, Storrs evidently offered the “natives of Arabia, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia”, as a reward for rebellion against Istanbul, British recognition of their independence and surely not British take-over.⁹¹

The promises given to Hussein by High Commissioner for Egypt Henry McMahon shortly thereafter, in 1915, for “independence of the Arab countries” [>10], may have gone beyond Kitchener’s offer, but these well-documented British promises do show that Britain was fully aware of Arab yearning for non-interference, a stance they would clearly express, for instance, in the Damascus Protocol [>9]. Kitchener himself seems to have favoured the independence of most or all of the Arab Near East.⁹² General Gilbert Clayton, who negotiated directly with the Arabs in Cairo, wrote drafts of McMahon’s letters to Sherif Hussein [>10] and served as Civil Secretary of Palestine under High Commissioner Herbert Samuel from 1922-25, was firmly on the side of Palestinians’ independence.⁹³

⁸⁹ Storrs 1937, p 152; also Jeffries 1939, pp 57-59.

⁹⁰ Storrs 1937, p 153; Smith 1996, pp 42-44.

⁹¹ Kedourie 1976, pp 21-22.

⁹² See Jeffries 1939, pp 56-63; Furlonge 1969, pp 48-49.

⁹³ Boyle 2001, pp 3, 58-60, 66-70, 88, 103, 112, 131-34.

Anglo-Zionism had for quite some time been strong in Manchester, advocated by figures including Herbert Sidebotham, Simon Marks, Israel Sieff, sometime-MP Arthur Balfour, Harry Sacher, Chaim Weizmann, *Manchester Guardian* editor C.P. Scott, and Winston Churchill, Manchester MP 1901-1908.⁹⁴ In London it was Herbert Samuel, Cabinet member during 1909-1916, who had become dedicated to Zionism [>105; >429] and who in January 1915 **circulated a memo** within the Cabinet whose importance cannot be overestimated.⁹⁵ Its title, 'The Future of Palestine', gave for the first time blunt expression by a top British politician of the intention to other-determine the future political nature of Palestine. It is the first British conceptual attack on Palestine's people, assuming not only *de facto* ownership of the country, without consultation of the actual residents, but also granting some degree of political power to Jewish-Zionists who had immigrated, or would immigrate, into Palestine. It was almost identical with two other memos distributed by Samuel in November 1914 and March 1915. It was the opening salvo in Britain's three decades-long war against the vast majority of the people living in Palestine.

It was Samuel, of all people, who would become the first High Commissioner of Palestine (1 July 1920 – 30 June 1925), but now, five years earlier, he wrote that he observed

a stirring among the twelve million Jews scattered throughout the countries of the world ... for the restoration of the Jews to the land to which they are attached by ties almost as ancient as history itself. ... Yet it is felt that the time is not ripe for the establishment there of an independent, autonomous Jewish State. ... It is hoped also that Jewish immigration, carefully regulated, would be given preference so that in course of time the Jewish people, *grown into a majority* and settled in the land, may be conceded such degree of self-government as the conditions of that day may justify. (*emphasis added*)

Noteworthy is Samuel's establishment of the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine as an argument for Jewish collective political rights in Palestine in the here-and-now – arguably the most important pillar of Zionist theory. And while the ontology of a "restoration" of people to a specific territory is not easy to grasp, whatever it means Samuel was careful to state that it was the Jews who should be "restored" to Palestine, rather than (all of) Palestine's being restored to the Jews. Here Samuel's formulation pre-saged the later debate over whether Britain should "reconstitute" Palestine as a Jewish national home or whether the Jewish nation should "reconstitute" itself in Palestine. [*see within >16*]

Closely tied to this distinction, Samuel was unabashed in saying that the Jewish "state" is only a matter of time. The Jewish "state" also follows logically from the future Jewish ma-

⁹⁴ Barbour 1946, p 57; *see also* Antonius 1938, p 259; Tibawi 1977, pp 199-204.

⁹⁵ Samuel 1915; = CAB 37/123/43 (five pages), *all citations*; also Abcarius 1946, pp 45-46; Ingrams 1972, pp 4-5; Wasserstein 1978, pp 77-78; Smith 1996, p 51. For the full text, *see the PDF at* <https://blakealcott.jimdofree.com/rare-writings/>

jority, a goal there is no attempt to disguise or hide. As diverse correspondence during the following three decades shows, this goal of a Jewish majority was given priority not only by Zionists but by the British Government. [e.g. >327; see Theme Index] Until the demographics were “ripe”, however, the “Jewish State” would have to bide its time. In another passage Samuel reiterated that his goal was “to realise the aspiration of a Jewish State”, but any attempt by Jews to govern an “Arab race” at a time when it was four or five times more numerous than the Jews would fail:

If the attempt were made to place the 400,000 or 500,000 Mahommedans of Arab race under a Government which rested upon the support of 90,000 or 100,000 Jewish inhabitants, there can be no assurance that such a Government, even if established by the authority of the Powers, would be able to command obedience. The dream of a Jewish State, prosperous, progressive, and the home of a brilliant civilisation, might vanish in a series of squalid conflicts with the Arab population.

Why such conflicts would be “squalid” I don’t know, but at any rate at this stage Samuel saw no need to employ the euphemism for this state used in the Balfour Declaration [¹⁶], namely a “national home”.

According to Samuel the Jewish State offered a win-win-win-win situation, advantageous **first** of all to the indigenous:

It would enable England to fulfil in yet another sphere her historic part of civiliser of the backward countries. Under the Turk, Palestine has been blighted. For hundreds of years she has produced neither men nor things useful to the world.

Second, advantageous to Britain:

[With] Palestine in British hands ... the mountainous character of the country would make its occupation by an enemy difficult, and while this outpost was being contested time would be given to allow the garrison of Egypt to be increased and the defences to be strengthened.

That is, Palestinians would become “useful” to Britain, providing a military-topographical asset. That this argument was wrong, by the way, was later attested by Abdul Latif Tibawi, who rejected Samuel’s claim that in Palestine ‘a large Jewish population was necessary for imperial reasons as a shield for Egypt’ by observing, “It never occurred to him that this could be done more effectively by the Arabs!”⁹⁶

But never mind, **thirdly** it would be advantageous to world Jewry:

Far more important would be the effect upon the character of the larger part of the Jewish race who must still remain intermingled with other peoples... [Through] a Jewish centre in Palestine ... the character of the individual Jew, wherever he might be, would be ennobled.

Samuel’s personal “intermingledness” with Britons, sitting in the Cabinet, evidently did not deliver the desired degree of “ennoblement”.

Fourth, advantageous to the world itself:

⁹⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 230-31.

The Jewish brain is a physiological product not to be despised. ... If a body be again given in which its soul can lodge, it may again enrich the world. Till full scope is granted, as Macaulay said in the House of Commons, 'let us not presume to say that there is no genius among the countrymen of Isaiah, no heroism among the descendants of the Maccabees.'

Palestine was to be the "body" for this particular ethno-religious category of human beings. Samuel would again use this philo-semitic language, praising Jews as a race superior to Arabs, in a major House of Commons debate on 17 November 1930 [242] as would his friend Lord Melchett (Henry Mond) in a major House of Lords debate on 26 February 1936 [289].

In late March 1921, remarkably, Samuel's intimate collaborator Winston Churchill, having just become Colonial Secretary, would assert the same four 'goods' of Zionism when talking with the natives in Jerusalem: "We think it is good for the world, good for the Jews, good for the British Empire; and it is also good for the Arabs dwelling in Palestine..."⁹⁷ [100] The two men's ideological closeness would also be manifested in the tract they co-authored in early 1922 along with top-ranking Colonial Office civil servant Sir John Shuckburgh, which became HMG's 'Churchill' White Paper of 3 June 1922. [133; 142]

From Samuel's and Zionism's point of view,

I am assured that the solution of the problem of Palestine which would be much the most welcome to the leaders and supporters of the Zionist movement throughout the world would be the annexation of the country to the British Empire.

This was perhaps the first of many times during the 20th century that the phrase "the problem of Palestine" was used. But why, and for whom, was it a "problem"? For the Palestinians, Palestine was not a "problem".

The first and fourth points – that only European Zionist Jews, backed by capital, could materially turn a poor backward country into an affluent progressive one – would during the next thirty years be routinely used as an anti-Palestinian argument – from Colonial Secretary Victor Cavendish's report to the Cabinet in 1923 [125] through the Peel Commission report of 1937 [336] to the deliberations of the UN Special Committee on Palestine in 1947 [465ff], as well as in all debates in the Houses of Parliament.⁹⁸ The constant Palestinian answer to this ubiquitous argument, here newly formulated by Samuel, would by the way be correctly identified by the 1946 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry [438] when it wrote:

The Peel Commission took the view that the enterprise of the Jews in agriculture and industry had brought large, if indirect, benefits to the Arabs in raising their standard of living. ... [However] in any event the Arabs declare that, if they must choose between freedom and material improvement, they prefer freedom.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ CAB 24/126/23, pp 151-52; Jeffries 1939, p 478.

⁹⁸ See all Hansard references in the Bibliography; also Quigley 2011, pp 271-72.

⁹⁹ Hutcheson 1946, Ch VI §7.

Material benefits or not, that is, no thanks, we'd rather do things ourselves. Samuel's stage-setting view, however, which through his person as the key British Zionist would steer His Majesty's Government's behaviour towards a Jewish-majority state, did not include such questions of freedom and dignity which were among the political and spiritual, as opposed to the economic, aspects of the conflict.

Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* and the proceedings of eleven World Zionist Organization (WZO) Congresses starting in 1897 were by 1915 well-known, but now a wealthy and elite Cabinet member, supported by the group of Mancunians mentioned above as well as by elite personages such as Lord Haldane, the Marquess of Crewe, Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild and soon-to-be Prime Minister David Lloyd George, was straightforwardly calling on the most powerful country in the world to slowly render self-government impossible for the inferior indigenous "Arab race".¹⁰⁰

According to Britain's 'Arab Bureau' in Cairo, another pamphlet appearing in the U.K. "in early 1915", with the title 'Palestine and the Jews' and issued by the English Zionist Federation, was written by "S", meaning "either [Harry] Sacher or [Leon] Simon", but it could have meant Samuel, seeing as it held that:

The Jewish land is Palestine; the Jewish language is Hebrew. Palestine is the Jewish land because whatever national life the Jewish people have lived has been inseparably associated with Palestine. Their literature has sprung from the soil of Palestine. Their language, their institutions and their cult have been moulded in the image of Palestine. Two thousand years of exile have produced no divorce; for tradition and hope, the impress of the past and the promise of the future, have kept Palestine before the eyes of every true Jew as the goal of the age...¹⁰¹

Literally, this passage establishes a broad Jewish connection to Palestine, not a connection of *Palestine* to "the Jewish people". But the logic – or rather the rhetoric – permeating this passage was that because Palestine was the *only* place "the Jewish people" had had a "national life", therefore – here the *non sequitur* – in the present the place was rightfully theirs. Political rights now were being derived from *past* physical and political presence, regardless of the will of the people now actually living on the land. The argument by the way also conflates Jews (or Judaism; in any case "every true Jew") with the Zionist *political* doctrine of a Jewish Palestine – despite the fact for instance that this very Arab Bureau intelligence report documented the opposition to Zionism of many Jews, inside and outside Palestine.¹⁰²

Of Samuel's 'The Future of Palestine' then Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, Lloyd George's predecessor and an anti-Zionist, wrote:

He thinks we might plant in this not very promising territory about three or four million European Jews. ... I confess that I am not attracted by the proposed addition to our responsi-

¹⁰⁰ Friedman 1973, pp 8-14; Smith 1996, pp 31, 34, 36; see also on Samuel generally Huneidi 2001.

¹⁰¹ FO 882/14/5, p 293, 'Memorandum of the Jewish Palestinian Question', 5 February (or 2 May) 1917.

¹⁰² FO 882/14/5, pp 285-303 & *passim*.

bilities, but it is a curious illustration of Dizzy's [former P.M. Disraeli's] favourite maxim that 'race is everything' to find this almost lyrical outburst proceeding from the well-ordered and methodical brain of H.S. [Herbert Samuel].¹⁰³ [also >105; >242; >429; >456]

Asquith introduced the term "race" with good reason, for Samuel was claiming that the Jewish race is superior to the Arab race. Samuel's pamphlet was racist.

According to A. L. Tibawi, Samuel did not give up in the face of Asquith's rejection, and gave a copy of his pamphlet to Mark Sykes who thereupon became a staunch and influential supporter of Zionism.¹⁰⁴ [also >12] During the period until he became High Commissioner five years later, Samuel would adhere closely to the principles and feelings of 'The Future of Palestine'.¹⁰⁵ He for instance acted in accordance with this memo by "working closely with [Chaim] Weizmann in furthering the Zionist cause in London", and in 1918 he drafted a Foreign Office dispatch to the Palestine [military] Government stating that the Balfour Declaration [->16] was a "chose jugée", i.e. something already irreversibly decided.¹⁰⁶ He was also a member of the Zionist delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and his first visit to Palestine, in March 1920, was followed by a telegram to Foreign Minister George Curzon on 2 April objecting that plans supported by General Allenby and others "for recognising Faisal King of Palestine. ... would tend to take life out of Zionist's movements [sic.]"¹⁰⁷ since Faisal clearly aimed for an Arab state, not a Zionist one. In Samuel's estimation, in other words, the life or heart of the Zionist movement would disappear without British support. That much was true.

¹⁰³ Samuel 1945, p 142; John & Hadawi 1970a, p 61, citing Asquith, *Memories and Reflections*, Vol. II, p 59.

¹⁰⁴ Tibawi 1977, pp 197-201.

¹⁰⁵ Wasserstein 1978, p 77; Huneidi 2001, *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ Wasserstein 1978, pp 50, 54.

¹⁰⁷ FO 371/5034, p 57; Wasserstein 1978, p 61.

9. The Damascus Protocol

23 May 1915

The ‘**Damascus Protocol**’, usually dated 23 May 1915,¹⁰⁸ was the culmination of several conferences held by Near East Arabs. The Arab Congress of 18-23 June 1913, for instance, was held in Paris in the hall of the French Geographical Society; although some Palestinians took part, and Palestinians at home bombarded it with telegrams, it ended without any resolution on Palestine or Zionism.¹⁰⁹ In response to this lack of an echo from the Paris meeting, Nablus was then the scene of a conference, demonstrations, and the founding of an Anti-Zionism Society – or the Zionism Resistance Society – which reaffirmed the Zionist danger to independence and to Arab land ownership.¹¹⁰ The enthusiasm engendered by the conference was large, and the Ottomans’ rejection of Arab demands for autonomy was afterwards bitterly criticised.¹¹¹

Some disappointed attendees at the Paris congress who were members of the secret societies *al-Jam‘iyya al-‘arabiyya al-Fatat* (Arab Youth Society) and *Jamyat al-Ahd* (Covenant Society) were focussed not so much on Zionism but rather on the broader Arab quest for independence, and sometime between February and May 1915 they presented the ‘Damascus Protocol’ to Faisal bin Hussein, one of the sons of Hussein ibn Ali al-Hashemi, Sherif of the Hejaz [also >7; >10]; it demanded

recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers: North: The Line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37N. and thence along the line Birejek-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat-Amadia to the Persian frontier; East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf; South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden, whose status was to be maintained). West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin. ... The conclusion of a defensive alliance between Great Britain and the future independent Arab State.

This did not include Egypt, but Palestine was clearly on the Mediterranean Sea between the Red Sea and Mersin and Adana.

These Arab nationalists, “who had formed a Central Arab Nationalist Committee [and] pledged them[selves] to recognize the Sherif as spokesman for the Arab Nation” would rise up against the Ottomans if Britain would agree to the Protocol’s terms – terms which were surreptitiously delivered to the Sherif in Mecca written on a tiny piece of paper “sewn inside the lining of one of [Faisal’s] retainer’s boots.”¹¹² The territorial bor-

¹⁰⁸ Antonius 1938, pp 157-58, *all further quotations; also* Furlonge 1969, pp 47-48, 50-55; Fieldhouse 2006, pp 22-31; *see also* Wikipedia, ‘Damascus Protocol’.

¹⁰⁹ Kayyali 1978, pp 30-31.

¹¹⁰ Kayyali 1978, pp 31-32; *see also* Wikipedia, ‘Arab Congress of 1913’; *also* Mandel 1976, pp 159, 173; Seikaly 1995, p 39; Ayyad 1999, pp 50-52, 57-58.

¹¹¹ Khalidi 1978, pp 49-53.

¹¹² John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 31-32.

ders therein defined were almost exactly those which Faisal's brother Abdullah and their father Sherif Hussein presented to the British rulers in Cairo between July 1915 and January 1916. [^{>10}]

30 June 1915 *The British Committee on Asiatic Turkey, headed by Maurice de Bunsen and including as a member Mark Sykes, worries that Our Empire is wide enough already, and our task is to consolidate the possessions we already have, to make firm and lasting the position we already hold, and to pass on to those who come after an inheritance that stands four-square to the world.*¹¹³

¹¹³ CAB 42/3/12, p 2 (§10); Regan 2017, p 25.

10.* **McMahon-Hussein Correspondence** July 1915-10 March 1916

Henry McMahon was appointed High Commissioner for Egypt in December 1914, and it thus fell to him to try to win Arab support during the war. Accordingly, he was the British official with whom Sherif Hussein, ruler of the Hejaz, conducted the negotiations known as **the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence**. In Hussein's opening letter, dated 14 July 1915, he respectfully told the British in Cairo that

the whole of the Arab nation without any exception have decided in these last years to accomplish their freedom, and grasp the reins of their administration both in theory and practice. ... [We hope] England will acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries... (*Letter 1*)¹¹⁴

He then named the borders listed in the Damascus Protocol [>9] as defining what he meant by the "Arab countries".

McMahon in reply on 30 August "confirm[ed]... the terms of Lord Kitchener's message [>7]... in which was stated clearly [the British] desire for the independence of Arabia and its inhabitants." (*Letter 2*)¹¹⁵ Hurt by McMahon's hesitant "coolness", Hussein on 9 September replied that the British are here dealing not with a single powerful ruler but with the Arab "peoples" whose "demands are necessary for our existence; nay, they are the essential essence of our life, material and moral." (*Letter 3*)¹¹⁶

To this McMahon replied on 24 October 1915:

The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta [today Turkey's *Mersin*, *Adana* and *Hatay* Provinces] and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded. Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca. (*Letter 4*)¹¹⁷

The coastal region from Aleppo on down was presumably not "purely Arab" because of its Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians, but at least McMahon had stated the criterion for excluding territory from independence, and that criterion applied far more weakly to Palestine, where such ethnicities were a very small proportion of the population.¹¹⁸ Note also that the "district" of Damascus was actually the Ottoman *Sanjak* (provincial subdivision or county) of Damascus, whose southern border, i.e. its border with the *Sanjak* of Hauran, was at around 33°35'N latitude, which is a bit to the north of even Tyre in south-

¹¹⁴ McMahon & Hussein, 1915/16, *all quotations in this entry*; see also Cmd. 5964; Huneidi 1998, pp 33-36; Antonius 1938, Appendix A.

¹¹⁵ Also Abcarius 1946, p 27.

¹¹⁶ Also Abcarius 1946, p 28; Smith 1996, pp 44-45.

¹¹⁷ Also Zuaytir 1958, pp 29-30; Kattan 2009, p 46.

¹¹⁸ See e.g. Matossian 2011, pp 29-30.

ern Lebanon, i.e. well north of Palestine. (The city of Damascus is at 33°50'N, the city of Safad at 32°57'N.) Therefore, none of Palestine was *due west* of the Damascus “district”; it was southwest of that *Sanjak*.

McMahon’s integrity is cast into doubt by the fact that on the same date as *Letter 4*, 24 October, behind Hussein’s back he dispatched to London:

I do not for one minute go to the length of imagining that the present negotiations will go far to shape the future form of Arabia or to either establish our rights or to bind our hands in that country ... What we have to arrive at now is to tempt the Arab peoples into the right path, detach them from the enemy and bring them over to our side. This on our part is at present largely a matter of words and to succeed we must use persuasive terms and abstain from haggling over conditions.¹¹⁹

Hussein on 5 November rejected the exclusion – in effect the continued colonisation – of “the two vilayets of Aleppo and Beirut and their sea coasts” because they “are purely Arab vilayets, and there is no difference between a Moslem and a Christian Arab: they are both descendants of one forefather.” (*Letter 5*)

By contrast, McMahon on 14 December replied directly to the Sherif’s *Letter 5* that British hands were tied by France’s interest in Aleppo and Beirut, but:

Great Britain has no intention of concluding any peace in terms of which the freedom of the Arab peoples from German and Turkish domination does not form an essential condition. As an earnest of our intentions, and in order to aid you in your efforts in our joint cause, I am sending you by your trustworthy messenger a sum of twenty thousand pounds. (*Letter 6*)

In this bundle of “persuasive terms” British and French “domination” are not mentioned.

Three things stand out in Hussein’s next reply, *Letter 7*, dated 1 January 1916: 1) He is but a “transmitter” of the “decisions and desires of our peoples”; 2) The Arab people won’t tolerate their “dismemberment” at the hands of France in their northwestern sections; and 3) The Arabs had “never cared to negotiate with any other Power but you.” (*Letter 7*) This declaration of friendship was the end of this famous Correspondence.

HMG kept this correspondence from the public until 1939. [400] (Why, if it clearly did *not* promise independence for Palestine?) In March 1919 the Foreign Office did show Emir Faisal’s assistant, Nablus native Awni Abdul Hadi, the full correspondence in Arabic¹²⁰, but the letters, and thus what Gilbert Clayton, then Britain’s highest intelligence official for the area including Palestine, would call the ‘McMahon Pledge’¹²¹ were suppressed by HMG until 16 March 1939, when the pressure of the Arab Revolt of 1936–39 and the desire of Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald to hold talks with Palestinians in London led to their release to Parliament. The letters and their context had been investigated for two months, as part of the St. James talks, by a special committee chaired by Lord Chancellor Frederic Maugham and including as members George Antonius and Musa al-

¹¹⁹ Kedourie 1976, p 120; Smith 1996, pp 46–48.

¹²⁰ Allawi 2014, p 201.

¹²¹ Clayton 1969, pp 9–10.

Alami, Maugham's fellow Cambridge alumni.¹²² [>400] The correspondence had however been obtained and privately published in 1923 and again, in 1938, by Antonius, Hussein having shown him his hand-written letters in 1931.¹²³ Until World War I's end suppression might have been advisable to avoid endangering so-called world Jewry's support for the Entente war effort, but afterwards, apparently, straightforward pro-Zionism sufficed.¹²⁴

The *political* effect on all parties of the letters' publication by Antonius notwithstanding, the large historiography around these letters, in particular whether the British had included or excluded Palestine in the areas to be free, has from an academic as opposed to a negotiating point of view been a poor use of time. The reason is that the logically and ethically prior 'Arab' claim to sovereignty in Palestine did not depend on any "words" of the British – it was a historical, moral, and political claim outside the realm of power and promises.¹²⁵ That is, as Jamal al-Husseini would testify at the February/March 1939 St. James Conference [>387] referred to just above:

It was also most important to bear in mind that the Arab case did not depend only on the interpretation of pledges but also on the basic and natural rights of the Arabs.¹²⁶

Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald similarly wrote a memo to the Cabinet on 18 January 1939 [>383] in which he said that while some

sections [of his memo] merely contain an account of the promises which British and other Governments have made to Jews and Arabs respectively, ... the real discussion of the issues on which we have to reach decisions does not begin until the section headed 'Future Policy'.¹²⁷

Since that later section dealt with the real and purported *rights* of the disputing parties the meat of the matter, MacDonald was saying, was not mere "promises".

That said, had the British admitted soon after taking over Palestine that despite McMahon's ambiguities Palestine in all likelihood was *not* excluded from the offer of independence, its being to the southwest, not the west, of the "district" of Damascus, and its having an almost purely Arab population, one leg supporting Britain's pro-Zionist policy would have collapsed, greatly strengthening the Palestinians' hand. It is moreover plausible that these early pledges did play a psychological role in inclining the 1939 British elite – MacDonald and Maugham, for instance – to do what they did in the 17 May 1939 White Paper, namely grant Palestine independence as a normal majoritarian democracy (albeit, as usual, with some caveats). [>383-413]

The political relevance of the Correspondence would become visible, for instance, in the House of Commons debate on Palestine on 17 November 1930 [>242] which discussed the just-released 'Passfield' White Paper [>234]. During the debate Seymour Cocks as-

¹²² Maugham 1939 (Cmd. [Command Paper] 5974).

¹²³ Antonius 1938, pp 164, 182-83; Jeffries 1939, pp 67-91; Andersen 2017, pp 48-57.

¹²⁴ Hansard 1923, cc644, 650, 658, 664.

¹²⁵ Jeffries 1939, p 78; also Tannous 1988, p 258.

¹²⁶ FO 371/23223, p 261.

¹²⁷ CAB 24/282/4, p 34.

serted that the parts of the correspondence publicly known strongly suggested that the promise was for independence, but “successive Governments have said that that pledge was not definite, and... they have shielded themselves behind a suppressed correspondence.”¹²⁸ Common sense as well must ask why something would be suppressed unless it argued against British pro-Zionism policy. In sum, even if the moral case for freedom was clear, the case based on such pledges, had they been revealed, might early-on have tipped the scales and made the Balfour Declaration untenable.

Against the Palestinian interpretation of the letters’ inclusion or exclusion of Palestine, by the way, stands Herbert Samuel’s claim in the House of Lords in 1937 that General Clayton, who had negotiated with the Arabs¹²⁹ and written all the letters’ drafts, had told him that he and McMahon intended to exclude Palestine due to “the peculiar interests involved in Palestine”¹³⁰ – namely the Zionist interests. But for this we have only Samuel’s word. In October 1918, on the other hand, Arnold Toynbee at the Foreign Office had supported the Arab interpretation in a twenty-page memo, and Sir John Maxwell in Cairo had written a separate memo pointing out that the excluded areas were to the “west of the Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo line”, implying in terms of pure geometry that the exclusion from the independence promise pertained only to areas perpendicular to that *line*, but nothing south-west of it.¹³¹

The Arabs would soon be privy to various other British promises of independence, made mostly during 1918 [>14; >18; >20-22; >25; >28], and their knowledge of at least the thrust of McMahon’s promises added to their awareness of betrayal by Britain. This awareness and emotional resentment underpinned Palestinian behaviour throughout the Mandate, with many if not most of their letters, manifestos, statements and testimonies making explicit mention of it.

Toynbee was one Briton who also resented the betrayal, and according to Izzat Tannous T.E. Lawrence was another:

T.E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia, was so grieved [at the Balfour Declaration and Sykes-Picot] that in protest of this betrayal, he refused to accept all the decorations awarded him by his government. In a statement he made on this subject, he said: “The British Government made the Arabs enter the war against written promises given to them which were specifically selfrude. ... But, naturally, instead of being proud for what we achieved together, I found myself in a bitter everlasting shame.”¹³²

¹²⁸ Hansard 1930a, c165.

¹²⁹ Boyle 2001, pp 58, 66.

¹³⁰ Hansard 1937, cc630-31.

¹³¹ Tibawi 1977, pp 298-300; see also Hansard 1939, cc1970-71; Renton 2010, pp 29, 31-32.

¹³² Tannous 1988, p 75.

We have seen that Hussein had “never cared to negotiate with any other Power but you.” (Letter 7) But we will see in the seminal ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ written by the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress in the winter of 1920-21 [199] that the Palestinians felt their faith in the honesty of the British had been naïve.¹³³

21 August 1915 [*An Ottoman Military Court set up by the military governor of Syria Jamal Pasha has the first group of 11 Arab nationalist-movement martyrs executed in Beirut [others on 6 May 1916]; Sheikh Said al-Karmi was reprieved. Mahmoud Al-Mihmasani (born 1884) and his brother Mohammad (born 1880) were both martyred in the ‘first convoy’.*]¹³⁴ Among those executed were two Palestinians – Ali Umar Nashashibi, of Jerusalem, and Mohammed Shanti, of Jaffa.¹³⁵

¹³³ See also Furlonge 1969, pp 49-62.

¹³⁴ See Antonius 1938, p 187; Khalidi 1978, pp 66-7.

¹³⁵ Barbour 1946, p 87; Tamari & Nassar 2014, p XXXVII

11. Grey to Sazonov

13 March 1916

On 13 March 1916 a **note presaging the Balfour Declaration** was sent by Foreign Secretary Edward Grey to the British Ambassador to Russia, George Buchanan, to be handed on to Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov, apparently in an attempt to sound out the Russian government about its stance on Zionist settlement.¹³⁶ I rely on the account of J.M.N. Jeffries, who himself was not able to obtain the English text of the original note – only a Russian translation – but who quoted from the texts given by Leonard Stein in his book *Zionism* and by Fannie Fern Andrews in her book *The Holy Land under the Mandate*.¹³⁷ The text floats the prospect of gaining support of Jewish Zionists during the war by “an agreement concerning Palestine which would fully satisfy Jewish aspirations.” In the dispatch, whose language bears close resemblance to that of the Balfour Declaration [p.16], especially in its invocation of “Jewish aspirations”, Grey directly quoted Lucien Wolf’s account:

If, as a result of the war, Palestine should fall within the sphere of French and British interests, the French and British Governments will not fail to take into consideration the historic interests of Jewry in this country. Both Governments would assure to the Jewish population equal political rights with other inhabitants [and] religious and civil freedom, such municipal privileges in colonies and towns as would appear necessary, as well as reasonable facilities for colonization and immigration. ... [T]his matter will be sympathetically considered by His Majesty’s Government. (p 107)

Grey continued:

The only object of His Majesty’s Government is to devise some agreement which will be sufficiently attractive to the majority of Jews to facilitate the conclusion of a transaction securing Jewish support. ... [I]f the scheme provided for enabling the Jews, when their colonies in Palestine are sufficiently strong to be able to compete with the Arab population, to take in hand the administration of the internal affairs of this region..., then the agreement would be much more attractive for the majority of Jews. (pp 107-08)

Ambiguity remained over whether the “equal political rights” referred to Jewish individuals or the Jewish collective (in which case the vision was that of *political parity* between a minority and an overwhelming majority), and whether “internal affairs” referred to those of Palestine as a whole or the Jewish-colonised areas.

¹³⁶ Abcarius 1946, pp 46-47.

¹³⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 106-16, *all citations*.

12. Sykes-Picot Agreement

January-16 May 1916

Secret until published by the Bolsheviks on 23 November 1917 and the *Manchester Guardian* three days later, a British-French deal called **the Sykes-Picot Agreement** was struck at meetings held between late 1915 or early 1916 and its signing and ratification by the two governments between late April and 16 May.¹³⁸ Negotiating for the British was Mark Sykes¹³⁹ and for the French François Georges-Picot. In effect they divided up Mesopotamia and *Bilad al-Sham* (Greater Syria, i.e. today's Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon) between themselves. Working under their respective Foreign Ministers Edward Grey and Paul Cambon, regarding Palestine the two diplomats decided:

It is accordingly understood between the French and British governments: That in [the area that became Mandate Palestine] there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other allies, and the representatives of the Shereef of Mecca.

That is, there would be no post-war freedom after all, and it should be noted that the main fact was the taking over of the Near East by Europeans, not its particular division between France and Britain: in terms of self-determination what mattered, by definition, was colonial take-over by *anybody*. In the event, the British War Cabinet well into the year 1917 aspired to British, rather than either French or international, control of Palestine¹⁴⁰ – which eventually happened.

Britain and France allotted some areas to themselves, yet in the same breath swore to “recognise and protect an *independent* Arab state or a confederation of Arab states.” The Agreement stipulated moreover concrete denials of sovereignty regarding, for instance, control by the British of the ports of Acre and Haifa, control for twenty years over tariffs, and the power of decision over railway routes.¹⁴¹

On 3 May 1916 Commander D.G. Hogarth [*also >21; >36*] wrote from Cairo to his superior Captain Hall:

I presume that, on grounds of high European policy, it was necessary to come now to some Agreement with our Allies about the future of the Near East... The section of French public opinion represented by M. Picot could hardly have been contented with a smaller tri-coloured area, and Sir Mark Sykes no doubt achieved the utmost in persuading M. Picot to resign the eastern part of Syria with the chain of important inland Cities to independent Arab government, to leave Haifa to us, and to accept the internationalisation of Palestine. ...

¹³⁸ Balfour Project, current, & Avalon Project, current, *all references*; also Regan 2017, pp 69-70.

¹³⁹ Colonel Sir Tatton Benvenuto Mark Sykes, MP and a 6th Baronet.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. CAB 23/2/44, §11.

¹⁴¹ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 129-31; Abcarius 1946, pp 38-39; Zuaytir 1958, p 32; Furlonge 1969, p 53.

At the same time the conclusion of this Agreement is of no immediate service to our Arab policy as pursued here [Arab military action against the Ottomans] and will only not be a grave disadvantage if, for some time to come, it is kept strictly secret.¹⁴²

Even after the Bolsheviks published it, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was suppressed by HMG until either 1939 or 1941.¹⁴³ Note the importance to Hogarth of friendly, allied relations with the Arabs.

Hogarth went on to say that while Sherif Hussein undoubtedly insisted on his demand of autumn 1915 [^{>10}] that “the whole of Syria with Palestine, up to lat. 37° N.” be included in “the area of Arab independence”, he had recently been quiet about borders and was willing to fight at Britain’s side; secrecy on borders and intentions was nevertheless needed, so Hogarth, because eventually “any definition [of borders] would be bound to clash with claims on which he has laid stress”; therefore this [Sykes-Picot] Agreement should

be regarded by our Government as a purely opportunistic measure, with the mental reservation that it cannot but need considerable revision sooner or later. For it contains several features which do not promise any final solution of the Near Eastern Question.

One of the “features” of the Agreement detrimental to a solution of that Question was “Palestine under international control ... especially in view of the aspirations of the Jews to an area in which they may enjoy some sort of proprietorship;...”¹⁴⁴ – despite the fact that the Sykes-Picot Agreement did not mention any Jewish or Zionist aspirations. Yet Hogarth must have known something about the connection between the Sykes-Picot Agreement and both Grey’s missive to Sazonov [^{>11}] and the Balfour Declaration [^{>16}]; as James de Rothschild (a closely-involved British politician and member of the Zionist Commission in Palestine in 1918 [^{>23}]) would explain in the House of Commons in 1930,

The Sykes Picot agreement was negotiated... simply and only because of the Jewish National Home, and when the limitation of their frontier was drawn between Syria and Palestine, it was drawn north of the most northern Jewish colony in order to include that in the Jewish National Home.¹⁴⁵

Compared with de Rothschild’s “National Home”, Hogarth’s “proprietorship” was at least an honest and apt word to describe the aspired-to Jewish state.

A view of the relation between the Sykes-Picot and Balfour statements is offered by A.L. Tibawi, one which sees it from the perspective of the criteria of peace and Palestinian sovereignty:

Had the original British intention of sponsoring as a successor state to the Ottoman Empire an independent Arab state in alliance with Britain not been bedevilled by the partition of these territories between Britain and France under the Sykes-Picot agreement, Britain would have been in a most favourable position, by virtue of at least military occupation, to bring that state into being. Neither the international regime for the holy places in Jerusalem,

¹⁴² FO 882/14, p 36.

¹⁴³ FO 371/27055.

¹⁴⁴ FO 882/14, pp 36, 39.

¹⁴⁵ Hansard 1930a, c181.

nor the accommodation of a Zionist programme within the framework of Arab independence, nor again an autonomous Lebanon, would have presented insuperable difficulties. With the benefit of hindsight this might have avoided much strife and bloodshed and afforded better and earlier opportunities for greater economic and social advance.¹⁴⁶

The understatement of Tibawi's final sentence aside, his view is exceptionally perceptive, all-encompassing, and touching in its lack of cynicism: Yes, the British had it in their hands to mould a peaceful Near East consisting of some relatively large, friendly Arab states. "Hindsight" also suggests, though, that for the British the bottom line was actually to give Palestine to the Zionists, in which case Sykes-Picot came in handy.

6 May 1916 *Ottoman authorities publicly execute 21 Syrians and Lebanese and 2 Palestinians in Damascus and Beirut for alleged activities against the Empire. These executions bring the total number of notable political nationalists executed by Jamal Pasha to 800 and earn him the name 'the Butcher'. [6 May is Martyrs' Day, every year.]*¹⁴⁷

5 June 1916 [Herbert Kitchener drowns at sea when his ship hits a German mine near Orkney, Scotland.]

10 June 1916 *Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali al-Hashimi proclaims Arab independence from Ottoman rule on the basis of his correspondence with McMahon [and] the Arab revolt against Constantinople begins. The Palestinians enthusiastically participate, perceiving themselves as part of the Arab ummah and hoping that the revolt will put an end to Zionist immigration.*¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 302-03.

¹⁴⁷ See also Jeffries 1939, pp 118-23; Andersen 2017, p 63.

¹⁴⁸ See Antonius 1938, pp 201-42.

13. Sherif Hussein, McDonogh & Clayton

21 Nov. 1916

The Sykes-Picot agreement should, as Commander Hogarth had said, be “kept strictly secret” [p.12], and so should the Zionist project:

When the Sharif's newspaper *al-Qibla* published, in the latter part of 1916, an article about Zionism, General McDonogh of British Intelligence directed General [Gilbert] Clayton, Chief Political Officer, Egyptian Expeditionary Force and head of the Arab Bureau, to communicate a ‘serious and personal warning’ to the Sharif and urge him ‘to do his utmost to prevent discussions of this dangerous topic.’¹⁴⁹

According to Philip Mattar, about this time Amin al-Husseini, later Mufti of Jerusalem, head of the British-created Supreme Moslem Council and *de facto* leader of the Palestine Arab Party, was in Cairo where he formed a group of 20 Palestinians pledging themselves to return to Palestine in order to “awaken the people” to the danger of Zionism.¹⁵⁰ This strong and early anti-Zionism amongst Palestinians raises the question of what a British, French or American ‘Mandate’ would have meant to them *without* pro-Zionist content. The simple desire for independence would have remained, and presumably, like the other mandated territories, Palestine would have eventually struggled for and attained independence, itself joining the League of Nations and United Nations.

¹⁴⁹ FO 882/14/1, p 72, MacDonogh to Clayton, 21 November 1916; Kayyali 1978, p 45.

¹⁵⁰ Mattar 1988, pp 9-10.

Izzat Tannous was eyewitness to an attempt by Britain to hide its Zionist intentions, writing that in 1917 Britain targeted Arab soldiers in Turkish regiments: “Leaflets dropped by planes over [Greater] Syria [stated that] we are fighting for two Noble Aims: The Preservation of the Religion and the Freedom of Arabs generally.”¹⁵¹ In Tannous’s account, this air campaign sprang from the fact that many Palestinians saw the writing on the wall in the form of land sales and well-known Zionist proclamations. One piece of evidence for this is that one “educated young Moslem” in early 1917 told a British intelligence officer: “If the Jews take our country, where shall we go?”¹⁵² As long as the war lasted the Arabs had to be placated.

Confirming Tannous’s report of the dropped leaflets, the Shaw Commission in 1930 [p.220] would believe Subhi Bey al-Khadra’s testimony that he also witnessed it in early 1917 – and that it must have been effective, since he himself then deserted the Ottoman army in order to fight for the British; without stating its source the Shaw Commission indeed quoted the leaflets’ entire text, which was addressed to “the Arab Officers and soldiers in the Turkish Army in Palestine” and seemingly penned by an Arab ally of Britain:

We have with much regret heard that you are fighting against us [i.e. for the Ottomans] who are working for the preservation of the soul of the Moslem Religion from being altered. We believe that the real truth has not reached you. We have therefore sent you this proclamation, sealed by our seal, to assure you that we are fighting for two noble aims, the preservation of religion and the freedom of Arabs generally. We have sent strict orders to the heads of the men on our line that if our Army happens to capture any one of you they should treat you well and send you to my sons who will welcome and keep you well. The Arab Kingdom has been for a long time in bondage to the Turks who have killed your brethren, and crucified your men and deported your women and families and have altered your religion. How then can you stand this and bear the bitterness of continuing with them and agree to assist them? Come and join us who are labouring for the sake of religion and the freedom of Arabs so that the Arab Kingdom may again become what it was during the time of your fathers, if God wills. God is the leader to the right path.¹⁵³

In 1939 Andrew MacLaren MP inserted this somewhat florid text into the *Hansard* records of parliamentary proceedings as “an exact copy of the document thrown from our aeroplanes into the Turkish lines” and “scattered over the Turkish trenches. If it is not a promise I do not know what a promise is. It was a promise that if they deserted the Turkish forces and fought for us we would liberate their own land and overthrow the Turkish power.”¹⁵⁴ MacLaren saw that the thereby promised “liberation” would not be consistent with substituting British for Turkish power.

¹⁵¹ Tannous 1988, pp 90, 71.

¹⁵² FO 882/14/5, p 300.

¹⁵³ Shaw 1930, p 126.

¹⁵⁴ Hansard 1939, cc2017-18.

The report of the Palin Court (Commission) in July/August 1920 of its investigations into the disturbances of 4-7 April 1920 – a report that was suppressed until 1968 [88] – would likewise confirm the dropping of such pamphlets:

The general result [of McMahon's pledges to Hussein]... was to convert any feeling the population (and this is true of the Christian population as well as the Moslem majority) may have had in favour of the Turks, into one of friendliness towards the British occupation. There is no question but that this was encouraged during the War by every kind of propaganda available to the War Office. For instance they were promised, in pamphlets dropped from aeroplanes, peace and prosperity under British rule. ... The tendency of the evidence is to show that in spite of the fact that nothing had been said about Palestine being included in the Hedjaz Empire and the fact that the Balfour Declaration had been published in 1917, the real impression left upon the Arabs generally was that the British were going to set up an independent Arab State which would include Palestine.¹⁵⁵

A.L. Tibawi, as well, confirms the scattering of freedom-promising circulars from British airplanes, based on "records of reconnaissance flights over southern Palestine in December 1916 and January 1917".¹⁵⁶

I have not myself seen such pamphlets, or facsimiles thereof. But these several official and eyewitness sources show that, as the drafting of the Balfour Declaration was underway, Britain was assuring the war-plagued inhabitants of Palestine that it prioritised their political interests. After its Balfour Declaration became known it would make many further such assurances [18; 21; 22; 25; 28].

Speaking of British propaganda leaflets, the Peel Commission in 1937 [336] recorded that:

To inform World Jewry of the [Balfour] Declaration millions of leaflets were circulated throughout the Jewish communities. They were dropped from the air on German and Austrian towns, and widely distributed through the Jewish belt from Poland to the Black Sea.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Palin 1920, Section A §5; *see also* Antonius 1938, pp 216-75.

¹⁵⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 166-67, 218, 273.

¹⁵⁷ Peel 1937, II §17; Barbour 1946, p 62.

All drafts of the incipient Balfour Declaration [>16] during the year or so of its incubation contained the phrase "national home for the Jewish people." It is thus worth recording that on the British as well as the Palestinian side there were objections to the phrase's vagueness. One person in particular who evidenced an anti-Zionist attitude, and was furthermore in a position to brake or even derail the Samuel-Balfour project all the way up until the summer of 1923 [>54; >72; >78; >165; >167], was George (Lord) Curzon.¹⁵⁸ This entry takes a look at his thoughts and statements about the fundamental British deception in dealing with the Palestinians, namely their claim that they wanted merely a 'home' for the Jewish people, not something with clear-cut sovereignty. Because of Curzon's stature and his role as Zionism's only potent British opponent, I have included in this entry some of his thoughts and statements made *after* 1917. Up until the establishment of the Palestine colony no Cabinet member remained unaware of the criticism and doubts expressed by Curzon.

Just five days before the War Cabinet's final decision to approve the text of the Balfour Declaration Lord Curzon, as one of its six members, circulated a **memorandum** called, as were several other documents before and during the Mandate, "The Future of Palestine"¹⁵⁹ [also >8; >30; >167; >214; >442; >464] in which he asked:

What is the meaning of the phrase 'a National Home for the Jewish Race in Palestine' and what is the nature of the obligation that we shall assume if we accept this as a principle of British policy? ... A 'National Home for the Jewish race or people' would seem, if the words are to bear their ordinary meaning, to imply a place where the Jews can be reassembled as a nation, and where they will enjoy the privileges of an independent national existence. Such is clearly the conception of those who, like Sir A. Mond [later Lord Melchett], speak of the creation in Palestine of 'an autonomous Jewish State', words which appear to contemplate a State, i.e., a political entity, composed of Jews, governed by Jews, and administered mainly in the interests of Jews.

An "independent" *national* existence necessarily means a state.

The War Cabinet was then in its last stage of constructing the final wording of the foreseen [Balfour] Declaration¹⁶⁰, and both the National Archives documents and the secondary literature show that other terms being floated were 'a home for the Jewish nation,' 'a national home for the Jewish race,' 'a Jewish Palestine,' 'the resettlement of Palestine as a national centre,' 'the reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth' and 'the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people.' As for the meaning of "na-

¹⁵⁸ Also Mathew 2011.

¹⁵⁹ FO 371/8038, pp 110-12, *all quotations*; also CAB 24/30/6, pp 22-23; CAB 21/58, pp 41-42; see also Tibawi 1977, pp 231-32.

¹⁶⁰ *E.g. within* FO 371/8038 & FO 141/439.

tional home”, exactly two years later Curzon took a stand in reply to an internal pro-Zionist “declaration” by Richard Meinertzhagen: he stated in a Cabinet-level report that the Cabinet did not “contemplate... government of a majority by a minority”.¹⁶¹

This chronology is limited to English-language documents and pays little attention to Arabic-English translation. That this omission is important is shown by the example of this phrase ‘Jewish national home’. As then High Commissioner Herbert Samuel would on 12 February 1921 report to his superior in London, Foreign Secretary Curzon, concerning a talk he’d had in Jerusalem with Awni Abdul Hadi:

He [Awni] was of opinion that the political difficulties in Palestine largely arose from a misunderstanding on the part of the Arabs of the meaning of the term ‘Jewish National Home.’ Translated into Arabic the phrase really meant that Palestine was to be a Jewish National Fatherland, and the people consequently were convinced that the Arab population would be obliged to go elsewhere.¹⁶² [>97]

Readers are invited to send me further such words or concepts whose translation poses issues of substance.

Curzon further on 26 October 1917:

The same conception seems to underlie several other of the phrases employed in these papers, *e.g.*, when we are told that Palestine is to become ‘a Jewish Palestine,’ and when we read of ‘the resettlement of Palestine as a national centre,’ and ‘the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people.’

Some self-declared pro-Zionists, so Curzon, envisioned “a much less definite form of political existence, one... quite compatible with the existence of an alien [non-Jewish]... Government”. Although he attested the unfeasibility of Palestine’s being either a home or a state for more than a tiny fraction of the world’s 12,000,000 Jews, he had no objection to further Jewish colonisation, even though it came at large expense, and he supported the Jews’ “enjoying equal rights with other sections of the population”; however, “If we contemplate no more, is it wise to use language which suggests so much more?”

Aside from practicalities, according to Curzon there was ethics:

[W]hat is to become of the people of this country...? ... There are over half a million of these, Syrian Arabs – a mixed community with Arab, Hebrew, Canaanite, Greek, Egyptian, and possibly Crusaders’ blood. They and their forefathers have occupied the country for the best part of 1,500 years. They own the soil, which belongs either to individual landowners or to village communities. They profess the Mohammedan faith. They will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants, or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the latter.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ CAB 24/156/4, p 3.

¹⁶² CO 733/13, p 349.

¹⁶³ Still FO 371/8038, pp 110-12; also Gilmour 1994, p 481 and Gilmour 1996, pp 63-66.

Note that the present inhabitants, for Curzon, were not the “existing non-Jewish communities” mentioned by the Balfour Declaration [16], but were called by a name: “Syrian Arabs”.

A few weeks earlier, on 4 October 1917, Curzon to the War Cabinet had similarly “urged strong objections on practical grounds”:

[T]he country was, for the most part, barren and desolate [and therefore] a less propitious seat for the future Jewish race could not be imagined. How was it proposed to get rid of the existing majority of Mussulman inhabitants and to introduce the Jews in their place? ... [R]epatriation on a large scale [was] sentimental idealism, which would never be realised, and [HMG] should have nothing to do with it.¹⁶⁴

According to William Mathew,

[Curzon] also worried that Zionist ambitions were much greater than those conveyed to the government by Weizmann and his friends, the likely objective being ‘an autonomous Jewish state’ in which the Zionists ‘would possess the soil of the greater part of the country.’¹⁶⁵

David Gilmour reports on Curzon’s skirmish with Balfour in January 1919 after the latter had claimed that Weizmann was not asking for a “Jewish Government in Palestine”, much less a Jewish “commonwealth”; Curzon:

Weizmann may say one thing to you, or while you may mean one thing by a national home, he is out for something quite different. He contemplates a Jewish state, a Jewish nation, a subordinate population of Arabs etc. ruled by Jews; the Jews in possession of the fat of the land, and directing the Administration.¹⁶⁶

To be sure, Curzon objected to the Balfour Declaration not only out of fairness to the indigenous people, but also from Britain’s self-interest, because it would cost a lot and make many Arab enemies.¹⁶⁷

On the other hand, at the 31 October War Cabinet meeting which gave its approval to the Balfour Declaration, Curzon stopped short of outright condemnation of British support for the Zionist project, stating that “he did not agree with the attitude taken up by Mr. [Edwin] Montagu” – whose opposition was principled and total – since he, Curzon, “recognised that some expression of sympathy with Jewish aspirations would be a valuable adjunct to our [wartime] propaganda.”¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, he did not fight for the Palestinians: as the most experienced and perhaps most powerful member of the ‘Cavendish’ Cabinet Committee on Palestine, in the summer of 1923 he was unwilling to prevent HMG’s sticking to the admittedly costly and unfair Zionist Mandate. [165; 167]¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ CAB 23/4/19, p 80 (printed page 6); Ingrams 1972, p 12; Tibawi 1977, p 226; Gilmour 1994, p 481.

¹⁶⁵ Mathew 2011, p 33, also citing CAB 24/30/6 (formerly War Cabinet GT2406).

¹⁶⁶ Gilmour 1994, pp 520–21, citing FO 800/215, Curzon to Balfour, 26 January 1919.

¹⁶⁷ Gilmour 1994, pp 495–96.

¹⁶⁸ CAB 23/4/35, p 6.

¹⁶⁹ Also Mathew 2011.

Between autumn 1917 and summer 1923 Curzon continued his criticism without teeth. He sometimes referred to the Balfour Declaration as the 'Zionist Declaration', and on 26 January 1919 wrote:

But vide Dr. Weizmann's telegram to Eder December 17th (below)... above his name appears the following 'stipulation'. 'That the whole administration of Palestine shall be so formed as to make of Palestine a *Jewish Commonwealth* under British Trusteeship'. Now what is a Commonwealth? I turn to my dictionaries and find it thus defined: 'A State'. 'A body politic'. An independent Community'. 'A Republic'. Also read the rest of the telegram. What then is the good of shutting our eyes to the fact that this is what the Zionists are after, and that the British Trusteeship is a mere screen behind which to work for this end? And the case is rendered not the better but the worse if Weizmann says this sort of thing to his friend but sings to a different tune in public.¹⁷⁰ [also >34; >38; >70; >88; >122; >178]

Curzon regularly read the Zionist periodical *Palestine* and throughout 1918-1919 could assure his fellow Eastern Committee members Balfour, Smuts and Lord Cecil, *inter alia*, that

They now talk about a Jewish State. The Arab portion of the population is well-nigh forgotten and is to be ignored. There seems... to be... a feeling by the Arabs that we are really behind the Zionists and not behind the Arabs...¹⁷¹

As minuted on 19 March 1919, Curzon's stand on the proposed phrase "Jewish Commonwealth" was that while it might not be politic to use it, since that was the aim of British Palestine policy, "why not be honest and say Jewish Commonwealth at once? That would be intelligible. But as it is contrary to every principle upon which we have hitherto stood" he could not accept it.¹⁷²

A day later, on 20 March, regarding the Mandate text's incorporation of the Balfour Declaration he would more sarcastically observe:

Here is a country of 580,000 Arabs and 30,000 or is it 60,000 Jews (by no means all Zionists)... Acting upon the noble principles of self-determination and ending with a splendid appeal to the League of Nations, we then proceed to draw up a document which reeks of Judaism in every paragraph and is an avowed constitution for a Jewish state. [T]he poor Arabs are only allowed to look through the keyhole as a non-Jewish community. It is quite clear that this Mandate has been drawn up by some one reeling under the fumes of Zionism. ... I have never been consulted as to this Mandate at an earlier stage, nor do I know from what negotiations it springs or on what undertakings it is based... But here I may say that I agree with Sir J. Tilley and that I think the entire conception wrong.¹⁷³ [also >72]

¹⁷⁰ FO 371/4153, pp 91-94; also pp 70, 81; Ingrams 1972, pp 56-57, citing FO 371/4153; Lesch 1973, p 10; also Mathew 2011, pp 32-37.

¹⁷¹ CAB 27/24, p 191, War Cabinet Eastern Committee, 5 December 1918 (Syria and Palestine, pp 185-93); Ingrams 1972, p 49.

¹⁷² FO 371/5199, p 66. *I have partly guessed and paraphrased because Curzon's handwriting is in places illegible.*

¹⁷³ FO 371/5199, pp 64-65, 20 March 1919, 'Palestine Chapter of Draft Treaty of Peace with Turkey' and 'Last revise of Draft Mandate for Palestine'; Ingrams 1972, pp 96-97; Quigley 1990, p 10.

It would be gullible to accept that he “not been consulted” at all. He was Foreign Secretary from 23 October 1919 until 22 January 1924. It is however possible that Colonial Secretary Milner, co-author of the Balfour Declaration who was succeeded by Churchill only after San Remo, on 13 February 1921, froze him out. This requires further research.

On either 19 or 20 March 1919 Curzon minuted his agreement with a Foreign Office official [name illegible] who suggested:

I notice that the Arab population are spoken of as, or included in, ‘the non-Jewish communities’ which sounds as if there were a few Arab villages in a country full of Jews. I should have thought that it would have been well to say more about the existing population and their rights before beginning about the Jews. I suppose this point of view has been considered and overruled, otherwise I should have expected the Palestine mandate to begin like the Syrian with paragraphs about helping and guiding the country in the development of its administration, being responsible for peace, order, etc., and then as an afterthought to provide for the Zionists.¹⁷⁴ [see >92]

It was Zionism, however, which was the ‘forethought’ for HMG when it came to Palestine. This note from Curzon by the way introduced the obvious possibility, used repeatedly by the Palestinians in their disputes with Britain and the League of Nations, of *comparing* the Palestine Mandate text [>146] with those of Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan and Iraq – as well of course as comparing the actual political development of those Mandates. As for the conveyed impression of “a few Arab villages”, Jeffries would later even more trenchantly than Curzon write that the Balfour Declaration

called the multitude the non-few; it called the 670,000 the non-60,000; out of a hundred it called the 91 the non-9. ... It would be as suitable to define the mass of working men as ‘the non-idling communities in the world’...¹⁷⁵

On the real aim of the British and Jewish Zionists Mark Sykes’ grandson Christopher would later write:

What were the Jews trying to do? Amid many uncertainties here is a simple question with a simple answer. The Zionists wanted a Jewish state. There was no secret about it for anyone who troubled to find out. They had said that a State was their object over and over again. The foundation document of modern Zionism was Theodor Herzl’s book published in 1896, and its title was *Der Judenstaat*, literally “The State of the Jews,” and he made it perfectly clear that by this he meant a State in the ordinary sense. In the age of Nationalism there was nothing else that he could mean.¹⁷⁶

Curzon certainly knew this even without step-by-step “consultation”, and certainly could have done all the homework necessary by the time he was negotiating for HMG in San Remo in April 1920. In any case, that there was deception on the part of the British Zionists, both Jewish and Gentile, in avoiding the word ‘state’ is beyond doubt. It is also beyond doubt that ‘everybody’ at the time knew this.

¹⁷⁴ FO 371/5199, p 63; also Gilmour 1994, pp 522-23.

¹⁷⁵ Jeffries 1939, p 185.

¹⁷⁶ Sykes 1965, pp 22-23.

Further concerning this crucial topic of the elision between ‘home’ and ‘state’, in May 1947 the Jewish Agency – successor to the Zionist Commission [23] and the embodiment of the Jewish Zionist organisations with an official role within the terms of the Mandate’s Article 4 [146] – would tell the First Committee of the UN General Assembly:

The distinction recognized by the Jewish Agency between a Jewish State and a Jewish National Home was that the establishment of the Jewish National Home was a process the consummation of which was the setting up of a Jewish State.¹⁷⁷

As Herbert Samuel had written in 1915, the state would simply take time, because a Jewish majority was a precondition. [8] The Palin Court of Inquiry on 1 July 1920 would likewise present evidence that the ‘national home’ was a euphemism. [88] George Antonius wrote that very soon after the war “it became clear” that “the label of National Home [was] a screen to establish a Jewish state...”.¹⁷⁸ ‘Commonwealth’ would later be the exact term chosen by international Zionists at their conference in 1942 at the Biltmore Hotel in New York [420], thus abandoning the weak ‘Jewish home’ yet stopping short of the final ‘Jewish state’.

All these terms originated, by the way, in the German language. Leading Zionist Max Nordau spoke the truth which informed both Palestinians and the British for the next decades:

[At the 1897 Basel Zionist conference] I did my best to persuade the claimants of the Jewish State in Palestine that we might find a circumlocution that would express all we meant, but would say it in a way so as to avoid provoking the Turkish rulers of the coveted land. I suggested ‘Heimstätte’ as a synonym for ‘State’ ... This is the history of the much commented expression. It was equivocal, but we all understood what it meant. To us it signified ‘Judenstaat’ then and it signifies the same now.¹⁷⁹

Both “Stätte” and “Statt” are weaker than “Staat”, usually meaning merely ‘place’, but stronger than a mere “Heim” (‘home’, *ein Zuhause*), making the German composite “Heimstätte” on balance actually a bit closer to “state” than the official British “circumlocution”, namely “home for the Jewish people”. With the introduction of the word “national” – the “national home for the Jewish people” of the 1917 Balfour Declaration [16] and the “Jewish National Home” of the 1922 Churchill White Paper [142] – the German term “Heimat”, which implies ownership and citizenship, was given a nod, and the concept again moved towards the honesty of the words “state” or “commonwealth”.

Similarly, if one asks what were the “Jewish Zionist aspirations” which, according to the all-important Balfour Declaration, Britain was to have “sympathy with” [16], the answer is: the aspiration for a Jewish state on the entirety of at least the land of what became Mandate Palestine.¹⁸⁰ As we shall see in the next entry, each word of that Declaration was weighed and re-weighed multiple times.

¹⁷⁷ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

¹⁷⁸ Antonius 1938, p 397.

¹⁷⁹ Sykes 1965, p 24.

¹⁸⁰ See also Weizmann 1949, pp 156-57.

This hoary discussion about the terms 'Jewish home', 'Jewish commonwealth' and 'Jewish state', however much it reveals about the nature of the basic conversation between Palestinians and Britain, is ultimately less important than the premise underlying all of them, namely that Jews as a group, defined either religiously or ethnically, have collective political rights in Palestine; i.e. that *it is right that* a group defined by that particular ethnicity and/or religion should come to Palestine possessing more rights and/or power than would be theirs as individuals. This premise would be captured in the White Paper of 1922 [142] by the assertion that "the Jewish people... should know that it is in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance."¹⁸¹ An entire ethnic collective is meant. It is the premise common to all shades of Zionism, then and now, and would be referred to thousands of times in correspondence and discussion between Britain and Palestinians, Britain and Jewish Zionists, and within each group. There is no more important concept in the study of the Zionist Mandate and the century-long conflict over Palestine.

At minimum, I believe the record shows that the term (Jewish national) 'home' should no longer be taken seriously by any scholar of the Mandate. It was simply a deception, as Curzon clearly grasped.

¹⁸¹ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

II. Britain throws the first stone

December 1916 *'In the new British Cabinet, at least five of its members – the Prime Minister; Lord Balfour, Foreign Secretary; Lord Milner, member of the war cabinet; Lord Cecil, Minister of Blockade; and Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for Munitions – were committed Zionists.'*¹⁸²

9 June 1917 *'On 9 June a meeting was held at Caxton Hall under the auspices of the Central Islamic Society [158 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4]... A record of the proceedings... was published in a 23-page pamphlet entitled Muslim Interests in Palestine which was communicated to the Foreign Office. It opens with these words: "As there has been a great deal of talk lately of creating a Jewish state in Palestine under the suzerainty of a Christian power" the Muslim community decided to register a protest and to voice a warning. ... [Ronald] Graham at least directed that the pamphlet be seen by Curzon [and other offices]. At the Foreign Office the pamphlet finally reached Balfour who may or may not have read it for it bears only his initials.'*¹⁸³

1917 *'The three assistant secretaries in the war cabinet were [MPs] Sir Mark Sykes, William Ormsby-Gore, and Leopold S. Amery – all committed Zionists.'*¹⁸⁴

31 October – 11 December 1917 [British forces under Allenby take Gaza, southern Palestine and Jerusalem.]

¹⁸² Alam 2009, p 112.

¹⁸³ Tibawi 1977, pp 213-14; the pamphlet is at FO 371/3053, pp 336-49, 2 August 1917 (former paper 152249).

¹⁸⁴ Alam 2009, p 238, citing Morris 1999, pp 72-73.

16.* Balfour Declaration

2 November 1917

This 14-page entry begins with the Declaration itself and an analysis of its text. It then discusses some of the history of its drafting – a departure from chronological order because its early drafts only make sense when compared with the final wording.

Here is the text of the letter from the War Cabinet, known as **the Balfour Declaration**, signed by hereditary Lord Arthur Balfour, Foreign Secretary and formerly Prime Minister and Secretary for [British colony] Ireland. It was sent on 2 November 1917 to the British Zionist Federation in care of its honorary president Lord Lionel Walter 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. I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

This exact text also appeared in the *Times* on 9 November 1917.¹⁸⁵

Sent through Balfour, the letter was from the War Cabinet rather than either the full Cabinet or the *Imperial War Cabinet*. Its ultimate recipient was to be the "Zionist Federation" (of Great Britain), then newly headed by Chaim Weizmann – not the Board of Deputies of British Jews, half of whose members were anti-Zionist, then headed by Herbert Samuel's brother Stuart.

In autumn 1917 the War Cabinet was made up of Prime Minister Lloyd George, Alfred Milner, George Curzon, Andrew Bonar Law, Jan Smuts, Edward Carson and George Barnes. Foreign Secretary Balfour, not a member, attended its meetings whenever he liked and did so on 31 October 1917 when the dispatch of the letter was approved.¹⁸⁶ From late 1916 on, Lloyd George's full Cabinet consisted of 25 Ministers, Secretaries and Lords, and to my knowledge it had nothing to do with the Balfour Declaration.

There was a small but important difference between the letter as sent, on 2 November, and what the War Cabinet had actually approved, on 31 October, namely:

The War Cabinet authorised:- The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Balfour] to take a suitable opportunity of making the following declaration of sympathy with the Zionist aspirations: – '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

¹⁸⁵ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Balfour_Declaration_in_the_Times_9_November_1917.jpg

¹⁸⁶ Mathew 2011, p 33.

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.¹⁸⁷

I do not know why “*the* Zionist aspirations” was replaced by “*Jewish* Zionist aspirations” sometime during those two days. The importance of the phrase was later reflected in a statement to Churchill by the 1st Palestinian Delegation to London on 24 October 1921, namely that proper British policy should “make provision for reasonable Jewish *religious* aspirations, but precluding any exclusive political advantages to them which must necessarily interfere with Arab rights.”¹⁸⁸ [^{>123}] In any case, there were two types of Jewish “aspirations” – political and religious.

William Rubenstein writes that Leo Amery, on instructions from Milner, wrote the final draft, and that the full War Cabinet “made only two minor amendments to his draft”; this could have been one of them.¹⁸⁹ It is known that multiple drafts of the letter had been poured over for half a year and that each ‘period and comma’ had been carefully weighed. The new wording implied that, lest the word “Jewish” be rendered redundant, there must be unnamed *non-Jewish* Zionist aspirations; perhaps the aspirations of Christian Zionists, of whom there were many. Or, there were other Jewish aspirations, for instance *religious* ones, as formulated for instance in the Palestinian Delegation’s statement quoted just above.¹⁹⁰

So, what were “(Jewish) Zionist aspirations” at that time known to be, aspirations now to be furthered by Great Britain? Whatever was said in public, the main aspiration was and was known to be the establishment of a Jewish state in (at least) all of Palestine, as perceived by George Curzon and admitted in 1945 by Herbert Samuel. [^{see >15 & >429}] Theodor Herzl’s book launching the movement on a large scale was after all entitled *Der Judenstaat*¹⁹¹, and in it Zionism was to enable “escape from minority life”¹⁹². Such an escape tautologically required a majority which would be able to reach the objective. The programs of the World Zionist Congresses, held as of 1917 eleven times since 1897, stated this goal (“aspiration”) more or less openly. As quotations throughout this chronology will show, this view was held in private by many Britons, and eventually publicly as well, for instance on 18 January 1939 by Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, who likewise read the Balfour Declaration as declaring that because the “aspirations” were “*Zionist*” ones, the British were supporting a Palestine in which the Jews were in the majority.¹⁹³ That is, the aspirations with which HMG were declaring sympathy were aspirations for nothing less than a Jewish state for which a precondition was a Jewish majority.

¹⁸⁷ FO 371/3083, pp 119, 121; also CAB 23/4/35, p 6 (stamped page 137); CAB 21/58, p 40.

¹⁸⁸ CO 733/16, pp 508-12.

¹⁸⁹ Rubenstein 1999.

¹⁹⁰ CO 733/16, pp 508-12.

¹⁹¹ Herzl 1896, *passim*.

¹⁹² Peel 1937, I §28.

¹⁹³ CAB 24/282/4, p 36/§14. [^{see >383}]

Samuel in 1915 in his 'The Future of Palestine' had moreover written that the goal was "to realise the aspiration of a Jewish State". [8] In the previous entry, as well, we saw that Curzon knew of the difference between a "national home" and the real aim, even if it would take time and immigration. [15]¹⁹⁴ And Balfour himself, at the decisive 31 October meeting, asserted without contradiction from the others that evidently the whole Cabinet agreed that "some declaration favourable to the aspirations of the Jewish nationalists" should be made.¹⁹⁵ What was any ethno-religious "nationalist" if not one who wanted a nation-state? On the legerdemain involving the terms 'home', 'commonwealth' and 'state' see the Theme Index.

If the favoured and supported "aspirations" were in fact for a state, the Declaration contained two contradictions:

1) Due to the great difference between a "home" ("for the Jewish people") and the aspired-to 'state', supporting only the former precluded supporting the latter; and indeed, official HMG policy as of the 1939 White Paper [410], was expressly that all of Palestine should not become a Jewish state¹⁹⁶, since the "home" which was by then well established was enough. On this reading the Balfour Declaration actually *failed* to support "Zionist aspirations".

2) While a mere "home" was just conceivably consistent with the integrity of what the Declaration termed "the civil... rights of existing non-Jewish communities", although established against their will, the Jewish 'state' the Zionists aspired to would undeniably "prejudice" those rights. For, by most definitions, 'civil' rights included at least political equality, yet any ethnically-defined 'state', implying some degree of political privilege for the named ethnicity, entailed political *inequality*.

Aims, aspirations... these are the stuff of a good century of debate, but I am trying to stay close to the text and the letter's context.

There are five further equivocal terms contained in the text which must be examined, terms with important consequences for the Palestinians and their debate with the British:

1. "national": What is the difference between a "home" and a "national home"? If 'nation' is synonymous with 'country' or 'state', then adding the qualifier "national" moves the "object" Britain wanted to "achieve" closer to a sovereign Jewish state, something far from harmless for the indigenous people.¹⁹⁷ If 'nation' on the other hand is defined merely as an ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic group, the qualifier is superfluous, for it has already been stated that the "home" shall be "Jewish". Whatever "national home" meant – it was a neologism in political science, and has only ever been applied to the Zionist project – it was successful, if not in cloaking the fact that if a nation has a homeland, it has a state, then at least in providing a default position whenever Zionism was taking too much heat for implying the disenfranchisement of the Palestinians. According to James Renton, the phrase (Jewish) "home in Palestine" first ap-

¹⁹⁴ Also Quigley 2011, pp 251-52.

¹⁹⁵ CAB 23/4/35, p 6; Cronin 2017, p 4.

¹⁹⁶ MacDonald 1939, §4.

¹⁹⁷ Also CAB 24/282/4, p 36/§14 [see >383]; Karmi 2017, p xxiv; Andersen 2017, p 105.

peared in the Basel Program of 1897, with Nahum Sokolow adding the term 'national' in the Zionist draft of what became the Balfour Declaration of 18 July 1917 (see just below); this word 'national', together with the phrase 'Zionist aspirations', meant that the most accurate label for this home was that used by Lord Islington in the House of Lords on 21 June 1922: "Zionist Home".¹⁹⁸

2. "in": The "home" would be "in" Palestine, but in how much of it? All of it, or only, say, in and around Tel Aviv? In order to assuage Palestinian opposition arising from this vagueness, Samuel and Churchill in their 1922 White Paper would write that the Declaration did not "contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded *in Palestine*".¹⁹⁹ [^{>142}] But although this was literally merely a statement about what was "contemplated", it did imply that the home would not be congruent with (all of) Palestine.
3. "people": This term shifted the focus towards an ethno-religious collective, away from any given individuals, of any given ethnicity or religion, then living in Palestine; in declaring that the "home" belonged to all of the world's Jewish people, although only about one-half of one percent of them lived in Palestine, it was moreover setting up a tension between the territorial or historical idea of a people – in this case those rooted in the land called Palestine – and the ethno-religious one, i.e. a people as a race.
4. "civil": As mentioned above, a 'civil' right arguably includes full and equal citizenship in the polity in question, but the concept was and is up for grabs. Clear is only that the Declaration's drafters did not – as they did when referring to the "Jews in any other country" – state that the "rights and political status" of the indigenous Palestinians should not be "prejudiced", only that their "civil and religious rights" would be protected – conspicuously absent the concept "political".²⁰⁰
5. "communities": The non-Jews in Palestine were characterised as a "community" rather than a "people", and "community" arguably implies less "political status" than either "nation" or "people".²⁰¹ No "aspirations" of this "community", much less any "national" ones, were mentioned in the Declaration; indeed not even the words 'Palestinian' or 'Arab' make an appearance.²⁰² The national aspirations of the indigenous Palestinians were acknowledged only two decades later, in a memorandum dated 18 January 1939 written by then Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, whose analysis of the Balfour Declaration was the same as the one given here.²⁰³ [^{>383}]

During the Mandate the ambiguities in the language of the Balfour Declaration provided the British with the means to negotiate and 'politically litigate', in their mother tongue, with the colonised Arabs. Towards the end of the Mandate Ernest Bevin, newly in charge of Palestine as Foreign Secretary, complained that the Balfour Declaration should have been "worded more carefully", and that as worded it was like trying "to ride two horses at once", but he did not comment on its past political usefulness.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ Renton 2010, p 21; Hansard 1922b, c998.

¹⁹⁹ Cmd. 1700, p 18.

²⁰⁰ See also Stein 1961, p 661.

²⁰¹ Also Cronin 2017, p 4.

²⁰² Khalidi 2020, p 24.

²⁰³ CAB 24/282/4, p 36.

²⁰⁴ Bethell 1979, p 216, citing Washington National Archives, S25/7566.

The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate text which incorporated it word for word [>146] were and still are repeatedly described as containing “dual obligations” or two equally strong commitments, one to each side.²⁰⁵ But this is false, not least because the Declaration, as just indicated, treats the two sides a-symmetrically, the one a “people” and the other a mere “community”. The text itself privileges the “Jewish Zionist” group over the other group(s):

1. The “Jewish people” get a “national home”, a phrase implying *political* rights, while the “existing non-Jewish communities” get only “civil and religious” rights, not political ones.²⁰⁶
2. The Jewish side is named by its name while the other is defined namelessly and by what it is not – Jewish; the framework is thus Judeo-centric, the present inhabitants situated on the conceptual periphery.
3. The Jewish-Zionist side gets the positive goods of “sympathy”, being “viewed with favour” and “facilitation”, while the unnamed, negatively-defined side gets at best only a negatively-expressed *status quo*: “nothing” shall be done to their “prejudice”.
4. This imbalance is aggravated by the fact that the demographic numbers – Jews’ making up at most 7% of the population – would suggest that any bias would be *a priori* in favour of the majority group; even giving the minority full-blown political and rhetorical parity with the majority would constitute an asymmetry in any imagined ‘dual obligations’.

As Jamal al-Husseini would say on 27 January 1947, during the last-ever talks between Palestine and Britain, the Balfour Declaration was both “vague and one-sided”.²⁰⁷

The Mandate Preamble would incorporate the wording of this Declaration and its Article 6 would include the phrase “ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced” [>146], thus containing some rhetorical nods to a balanced ‘dual obligation’, but the a-symmetry remained because the obligations to the two groups were not the same. The Mandate text also said HMG must positively “facilitate” immigration and “encourage” close settlement, whereas no positive activity for the Arab-indigenous side was mentioned at all, only the negative caveat to “not prejudice” their “rights and position”. The texts of neither the Balfour Declaration nor the British-authored Mandate foresee even parity, much less respect for the majority. Thus, the British cannot be accused of not carrying out what they declared they would do, namely support “Zionist aspirations”. They did not waver from fulfilling the lop-sided Balfour Declaration.

*Below are some observations on the attitudes and thoughts behind the Declaration’s final draft, and also, although strictly speaking beyond this book’s scope, a few words on the genesis of the Declaration.*²⁰⁸

Official material on the Declaration’s history has been scarce. On 14 July 1967 a dispute was finally settled as to whether documentation of the origins, drafting and authorisation of Balfour’s letter to Rothschild was actually held by the Public Records Office in London.

²⁰⁵ E.g. Shaw 1930, pp 98–99; Passfield 1930, §2; Hansard 1930a, cc77, 94, 102–05, 120, 136, 152, 160, 181; Peel 1937, IX §1–41; Ghandour 2010, pp 86–87.

²⁰⁶ See also Friedman 1973, pp 247–58.

²⁰⁷ CO 537/2324, p 3.

²⁰⁸ [see also >15]; Jeffries 1939, Ch. 10.

Mr. A. Harrington on that date assured those researchers looking for such documentation that although some papers “came to light” only in 1940 and others in 1947, there were now no “serious gaps in our archives surrounding this matter”:

[A]s far as the Declaration itself is concerned, the draft, which was prepared in the Foreign Office and initialled by Sir Ronald Graham, and a carbon copy of the letter as sent (showing Mr Balfour as the signatory) safely repose in Volume F.O. 317/3083 [sic.: The correct file number is FO 371/3083], in paper number 210332/143082 – War (Turkey).

A Mr. Child then commented that “some of the papers could be missing” still.²⁰⁹ Historians have therefore turned to many other sources as well.

The basic idea of British support for a Jewish political presence in Palestine was of course contained in Herbert Samuel’s ‘The Future of Palestine’. [8] Some scholars have traced it back to somewhat later in 1915:

The idea had come to [the British] from an unlikely source. In November 1915, long before the United States was involved in the war, the fertile brain of [U.S.-American] Horace Kallen... had come up with the idea of an Allied statement supporting in whatever veiled way was deemed necessary, Jewish national rights in Palestine.²¹⁰

“Jewish national rights” was one way of “veiling” the Zionist “aspirations” to be supported. James Renton offers a further account in which he also relates Curzon’s reservations on the wording of British policy [e.g. >15; >72] and the various drafts in the months before 2 November.²¹¹

Another source puts the date 1916 on an agreement between the War Cabinet and Zionists to promise the latter a “national home”.²¹² And according to Chaim Weizmann, a few days after 13 June 1917 he, Lord Rothschild and Ronald Graham went to Balfour requesting “a definite declaration of support and encouragement”, whereupon Balfour “promised to do so, and asked me to submit to him a declaration which would be satisfactory to us, and which he would try and put before the War Cabinet.”²¹³ A.L. Tibawi’s rendering of this encounter is that Balfour asked “Lord Rothschild and Professor Weizmann” – two British citizens who were neither elected politicians nor members of the civil service – to “submit a formula”.²¹⁴

One formula ‘in the air’ found its way into a draft written by *Manchester Guardian* journalist Harry Sacher dated 22 June, which the final 67-word version of 2 November would actually tone down; it had read:

²⁰⁹ British National Archives, FCO 12/41, ‘Whereabouts of the Balfour Declaration, CONFIDENTIAL.

²¹⁰ Grose 1983, p 39; also Weir 2014, p 18.

²¹¹ Renton 2010, pp 17-24.

²¹² Nakhleh 1991, p 2, quoting Samuel Landman (1936), *Great Britain, the Jews and Palestine*. New Zionist Press, London, p 4.

²¹³ Weizmann 1949, pp 255-56.

²¹⁴ Tibawi 1977, p 212.

The British Government declares that one of its essential war aims is the reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish State and as the national Home of the Jewish People.²¹⁵

Another draft, similar to this one in employing the maximal concept of a “reconstitution” of (all of) Palestine, had also been proposed by the letter’s eventual recipient, Walter Rothschild.²¹⁶

Replying explicitly to Balfour’s request for a “formula”, one formula dated 18 July and regarded as the version officially desired by the Zionist Organization in London was sent along to the Foreign Office by Rothschild:

His Majesty’s Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people. His Majesty’s Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organisation.²¹⁷

Curiously, Weizmann omits from his own citation of this draft any reference to the “reconstitution” of Palestine, quoting only HMG’s hoped-for “recognition” of Palestine as “the National Home of the Jewish people” and its intention to

grant... internal autonomy to the Jewish nationality in Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish National Colonizing Corporation for the re-establishment and economic development of the country. The conditions and forms of the internal autonomy and a Charter for the Jewish National Colonizing Corporation should... be elaborated in detail and determined with the representatives of the Zionist Organization.²¹⁸

The evocative “re-establishment... of the country”, to be sure, can be read as synonymous with Palestine’s “reconstitution”; in any case, the native Palestinians were to be frozen out of any “determinations”.

Balfour answered this submission by Rothschild in “August 1917”:

In reply to your letter of July 18th, I am glad to be in a position to inform you that His Majesty’s Government accept the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people. His Majesty’s Government will use their best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them.²¹⁹

Here according to Balfour, *Palestine* as a unit was to be “reconstituted” – but I have no knowledge of a Cabinet (HMG) conclusion officially “accepting” that principle.

Also in August came Milner’s watered-down version omitting the term ‘reconstitute’:

²¹⁵ PIWP, current.

²¹⁶ UNSUPR 1988, ‘*Balfour Declaration*’.

²¹⁷ CAB 24/24/3 G.T. 1803, ‘Letter’, Rothschild to Balfour, 18 July 1917; Regan 2017, pp 56-57, citing Smith 1996, pp 102-03.

²¹⁸ Weizmann 1949, p 256.

²¹⁹ CAB 24/24/3 G.T. 1803; also CAB 21/58, pp 223, 225, 49; Jeffries 1939, pp 171-72; Ingrams 1972, p 9; Friedman 1973, pp 247-58, 262-79; Smith 1996, p 53; Quigley 2022, pp 17, 64-67, 112-16, 150.

His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them.²²⁰

A bit later, on 4 October, Milner's version would be "His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish Race..."²²¹ This was identical to the final formulation except that the word "Race" would be replaced by "people".

In the end (on 31 October and 2 November 1917) the Balfour letter said nothing of reconstituting anything, but the idea of "reconstituting" Palestine would resurface during the drafting of the Preamble to the Mandate [>146] when the idea was still politically incorrect but the term "reconstitute" was still beloved. How to reconstitute Palestine without overly inflaming the natives? According to Curzon, Balfour came to the rescue, proposing the wording that was in fact adopted in the Preamble:

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country;...

Voilà. It was no longer Palestine, but rather the Jews' national home, that would be 'reconstituted'. [also >78; >94; >146] Ontological difficulties surrounding the idea of the spread-out Jewish people's constituting a "home" notwithstanding, the rhetorically useful term "reconstitution" was thus planted, with later generations not paying all that much attention to whether it was Palestine or the Jewish national home that was to be newly put together and built up.

Whatever the exact formulation, according to J.C. Hurewitz during the summer of 1917 HMG regarded as "essential for the realisation of this principle [the establishment of the ambiguous 'home'] the grant of internal autonomy to the Jewish nationality in Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish National Colonising Corporation..."²²² Hurewitz's description of what was desired was in fact accepted for the Mandate text which was to flesh out the Balfour text – and not unimportantly included *yishuv* autonomy in many areas of public life such as schooling, a military, courts and a single recognised legislature – but with the drafters' stopping short of the "reconstitution" of Palestine. That concept, desired by Weizmann, Sokolov, Stuart Samuel and most other Zionists²²³, would mean switching sovereignty from one group to another and thus would have publicly and ineluctably admitted that Britain's policy was the establishment of a Jewish *state* with destructive consequences for 90% of the present inhabitants. Ac-

²²⁰ CAB 24/24/4 G.T. 1803.A, 'Alternative, by Milner', August 1917.

²²¹ CAB 23/4/19, p 80 (printed page 6).

²²² Hurewitz 1976, p 26.

²²³ CO 733/248/19, p 13.

According to David Gilmour, in deleting the words “reconstituted as”, the War Cabinet was deferring to Curzon’s minority anti-Zionist position, yet while “Curzon won the argument... Balfour won the battle.”²²⁴

In the event, even if the Declaration was not perfect from the Zionist point of view, on 31 October Mark Sykes, Secretary to the War Cabinet, emerged from the meeting which agreed on the final draft of the Balfour Declaration to tell the waiting Chaim Weizmann, “It’s a boy!”²²⁵ According to Sahar Huneidi Leo Amery and William Ormsby-Gore, two later Colonial Secretaries, were the main authors of the final draft²²⁶, although, as we have seen, within the War Cabinet Milner put his name on it. William Rubenstein gives Amery the credit, and Amery himself would claim authorship in late January 1946 when testifying before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.²²⁷ [>438]

Edward Said’s comment on this battle over wording comes from his practice of looking at the ‘question of Palestine... from the standpoint of its victims’:

The country’s ‘re-constitution’ and ‘rebuilding’ unmistakably implies... that its present constitution – including hundreds of thousands of Arabs – was to be dissolved... *in order that in its place* was to appear a new Jewish state. The style of these declarations of intent is to leave out any unambiguous reference to the doubtless inconvenient fact that the country was already constituted...²²⁸

Thirty years later, speaking before the United Nations, David Ben-Gurion in May 1947 would obfuscate by using a slightly different word, referring to “the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people”.²²⁹ When, moreover, Ben-Gurion was grilled by Indian UN Delegate Abdur Rahman about the crucial difference between “Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people” and a “National Home in Palestine”, Ben-Gurion equivocated.²³⁰ The phrase ‘national home’ would spawn entire libraries full of commentary.

The debate over the Declaration’s terms was both heated and international. On 23 August 1917 the Cabinet member most strongly opposed to any declaration of sympathy for Zionism, Edwin Montagu, a Jew, had written to the Cabinet:

[T]he Government proposes to endorse the formation of a new nation with a new home in Palestine. ... But... it seems to be inconceivable that Zionism should be officially recognised by the British Government, and that Mr. Balfour should be authorised to say that Palestine should be reconstituted as the ‘national home for the Jewish people.’ I do not know what this involves, but I assume that it means that Mahommedans and Christians are to make way for the Jews... [However,] I assert that there is not a Jewish nation. ... I would willingly disfranchise every [British] Zionist. I would be almost tempted to proscribe the Zionist organisation as illegal and against the national interest. ... I deny that Palestine is to-day associated with

²²⁴ Gilmour 1994, p 482.

²²⁵ Meinertzhagen 1959, p 139; Rogan 2015, p 349.

²²⁶ Huneidi 1998, p 33.

²²⁷ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 30, *citing* Crossman, Richard, 1947. *Palestine Mission*, p 59.

²²⁸ Said 1979, p 13; also Tibawi 1977, p 219.

²²⁹ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, 5. e. §19.

²³⁰ UNSCOP 1947b, *use* Search function.

the Jews or properly to be regarded as a fit place for them to live in. ... I would say to Lord Rothschild that the Government will be prepared to do everything in their power to obtain for Jews in Palestine complete liberty of settlement and life on an equality with the inhabitants of that country who profess other religious beliefs. I would ask that the Government should go no further.²³¹

Montagu was to be sure always arguing from the likely bad effects on *Jews*, not on indigenous Palestinians, of Britain's pursuit of Zionist aspirations.

At the War Cabinet meeting of 4 October Montagu again brought his objections,²³² and on 9 October he followed this up with another memo in which he called Weizmann "near to being a religious fanatic", gave the names of 47 prominent anti-Zionist English Jews, and favourably quoted leading Italian Jew Luigi Luzzatti who wrote, "In Palestine, delivered from the Turks, Jews will live, not as sovereigns but as free citizens, to fertilise their fathers' land. Judaism is not a Nationality but a Religion."²³³ In 1919 300 U.S.-American Jewish opponents of political Zionism wrote President Wilson urging not a Jewish, but rather a "democratic" state of Palestine, because

A Jewish State involves fundamental limitations as to race and religion, else the term 'Jewish' means nothing.²³⁴

Then on 4 March 1919 this petition's author wrote to Wilson pleading for his support for the idea at the Paris conference "that the principle of self-determination of peoples should be applied to Palestine precisely as to other countries."²³⁵

At any rate, since the text would declare "the Jewish people", anywhere in the world, as the beneficiaries of the pro-Zionist policy, the consequence lay very near of their moving in large numbers to Palestine. Winston Churchill, brought into Lloyd George's Cabinet earlier in 1917 and named Colonial Secretary, in charge of Palestine, from 13 February 1921 through 19 October 1922, would years later comment on how these issues had been understood in 1917. In the House of Commons on 22 May 1939 he said, in justification of "freedom of immigration for Jews":

To whom was the pledge of the Balfour Declaration made? It was not made to the Jews of Palestine, it was not made to those who were actually living in Palestine. It was made to world Jewry and in particular to the Zionist associations. ... They were the people outside, not the people in. It is not with the Jews in Palestine that we have now or at any future time to deal, but with world Jewry, with Jews all over the world. That is the pledge which was given,...²³⁶ [>41]

²³¹ CAB 24/24/71, pp 256-57, 'Zionism' [4 pages by Montagu]; Tibawi 1977, p 221.

²³² CAB 23/4/19, p 80 (printed page 6).

²³³ CAB 24/28/63, pp 353-54; Tibawi 1977, p 229.

²³⁴ Nakhleh 1991, pp 2, 1023-29, quoting Morris Jastrow (1919), *Zionism and the Future of Palestine*, Macmillan, New York, pp 151-52.

²³⁵ Nakhleh 1991, p 1026.

²³⁶ Hansard 1939a, cc2171-72.

Churchill here incidentally came within a hair's breadth of conflating "world Jewry" with "Zionist associations".

Similarly Lloyd George, Prime Minister in 1917, testified in 1937 before the Peel Commission:

The idea was, and this was the interpretation put upon it at the time, that a Jewish State was not to be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a national home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth.²³⁷

The aimed-at "definite" numerical majority was the precondition, and Lloyd George threw in the word "Commonwealth", which was more than a 'home' yet less than a 'state'. He was to be sure recalling things correctly, for in expressing the consensus view of the War Cabinet at its meeting of 31 October 1917 Balfour had declared unchallenged:

As to the meaning of the words 'national home,' to which the Zionists attach so much importance, he [Balfour speaking of himself] understood it to mean some form of British, American, or other protectorate, under which full facilities would be given to the Jews to work out their own salvation and to build up, by means of education, agriculture, and industry, a real centre of national culture and focus of national life. It did not necessarily involve the early establishment of an independent Jewish State, which was a matter for gradual development in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution.²³⁸

A "State" after all, just not an "early" one, given the demographics. That Balfour was a genius is proven by his capturing forced immigration and demographic revolution within the concept of "ordinary... political evolution".

Further supporting Lloyd George's recollection of what "the idea was", of what was "the interpretation put upon it at the time", namely that a Jewish-majority 'state' or 'commonwealth' was intended, are many other British documents, just one example being a 36-page 'Intelligence Report' dated 10 January 1918 that delved into the various meanings of "self-determination" for Europeans, Orientals, Christians, and Moslems: it reads as if it were apparent to all concerned that "Mr Balfour's letter to Lord Rothschild foreshadowed the first positive alienation of Moslem soil to non-Moslems by the [an] act of the Allies"²³⁹. Helped on by the deceptive language of a national 'home', Palestinian soil, through immigration and land purchase and political encouragement by the British, would be "alienated".

It should go without saying that one aspiration of the Jewish Zionists, moreover one not needing to be hidden from the public, was immigration – as free, numerous and rapid as possible. Commenting on Milner's draft of 4 October 1917 (see just above), the reput-

²³⁷ Peel 1937, II §20; Maugham 1939 (Cmd. 5964), Annex D §15.

²³⁸ CAB 23/4/35, p 5; Cronin 2017, p 8; Tibawi 1977, pp 281, 232-33.

²³⁹ CAB 24/39/24, p 118.

edly anti-Zionist President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, Claude Goldsmid Montefiore, made a comment covering the two themes of Jewish immigration into their “home” and the goal of a sovereign state once there was a Jewish majority. He said:

We are in favour of local autonomy where ever the conditions allow it. Whoever the suzerain Power of Palestine may be, we are in favour of the Jews, when their numbers permit it, ultimately obtaining the power which any large majority may justly claim.²⁴⁰ [also >143; >327]

The seeds of the state were in the wording, since a “majority” with “power” logically forms a state.

But the devil was in the timing: if, as Montefiore opined, “any” large majority “justly” claims political “power”, then on this general and valid democratic principle, in the year 1917, the overwhelming anti-Zionist, non-Jewish Palestinian majority in Palestine had exactly that “just claim” – to form a state from the Moslems, Christians and Jews living there.

Throughout the Mandate most people were aware of this contradiction between being in favour of democracy on Sundays, but blocking it during the week as long as the demographics showed the ‘wrong’ majority. British Zionist Richard Meinertzhagen²⁴¹, for instance, one of the highest-placed members of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office from 1921 through 1926, wrote in his diary on 27 October 1932:

Iraq has recently become a member of the League of Nations. There has been a suggestion that Palestine should receive autonomous government on the same lines as has been granted to Iraq. Such a course is impossible until the Jews get control.²⁴²

It is worth noting that the British throughout the Mandate also put this attitude into practice, namely by repeatedly blocking any Legislative Council with an indigenous majority.²⁴³ Self-determination would be approved only if the ‘self’ had a Jewish majority.

The content of the Balfour Declaration contained most of the main points of contention between the British and the Palestinians throughout the Mandate. But the fall of 1917 also saw a good illustration of the lack of dialogue between the British and their Palestinian subjects. When the War Cabinet on 4 October was officially submitting its penultimate draft to selected people for comments, it decided to “confidentially” submit the draft of Lord Milner (see just above) “to President Wilson, Leaders of the Zionist Movement [and] Representative persons in Anglo-Jewry opposed to Zionism”, but not to any Palestinians or Arabs, not to any actual residents of the places whose future they were deciding.²⁴⁴ Carrying out this War Cabinet decision to get feedback, its Secretary, Maurice P.A. Hankey, on 17 October wrote:

In accordance with the instruction given in War Cabinet 245, Minute 18, the draft declaration on Zionism was submitted to nine – or, including Mr. E.S. Montagu, ten – represen-

²⁴⁰ CAB 24/4/14, p 44; quoted in Ingrams 1972, pp 15-16 without citation.

²⁴¹ See also e.g. >58; >61; >65; >74; >116; >165; >204; >429.

²⁴² Meinertzhagen 1959, p 147.

²⁴³ See >133-137; >142; >150; >161; >193; >196; >258; >279; >289; >290.

²⁴⁴ CAB 23/4/19, p 80 (printed page 6).

tative Jewish leaders. ... The six favourable to a Zionist form of declaration are:- 1. The Rt. Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P. 2. The Chief Rabbi. 3. Lord Rothschild. 4. Sir Stuart Samuel, Bart., Chairman of the Jewish Board of Deputies. 5. Dr. Weizmann. 6. Mr. Nahum Sokolow. The three unfavourable are:- 7. Sir Philip Magnus, M.P. 8. C.G. Montefiore, Esq., President, Anglo-Jewish Association. 9. L.L. Cohen, Esq., Jewish Board of Guardians.²⁴⁵

Six of these were pro-Zionism, three against if one includes Montefiore. Accompanying these referee's comments were the views of the British Jewish press and of Zionist U.S.-American Jews, gathered in a long memorandum.²⁴⁶ Again: there was no input from the region or the indigenous side at all; they had been *a priori* 'erased'. The Balfour Declaration was a letter written by its recipients.²⁴⁷

A week or so later, on 26 October, War Cabinet member Curzon staked out a meaning of "home" as far as possible away from "state", saying that the maximum to be agreed to was to:

1. Set up some form of European administration (it cannot be Jewish administration) in Palestine.
2. Devise a machinery for safeguarding and securing order both in the Christian and in the Jewish Holy Places.
3. Similarly guarantee the integrity of the Mosque of Omar and vest it in some Moslem body.
4. Secure to the Jews (but not to the Jews alone) equal civil and religious rights with the other elements in the population.
5. Arrange as far as possible for land purchase and settlement of returning Jews.²⁴⁸

Evidently already current were the later, hot and constant themes of the *de facto* Jewish-Zionist role in the Administration, the different categories of "rights" to be granted, land sales, "close" land settlement and perhaps even – what to be sure only the anti-Zionists doubted – whether the European Jews were "returning" to Palestine.

After the War Cabinet's letter was mailed, the British attempted to keep it a secret from Arabs, and the text was suppressed in Palestine, perhaps by direct order of General Allenby²⁴⁹, until 28 April or 1 May 1920, when Louis Bols, then Chief Administrator of the Military Administration in Palestine, read it out publicly in Nablus²⁵⁰. [>77; >84] Keeping it secret was of course impossible, though, not least because jubilant Zionist groups announced it to the world in the weeks just after its publication [*see* >17] and also because of the announcement in the *Times* on 9 November. In any case a group of Syrian and other Arab leaders in Cairo grasped its significance and protested immediately to the High Commissioner in Egypt.²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ CAB 21/58, p 45.

²⁴⁶ CAB 24/4/14, pp 41-49.

²⁴⁷ See also Hansard 1936, c754.

²⁴⁸ CAB 24/159/6, §15.

²⁴⁹ Jeffries 1939, pp 227-28.

²⁵⁰ FO 371/5118, pp 186-87; Huneidi 2001, p 28.

²⁵¹ Jeffries 1939, p 223; Tibawi 1977, pp 238, 245.

There have been hundreds of further retrospective views on the meaning of the terms in the Declaration.²⁵² One of them was expressed on 25 February 1947 in the House of Commons by Benn Levy while arguing for the two-state solution ('partition') and free Jewish immigration into Palestine, against the then-Government's plans to send their Palestine problem to the United Nations:

The Foreign Secretary [Ernest Bevin] admitted that he had some difficulty in understanding precisely what was meant by 'a Jewish National Home.' I sympathise. It is a nebulous phrase. But whatever it may mean, one thing is certain and that is that one cannot call a man's home his home if he is prevented from entering it at the point of a gun.²⁵³

The "man" whose home Levy thought was Palestine was one of the tens of thousands of displaced Jewish Europeans whom the British were then preventing from entering Palestine, or from entering Britain, for that matter. He was saying that whatever else a "national home" might be, it had always included an influx of Zionist settlers.

Finally, there was startling irony in the fact that while US President Woodrow Wilson, on 8 January 1918, promised the Arab Ottoman people in Point 12 of his famous Fourteen Points (the only one relevant to Palestine) "an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development"²⁵⁴ [>20], the rhetoric and thrust of the wording of the Balfour Declaration had two months earlier applied this idea not to *the Palestinians* already living in Palestine but to the "Jewish people", i.e. to *world Jewry*.²⁵⁵ John Quigley describes this logic, which severs ownership from territory, thus:

Balfour said that Zionism's critics invoked self-determination to argue that Palestine should belong to the majority of its existing population. He conceded that 'there is a technical ingenuity in that plea' but argued that 'the case of Jewry in all countries is absolutely exceptional... The deep, underlying principle of self-determination really points to a Zionist policy, however little in its strict technical interpretation it may seem to favour it.'²⁵⁶ [>122]

The logic of the Balfour Declaration postulates the 'self' that can rightfully determine itself *in Palestine* to be a group outside of Palestine – a re-definition of the term 'self-determination'.

21 November 1917 'Fauzi al-Bakri..., Rafiq al-Azem..., Sulaiman Nasif..., and Faris Nimr... called on the [British] Arab Bureau [in Cairo] with a text of a telegram addressed to Balfour. ... They objected to the suggestion of detaching Palestine from Syria, repeated the previous Arab offer of equality for the Jews, and repudiated "the Balfour-Rothschild" declaration as giving preferential treatment to the Jews. ... [T]here is no evidence that the telegram was ever forwarded to London.'²⁵⁷

²⁵² See for starters Jeffries 1939, pp 163-210; Zuaytir 1958, pp 37-40; Khalidi 1987, pp 173-88.

²⁵³ Hansard 1947, cc1954-55.

²⁵⁴ Wilson 1918.

²⁵⁵ Friedman 1973, p 175; Smith 1996, p 52.

²⁵⁶ Quigley 1990, pp 10-11; Kattan 2009, p 250.

²⁵⁷ Tibawi 1977, pp 238, 245; Jeffries 1939, p 223.

November 1917 Arabs are consternated when the Azvissta paper in Russia reveals the contents of the Sykes-Picot Agreement; the British and French are quick in reassuring their commitments to the Arabs.

17. Zionist celebration in London

2 December 1917

Visible to anybody, on 2 December 1917 leading British Zionists celebrated the British Declaration of 2 November 1917 in London's Royal Opera House – attended by future High Commissioner of Palestine Herbert Samuel as well as Walter Rothschild, Chaim Weizmann, Lord Robert Cecil, Nahum Sokolow, Lord Lamington, Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz, and William Ormsby-Gore MP – and closed with singing 'Hatikva'.²⁵⁸ Short excerpts from three of the speeches held there are given in this entry for the purpose of showing that any interested party privy to what was said would know that the Zionist consensus was to turn Palestine into a Jewish state. With hindsight this is perfectly clear, but it is important to refute the in any case implausible ideas that either a) the Zionists intended only some sort of ethnic, religious or cultural home within an Arab Palestine or b) that the true intention was somehow able to be concealed from the affected Palestinians.

Dr. Moses Gaster, a leading Zionist in Britain and a Vice-President of the 1897 Basel Congress,²⁵⁹ explained:

What Zionism stands for must be clearly apprehended, and also what the declaration of the British Government is expected to embody. ... What we wish to obtain in Palestine is not merely a right to establish colonies or educational or cultural or industrial institutions. We want to establish in Palestine an autonomous Jewish Commonwealth in the fullest sense of the word. We want Palestine to be Palestine of the Jews and not merely a Palestine for the Jews. We want the land to be a land of Israel. The ground must be ours.²⁶⁰

A Palestine “of the Jews”, who owned its “ground” – concepts essential to the very term ‘Israel’.

Lord Cecil, Balfour's deputy at the Foreign Office, stood up to laud Zionism as “the greatest step” in the direction of the self-determination of “all peoples”,²⁶¹ and the speech by Ormsby-Gore included the following:

The Jewish claim to Palestine is to my mind overwhelming. ... From the moment I met their Zionist leaders, whether in Egypt or in this country, I felt that there was in them something so sincere, so British, so straightforward, that at once my heart went out to them. ... I have done what little I can to help forward the movement, and in the future, if you are looking out for a friend, count me as one of them.²⁶²

The Jewish Zionist leaders were “so “British”, while the Arabs were apparently not “British”. The “little” he had done was to help draft the Balfour Declaration as one of the Secretaries to the War Cabinet, and “in the future” the celebrating Zionists would indeed

²⁵⁸ Jerusalem Post, 2017, 9 November, by Neville Teller. <https://www.jpost.com/blogs/a-mid-east-journal/the-balfour-declaration-why-lord-rothschild-505748>

²⁵⁹ <https://www.jta.org/1931/09/18/archive/dr-moses-gaster-75>

²⁶⁰ Jeffries 1939, pp 214-15.

²⁶¹ Tibawi 1977, p 248.

²⁶² Jeffries 1939, p 215.

be able to count on him: in 1918-19 he would officially accompany the Zionist Commission to Palestine [23]; he would be Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1924 until 1929; and as Colonial Secretary from 28 May 1936-16 May 1938, that is, during the period of the Palestinian Rebellion and the rise and fall of the Peel Commission's partition plan [336], he would protect the national-home project. This man's belief was that "Palestine is largely inhabited by unreasonable people. It will always be so, and strong Government by a strong external Power is essential."²⁶³ Taxing the entirety of the indigenous residents as "unreasonable" is racist. See also Herbert Samuel's words at the second anniversary celebration of the Balfour Declaration, in 1919, at the same London venue. [105]

²⁶³ CO 733/42, p 318, 1 March 1923; Wasserstein 1978, p 109.

18. General Allenby's Proclamation December 1917/January 1918

According to Michel Fred Abcarius, in contrast to British appeals to Arab soldiers and the local population in general [>14], the Turks made a straightforward offer of Arab independence to the Sherif's son Faisal if they would ditch their alliance with the British; the Sherif declined the offer but, in light of the newly-revealed Sykes-Picot and Balfour documents [>12; >16], demanded explanations from the British.²⁶⁴ According to A.L. Tibawi a Foreign Office "directive" was issued by Mark Sykes and sent to General Gilbert Clayton in Cairo on 1 December telling him to say to Sherif Hussein and Emir Faisal that

the Turks (and Germans), if not the British, would have backed Zionism... [and then] offer Arab autonomy and then smash them by use of moral force of traditional Turk dominion and usual promotion of dissension.²⁶⁵

At any rate growing Arab awareness of Britain's and France's colonialist intentions brought forth a flurry of reassuring British statements, not only **this entry's Proclamation by General Allenby** of December 1917, but throughout 1918 – by David George Hogarth [>21], J.R. Bassett [>22], Henry McMahon together with Hogarth and Reginald Wingate [>20] and by the British and French Governments in the unequivocally independence-pledging Anglo-French Declaration [>28].

In the lead-up to Allenby's Proclamation the head of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, Clayton, "as early as 28 November 1917, in a telegram to the Foreign Office... spoke of Arab 'dismay' at the Balfour Declaration."²⁶⁶ The Palestinians' knowledge of what was planned for them required, in the eyes of the British, a counter-statement in the form of a 'Proclamation to the people of Jerusalem' by Allenby, in Arabic, which according to eyewitness Izzat Tannous was distributed in every Palestinian village surrounding Jerusalem²⁶⁷ and which stated:

The object of war in the East on the part of Great Britain was the complete and final liberation of all peoples formerly oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national Governments and administrations in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of those peoples themselves: ... Great Britain agrees to encourage and assist the formation of native Governments and their recognition when formed.²⁶⁸

One Arabist historian who served in the Near East during World War II wrote that "General Allenby's proclamation, published in Jerusalem towards the end of 1917, contained no

²⁶⁴ Abcarius 1946, pp 41-42, 50-53, 59; also UNSCOP 1947, Ch II §159, 168; UNGA 1947n (= Khan 1947), §4 (pp 646-47).

²⁶⁵ Tibawi 1977, p 242.

²⁶⁶ Wasserstein 1978, p 23; also FO 141/803/3.

²⁶⁷ Tannous 1988, p 90.

²⁶⁸ Hansard 1922b, c1005, quoted by Lord Islington.

reference to the Jewish National Home” and indeed “during the whole of 1918 and 1919 the [Balfour] Declaration was never officially published, never even officially referred or alluded to, in any public function [in Palestine].”²⁶⁹

For the existence of this Proclamation, concerning which more research is needed, I am accepting the word of those cited in this entry. I have not seen the original text of any Allenby Proclamation, in English or Arabic, and the Foreign Office in 1939, when accepting George Antonius’s argument that the Hogarth Message [^{>21}] and the Declaration to the Seven [^{>25}] constituted straightforward promises of independence, claimed that no such document had ever been found in HMG’s archives or in any book.²⁷⁰ That Allenby was authorised to issue proclamations informing inhabitants of war areas of British policy is certain.²⁷¹ But clearly this announcement of late 1917 is not identical with the Anglo-French Declaration of 7/8 November 1918, perhaps initiated by Allenby and sometimes called ‘Lord Allenby’s Proclamation’.²⁷² [*see >28*]

Also referring to the Anglo-French Declaration, rather than to one by Allenby alone, was for instance Andrew MacLaren who on 22 May 1939 told the Commons:

The late Sir William Joynson-Hicks, as he then was, put a question in the House [apparently in 1921 or 1922] to the present Lord Halifax, who was then Mr. Edward Wood, asking: If he would state the terms of what was then called Lord Allenby’s proclamation in Palestine in 1918? All hon. Members will remember that famous proclamation, because it was broadcast throughout the length and breadth of Palestine, and it made no reference whatever to the proposal to establish a National Home in Palestine. There was not a word about that in the proclamation. Although the proclamation was published a year after the Balfour Declaration, there is not a word in it about the [Balfour] Declaration. But the Minister replying in this House said in effect, ‘Although there is nothing in this proclamation about the Balfour Declaration, you must not take it that we do not mean to get on with the Declaration.’ There, again, is evidence of deceit.²⁷³

(Halifax had been Under-Secretary for the Colonies, under Churchill, in 1921-22, and was Foreign Secretary when Malcolm MacDonald was Colonial Secretary, when the two crafted the 1939 White Paper [^{>383ff}].)

Was this Proclamation by Allenby of late 1917/early 1918, though, atonement for his behaviour when entering victoriously into Jerusalem on 11 December 1917? After all, according to Rashid Khalidi:

²⁶⁹ Barbour 1946, p 62; also Tannous 1988, p 90.

²⁷⁰ FO 371/23224, p 325.

²⁷¹ E.g. CAB 24/23/20.

²⁷² E.g. CO 733/54, p 8.

²⁷³ Hansard 1939, cc2021-22.

During General Allenby's ceremonial entry into Jerusalem in December 1917, which was attended by a host of French and Italian military and political representatives and contingents of their armed forces, the British had purposely excluded Arab forces, Arab military flags, and representatives of the Arab army.²⁷⁴

That "Arab army" had however fought significantly against the Ottomans, and if such actions contradicted words, perhaps more words were necessary? Eyewitness Wasif Jawhariyyeh claimed that these additional words were spoken on 18 December and included Allenby's saying that "only now have the crusades ended", whereupon "some of the Muslim leaders protested [and] withdrew from the celebration".²⁷⁵

At its meetings on 3 and 4 January 1918 the War Cabinet was struggling behind closed doors to decide for which conquered territories Britain should urge self-determination. On 3 January it had debated whether to include in British "war aims" self-determination for "races", "captured German colonies", Mesopotamia, India, Egypt, Cyprus and Palestine.²⁷⁶ Walter Long, Secretary of State for the Colonies, "uttered a caveat against laying too much stress on the principle of self-determination" because "some of the Crown Colonies would certainly be affected".²⁷⁷ Prime Minister Lloyd George, on the other hand, although an adamant supporter of British pro-Zionist policy, urged that

the principle of self-determination... might be applied in the case of Mesopotamia - which was occupied [lived in] by Arabs and not by Turks - and in the case of Palestine, which had a very mixed population. Our attitude should be that we were not going to hand these territories back to the Germans or Turks unless their inhabitants expressed a preference for German or Turkish rule.²⁷⁸

Yet Palestine should be "handed" over to the British, although its inhabitants did not "express a preference" for that, but rather for independence.

A day later it decided that self-determination was definitely to apply to former German, Austro-Hungarian and Italian possessions in Europe:

3. With reference to War Cabinet 313, Minute 3²⁷⁹, it was agreed [within the War Cabinet] that the passage dealing with the principle of self-determination of races should be modified so as to apply, not to all races indiscriminately, but merely to the settlement of the New Europe.²⁸⁰

It was also decided that Britain would push for self-determination to be applied to former German colonies in Africa, and for places "outside Europe", and the War Cabinet agreed with Prime Minister Lloyd George that

²⁷⁴ Khalidi 1997, p 171.

²⁷⁵ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 104.

²⁷⁶ CAB 23/5/4, p 11 & /5, p 12.

²⁷⁷ CAB 23/4/5, p 12.

²⁷⁸ CAB 23/4/4, p 11.

²⁷⁹ CAB 23/5/5, 3 January 1918, p 12.

²⁸⁰ CAB 23/5/6, 4 January 1918, p 14; Regan 2017, pp 66-67.

While we do not challenge the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turkish race with its capital at Constantinople..., Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine are in our judgment entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions.²⁸¹

The only conclusion I can draw from the assertions that Palestine “had a very mixed population” or that self-determination should not apply “to all races indiscriminately” is that there was at best unclarity and at worst some intended deception on the part of HMG as to where and for whom to support self-determination.

²⁸¹ CAB 23/5/6, p 17.

In passing, note that one British action, known as the ‘language controversy’, was described by an eyewitness, Military Governor of Jerusalem Ronald Storrs:

The Military Administration notably contravened the Status Quo [Law and Usages of War and the *Manual of Military Law*], in the matter of Zionism. ... Under the *Status quo* we were entitled (and instructed) to impress upon those desiring immediate reforms that we were here merely as a Military Government and not as Civil Reorganizers. Our logical procedure would therefore have been to administer the territory as if it had been Egypt or any other country with important minorities; making English the official language, and providing Arabic translations and interpreters, and treating the resident Jews, Europeans, Armenians and others as they would have been treated elsewhere. [However] General Allenby’s very first proclamation and all that issued from me were in Hebrew, as well as in English and Arabic. Departmental and public notices were in Hebrew and, as soon as possible, official and municipal receipts also.²⁸²

When the Jaffa Municipal Council decided by a vote of 9-2 that Arabic should be the only official language, Storrs overruled it.²⁸³ Wasif Jawhariyyeh wrote that Musa Kazem al-Husseini resigned from the mayoralty of Jerusalem a bit later, in the autumn of 1920, because he “categorically refus[ed] to give his approval regarding the Hebrew language.”²⁸⁴ Dialogue with the Hebrew-speaking residents was important to Britain.

²⁸² Storrs 1937, p 301; also Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 219; McTague 1978, p 56; Farsoun & Zacharia 1997, p 70.

²⁸³ Kayyali 1978, p 49.

²⁸⁴ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 119, 219.

20. Wilson's promises

8 January 1918

Behind all Palestinians' communications with the British were their expectations of being able to enjoy government by consent of the governed – as was being promised, relatively unambiguously after the First War, by the Great Powers. [e.g. >32; >33] Internationally foremost among these promises was **President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech** before the U.S. Congress on 8 January 1918²⁸⁵ leading the *Zeitgeist* away from colonialism and towards self-determination:

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments. ... It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation *which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions*, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. ... A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the *interests of the populations concerned* must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined. [?] ... The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure *sovereignty*, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of *autonomous development*,... (*emphasis added*)²⁸⁶

While the thrust of the message was strictly anti-colonial, wiggle-room was left: Were Palestine, Syria, etc. "nations" (who could "determine their own institutions")? While Turkey itself was promised "sovereignty", the concept of "autonomous development" falls short of sovereignty or independence. But even with such ambiguities, "autonomous development" of the Arab "nationality" did not jibe with the building of a Jewish *national* home there.²⁸⁷

On 11 February, again speaking to Congress, the man underscored more clearly consent and self-determination:

Peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power, but that every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states. National aspirations

²⁸⁵ Wilson 1918, *all citations*; also e.g. Antonius 1938, p 271; Tannous 1988, p 72; Kattan 2009, pp 48, 139.

²⁸⁶ Also Tibawi 1977, p 256.

²⁸⁷ See Regan 2017, pp 68-69.

must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril.²⁸⁸

The phrase “dominated... by their consent” is puzzling. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 Wilson would refer to Palestine, along with all the to-be-mandated countries, as a “backward territory”,²⁸⁹ perhaps needing some “domination” by the progressive West, and alas, “bartering peoples about” would be exactly what the international conference at San Remo in April 1920, albeit without U.S. participation, would do. [>78]

On an anniversary of the USA's independence from Britain, 4 July 1918, at Mt. Vernon, New York, Wilson would again express the new *Zeitgeist*:

The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, or economic arrangement, or of political relationship, [shall be] upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people concerned and not upon the basis of material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.²⁹⁰

Britain was a “nation” and the Jews of the world were now widely perceived as a “people”, yet neither were of a mind to “freely accept” the wishes of “the people concerned”, choosing instead to exercise their “own exterior influence or mastery”. The principles formulated by Wilson were nevertheless incorporated, albeit with some ambiguity, into Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations on 28 April 1919 [>46], part of the Treaty of Versailles co-signed by British Prime Minister Lloyd George on 28 June 1919 and subsequently tacitly ratified by the House of Commons.

While the Palestinians repeatedly appealed to Wilson's statements, which had become a sort of shorthand for the alleged commitment of the Powers to independent democracies world-wide, I do not know if they knew that in contradiction to his Fourteen Points Wilson had in the spring of 1917 expressed sympathy for Zionism to his close friend and leading U.S. Zionist Louis Brandeis, whom he had in 1916 appointed to the US Supreme Court.²⁹¹ [also >50] Even more strongly, as quoted by Senator Robert Taft, Wilson had declared on 3 March 1919, “The Allied Nations, with the fullest concurrence of our Government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish commonwealth.”²⁹² It was also Wilson who would ignore and suppress the King-Crane Report of 28 August 1919, a report that proved beyond any doubt whatsoever that well over 90% of the inhabitants of Palestine did not give their consent to rule by Britain, largely because that rule included the realisation of the “Jewish Zionist aspirations” named in the Balfour Declaration. [>59]

²⁸⁸ Nakhleh 1991, p 913, quoting 1918 Foreign Relations of the United States, vol. 1, Supplement 1, p 16.

²⁸⁹ Nakhleh 1991, p 913, quoting 1919 Foreign Relations of the United States, vol. 3, pp 740-41.

²⁹⁰ Quoted by Hadawi 1992, p 15.

²⁹¹ Grose 1983, p 38.

²⁹² U.S. Senate 1945, p 12140; John & Hadawi 1970b, p 18; also CAB 24/282/4, p 36.

Although not British, Wilson is relevant to this chronology for several reasons. His words were listened to worldwide, ipso facto by Palestinians and other Syrians and Arabs. On overseas issues his country almost always worked in tandem with Britain. And he was powerful enough to suppress the King-Crane Report, written by two U.S. friends of his; had he published it openly and followed its advice, Zionism would likely have been nipped in the bud. Certainly he was a man unconcerned with either consistency or fairness.

21. Hogarth Message to Hussein

8 January 1918

Mark Sykes wrote **this brief message** for Commander David George Hogarth to deliver on 8 January 1918 (or perhaps already on 4 January) in Jeddah to Sherif (now King) Hussein in the name of the British government.²⁹³ Knowledgeable about the Balfour Declaration, Hussein had “threatened to call off the revolt”, necessitating this “hurried intervention of Commander Hogarth”.²⁹⁴ Its text, which as Tibawi points out had “less than six lines on the Arab question and thirty lines on the Jewish”²⁹⁵, included:

(1) The Entente Powers are determined that the Arab race shall be given full opportunity of once again forming a nation in the world. ... (2) So far as Palestine is concerned we are determined that no people shall be subject to another,... (3) Since the Jewish opinion of the world is in favour of a return of Jews to Palestine and inasmuch as this opinion must remain a constant factor, and further as His Majesty’s Government view with favour the realisation of this aspiration, His Majesty’s Government are determined that in so far as is compatible with the freedom of the existing population both economic and political, no obstacle shall be put in the way of the realisation of this ideal.

The boundaries of the Arab “nation” for the “Arab race” of Point (1) were left undefined, but Sykes left verbal room for excluding Palestine. A case can be made that Point (2) meant, *inter alia*, that the Jewish “people” would not have to be “subject to” majority-Arab political decisions. Point (3) did not specify which “Jews”, or how many, “aspired” [-16] to move to Palestine. The point of all three Points together was that HMG supported the Zionist “ideal”. A final paragraph stated:

In this connexion the friendship of world Jewry to the Arab cause is equivalent to support in all States where Jews have a political influence. The leaders of the movement are determined to bring about the success of Zionism by friendship and co-operation with the Arabs, and such an offer is not one to be lightly thrown aside.

The “Arab cause” was being offered help not from Britain, in case they defeated the Ottomans and their German allies, but from “world Jewry”.

The text roughly parallels that of the Balfour Declaration, first specifically “viewing with favour” the Zionist “ideal” or “aspiration”, and only then bringing in the Palestinians with the caveat “in so far as is compatible with the freedom of the existing population both economic and political”. But at least the words “freedom” and “political” went beyond and stood in contradiction to the Balfour Declaration’s weak “civil and religious rights”, and they are moreover stated as the precondition for what might be done for the Zionists.

²⁹³ Maugham 1939, p 48 (Annex F); FO 371/23232, pp 220-21, 227; also <http://aldeilis.net/english/the-hogarth-message/>; Antonius 1938, pp 267-68; Jeffries 1939, pp 289, 293, 405; UNSCOP 1947, Ch II §95, 159, 171, 172; also Hansard 1939, c2038; Abcarius 1946, p 51; Friedman 1973, p 329; Hadawi 1992, p 14; Huneidi 2001, pp 66-67; Allawi 2014, p 185.

²⁹⁴ Hansard 1939, cc2016-17.

²⁹⁵ Tibawi 1977, p 246.

Anything less would not have placated the Sherif. Sykes and Hogarth had walked this public-relations tightrope masterfully. Of course the Palestinians always answered that the first thing they would do with their “political... freedom” would be to reject “a return of Jews to Palestine”. So much for compatibility.

There was however a contradiction between on the one hand declaring that “no people shall be subject to another” (Point 2) and on the other hand doing just that daily, namely by establishing a Military Administration constrained by the Balfour Declaration which had been issued two months earlier and which amounted, objectively, to “subjecting” the local people to the British people and/or the Jewish people. Evidently Sykes, or Hogarth, “made no mention of the words ‘national home’ or of the Balfour declaration to the Sharif”, and

Within deliberately vague and misleading terms of reference Hogarth discharged his duties remarkably well. ... As a man of learning, with a distinguished academic past, Hogarth [or Sykes] might have protested like Wilson before him with a *cri de coeur* ‘For Heaven’s sake let us be straight with the old man’.²⁹⁶

Some members of the Arab Bureau in Cairo were for straight talk, but their “superiors at the Foreign Office were as before in favour of vague generalities and against that ‘openness and truth’ which they praised in the Sharif.”²⁹⁷

In any case, this message promised self-determination enough to lead the British to keep it secret until 1939,²⁹⁸ at which time it was deemed relevant to the St James Conference which had just been convened to settle Palestine’s political future through three-way talks between Britain, the Palestinians and other Arabs, and the Jewish Zionists. [386ff] At that time George Antonius had anyway just published the Hogarth Message in his *Arab Awakening* (1938).²⁹⁹ The Message leaned strongly enough towards Arab-Palestinian “freedom” that Colonial Office negotiators at the St James Conference Baggallay and Baxter regarded it as “obviously embarrassing” to Great Britain.³⁰⁰

Another part of the message made a claim which down to the present day has been used as a reason why Palestine cannot be independent:

In view of the fact that there are in Palestine shrines, Wakfs and Holy places, sacred in some cases to Moslems alone, to Jews alone, to Christians alone, and in others to two or all three, and inasmuch as these places are of interest to vast masses of people outside Palestine and Arabia, there must be a special regime to deal with these places approved of by the world.

That is, although the largely Moslem Ottomans, and Palestine’s Moslem rulers before them, had meticulously respected the places of all three religions, it seems that the British did not trust the likewise Moslem-majority Palestinians to do so.

²⁹⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 257-58.

²⁹⁷ Tibawi 1977, p 262.

²⁹⁸ Maugham 1939, §20; Barbour 1946, p 200.

²⁹⁹ Antonius 1938, Appendix D.

³⁰⁰ FO 371/23224, pp 320-25.

A British document quoted by the United Nations Special Unit on Palestinian Rights probably refers to the Hogarth Message:

On 17 April 1974, The Times of London published excerpts from a secret memorandum prepared by the Political Intelligence Department of the British Foreign Office for the use of the British delegation to the Paris peace conference. The reference to Palestine is as follows: 'With regard to Palestine, His Majesty's Government are committed by Sir Henry McMahon's letter to the Sherif on October 24, 1915, to its inclusion in the boundaries of Arab independence... but they have stated their policy regarding the Palestine Holy Places and Zionist colonization in their message to him of January 4, 1918.'³⁰¹

This is obviously also relevant to the debate about what Arab territory Britain, through McMahon's Letter 4 to Hussein, had meant to exclude from independence. [see >10; >400]

George Antonius in 1938 recounted that Hussein had replied in detail to Hogarth and that in 1921, when the British sought a treaty with him, held to what he was saying in 1918, namely that reasonable, non-Zionist immigration of Jews into Palestine was fine if not only the "civil and religious rights" of the indigenous Arabs were protected, but also their "political and economic rights", and that he presented a "counter-draft" of the proposed treaty wherein "he proposed that Palestine be constituted into an independent state with a national government representing all the inhabitants, including the Jews..."; moreover, so Antonius, the British were in 1921 proposing what the Balfour Declaration had said while Hussein was proposing what Hogarth had promised him.³⁰²

³⁰¹ UNSUPR 1978a, >'Anglo-French'.

³⁰² Antonius 1938, pp 333; also 267-69.

22. Bassett Letter to Hussein

8 February 1918

To further quell Arab doubts, Acting British Agent in Jeddah J.R. Bassett, who had been present at Hogarth's talks with King Hussein, reaffirmed to Hussein in Jeddah on 8 February 1918 HMG's pledge of freedom. **The letter delivered by Bassett** came from Foreign Secretary Balfour through the British High Commissioner in Egypt. The first paragraph thanked Hussein and his son Emir Faisal for spying on the Ottoman Turks who had been trying to negotiate a truce with Faisal's troops in Syria, and reminded him that through "intrigues" the Turks wanted to "create dissension". (Faisal deserved British thanks, for the great majority of Arab Ottoman personnel stayed loyal to Istanbul up until military defeat.)

In George Antonius' translation from the Arabic version, the meat of the letter was that

His Majesty's Government and their allies stand steadfastly by every cause aiming at the liberation of the oppressed nations [and] re-affirm their former pledge in regard to the liberation of the Arab peoples. His Majesty's Government have hitherto made it their policy to ensure that liberation, and it remains the policy they are determined unflinchingly to pursue by protecting such Arabs as are already liberated from all dangers and perils, and by assisting those who are still under the yoke of the tyrants to obtain their freedom.³⁰³

Zionism was a "danger and peril" to the Arabs, and on 18 April 1918 General Clayton would again write from Cairo to the Foreign Office reporting "Arab distrust and suspicion" because Britain's support for Zionism contradicted British support for Arab independence promised during the war.³⁰⁴

early 1918 *'Early in 1918 the twelve foundation stones – to every tribe a stone – of the Hebrew University were formally laid in the presence of a distinguished gathering which included the Commander-in Chief [Allenby].'*³⁰⁵

1918 onwards *'[W]hen Britain occupied Jerusalem, it tried to sow trouble, particularly among Muslims and Christians. As though it had not been vicious enough in issuing the sinister Balfour Declaration after the occupation [sic.], causing the loss of our homeland, it banned Muslims from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Christians from al-Haram al-Sharif.'*³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Antonius 1938, pp 431-32; Jeffries 1939, pp 225-26; Hadawi 1989, p 14; UNSCOP 1947a, Appendix III, I.1, 'Special note by Sir Abdur Rahman'.

³⁰⁴ Wasserstein 1978, p 24; also p 27.

³⁰⁵ Storrs 1937, p 345.

³⁰⁶ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 106.

23. The Zionist Commission

18 February 1918

The Hebrew language became official [>19], many Jews were hired as government officials at higher pay than locals, and Zionists were permitted to fly their flag while the Arabs were prohibited from doing so.³⁰⁷ And while issuing further promises of independence the Foreign Office was simultaneously giving official status to **the Zionist Commission for Palestine**, and thus to its leader, Chaim Weizmann. Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner would on 30 July 1921 confirm in a letter to his boss at the Colonial Office, Churchill, that this Commission “was sent there, with the approval of the Government, to concert measures for carrying into effect the policy of the Declaration”.³⁰⁸ [^{>115}]

This group, which undisputedly believed in anything but independence for Palestine’s present citizens, was created in February and March 1918 as a quasi-governmental body and arrived in Palestine from Europe on 14 April 1918. It was ‘quasi-governmental’ in that 1) it was a child of Whitehall together with the British Zionists, 2) it obtained from the military administration certain privileges while in Palestine, and 3) it was aided on the scene by two pro-Zionist British officials, William Ormsby-Gore MP and Edwin Samuel, as well as French citizen Major James de Rothschild who had served in the British Army in Palestine and would become a British citizen in 1920.³⁰⁹ [^{also >26; >27}]

Over the objections of Clayton in Cairo **Foreign Secretary Balfour announced the Commission** on 18 February 1918 in the House of Commons:

His Majesty’s Government have acceded to the request of the London Zionist Central Organisation to permit a Zionist Commission to proceed to Palestine at an early date. The functions of the Commission are to investigate the present condition of Jewish colonies in Palestine, to organise relief work, and supervise reparation of damage done to Zionist colonies during the War in as far as circumstances will permit. The London Central Zionist Organisation has already submitted the names of Dr. Weizmann, Mr. J. Cowans, and Mr. Simon. It is probable that other names will be added to the list, but the matter is still under consideration.³¹⁰

Regarding the foreseen task presented for public consumption – “investigating” Jewish colonies – Tibawi writes:

The strange thing was not that the Zionists suggested the dispatch of a commission [to Palestine], but that it was approved by the Foreign Office at a time when the British army had not yet occupied any area in Palestine inhabited by Jews.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Smith 1996, p 68; also Khalidi 1978, p 93.

³⁰⁸ CO 733/4, pp 5-6.

³⁰⁹ Palin 1920, §18; also Haycraft 1921, pp 54-55; Abcarius 1946, pp 60-65; [encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com), current, >Zionist Commission.

³¹⁰ Hansard 1918, c436.

³¹¹ Tibawi 1977, p 247, also pp 260, 265.

At any rate, HMG was approving a “Zionist” commission to investigate both “Jewish colonies” and “Zionist colonies” and although the named London Central Zionist Organisation was a political one, it was charged with humanitarian “relief work”.

Soon thereafter, according to Jeffries, the remit was explicitly expanded to include the political work of the national home: before leaving England the Commission was granted

supplementary terms-of-reference masked as a ‘definition of status.’ In order supposedly that both the Army authorities and the Delegation itself should know where the latter stood, it was announced from the Foreign Office that the Zionist Commission was ‘to represent the Zionist Organization in Palestine and act as an advisory body to the British authorities there in all matters relating to Jews or which may effect the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in accordance with the [Balfour] Declaration of His Majesty’s Government.’ ... [T]he Zionist Commission... was granted the freedom of the military cables and telegraphs and telephones. The Arabs [on the other hand] were gagged...³¹²

In the opinion of the Palin Court [^{>88}], which in spring and summer of 1920 would look into the causes of the violent protests of early April 1920 [^{>76}], the Zionist Commission’s actual activities went far beyond “investigations” and “humanitarian” work:

It appears to have been Mr. Herbert Samuel who first enlightened the Chief Administrator [Louis Bols] as to the extent to which the Zionist Commission had assumed the role of a full blown Administration. For full details reference must be made to the despatch of Sir Louis Bols filed in the exhibits: it will be sufficient here to point out certain special features of the organisation. It amounts to this that every department of the official administration is duplicated in the Zionist Commission. The organisation consists of no less than a hundred individuals and it is clear from an examination of the details given that a complete administrative machine is in active operation.³¹³ [*also >85*]

That Court also listed concrete areas of state development where the British and the Zionist Commission co-operated.³¹⁴

The Haycraft Commission, charged a year after the Palin Court with looking into the violent protests of May 1921, would in its Report of October 1921 likewise record as a major Arab “grievance” the fact that

in pursuance of [the Jewish national home] policy the Government of Palestine has, as its official advisory body, a Zionist Commission, bound by its ideals and its conceptions of its rôle to regard Jewish interests before all others, and constituted by its singular prerogatives into an *imperium in imperio*.³¹⁵

³¹² Jeffries 1939, pp 230-31. Reportedly, further documentation *can be found* in the British Library, Asian and African Studies, P 2163/1918, ‘Palestine: the Zionist Commission, 20 April - 22 May 1918’.

³¹³ Palin 1920, §25.

³¹⁴ Palin 1920, §19.

³¹⁵ Haycraft 1921, p 51; Abcarius 1946, p 62.

The Haycraft Commission did not wish to take a stand on whether “the activities, real or alleged, of the Zionist Commission were or are illegitimate”, and in response to the “interim” Haycraft report of 8 July 1921, then High Commissioner Herbert Samuel on 25 August acknowledged the Zionist Commission’s great influence when he wrote:

With respect to the complaint mentioned in the report that the Arabs have no body similar to the Zionist Commission to exercise influence on their behalf, a Consultative Committee of leading Christian and Moslem notables has been constituted, which will be in close and constant communication with the High Commissioner.³¹⁶

I am not aware of the emergence of any such “Consultative Committee”; the future Supreme Moslem Council was for Moslems only, and the future Advisory Council was for Jews as well as for Christians and Moslems.

The Royal (‘Peel’) Commission, as well, would in 1937 confirm the Zionist Commission’s role as a “state within a state” – allowed and approved by the British who held the ultimate authority.³¹⁷ The British, so the logic of that Commission’s analysis, had been the enablers of the Jewish proto-state. But to return to the spring of 1918, it is worth mentioning that as so often the British were internally divided: the Military Administration on the spot in Palestine opposed the sending of the Zionist Commission while the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet approved it.³¹⁸

Relevant to the dialogue between Britain and Palestine is that, because it was still wartime, censorship and access to telegraph facilities were tightly controlled: by and large, the Arabs could not by such means communicate among themselves or with the rest of the world, while the Zionist Commission could do so with the approval of Balfour, Chief Administrator Money and General Allenby, and could also travel freely within Palestine.³¹⁹ There was in 1918 not only a blanket censorship of Arab writings³²⁰, but when something did appear, for instance in a Cairo newspaper edited by Palestinian Shaikh Muhammad al-Qalqili in which the principle of consent of the governed was insisted upon, neither the British regular administration nor the quasi-British Zionist Commission replied; nor did they reply, to give another instance, to a memo written by Palestinian Sulaiman Nasif stating the Palestinian and Arab anti-Zionist position, including the demand to determine immigration policy themselves.³²¹

On the ground, the Zionist Commission arrived in Egypt on 12 March 1918. Before proceeding to Palestine, according to Ayyad,

British officials in Cairo pressured Syrian Arab collaborators to meet with the [Zionist] Commission, the idea being that this would help in persuading the Palestinian Arabs to mod-

³¹⁶ Haycraft 1921, pp 55, 63.

³¹⁷ Peel 1937, III §17, 18, IV §37, VI §25, X §94; also Farsoun & Zacharia 1997, p 88.

³¹⁸ McTague 1978, p 62, citing FO 371/7664/19932.

³¹⁹ Jeffries 1939, pp 231-32.

³²⁰ Also Khalidi 2020, p 26, citing Storrs 1937, p 327.

³²¹ Tibawi 1977, pp 265-67, 308.

erate their attitude toward Zionism. ... Among the Arab participants... connected with the Arab Office in Cairo... were Faris Nimr, Rafiq al-Azm, Rashid Rida, Ibrahim Ash-Shahbandar, Sheikh Kamil Al-Qassab, and Khalid Al-Hakim.

Some of this group, known sometimes as 'the Seven' [see also >25], went to Palestine a month later but failed to convince the Palestinians of the British-Zionist argument, urged by General Clayton and Weizmann, that the Jewish National Home was no threat.³²²

Preferential treatment for the Zionist Commission was only one part of Britain's indirect message to the Palestinians that HMG supported Zionism above all else; in addition, there was

the use of Hebrew in official communiqués, the free use of army transport, post and telegraphs by the commission, the appointment of a Jewish vice-mayor in Jerusalem and two Jewish councillors in Jaffa, and above all the freedom denied to the Arab majority of public assembly and open political activity...³²³

Even in London, the Arab press was strictly censored while

a special Zionist section was established under Albert Hyamson at the Ministry of Information that was allowed to circulate its own version of the Palestine question with tendentious reports from the Zionist Commission. The Arab case was dismissed without even a hearing.³²⁴

March 1918 *The British appoint Musa Qassem [Kazem] Al-Husseini, father of Abdel Qader Al-Husseini, mayor of Jerusalem (until removed by the British for opposing their pro-Zionist policies in April 1920).*

³²² Ayyad 1999, pp 70-73.

³²³ Tibawi 1977, p 283.

³²⁴ Tibawi 1977, p 290.

24. Palestinian-Weizmann dialogue

May 1918

This entry is one of several [also >62; >64; >273; >274; >278; >333] belonging to the dialogue between Palestinians and Zionists in their self-declared rôle as Jews even if they were also British. See also Ben-Gurion (1968), Chapters 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, & 19, where discussions with Musa Alami, Awni Abdul Hadi, Hussein Khalidi, George Antonius, Izzat Tannous as well as some non-Palestinian Arabs are recorded. It is included partly because their dialogue partner Chaim Weizmann was not only a British citizen (since 1910) but also *in effect* a British as well as a Zionist official whose advice was sought and wishes heeded at the very top levels of HMG.³²⁵ Like Samuel, he was both an international and a British Zionist.

The event was a meeting on 8 May 1918 between the Zionist Commission and indigenous Yaffa Moslems and Christians, whom Weizmann twice told that he was speaking for “14 million Jews existing in the world” – something the British would for the next 20 years consistently agree with; he also swore to the congregated locals:

It is not our aim to get hold of the supreme political power and administration in Palestine, nor to deprive any native of his possessions. For Palestine is rich to the extent that it can contain many times the number of its present inhabitants. ... [We aim to] cultivate and enrich the lands which had become our possessions during the Turkish rule, to enliven and animate scientific knowledge [etc.]...³²⁶

Every page of Weizmann’s own autobiography, *Trial and Error*, proves that this was a lie. At the same Yaffa meeting William Ormsby-Gore MP, who could use his native English language more subtly than Weizmann, expounded:

What do we understand by the Jewish national home? We mean that those Jews who voluntarily come to live in Palestine should live in Palestine as Jewish nationalists, that is, that they should be regarded [by Britain] as Jews and nothing else, and that they should be absolutely free to develop Hebrew education, to develop the country, and live their own life in their own way in Palestine freely... [The Jews of Europe] are bound together in Palestine by the ideal of building up a Jewish nation in all its various aspects in Palestine...³²⁷

In this context “Jewish nationalists” and “Jewish nation” lean heavily towards “Jewish state”, and the phrase “be regarded as Jews and nothing else” can only mean that Britain should not regard them as Palestine citizens or indeed as part of the existing Palestinian society or polity. And although some Palestinians might have been tempted to agree to Jewish “enrichment”, they certainly looked forward to further populating their country with their own children and grandchildren.

³²⁵ Weizmann 1949, *passim*.

³²⁶ FO 371/3383, pp 394–96 (Clayton to FO, 27 May 1918); Kayyali 1978, p 52.

³²⁷ Jeffries 1939, p 233.

In reply a speaker for the Palestinians, according to General Clayton's report, made some ethical points:

Palestine generally and Jerusalem especially is the place of worship for over 350 million Moslems and 700 million Christians and 14 million Jews. And I assure Mr. President [Weizmann] that the Moslems and Christians of Jaffa are the first nations to mix with others, and that both Moslems and Christians shall treat their compatriots the Jews as they treat one another... I hope that Great Britain will allow representation of the Moslems and Christians to attend the sittings of the Convention [?] or the body of men that have to consider and settle the question of this country.³²⁸

This Yaffa resident was also attaching political importance to the fact that Moslems and Christians each far outnumbered Jews in the world. [see also >27; >30; >32; >33]

They outnumbered them within Palestine, as well, a fact Weizmann several weeks later, on 30 May 1918, dealt with in a note to Balfour:

As I mentioned before, the Englishman at the head of affairs [Allenby] is fair and just,... [b]ut his only guide in this difficult situation is the democratic principle, which reckons with the relative numerical strength; and the brutal numbers operate against us, for there are five Arabs to one Jew.³²⁹ The influence of the Arab must in fairness be five times greater than the Jewish; in fact, in many cases it is far more than that. ... This system does not take into account the fact that there is a fundamental qualitative difference between Jew and Arab. ... The present system tends... to level down the Jew politically to the status of a native...³³⁰

That is, the qualitative superiority of Jews politically outweighs their numerical inferiority. Given the political alliance between Weizmann, the organisations he headed, and the British Government, a case can be made that this exchange is all one needs to know about the history of the dispossession of the Palestinians, incorporating as it does anti-Arab racism, philo-Jewish racism, unabashed rejection of what was conceded to be "fair", and democracy.

³²⁸ FO 371/3383, p 396.

³²⁹ Wrong: the actual breakdown was approx. 512,000 Moslems, 61,000 Christians and 66,000 Jews. (FO 371/3386, p 256.) See also >Appendices 7 & 8.

³³⁰ FO 371/3395, p 151, Weizmann to Balfour, 30 May 1918; FO 608/99, pp 287-88; Kayyali 1978, p 52.

25. Declaration from and to the Seven

7 May & June 1918

The Arabs in Palestine and Greater Syria sought a strong, unified voice, and formed numerous anti-Zionist groups during the first half of 1918, four of them alone in Jaffa, namely

Dar al-Ulum al-Islamiyya (The Islamic School for Sciences), *Jam'iat al-Shabiba al-Yafiyya* (The Yaffa Youth Society), *Jam'iat al-Ta'awun al-Massihi* (The Social Christian Welfare Association), and *Al-Jam'ia al-Ahliyya* (The National Society), which was similar to the local Zionist Organization, composed of Yaffa's leading Muslim and Christian families and was responsible for dealing with the Government.³³¹

In Cairo, seven of these Syrian and Palestinian activists, who still conceived Palestine as part of Syria, on 7 May 1918 published and delivered to the British High Commissioner **an anonymous 'memorial'**.³³² This **letter from the seven** to the High Commissioner in Egypt, for forwarding to the Foreign Office, had to be anonymous because Syria was still "in the grip of the Turks" and under the "Turkish yoke".

These seven representatives of "Arab Societies" or "Committees" were manifestly still unclear "as to the real meaning of Mr. Lloyd George's [>16; >18; >21; >22] and Mr. Wilson's [>20] recent pronouncements", and thus put the simple question:

Can we assure our people that it is the aim of the British Government that the Arabs should enjoy complete independence in Arabia? We... promise as soon as we get a positive answer to our question, to offer the necessary services which our Allies request us to perform, the advantages of which are for us all.

The rest of the text (below) indicates that "Arabia" referred to all Arab places now occupied or likely to be occupied by the British and French.

A secondary question was whether Britain would

assist the inhabitants of these countries to attain their complete independence and the composing of an Arab Government decentralised like the United States of America, or other Federal Governments, which suits their social condition; or does it not consider them all equal?

They themselves preferred a division of the Arab world into provinces, applying "the principle of decentralisation to Syria". Further,

Though the source of the Arab revolution appeared in the Hejaz its corner stone was Syria and it had the greater share in the intellectual movement [and they had] no doubt but that the great men of England, who are well known for their sense of justice, will never allow, whatever the state of political affairs in Europe, those noble lives and blood to pass away in vain.

³³¹ Kayyali 1978, pp 53-54.

³³² FO 371/23232, pp 230-36, all further quotations.

In 1939 the Foreign Office would acknowledge that Antonius's 1938 record of this Memorial or Declaration³³³, based on notes taken in Arabic, "is perfectly correct"³³⁴. In Antonius's mind this interaction between Britain and the Syrian Arabs was clearer than the McMahon letters in offering independence.³³⁵

The presenters of the reply to these Arabs, known as **the Declaration to the Seven**, were British officials Henry McMahon, Commander Hogarth and the then High Commissioner of Egypt Sir Reginald Wingate, but according to A. L. Tibawi it was written by Mark Sykes MP, with no "earnest consideration" or "great care" on the part of anyone of rank in Balfour's Foreign Office.³³⁶ They addressed their reply to all Arabs, while physically delivering it to the seven men whose identities were known to the British Arab Bureau, identified by M.F. Abcarius as K. Al Qassab, A.R. Shahbandar, R. Al Azm, M. Al Sulh, F. Al Bakri, H. Himadeh and K. Al Hakim.³³⁷ [see also >23] It again promised, in line with "the Baghdad declaration of March 1917³³⁸ and General Edmund Allenby's Jerusalem declaration of December" [>18]:

[In a]reas emancipated from Turkish control by the action of the Arabs themselves during the present war... HMG recognise the complete and sovereign independence of the Arabs inhabiting these areas and support them in their struggle for freedom. In regard to the areas [formerly under Ottoman dominion,] occupied by Allied forces during the present war,... it is the wish and desire of His Majesty's Government that the future government of these regions should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed.³³⁹ (*emphasis added*)

This wording set up a dichotomy between people who should and would get "complete and sovereign independence" (those who had liberated themselves) and those rule over whom should merely be "based on... consent of the governed" (those Britain and its allies had liberated). According to Tibawi, Sykes introduced this distinction in order to shrink the area of promised "complete and sovereign" independence.³⁴⁰ Even in the absence of an accompanying map showing the line separating areas emancipated by the Arabs themselves and areas emancipated and "occupied" by Allied forces, it is clear that Palestine was part of the latter – while the Hejaz, for instance, was part of the former. What the conceptual difference might be between complete independence and consent of the governed is not clear, for no Arabs were ready to give their consent to anything but complete independence. As with almost all British documents, suspicion as well as patient textual analysis are here required.

³³³ Antonius 1938, Appendix D (pp 433-34).

³³⁴ FO 317/23224, p 324.

³³⁵ Boyle 2001, p 9.

³³⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 276-77.

³³⁷ Abcarius 1946, pp 53-55.

³³⁸ FO 371/23224, pp 330-32, 'British Proclamation on Capturing Baghdad'.

³³⁹ CAB 27/27; Maugham 1939, p 49 (Annex G); FO 371/23232, pp 221, 228; Ingrams 1972, pp 37-38; Smith 1996, p 58.

³⁴⁰ Tibawi 1977, pp 276-77.

In any case Palestine's immediate independence was apparently *not* being "recognised" (promised). Its status would be weaker than simple independence but its citizens would have to consent to what was being done, notwithstanding the fact that the "emancipated" Palestinians were already on record as wanting complete freedom now. The Declaration to the Seven moreover only expressed the British "wish and desire" to respect the principle of the consent of the governed, not the firm intent to do so.³⁴¹

General Gilbert Clayton, from early 1918 through August 1919 Chief Political Officer for Palestine,³⁴² showed that he knew the score in a post to the Foreign Office sent a few months later, on 21 September 1918, in which he mentioned The Seven:

I have the honour to enclose a letter which has been presented to the Arab Bureau by a somewhat influential Moslem Syrian residing in Cairo for transmission to Capt. Abdin Husheimi. The letter has been opened for purposes of censorship and a translation is attached. In my opinion the letter should be suppressed and not forwarded to the addressee but I suggest that Sir Mark Sykes be consulted with regard to its disposal. ... It will be observed that the writer shares the feeling of hostility to Zionist aims which obtains among most Syrians [a category then including Palestinians] in Egypt, both Christians and Moslem, and which no amount of explanation seems to decrease. This section of Syrian opinion is represented by the seven persons who forwarded to the High Commissioner at the beginning of May last an address which was transmitted to you under cover of the High Commissioner's despatch No. 90 of the 7th May 1918. These persons and the party they represent deprecate any separation of Palestine from Syria and are also averse from any close connection with Arabia as represented by the King of the Hejaz and his sons. They are therefore opposed in principle not only to the Zionist movement but also to the Arab Movement as represented by the Sherifian leaders. ... Failing support from Great Britain they might turn to America or to France, or to both, rather than see the failure of their own plans and a successful development of the Zionist programme in Palestine... The Christian and Moslem population of Palestine... regard the advance of Zionism with fear and distrust.³⁴³

Both Clayton and Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner in Egypt, were at the time, with the approval of the Foreign Office, applying various measures to prevent the publication of anti-Zionist articles.³⁴⁴ As proven by Arab testimony to the King-Crane Commission about a year later, Clayton was correct that the U.S. would be the preferred colonial power if there had to be one. [>59]

Clayton gave further information by relating the contents of a letter printed in an Arab newspaper:

The enclosed letter is dated 19 July 1918, from Hakki (Haqqi) el Azm to Sayed Abdin El Husheimi from Heliopolis: Evidently Haqqi belongs to a group of Syrians in Cairo including Suleiman Bey Nassif, who had just written against Zionism in the newspaper *Al Kawkab*. [Evidently quoting from said letter:] 'The entanglements of this question (Zionism) increase or

³⁴¹ See also http://al-hakawati.net/english/Culture_Traditions/british-government-declaration.asp

³⁴² Also McTague 1978, p 57.

³⁴³ FO 371/3384, pp 38-39.

³⁴⁴ Tibawi 1977, pp 278-79.

get worse every day on account of the hatred of the Syrians in general and the Palestinians in particular of Zionism and Zionists, for the misconduct of the latter and for the pride, haughtiness, etc., which were shown lately by the Jews, i.e. before the departure of the delegation [Zionist Commission, >23] to Jerusalem.' [Clayton resumes:] I wish Sir Mark Sykes would resume the study of this important question in order to arrive at a solution which will suit both parties. I will ask Sir Mark Sykes to allow me to say that if this problem is not solved in a way to please both Mohammedans and Christians and to maintain their rights, it will cause in future such great difficulties (troubles) the result of which will only be known to God!³⁴⁵

Clayton's view of the future turned out to be accurate.

In sum, like the Hogarth Message [>21], the Declaration to the Seven rhetorically leaned towards Arab wishes but literally left room for Britain to flexibly govern as it wished – with, or without, the consent of the vast majority of the governed.

September 1918 *The first Moslem-Christian Association is established in Jerusalem, headed by Haj Abu Suud Al-Dajani. [Already in March 1918 in Yaffa such a group was being formed.³⁴⁶]*

1 October 1918 *'By October 1918 it was clear that Turkey's resistance was drawing to a close. On the 1st of that month Damascus was occupied by the Australians and by the Arab Army under Faisal and Lawrence, who set up a provisional Arab Government there...'³⁴⁷ [Following battles at Haifa, Tulkarm, Samakh and Megiddo, Arab forces under Emir Faisal and British forces under Allenby take military control of Damascus, leaving Faisal in political control of an Arab government.]*

³⁴⁵ FO 371/3384, p 41.

³⁴⁶ Kayyali 1978, p 48; Tibawi 1977, p 273.

³⁴⁷ Furlonge 1969, p 63.

26. Allenby's report to HMG

17-19 October 1918

According to Eugene Rogan, General Allenby straightforwardly told Emir Faisal on 3 October 1918 that an Arab government would not rule Palestine due to the Balfour Declaration, nor Lebanon due to a deal with the French, and that he (Allenby) himself would rule all of Syria until the war ended.³⁴⁸ This at least left open the possibility of a post-war Arab government, when peace returned, in the rest of Syria outside of Lebanon and Palestine. According to Tibawi, Allenby telegraphed to London (for Robert Cecil and Mark Sykes) on 6 October 1918 reporting that

a proclamation [from the Syrian nationalists] was received at Acre from Beirut with these facts: (a) an Arab government was proclaimed in Damascus on 30 September; (b) this government telegraphed the same day to Beirut to do likewise; (c) on the first of October the Turkish governor of Beirut took note of the Arab government and handed [Beirut] over by official letter to the Arab mayor; (d) the proclamation received at Acre was signed by the Mayor of Beirut, Umar Dauq, as 'Chief of the Arab government'.³⁴⁹

Chief Political Officer Clayton just then travelled from Cairo to Damascus, reporting on 8 October 1918 much the same thing and noting that

Arabs have established in Damascus an Arab administration which was in being when our troops actually entered the city. Ali Pasha Ridi El Rikabi was appointed Governor of occupied territory in areas A and B and has been recognised by Commander-in-Chief [Allenby?] as Military Governor.

He added, "I hope to return to Damascus in a week's time when the situation should have become more clear. At present it is too confused for a detailed appreciation."³⁵⁰

Somewhat later, however, while Allenby and Faisal were fighting side by side in and around Damascus against the Turks, as well as indirectly against the French, Allenby **reported back to London:**

I gave to Emir Faisal an official assurance that whatever measures might be taken during the period of military administration they were purely provisional and could not be allowed to prejudice the final settlement at the peace conference. ... I reminded the Emir Faisal that the Allies were in honour bound to endeavour to reach a settlement in accordance with the wishes of the peoples concerned and urged him to place his trust whole-heartedly in their good faith.³⁵¹

The default phrase was once again "wishes of the peoples", and the Jewish "people" was arguably one of the "concerned" ones. Whether Allenby's "official assurance" here was for Faisal's or London's ears is an open question, but it did likely also tantalise the people actually living in even Palestine and Lebanon with the possibility of their desired and

³⁴⁸ Rogan 2015, pp 379-80.

³⁴⁹ FO 371/3383, pp 543-48; Tibawi 1977, p 297.

³⁵⁰ CO 733/3383, pp 549-54.

³⁵¹ Maugham 1939 (Cmd. 5974), p 50 (Annex H); FO 371/23232, pp 221, 228-29.

demanded “settlement”. On the ground, though, Allenby insisted under French pressure that the Arab flag be removed a few days after the above-mentioned Arab Government had been proclaimed in Beirut. As reported by eyewitness Anbara Salam (Khalidi),

General Allenby entered Damascus on December 3, 1918 at the head of a British army and declared that all occupied territories were to be under his command until a peace treaty was signed with Turkey. For us, the youth of that period, our hearts burning with zeal, the shock was great indeed, especially when we learnt that the flag we had raised over the *Serail* a few days before had been ordered to be taken down, since the fate of Lebanon had not yet been decided. I can't imagine what impact this had on our leaders, but I learnt that Umar al-Dauq, as head of the municipality [of Beirut] and city representative, was ordered to bring down the Arab flag. He did so reluctantly, and the flag came down on November 9.³⁵²

Was this one of the measures Allenby told Faisal were “purely provisional”? At any rate, according to Abcarius, removal of the flag caused enough Arab resentment to necessitate, in British eyes, the soon-to-be-issued, unequivocally pro-independence Anglo-French Agreement [^{>28}].³⁵³

One moment the Palestinians were reading the Balfour Declaration and observing the progress of the Zionist Commission; the next they were hearing the highest British official in Palestine speak of whole-hearted trust and good faith. Many apparently weighed the relative strengths of the two sets of British words and held the first of many annual days of mourning in several Palestinian cities on 2 November 1918, the first ‘birthday’ of the Balfour Declaration.

2 November 1918 *Non-violent protests mark the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.*

4 November 1918 *A delegation of Palestinian leaders headed by Mayor Musa Qassem [Kazem] Al-Husseini submits a petition to [British Military Governor of Jerusalem Ronald] Storrs protesting against Zionist policy, signed by hundreds of Arabs from the Jerusalem area.*

³⁵² Khalidi 1978, p 93.

³⁵³ Abcarius 1946, p 55.

27.* Protestations to Storrs & Money

4 November 1918 etc.

This entry collects some Palestinian protestations known to have been made during November 1918 or shortly thereafter.

In spite of an official ban on demonstrations,³⁵⁴ two days after the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration “a deputation of all Christian and Muslim sects headed by the mayor [of Jerusalem, Musa Kazem al-Husseini, who spoke English fluently] marched singing” to deliver to the top British officials in Palestine a comprehensive, politically insistent and tolerant **protest note**³⁵⁵:

The undersigned inhabitants of Jerusalem and villages attached thereto, speaking for themselves and on behalf of all the Arabs, Muslim and Christian, living in Palestine, beg to state: We have noticed yesterday a large crowd of Jews carrying banners and over-running the streets shouting words which hurt the feelings and wound the soul. They pretend with open voice that Palestine which is the Holy Land of our fathers and the graveyard of our ancestors, which has been inhabited by the Arabs for long ages, who loved it and died in defending it, is now a national home for them. These are words which displease the heavens. ... If it is meant that they should obtain national liberty in the country why should this be confined to the Jews and not to others? ... We Arabs, Muslim and Christian, have always sympathised profoundly with the persecuted Jews in their misfortunes in other countries ... We hoped for their deliverance and prosperity. But there is a wide difference between this sympathy and the acceptance of such a nation in our country, to be made by them a national home, ruling over us and disposing of our affairs.

Addressed to Military Governor of Jerusalem Ronald Storrs and Chief Administrator Arthur Money, these written protestations were from “The Moslem Benevolent Society, The Arab Club, The Greek Orthodox Benevolent Society, *Muktataf Durus* (Moslem Educational Society), The Society of Brotherhood and Chivalry, The Greek Catholic Society, and over 100 other seals”. [see also >29; >30]

It went on to ask:

How do the Jews expect Palestine to be a national home when the Moslems and the Christians never asked that it should be a national home for those of them who are not inhabitants of Palestine? Every reader of history knows that the Arabian Peninsula was a country of heathens for a very long time and when Islam appeared it was inhabited by heathens, Christians and Jews. Is it right that any one of these should now claim it as a national home? The Arabs occupied Spain over seven centuries, and having established themselves there they were scattered all over the globe. Is it now permitted to them to claim the country ruled by them in the past and their old native home, where they left traces of their civilization which still stir their imagination?

³⁵⁴ Tibawi 1977, pp 308, 317.

³⁵⁵ FO 371/3385, pp 426-27, all citations; Wasserstein 1978, p 32, citing Israel State Archives 2/140/4A, Storrs to OETA headquarters, 4 Nov. 1918; also Lesch 1979, pp 85-86.

The non-Jews, that is, had never asked for any privileges *in Palestine* for all the other Moslems and Christians in the world, so why should Jews be allowed to do this? ^[see also >24] Moreover, the Jewish claim to Palestine was as ridiculous as for instance an Arab claim to Spain.

They also asserted it was such national claims which had “brought on the present War”, and re-emphasised that their objection was to Zionism, not Jews:

Anybody knowing this country appreciates at once what is said universally about the people of Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular, that they are the last persons to rouse religious feeling, and they have always lived in complete peace with all communities.

Not to forget their trust of the British:

We natives in general were all under the oppression of the Turks and rejoiced at our deliverance from their yoke, presenting our heartiest thanks to our rightful deliverers. We consider that they [the deliverers] are far above giving happiness and freedom to certain people and not to others. The history of Great Britain which never attained their greatness except by administering justice attests the standard of righteousness and the character of her men. It is therefore impossible that it should be blackened by this injustice. We are perfectly sure that nothing will be realised of what the Zionists and their Agents pretend throughout the country and we expect that a Power like Great Britain well known for justice and progress will put a stop to the Zionists' cry.

Tannous reports that in Jerusalem in November 1918 although “rumors of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration were in the air... [,] the Arab people's trust in British honor and prestige had not yet been shaken”.³⁵⁶

The document specifically counted on the British not to flood Palestine with European Jews:

Furthermore, it [Great Britain] will establish a just ruling for emigration to Palestine by Moslems, Christians, and Jews equally, in order that the country may be saved from being lost and the inhabitants from being persecuted. In conclusion, we Moslems and Christians desire to live with our brothers the Jews of Palestine in peace and happiness and with equal rights. Our privileges are theirs, and their duties ours.

Tibawi gives this credo of equality as “*lahum ma lana wa alaihim ma alaina*”, and notes that the Foreign Office, which paid “careful and serious consideration” to protests and manifestos from Zionists, dealt with this and other Palestinian protests merely with the written remark, “No action.”³⁵⁷ By the time of the 3rd Palestine Arab Conference exactly two years later [^{>95; >99}], likewise headed by Musa Kazem al-Husseini, disillusionment and disappointment had replaced the pre-existing widespread confidence in British “righteousness”.

After receiving the protesters and their written statement, Storrs wrote to O.E.T.A. [Occupied Enemy Territory Administration] Headquarters in Cairo, also on 4 November:

³⁵⁶ Tannous 1988, p 79.

³⁵⁷ Tibawi 1977, pp 309, citing FO 371/3385, p 422, but I have not yet found this; also >52.

I am convinced that there was nothing anti-Jewish or organised in this scuffle, though there is certainly a very strong anti-Zionist feeling prevalent. ... [I]n this connection, it is remarkable that at the opening ceremony of the Rothschild Hospital by the American Zionist Unit the same morning, the Mufti [Kamil al-Husseini, who had been appointed by Storrs] was not only present but delivered a speech of sincere sympathy and congratulation, with reference to the Rothschild family and the colonizing and humanitarian work with which their name is so notably associated throughout Palestine.³⁵⁸

O.E.T.A. South's Chief Political Officer Clayton replied in a dispatch to the Foreign Office on 8 November, attributing the Palestinians' protest to the "somewhat over zealous celebration" by Jews of the Balfour Declaration anniversary [see >17], attesting that "the non-Jewish elements of the population... have still considerable apprehension as to the scope of Mr. Balfour's declaration" and advising,

If the Zionist programme is to be carried through without serious friction with other Communities great tact and discretion must be employed and the more impatient elements of Zionism must be restrained.³⁵⁹

Clayton was perhaps unaware of the Anglo-French Declaration, which was literally an anti-Balfour Declaration, which would be issued the same day. [>28] At any rate, this Political Officer's reaction was to do public relations rather than try to solve HMG's contradictions.

Like the Palestinians, Storrs and other British officials usually managed to distinguish between Jews and Zionists, as for instance in an intelligence report from William Ormsby-Gore from the Arab Bureau in Cairo dated 12 January 1917:

The Moslems of Jerusalem and neighbourhood are well disposed toward the Christians, but very anti-Jewish, or to be more precise – Anti-Zionist.³⁶⁰

Clumsy perhaps, but avoiding the conflation.

Storrs then reported his personal encounter with Mayor Musa Kazem al-Husseini:

The sequel to yesterday's events occurred this morning when a deputation of all Christian and Moslem Sects headed by the Mayor, marched singing to these Headquarters. [The Mayor,] amid a well disciplined silence, informed me that he had come to protest against the assumption that Palestine was to be handed over to any one of the three religions practised by its inhabitants. At the conclusion of his speech, he handed me written protestations addressed to the Chief Administrator [in Jerusalem, Arthur Money] and myself, desiring me to have them forwarded to the proper quarter.³⁶¹

According to Wasif Jawhariyyeh, who as a 21-year-old at that time lived and worked in Jerusalem and knew Storrs personally, during the period of the Military Administration (ending on 30 June 1920),

³⁵⁸ FO 371/3385, p 424.

³⁵⁹ FO 371/3385, p 423.

³⁶⁰ FO 882/14/5, p 271.

³⁶¹ FO 371/3385, p 425.

[a]n atmosphere of friendship and understanding prevailed among all the civil servants; there was no room for hate or jealousy. Storrs liked this way of life, for having lived for a very long time in Egypt and Sudan, and having come to know the ways of the Orient [and the Arab language] and its passionate and cheerful nature, he decided to adopt them. Unfortunately, this era came to an end when the British government established the Civil Administration in Palestine in the summer of 1920 and appointed Sir Herbert Samuel as high commissioner. ... We had only been relieved from the tyrannical rule of the Ottomans to find ourselves under the rule of a Zionist high commissioner. We were gripped by fear and our hearts cringed.³⁶²

According to Philip Mattar, during 1918 further Greater-Syrian resistance to Zionism formed, the Palestinians among them holding various allegiances to greater Syria, the French and the British:

Amin [al-Husseini] became one of the leaders of the nascent Palestinian national movement. He was elected president of a literary and political organization, the Arab Club (*al-Nadi al-Arabi*), which, together with the Literary Club (*al-Muntada al-Adabi*) and the Moslem-Christian Association (*al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya al-Masihyya*), was formed in 1918 to champion the Palestinian cause. ... The Literary Club, composed of young members of the Nashashibi family, was anti-British, probably because of the family's connection with French agents, and sought complete independence for Palestine. On the other hand, the Moslem-Christian Association, a united front composed of the older generation of the urban elite who sought to preserve their positions of leadership, expected autonomy under the British. [Amin's Arab Club] were pan-Arabists whose objective was the unification of Palestine with Syria as a means of saving Palestine from Zionist claims.³⁶³ [also >4]

By 'greater Syria' is meant today's Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, with the Palestinians considering themselves *southern Syrians* despite the fact that the Ottomans had placed those living in the *Sanjak* of Jerusalem directly under control of 'Istanbul'. Those living farther north, on the other hand, were in the *Sanjaks* of Nablus and Acre which belonged to the separate Vilayet of Beirut, while those living farther east – east of the Jordan River (thus including 'Transjordan') or east of the *Sanjaks* of Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Tripoli and Latakia – were mostly in the Vilayet of Syria.

According to Nassir Eddin Nashashibi, a nephew of Ragheb Nashashibi,

In 1918 Is'af Nashashibi, Fakhri and Fuad Nashashibi founded the Literary Club with several members of the prominent Dajani family. The Club members produced a charter which advocated the integration of Palestine into Syria. ... They [later] asked for the annulment of the British mandate and a limitation on Jewish immigration into Palestine.³⁶⁴

George Antonius named as founders of the Literary Club others than Nashashibis and Dajanis, namely

³⁶² Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 121, also pp 123-26.

³⁶³ Mattar 1988, p 13; also Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 119; Lesch 1979, pp 84-85; Muslih 1988, pp 166-74; Nashashibi 1991, p 131; Ayyad 1999, p 77; Robson 2011, pp 38-43.

³⁶⁴ Nashashibi 1991, pp 125-26.

Abdul-Karim al-Khalil (Moslem from the Lebanon); Saleh Haidar (Moslem from Baalbek); Rafiq Sallum (Christian from Homs); Jamil Husaini (Moslem from Jerusalem); Yusuf Mukhaiber (Moslem from Baalbek); Saifuddin al-Khatib (Moslem from Damascus).

He added that all but al-Husseini and Mukhaiber were hanged by the Turks.³⁶⁵ At any rate, this widespread idea of achieving dilution of the Zionist presence by enlarging the political entity it aimed to colonise would be held onto by many Palestinians deep into the Mandate, but was of course thwarted by the British-French co-operation embodied in the Sykes-Picot Agreement [>12] and Colonial Secretary Churchill's separating off the area east of the Jordan River as 'Transjordan' in mid-1921 [>98].

The pan-Arab endeavour would be reinforced under the 'unification of Syria' banner at the large Jerusalem demonstration of 27 February 1920 [>88; >69]³⁶⁶, and Muslih quotes Kamil al-Dajani, an Arab nationalist from Yaffa, as later observing that "Once it is united, Syria would serve as a wider protective circle from which we could derive the strength to fight against the Zionist onslaught."³⁶⁷ On this matter of political boundaries, the Anglo-Jewish-Zionist trio of Weizmann, Sokolow and Samuel, advised by Anglo-Zionist Ormsby-Gore, were at this time discussing Palestine's borders in internal Foreign Office messages; for instance, "private and confidential Proposals Relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine" named the northern border as the Litani River and the eastern border as a bit to the west of the Hijaz railway line, i.e. a bit to the east of the Jordan River.³⁶⁸

Another Palestinian observer recently wrote that it may have been true that only a year earlier the

majority of the Palestinians... were in no position to resist or even comprehend the complex ideology of Zionism, linked as it was to a European Jewish history they were ignorant of. And Palestine's middle class of old families, religious leaders and professionals, was too small to be effective and the task too hard. My grandfather was a landowner, and also a noted religious authority and *sharia* judge, but he could no more have fought the Zionists than any of his illiterate peasants.³⁶⁹

Yet while the ability to effectively fight Zionism was lacking, knowledge of Zionism was widespread and growing – as witnessed by the protests recorded in this entry and by Palestinian reactions to President Wilson's vision [>20], to the status, purpose and demeanour of the Zionist Commission in Palestine [>23], and to the rumoured, promising League of Nations Covenant [>46]. That the British found it necessary to assuage Syrian/Palestinian opinion in their various messages from Allenby, Hogarth, Bassett, Sykes, et al.

³⁶⁵ Antonius 1938, p 108.

³⁶⁶ Mattar 1988, p 16.

³⁶⁷ Muslih 1988, p 186.

³⁶⁸ FO 371/3385, p 207 – see 'Proposals', pp 206-10, 19-25 November 1918 (former paper 191828); Tibawi 1977, p 311.

³⁶⁹ Karmi 2017, p xxv.

[>18; >21; >22; >25], and very soon through a joint declaration with France [>28], indicates that at the latest by the time of the arrival in Palestine of the King-Crane Commission [>59], in late June 1919, all Palestinians *understood* the Zionist threat.

28.* Anglo-French Declaration

7/8 November 1918

During the first full year of British rule the words of Allenby, Sykes, Hogarth, McMahon and Bassett [>18; >21; >22; >25] had not de-fused the Balfour-Declaration bomb. Straight words were needed. Probably triggered by Commander-in-Chief Allenby, and sometimes called “Lord Allenby’s Proclamation”,³⁷⁰ but not to be confused with Allenby’s Proclamation of about ten months earlier [>18], **the Anglo-French Declaration** was partially written by Mark Sykes and was approved by François Georges-Picot, Georges Clemenceau, Robert Cecil and PM David Lloyd George representing the two governments who wanted control of Greater Syria. Reflecting the language of, but clearer than, the Declaration to the Seven [>25], it issued the most unequivocal promises ever for the independence of Syria and Mesopotamia, with no territorial exceptions:

The object aimed at by France and Great Britain in prosecuting in the East the War ... is the complete and definite emancipation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations. ... [They] are at one in encouraging and assisting the establishment of indigenous Governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia ... Far from wishing to impose on the populations of these regions any particular institutions they are only concerned to ensure by their support and by adequate assistance the regular working of Governments and administrations freely chosen by the populations themselves.³⁷¹

This language served as a pattern for Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant [>39] and was not consistent with the Balfour Declaration. Was not the “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine a “particular institution” that would be “imposed on the population”? Could an “indigenous Government” conceivably agree to the establishment of a Jewish state, or even ‘national home’ which jibed with known “Jewish Zionist aspirations”? [>16] Could the “initiative and free choice” of (a majority of) the local population possibly give “authority” to any “national governments and administrations” which strove to establish anything consistent with the description given in the Balfour Declaration? Of course not. Based on the pro-Zionist documents and goals of the years 1916-1918 which were contradictory to this Anglo-French Declaration – not to mention the colonial behaviour of France and Britain during the next few decades – I think we should drop academic pretences and speak normally: The British and the French were lying.

The only way the Balfour Declaration could be reconciled with this Declaration was to define Palestine out of “Syria”. The British, through Allenby with help from Emir Faisal, had just completed ‘liberating’ northern Palestine, and like the Sykes-Picot Agreement the Anglo-French Declaration, for what it was worth, included Mesopotamia and thus

³⁷⁰ E.g. CO 733/54, p 8.

³⁷¹ Maugham 1939, p 50 (Annex I); FO 371/23232, 221-22; FO 371/4178, p 338; FO 371/4179, pp 393-94, 436-38; in *French* FO 371/3385, p 59; also Hansard 1922c, c296; Jeffries 1939, pp 137-39; Smith 1996, p 69.

the broad near-eastern Arab area in the territories to be given “complete and definite emancipation”.³⁷² That “these regions” included Palestine is evidenced by the use of the phrase “the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks”: the Palestinians were undeniably one such people. Furthermore, Palestine was at the time universally spoken of as Southern Syria. In one important political debate of the time, moreover, in the House of Lords on 21 June 1922, a statement by Lord Islington went uncontradicted that Palestine and its people were included in the proclamation, which was distributed in every village in Palestine.³⁷³ [>144] Lastly Balfour, in confidential talks with U.S. Zionists on 24 June 1919, would explicitly state that the “agreement made early in November by the British and French [was to] the people of the East”.³⁷⁴ I thus don’t find anything in the text of the Agreement or in later documents to support the view that

On 8 November 1918, the governments of Britain and France proclaimed the right of the peoples of Iraq and Syria to self-determination, but they excluded Palestine, probably because of the Balfour Declaration.³⁷⁵

Such documents perhaps exist, but it is clear that at the time ‘Syria’ in official correspondence included today’s Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. Moreover, any *exclusion* of one of the “peoples so long oppressed” would, by the logic of the text, have had to be specifically declared.

A month later, in early December 1918, Gilbert Clayton, Chief Political Officer for Palestine, telegraphed to the Foreign Office:

Majority of people have taken it for granted that Palestine is included in the general principle enunciated [in the] Anglo-French declaration of November 8th.

In reply, on 4 December 1918 FO official George Kidston in London expressed his contrary opinion that “Declaration was expressly worded so as to exclude Palestine.” However, again, this opinion had no basis in the text.³⁷⁶ Witness also the fact that petitions for the unity of ‘Syria’, i.e. against its division as determined by Sykes-Picot Agreement [>12], during these years flooded the British and French Governments and, in 1919, the King-Crane Commission [>59]. Unless Syria was already a unit, how could these thousands of indigenous people demand that it *remain* a unit?

Similarly, to my knowledge no commentator ever claimed that the ‘General Syrian Congress’ [>52; >60; >69] was limited to the ‘Syria’ and ‘Lebanon’ which later became French-mandated countries.³⁷⁷ Also, around the time of Emir Faisal’s proclamation as King of Syria in early 1920, British officials such as Allenby, Clayton and Milner did not doubt that ‘Syria’ definitely included both Palestine and what became Transjordan. [see e.g. >70; >78; >88] That said, the Sykes-Picot Agreement of course did force the British and French to

³⁷² Jeffries 1939, p 240.

³⁷³ Hansard 1922b, c1004.

³⁷⁴ FO 800/217, p 189. [>50]

³⁷⁵ Pappe 2002/2010, p 172, citing Porath, *Al-Hajj* (in Hebrew), p 223.

³⁷⁶ FO 371/ 3385, pp 455-57; also p 531.

³⁷⁷ See Maugham 1939, Annex A §3.

find some way to refer to the various parts of Syria they had created. To my knowledge only once in later years did the British attempt to hide behind any territorial ambiguity, namely when the Middle East Department, led by Shuckburgh and Meinertzhagen, was briefing the new post-Lloyd George Cabinet on 17 February 1923 about Britain's alternatives. [^{>159}]

Palestine's inclusion was also the belief amongst the population. As High Commissioner John Chancellor would write on 17 January 1930 to then Colonial Secretary Passfield [^{>218}], just as an example,

While the Commander-in-Chief's [i.e. Allenby's] Declaration, which was given wide publicity, made no specific mention of Palestine, it is a fact that the northern half of Palestine was at that time included in the *Vilayet* of Beirut; and the Arabs of Palestine believed either that Palestine was included in the scope of the declaration or, if that were not so, that the reason for its exclusion was to be found in the Balfour Declaration.³⁷⁸

Many documents in this chronology attest to the self-perception of the Palestinians as being Southern Syrians,³⁷⁹ and Sykes and co-authors surely knew this. Admittedly, though, the text of the Anglo-French Declaration is not crystal clear on exactly what "region" Syria comprised.

A small but typical example of the challenge to which the Anglo-French Declaration was deemed the advisable reply was a letter sent on 29 October 1918 to Chief Administrator of Palestine Arthur Money by representatives of the Mulawi and Indian Chapelries, Mohammed Hassan and Mohammed Jumace:

You will probably be surprised to see a petition written by a Mussulman Society in defence of the Christian interests. ... Turks had practiced to humiliate the Arabs and deprive them of their rights, no matter to them what race or sect they belong to. ... The Orthodox Arabs suffered many afflictions and troubles under the old Government. ... Since we have a new and just Government whose characteristics do not agree with the old one; so we lay before its justice the question in subject. How can a nation, folk or sect consent to let a stranger [Zionism or Britain?] whose country, language and nationality is different to monopolize the natives' own rights?³⁸⁰

So widespread was the interest in the question of 'how much independence' the to-be-mandated areas would be allowed.

According to British intelligence the public reaction in Damascus to the Declaration, incidentally, was of "gratification" and in Beirut

Maronites were somewhat upset, especially those holding official posts. All others both Moslem and Christian, jubilant, impression produced is that Syria may choose her own form

³⁷⁸ CO 733/183/1, p 124/§6.

³⁷⁹ See Theme Index.

³⁸⁰ FO 371/3386, p 259.

of Government, and the power to guide Government in what is to be Palestine. ... General impression appears to be that declaration will apply to Palestine and Moslems and Christians are relieved at what they consider a check to extravagant Zionist aspirations.³⁸¹

But would the Anglo-French Declaration *suffice* to placate the Syrian Arabs, whose suspicions were indeed very strong? On 18 November 1918, General Clayton would reiterate from the military point of view the intelligence of the Arab Bureau in Cairo:

Arabs in Palestine are strongly anti-Zionist and are very apprehensive of Zionist aims. They were pro-British in the earlier days of the occupation but are showing a tendency to turn towards the King of the Hedjaz and the Arab Government of Damascus [still *de facto* under the control of Emir Faisal]. This attitude is due to the growing conviction that Great Britain is pledged to support the Zionist programme in its entirety. ... Moslems throughout the area strongly anti-French and desirous of independent Arab Government with British assistance. Christians. Amongst coast area Syrians are anti-French and all are anti-Zionists.³⁸²

But the Anglo-French Declaration most likely only temporarily removed some of this “apprehension”. The Declaration may have brought about some “relief” in Damascus, but there were contrary signs. Only a few weeks after this Anglo-French public-relations exercise, according to eyewitness Anbara Salam Khalidi,

[W]e learnt that the flag we had raised over the Serail [in Beirut] a few days before had been ordered to be taken down, since the fate of Lebanon had not yet been decided. [>26] ... And thus, while we burned with hope to achieve our dreams, Western policy was manipulating our destiny in secret, drawing up its own plans for our lives and engaging in horse-trading to tear apart our larger Arab homeland. These countries and their inhabitants were little more than pawns on a chessboard... The word ‘Mandate’ now entered the political lexicon...³⁸³

Independence, but no flag? The female Moslem writer of this text, by the way, later spent two years in London where she shared mutual interests in Palestine and feminism with M.A. Broadhurst and M.M. Farquharson, whose National Union of Women for instance hosted Musa Kazem al-Husseini, long-term President of the Palestine Arab Congress and Arab Executive Committee, during his stays in England and who, according to Musa Alami, were the Palestinians’ main contacts in London³⁸⁴. It was also she who, shortly after her return to Lebanon in 1928, removed her veil to deliver a lecture before a mixed audience, sending shocks throughout the Arab world.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ FO 371/3385, p 111, Report to General Clayton (Cairo), 16 November 1918.

³⁸² FO 371/3385, pp 172-73.

³⁸³ Khalidi 1978, p 93.

³⁸⁴ Furlonge 1969, p 85.

³⁸⁵ Khalidi 1978, pp 111-14.

29. Moslem-Christian Association to Allenby

November 1918

This **memorandum** from November 1918 is the first in Akram Zuaytir's *Documents of the Palestinian National Movement*, in Arabic, a compilation which according to Rashid Khalidi "includes a total of 36 documents reflecting Palestinian political positions in 1918, 1919, and 1920."³⁸⁶ It was sent by the Moslem-Christian Association (Jerusalem) to General Allenby. According to Huneidi,

The memorandum claimed that the Arabs were apprehensive after reading a statement in the *Times* that Palestine was to become a 'Jewish Kingdom', and asked whether it was possible that the future of Palestine would be decided without the consent of its people.³⁸⁷

This paraphrase indicates either polite outrage or pre-heartbreak disbelief.

By 1921 there would, by the way, be Moslem-Christian Associations in Yaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, Tulkarem, Hebron and Gaza.³⁸⁸ According to Huneidi,

They intended to call their organization *al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya al-Wataniyya* (the National Arab Party) but the military authorities persuaded them to name it the Moslem-Christian Association in order to demonstrate to the world that opinion was unanimous in Palestine against Zionism.³⁸⁹

Tibawi gives a different explanation, namely that these groups organised around their religious affiliations only because the British during and just after the World War banned "all open political activity".³⁹⁰ At any rate, on 20 November 1918 and again on 2 May 1919 Chief Administrator Arthur W. Money was warning the Foreign Office of the still "widespread apprehension on the part of both Moslems and Christians that Palestine is going to be handed over to the Jews...".³⁹¹ In Money's estimation, "The Palestinians desire their country for themselves and will resist any general immigration of Jews, however gradual, by every means in their power including active hostilities."³⁹²

³⁸⁶ Khalidi 1997, p 256; see also Al-Hout, Bayan (ed.), 1979. *Documents of the Palestinian National Movement, 1918-1939*. Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut and Washington D.C.

³⁸⁷ Huneidi 2001, p 248 note 36.

³⁸⁸ Ghandour 2010, pp 150-51.

³⁸⁹ Huneidi 2001, p 30.

³⁹⁰ Tibawi 1977, p 273.

³⁹¹ FO 371/3386, p 260, note from Arthur W. Money, Chief Administrator; Ingrams 1972, p 44.

³⁹² Farsoun & Zacharia 1997, p 70, citing FO 371/2117/68848 [sic: *This file is from 1914.*].

Soon after the propagation of the Anglo-French Declaration on 7/8 November 1918 [^{>28}] **the Moslem-Christian Committee** (or Association) of Yaffa **appealed to Allenby** through Yaffa Military Governor John E. Hubbard:³⁹³

On this happy day of the last year, the Almighty God has hearkened our prayers by sending a redeemer, who is Great Britain, to save us from the cruelty and despotism of the Turks. ... [We ask of] the Exalted and Everlasting God, to grant a perpetual victory to Great Britain Nation of Justice and Clemency, who is ready to sacrifice even Her own interests with the intentions to help and assist the small, weak, oppressed nations.

After praising Lloyd George's and President Wilson's [^{>20}] apparent support for indigenous Arab and Syrian self-determination, they declared:

Palestine is an Arab country, according to the full meaning of the word. ... Palestine is inhabited by more than three million³⁹⁴ Souls (Moslems and Christians) when it should be reminded that the native Jews are not more than 20,000, half of whom is nearly Arab; as for the Foreigner Jews, they can only be numbered to 80,000. On what grounds do the Jews stand to hope to be granted such boon namely to rule and predominate in Palestine? ... In accordance with such prospect, the Arabs, then, should reclaim Spain and a great portion of Europe where they had established themselves for over 400 years. ... If the country be the pretext, we should hasten to say that the country as well as the inhabitants are Arabs. If the numbers be the pretext, it should not be forgotten that the Arabs are 30 times more numerous than the Jews. If majority of the land be the pretext, the Jews must be warned that the portion they possess in Palestine is nothing more than 1/500 comparatively to the possessions of Moslems and Christians. Is it for the language? Then it is fairly well known that the language of this country is pure Arab. [*also >27*]

The unequivocal message, given perhaps in anticipation of either British duplicity or backsliding from the Anglo-French Declaration [^{>28}]:

[We Palestinian Arabs] ... hold fast in our National right up to death. We, Arabs, are not hostile to the others, and never entertain the least idea to expel other elements from our country wherein we cannot agree to see that our guests the Jews are going to frustrate us from political rights as we are unwilling to consider as native the people who come from outside our country. ... Some Zionist papers have published the necessity of exiling us from Palestine to get possession of it, and to consider it as a Jewish property and National Home to them, in the meantime, the Moslems and Christians, the Jews state, should find another place to live in. ... [T]hen the Jews be informed, that Palestine belongs to us, and will never part with it; they must also know that we are born in Palestine wherein we hope to die and be buried

³⁹³ FO 371/3386, pp 263-65; Kayyali 1978, pp 57-58; Tibawi 1977, p 317; Ayyad 1999, p 76.

³⁹⁴ Apparently, the population of Greater Syria (*Bilad ash-Sham*) was meant.

in its holy grounds. ... Now, since we are the landowners of the country, we humbly request that no matter concerning Palestine be settled without due regard to our opinion and wishes.

The older theme of British violation of the principle of consent of the governed as well as the newer theme of population transfer here became visible. Given that this manifesto, or memorial, was written a good week after the publication of the Anglo-French Agreement, its authors evidently did not trust those two governments.

According to Tibawi, Yaffa Military Governor Hubbard, for his part, did recommend in his comments on this memorial that

the Arabs should have a representative body parallel to the Zionist commission, and that they should receive a declaration from the British government explaining its policy. He had permitted the earliest Moslem-Christian Association in the country to function as a logical result of his understanding of the situation. It was exactly the opposite in Jerusalem where Storrs zealously frustrated the formation of such an association.³⁹⁵

Storrs soon ordered Kamil Effendi al-Husseini, Musa Kazim Pasha al-Husseini, Arif Hikmal Nashashibi and Shaikh Musa al-Budairi to desist from all political activity.³⁹⁶

That the Palestinians had an objective need for organised political resistance is shown by a “secret and confidential” memorandum composed by the War Office, dated November 1918, entitled “The Strategic Importance of Syria to the British Empire”:

The creation of a buffer Jewish State in Palestine, though this State will be weak in itself, is strategically desirable for Great Britain as long as it can be created without disturbing Mohammedan sentiment and is not controlled by a power which is potentially hostile to [Great Britain, e.g. France].³⁹⁷

This implied that the “buffer Jewish State” was of no benefit without the goodwill of the Mohammedans. A Jewish State in Palestine could of course not help but “disturb Mohammedan sentiment”.

The War Office’s opinion that a Jewish “buffer state” would be strategically useful to Britain, in my opinion, needs more research. Who, for instance, was being “buffered” against? The strategic-benefit question was often and contradictorily dealt with at Cabinet meetings. On the face of it, it is hard to understand how antagonising millions of Arabs, as well as millions of Moslems throughout the world, some in British colonies, could have any strategic use at all. Why not just establish *Arab* states bound by treaties with Britain similar to those of Egypt and, soon, Iraq? Zionists naturally asserted there was such a strategic interest. Frontline Zionist Leo Amery MP, for instance, an Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet, already on 20 May 1917 had written that

³⁹⁵ Tibawi 1977, p 318.

³⁹⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 318-19.

³⁹⁷ FO 371/4178, p 357.

Without the control of Palestine it will be impossible either to secure eventual railway communication between Egypt and Mesopotamia, or to prevent a Turkish reoccupation or re-absorption of Arabia, and the collapse of the whole Arab movement to which our prestige in the Moslem world is now committed.³⁹⁸

Objectively, of course, it was Amery's Zionism which needed British "control of Palestine". Amery even imagined a much larger 'buffer state', writing on 18 October 1918 that future "Jewish settlement" will be way beyond Palestine and "is sure to spread not only in the trans-Jordan country, but to Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Near East generally."³⁹⁹ But couldn't Great Britain control Palestine directly, militarily, and far more easily without the albatross of the Balfour Declaration?⁴⁰⁰ The War Office, as seen just above, and many politicians and journalists were perfectly aware that pro-Zionism would "disturb Mohammedan sentiment" – something true up to this very day.

At any rate, whatever the ins and outs of Britain's perceived strategic interests, which were of only remote interest to Palestinians, sometime before this appeal to Jaffa Governor Hubbard on 16 November, another Moslem-Christian delegation had visited Mark Sykes, then in Palestine as a travelling MP,⁴⁰¹ and asked him

(a) Whether Palestine formed or did not form part of Syria. (b) Whether, if so, Palestine came under the category of those inhabitants of the liberated countries who were invited to choose their own futures; and (c) If not, why the notices [i.e. the text of the Anglo-French Agreement (>29)] had been sent to them at all.⁴⁰²

As another aside, according to Shane Leslie, on these travels Sykes, confronted with the vehemence of local opposition to Zionism, began doubting the wisdom of Britain's policy.⁴⁰³ Tannous believed Sykes at some time changed his mind:

Only then did he realize why the Arabs were so vehemently opposed to [the Balfour policy]. Reversing his policy, he went back to Paris to influence members of the Supreme Allied Council to reverse their policies. He made contacts with Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister and others, but unfortunately he fell ill and died [on 16 February 1919].⁴⁰⁴

Perhaps his death from the 'Spanish flu' at that crucial time, when Britain's pro-Zionism was not yet chiselled in stone, was another narrow escape for Zionism. According to George Antonius, Sykes additionally, shortly before his death, rejected the Sykes-Picot

³⁹⁸ CAB 24/14/31, p 126; Regan 2017, p 29.

³⁹⁹ FO 371/3384, p 236, Leo S. Amery, 'The Future of Palestine', 18 October 1918; Kayyali 1978, p 56.

⁴⁰⁰ One writer propounding the theory of the Zionist colonies' strategic usefulness to Britain is Bernard Regan (2017).

⁴⁰¹ Leslie 1923, p 275.

⁴⁰² Kayyali 1978, pp 57-58, quoting FO 371/3385, Storrs to HQ, OETA South, 19 November 1918, but I have not yet found this.

⁴⁰³ Leslie 1923, p 284.

⁴⁰⁴ Tannous 1988, p 82.

treaty as well in favour of a philosophy of self-determination.⁴⁰⁵ There were in fact always a number of highly-placed British politicians and civil servants who shared the political position of the indigenous Palestinians.

⁴⁰⁵ Boyle 2001, p 70.

Meanwhile, in assessing the more or less openly expressed Zionist demand for a state, Arnold Toynbee at the Foreign Office on 2 December 1918 **wrote that**, regarding the Balfour Declaration's "non-Jews" living in the area coveted by the Zionists,

surely our foundation should be a Palestinian State with Palestinian citizenship for all its inhabitants, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. This alone seems consistent with Mr Balfour's letter. Hebrew might be made an official language, but the Jewish element should not be allowed to form a state within the state, enjoying greater privileges than the rest of the population.⁴⁰⁶

Toynbee was mistaken that his desired state was consistent with the Balfour Declaration, which all in all gave "the Jewish people" more than political parity. [16] His message was however noteworthy as one of the first examples of a British official fully agreeing with the position of the Palestinians: Let us have an ordinary state of its inhabitant citizens. The Zionist Commission and Jewish Agency [23], in the judgment of the Royal 'Peel' Commission in 1937, would indeed amount to a "state within a state" [336], and Britain would in fact grant "privileges" to Jews in fundamental respects, e.g. in its Citizenship Order in Council of 1925 [186]; and during the next three decades, as we shall see, British policy would only for a year or two between 1938 and 1940 even contemplate a "Palestinian State" [383ff].

Regarding the accuracy of the "state within a state" description, by the way, Nevill Barbour quoted from a Hebrew-language source the record of the Ottoman Commissioner for Jewish Affairs in Palestine and *Kaimakam* (District Governor) of Yaffa, Bahaaddin Bey, at the outbreak of World War I. According to this *Kaimakam* Jewish colonization was marked by:

The attempt of the Jews to separate themselves from the rest of the inhabitants; their retention of foreign nationality; their submission of litigation to Jewish courts; their own paper-money (by which he referred to the cheques of the Anglo-Palestine Company); their own symbols of statehood, in particular the blue-and-white flag; the Jewish National Fund stamps; their supplanting Arab labour; their purchase of land in an attempt to possess themselves of the country; their disrespect of Turkish authority and of the Turkish language in schools which inculcate Jewish nationalist and anti-Turkish sentiment; and the autonomy of the Jewish colonies, with their own law-courts and defence services.⁴⁰⁷

Although Bahaaddin Bey was reporting on the situation as it was some years before the Balfour Declaration, this is a description of the major complaints made by the Palestinians over the years to the various British commissions tasked with finding out why

⁴⁰⁶ FO 371/3398, p 584; Ingrams 1972, p 43; Tibawi 1977, p 312.

⁴⁰⁷ Barbour 1946, p 53.

the Palestinians were so rebellious [*mainly* >88; >122; >220; >336]. These elements of separatism were of course the preconditions for the separate polity or state which emerged in 1948.⁴⁰⁸

Finally, on 6 December 1918 General Clayton in Cairo was reminding the Foreign Office in London that Dr. Weizmann's well-known statement that the Arabs of Palestine will be satisfied with a new "Arabo-Syrian State", instead of a Palestine, had "aroused distrust and apprehension among the non-Jewish population of Palestine"; perhaps some Arabs were selling out to the Zionists, but Clayton attested that "it does not appear to be realized [in London] that Arab national ambitions count for little in Palestine."⁴⁰⁹ At least in the opinion of Chief Political Officer Clayton, theirs were Palestinian rather than pan-Arab national ambitions.

The state of play exactly one year after Britain started its "endeavour to establish a national home for the Jewish people", in the view of historian Abdul Latif Tibawi, was that such statements by "Weizmann and his associates" were part of an "assault... to legalise the usurpation of the political rights of the Arab majority in Palestine"; they were "aided behind the scenes by Herbert Samuel and openly at the Foreign Office by, among others, Sykes and [Ormsby-]Gore, with the undisguised support of Cecil and the not uncomprehending cynicism of Balfour"; and "renewed Arab protests... were totally ignored at the Foreign Office": the Palestinian-British 'conversation' was a one-way street.⁴¹⁰ Toynebee, along with Louis Bols [*>77; >84*] and to some extent Clayton [*also >34; >42; >45; >53*]⁴¹¹, were exceptions amongst the British who were now running Palestine, with the above-named political actors – soon to be joined by Winston Churchill – constituting the core group within HMG which in reality determined the fate of the next thirty years.

⁴⁰⁸ Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, pp 114, 134-35.

⁴⁰⁹ FO 371/3386, p 255.

⁴¹⁰ Tibawi 1977, pp 305-07.

⁴¹¹ Also Boyle, pp 59, 70, 131.

32. Honduran Palestinians to ‘Your Majesty’ 8 December 1918

Another example of Palestinian opinion in this period just before the Paris Peace Conference is the **message to “Your Majesty” sent by ten Palestinian signees**, originally from Belen [Bethlehem] and Betjala, living in Tegucigalpa:

We have heard reports that the Jews are approaching several of the Allied Governments at the Peace Conference to persuade them to allot to them our native land. In view of these rumours we cannot but raise our voices in protest in view of the following circumstances: The Jews are to-day strangers in our land. The eighteen centuries during which they have been absent from the country are more than sufficient to have wiped out any *feeling for the soil* among them, and to have completely destroyed any bonds of affection which they may have possessed for a distant country. ... *The country which we call our own has become so thanks to our labour and sufferings.* Having thrown off the tyranny of the Sultans of Egypt we fell under the yoke of the Turks. We hope for a Government of our own, formed of people of our own race and sympathising with our needs and collective interests. Now that the liberty of peoples is in everyone’s mouth we demand that we should not be placed in vassalage to the sons of Abraham who we outnumber in population. We can live with them in the same way that we have suffered together with them under the despotism of the Sultans, but we protest strongly against their being given a preponderance over us. ... Now ..., thanks to the Allied victory, justice, liberty and right are enthroned.... Relying on the ideals upheld by the Allied Governments, and the unselfish doctrine of President Wilson [>20] we formulate a protest against any intention of handing over the Holy Land to the Jewish people, and against the setting up of an exclusively Jewish Government in Palestine with supremacy over the actual population.⁴¹² (*emphasis added*) [also >27]

A “feeling for the soil”, resulting from working and living on it unbrokenly for centuries, was part of what distinguished the two incompatible political claims to Palestine.

At the mentioned “Peace Conference” there would be no Palestinian representatives, while Anglo-Zionist principals, for example Chaim Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, Mark Sykes, Richard Meinertzhagen and Herbert Samuel, were officially present as part of the British delegation as of January 1919, all pursuing what these Hondurans anticipated, namely Jewish ownership of Palestine.

⁴¹² FO 371/4170, pp 173-74.

Petitions to Foreign Secretary Balfour, Acting Foreign Secretary Curzon, the Peace Conference itself and to President Wilson himself, **like this one** signed by 33 people from all major Palestinian towns, argued on the basis of “what Dr. Wilson declared [>20], viz:- ‘Securing the rights of weak nations’”:

The principles of justice and equity cannot admit of the crushing of a nation by an influx of a greater number of another foreign nation that will assimilate her. Such procedure smells of the dark ages and is incompatible with the sense of freedom in this age of light. ... The same principle that justified the United States in prohibiting the Chinese immigration, and Australia the Asiatics, and Egypt in excluding the Syrians from employment there – can it not justify the Arabs of Palestine in preventing the immigration of any foreign element that threatens their national existence? The country is ours and has been so of old. We have lived in it longer than they did, and have worked in it more than they did. Our historical and religious relations with it, we Moslems and Christians, far exceed those of the Jews. Therefore, their claim to their ancient historical rights in the country do not give them the right of appropriating it, in as much as in our historical rights we Arabs cannot justify our claims to Spain, our old home... The number of Jews in Palestine does not exceed, at the highest estimate one-eighth of the number of the natives, and their land possessions are not more than 3%. Does justice then allow of the violation of the rights of the majority? The native Jews of Palestine have been and still are our brethren in pleasure and in sorrow. We can live with them peacefully and happily, and enjoy the same individual freedom.⁴¹³

Whatever the relatively remote – “ancient” – historical presence of a group of people in a particular place, that is, whether Palestine or Spain, it was another, illegitimate, thing to try to derive present political rights from it.

To counter this *Palestinian* historical claim the British would soon see the need to explicitly put into the Churchill White Paper of 3 June 1922 [>142] and the Mandate’s Preamble during its formulation and adoption in 1919–1923 [>146] their belief in “the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine”; these two documents would then assert the *non sequitur* here criticised by these Palestinian petitioners, namely that this meant the Jewish people had collective rights there *at present*.⁴¹⁴ Samuel, by the way, later confirmed the petition’s general claim that “the older [Jewish] colonists and residents... have hitherto been on excellent terms with the Arabs...”⁴¹⁵ This actual petition, however, was not read by anybody at the Foreign Office other than a “junior clerk” who buried it on 4 January 1919.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹³ FO 371/4153 pp 11–15; also pp 13 & 16 in Arabic; Ingrams 1972, p 47; Friedman 1987, pp 7–8.

⁴¹⁴ Cmd. 1700; see also Ingrams 1972, pp 99–104 and Khalidi 2020, p 34.

⁴¹⁵ FO 371/6372, p 132, Samuel to Churchill 13 June 1921; Ingrams 1972, p 129; also Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, pp 85–86.

⁴¹⁶ Tibawi 1977, p 338.

III. The “voiceless many”

During 1917 and 1918, as we have seen, Britain had ‘thrown the first stone’ in the fight against the Palestinians which continues to this day. The Palestinians and other Syrians were resisting as best they could, while the British made sure that neither their military administrators in the conquered territory nor the other Powers in Europe and North America seriously challenged their Jewish national home plan. It was not yet necessary to really listen to the Palestinians themselves.

34. Clayton to Foreign Office

5 & 31 December 1918

On 20 November 1918 Chief Administrator Arthur Money had warned of Palestinian “apprehensions” of a Jewish takeover of their country.⁴¹⁷ [>29] Contradicting the various public utterances assuring the Arabs that they would soon be released into freedom [>18; >20; >21; >22; >25; >28], evidence that these apprehensions were justified was contained in a series of British statements and telegrams in the build-up to the Paris Peace Conference starting in early 1919. For instance, Chief Political Officer for Palestine General Gilbert Clayton, an Arabic speaker stationed in Cairo, sent some **“files only” remarks** to the Foreign Office in London on 31 December 1918.⁴¹⁸

Some background is necessary. Clayton had already on 5 December telegraphed⁴¹⁹ to the Foreign Office that

The non-Jewish population of Palestine are concerned not with National aspirations but with the maintenance in Palestine itself of a position which they consider is threatened by the advance of Zionism. The declaration made by Mr. Balfour in November 1917 was extremely unpalatable to the non-Jewish elements both Christian and Moslem, and during the last year Zionist propaganda has not tended to diminish their apprehensions...

He then gave the “present population of Palestine” as 512,000 Moslems, 61,000 Christians and 66,000 Jews” and advised the FO to advise the Zionist Organization to avoid “indiscreet declarations of policy” because

Such a course can only militate against the success of Zionism by arousing hostility which will take many years to dissipate, and will lay them open to the charge of endeavouring to secure their aims by force. There is no reason why the legitimate aspirations of Zionism should not be realized provided their programme is carried out wisely and with sympathy for what is after all the very large majority of the population of Palestine.

Despite the apologetic avowal of democracy in the last phrase, Clayton was expressing a theme that would endure for the next decades: that Zionism should be pursued only “discreetly” – ‘deceptively’ – because it was in the interest, not of the Palestinians, but of Zionism itself. And not only the Zionist Organization, but also the British themselves, should avoid “indiscreet” declarations of the policy opposed by the 90% majority. As a General, Clayton would have had to realise that, given the demographics, Britain, if not the Zionists, would have to “secure their aims by force”.

Returning to the above-mentioned missive dated 31 December, Clayton reacted specifically to a telegram dated 17 December from Weizmann to another British-Zionist member of the Zionist Commission, Dr. Montague David Eder, wherein the latter was told by Weizmann to see to it that

⁴¹⁷ FO 371/3386, p 260.

⁴¹⁸ FO 371/4170, p 153, Clayton to FO 31 December 1918; *see also* FO 371/3386, pp 255-57, Clayton to Foreign Office; Wasserstein 1978, p 37.

⁴¹⁹ FO 371/3386, pp 256-58.

the whole administration of Palestine shall be so formed as to make of Palestine a Jewish Commonwealth under British trusteeship. Second that Jews shall so participate in the administration as to assure this object ... Fourth that the Jewish population be allowed the widest practicable measure of local self-government. Five that the Jews shall have extensive rights in regard to the taking over of land including the right of expropriating the effendis [and] the right of preemption of public works.⁴²⁰

The importance to the plan of “local self-government”, in addition to control of the British administration in Palestine, is here visible. The term “Commonwealth” was here internally preferred to the euphemism “national home”, recalling Curzon’s previous trenchant and sceptical remarks about the ambiguous “Jewish Commonwealth. [>15; also >420] Furthermore, the “expropriation” of Palestinians’ land was unabashedly envisioned.

Despite this background of British-Zionist lobbying for more than a ‘national home’, to be led in Paris by Balfour, Weizmann and Samuel, and despite the fact that this telegram was a perfect example of an “indiscreet declaration of policy” he had advised against in his 5 December telegram home, Clayton on 31 December only recommended to the Foreign Office “comparatively small modifications in Weizmann’s proposals”, explicitly adopting a gradualist approach to “succeed in establishing Zionism in Palestine”:

In view of the fact that quite 90% of the inhabitants of Palestine are non-Jewish, it would be highly injudicious to impose *except gradually* an alien and unpopular element which up to now has had no administrative experience. It is not the appointment of Jewish officials, but development of Colony system by Jewish tillers of the soil, which will succeed in establishing Zionism in Palestine. ... The cause of the Christians and Moslems of Jerusalem should be represented at all times when Zionism is under discussion and with its proportionate claims to attention. ... [I] strongly urge reservation might safeguard the rights of the *voiceless many*. As an example, it might be laid down that an administration of Palestine shall be formed so as to give practical effect to Mr. Balfour’s declaration, and that Jews shall be increasingly employed therein. (*emphasis added*)⁴²¹

I interpret the part about “proportionate claims” to mean the “Christians and Moslems of Jerusalem” should constitute 90% of whichever Palestinian residents were taking part in such discussions of Zionism, but I might be wrong.

These words might have been co-written or even written by Allenby, also in Cairo.⁴²² Both Clayton and Allenby were apparently trying to find the middle way required if the Jewish Commonwealth was not to be nipped in the bud. The argument that Jewish immigrant farmers were more important than Jewish immigrant civil servants was moreover perhaps put forward in an attempt to keep the Jerusalem administration as British as possible. And even if we credit them for standing up for “proportionate” presence and for their accurate and moving description of the non-Jews as the *voiceless many*, the bottom line was that while it would be “judicious” to impose the alien and unpopular element

⁴²⁰ FO 371/4170, p 153.

⁴²¹ FO 371/4154, p 275.

⁴²² Tibawi 1977, p 313.

“gradually” and with “great tact”,⁴²³ imposed it would be. Despite his attitude shown in this entry, Clayton was nevertheless not pro-Zionist enough, and was soon replaced as Chief Political Officer for Palestine by Richard Meinertzhagen⁴²⁴ – a radically pro-Zionist change in that high office. [e.g. >74; >116] (He would later assist High Commissioner Herbert Samuel in Jerusalem, 1922-25.)

It was around this time, furthermore, that Clayton, Mark Sykes and William Ormsby-Gore favoured what would later be called the ‘bi-national’ solution in Palestine⁴²⁵, namely

that at an early date there should be a declaration that the Tutelage [^{>46}] of Palestine should be permanent until both Jewish and non-Jewish elements by decisive respective majorities elected otherwise. ... Agreement would necessitate a majority of both Jews and Arabs respectively in favour of complete autonomy and tutelage would continue if either party refused to agree.⁴²⁶

This was an early, perhaps the earliest, formulation of the principle of *political parity* between the Jews and the non-Jews: Whatever their relative population percentages or historic rights in Palestine, the two groups should hold equal political power. [also e.g. >4; >50; >463]

⁴²³ FO 371/3385, p 423.

⁴²⁴ McTague 1978, p 66.

⁴²⁵ On the ‘bi-nationalism’ which later several times failed to satisfy the Palestinians see >266; >438; >442; >452; >463; >469; >478.

⁴²⁶ FO 371/3385, pp 258, 272, 20-22 November 1918.

35.* Samuel to Peace Conference

Nov 1918-Jan 1919

Herbert Samuel, the author in 1914/15 of the philosemitic ‘The Future of Palestine’ [>8], was in 1918 an MP with Cabinet experience and a top British-Jewish Zionist. In 1918 he co-authored with Weizmann, Sokolow and others from the League of British Jews the ‘**Proposals Relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine**’⁴²⁷ which was intended for adoption at the Paris Peace Conference beginning on 18 January 1919. After the Proposals were amended to speak of a ‘National Home’ rather than a ‘Commonwealth’, they were accepted by Arthur Balfour, Mark Sykes and William Ormsby-Gore. Keep in mind that Weizmann, Sokolow, Samuel, Eder, Churchill, Balfour, Lloyd George, Sykes, Amery, Ormsby-Gore and others determining British policy in Paris were not natives of Palestine.

This Special Committee of the League of British Jews wrote a dozen concrete proposals on or around 19 November 1918.⁴²⁸ (These are probably identical to the “Resolutions” which Foreign Office officials in January 1919 regarded as coming from the “London Bureau of the Zionist Organization”. [>31]) During this time, according to Barbara Smith’s account of the *economics* of the Zionist project, Samuel “chaired a committee on the future finances of the Zionist movement and of the National Home itself”, and he also chaired “HMG’s Advisory Committee on the Economic Development of Palestine...” in early 1920 [>73].⁴²⁹

This group of British Zionists wanted *inter alia* the Balfour Declaration to be “an integral part of [the] constitution” of Palestine and that the “boundaries of Palestine”, which the Balfour Declaration hadn’t defined, should be in the north the Litani River, in the east just west of the Hejaz Railway (i.e. a bit east of the Jordan River), in the south a line from Akaba to El Arish, and in the west the Mediterranean Sea. [see also >27] Politically:

The establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine is understood to mean that the country of Palestine should be placed under such political, economic, and moral conditions, as will favour the increase of the Jewish population, so that in accordance with the principles of democracy it may ultimately develop into a Jewish Commonwealth.

The “principle of democracy” was once again the principle that a majority had the right to sovereignty in a territory – a principle which, if applied on New Year’s Day, 1919, would yield an indigenous Arab government. After sufficient “increase of the Jewish population” it would yield an immigrant Jewish government. This group would succeed in making the Balfour Declaration an “integral part” of the Mandate text – it was indeed incorporated therein word for word – which would amount to Palestine’s “constitution”. [>133; >142; >146]

Further, any nominated administrative body set up by Britain should include enough Jews “adequate for the purpose of giving effect to the policy of the [Balfour] Declaration”.

⁴²⁷ FO 371/3385, pp 203-10, 257-59, 545-64.

⁴²⁸ FO 371/3385, pp 207-10, all further quotations; Ingrams 1972, p 53.

⁴²⁹ Smith 1993, pp 51-52.

Future British proposals for administrative, legislative or advisory bodies would more or less fulfil this wish, with Jews plus British officials always making up the majority. Also, “For all purposes of government the Hebrew language should be recognised as the official language of the Jewish population” and “The Sabbath and Jewish Holidays [were] to be recognised as legal days of rest.” The proposals then outlined in detail the formation of a “Jewish Council for Palestine with ‘the development of a Jewish National Home’ as its declared object.” An “All-Jewish Congress” held in Jerusalem would determine the Council’s constitution, and the Council shall “have two central establishments, one in London and the other in Palestine”. It would be “an independent body, but ... its status should be recognised both by the British Government and by the Government of Palestine”, and its main tasks would be to maximise Jewish immigration and purchase and settlement of land, seeing to it that Government land should not be “alienated”, i.e. sold to non-Jews. HMG would adopt this proposal by including in the Mandate text’s Articles 4 and 6 an official “Jewish agency”. [>146]

The description of this “independent body” fit the Zionist Commission in Palestine which for some nine months was already on the spot in Palestine [>23], as well as the Jewish National Fund (JNF), a British ‘Association Limited by Guarantee’ incorporated under the name ‘Keren Kayemeth Leisrael (originally called *Jüdischer Nationalfonds Limited*)’ in London on 8 April 1907⁴³⁰. This JNF ‘Memorandum and Articles of Association’ were on that date signed by three Germans, two Englishmen, a Russian and a Frenchman – with the ‘Memorandum’ later slightly “altered pursuant to an Order of the Court dated 23rd of October 1933” – and they stated that its main object was

to purchase [etc.] lands... and other immovable property... for the purpose of settling Jews on such lands [and] to let any land or other immovable property... to any Jew or to any unincorporated body of Jews or to any company [if] the Board is of opinion that... the Company is a Company under Jewish control... [and] provided that no lessee or lessees shall be invested with the right of selling... or sub-letting [etc.] its interest in the land or other immovable property... [nor] to sell [etc.]... all or any of the property and assets for the time being of the Association, but so that nothing... shall enable the Association to divest itself of the paramount ownership of any of the soil of the prescribed region which it may... acquire save only that the Association may... transfer the paramount ownership of such lands... to a Corporation in Israel having the primary objects similar to the primary objects of the Association.

The similar organisation it was “winding up” was the “Jewish Colonial Trust (*Jüdische Colonial Bank*)”. These clauses were written to ensure that the land would remain forever in Jewish ownership – for the purposes of settling Jews. Its 67 ‘Articles of Association’ described the “prescribed region” as “Palestine, Syria, any other parts of Turkey in Asia and the Peninsula of Sinai” – considerably larger than what the Special Committee of the League of British Jews (see just above) had envisioned.

Mark Sykes and other Foreign Office officials urged removing the word “Commonwealth” from the last draft of these ‘Proposals Relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National

⁴³⁰ Jewish National Fund 1907, §3.1, 3.3, 11.

Home in Palestine' because this word "would be interpreted as 'State' and give rise to great uneasiness among the non-Jews of Palestine"; they also recommended rendering the description of boundaries more vaguely, namely "from and inclusive of Dan to Beer-sheba". These officials however found that "In all other respects the proposals seem to be eminently satisfactory" and that Mr. Balfour "should... inform Dr. Weizmann that HMG are in agreement with the proposed declaration (subject to the provisos [just above]...). Dr. Weizmann will then arrange for the publication of the (revised) declaration with an announcement that it is approved by HMG."⁴³¹

The task of eliminating the frightening yet honest word "Commonwealth" [see also >38], by the way, was given to William Ormsby-Gore, the pro-Zionist MP who had been a secretary to the War Cabinet when that body sent Balfour's letter to Rothschild [>16] and had accompanied the Zionist Commission to Palestine in 1918 [>23]; as well, he had been "a member of the wartime Arab Bureau in Cairo, Milner's private secretary at the Paris Peace Conference" in 1919 and been "involved in the drafting of both the Balfour Declaration and Palestine mandate"⁴³². Once the weaker phrase "Jewish national home" was adopted, Ormsby-Gore agreed with the entire Special Committee plan.⁴³³ This answer to the feelings and demands of the indigenous population for self-determination was an example of the fact that the Palestinians' dialogue partner was not simply the British Government but rather a union between HMG and Zionist organisations.

In general, in preparation for the peace conference, the Eastern Committee of the Imperial War Cabinet, manned by Balfour, Cecil, Montagu, Smuts, Curzon and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff,⁴³⁴ approved a resolution on Palestine which placed the great majority of the inhabitants at best on an equal political level with 20,000 or 30,000 Zionist immigrants:

The Committee favours the nomination of a single Great Power, either by the League of Nations, or otherwise, to act as representative of the nations in Palestine. ... While we would not object to the selection of the United States of America, yet if the offer were made to Great Britain we ought not to decline. The choice, whatever form it may take, should be, as far as possible, in accordance with the expressed desires (a) of the Arab population, (b) of the Zionist community in Palestine.⁴³⁵

Interesting was the reference to the "Zionist", not the "Jewish", community in Palestine. Moreover, Palestine was seen as the property of the "nations"; the desires of the locals were to be conformed to only "as far as possible", and Palestine was treated differently from Iraq or Syria

because of the declared British commitment to Zionism and the concealed intention of denying its Arab majority self-determination.⁴³⁶ [see >92]

⁴³¹ FO 371/3385, pp 203-05.

⁴³² Pedersen 2010, p 43.

⁴³³ FO 371/3385, p 205.

⁴³⁴ CAB 24/72/15.

⁴³⁵ CAB 24/72/10, p 39; Tibawi 1977, p 304.

⁴³⁶ Tibawi 1977, p 304.

The Eastern Committee was here also mapping the detour Britain wanted to take: its rule with the purpose of establishing a Zionist entity would not be direct colonial rule – now no longer *comme il faut* – but would be hidden behind the international community, HMG merely carrying out that larger group's wishes. It remains moot whether HMG for 30 years could have gotten away with direct colonial imposition of Zionism onto Palestine, but they deliberately called the 'mandate' concept into play on the many occasions when they had to deflect criticism from Palestinians, other Arabs, or Members of the Houses of Parliament.

36. Hogarth to Clayton

18 December 1918

The same D.G. Hogarth who delivered HMG's message to Sherif Hussein on 4 January 1918 [>21] on 18 December 1918 sent **his confidential thoughts** as Commander of the Arab Bureau (British Intelligence) in Cairo to "Chief Political Officer, E.E.F.", that is, to Gilbert Clayton of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, who was from early 1918 through August 1919 also responsible for political intelligence in Palestine:

If the French have to use armed force (as I feel sure they must and will) [to control northern Syria], the injury added to insult will react on Moslem opinion all over the world. We [Britain and France] shall be accused of having tricked the Arabs into treachery to Islam, and all the 'intelligenza' will proclaim the hypocrisy of our declarations in favour of Self-Determination and Small Nations. It cannot be said too strongly that mere liberation from Turks does not appear to Syrian Arabs nearly such a boon as the European Press represents it. *It has been, for them, only a means to the end of independence.* If they are not to have the latter in full measure, they would rather have the Turk back and will scheme to get him. Anti-Jew feeling is as strong as – perhaps stronger than – ever among all classes of Arabs, and there is little doubt that, if we openly and immediately promote a Zionist political state in Palestine, we shall be no more popular than the French in the rest of Syria. Weizmann's disclaimers of political aims are not credited partly because associates of his both at home and in Palestine have not always endorsed them. If the Zionists are to come into their 'National Home', they can do it only by suppressing political aims at present and trusting to the slow affect [effect] of colonization and economic forces. They may do this under a British or an International cover. If our occupation and administration is continued, we must expect every sort of intrigue at the hands of various foreign Christian powers, which have centres established in the country, as well as at those of both Jews and Arabs; and we shall have reason to be *thankful* if and when the Jewish people is *sufficiently numerous and established to take Palestine over.* (emphasis added)⁴³⁷

Hogarth and Clayton were thus in agreement that Zionism had to move "discreetly", the term Clayton used in his similar ruminations during December 1918 related two entries ago. [>34] Hogarth's term "Zionist political state" is refreshingly clear, and in such internal communications it was openly stated that Britain might need "international cover".

Remember that Weizmann was then still in Palestine as head of the semi-official, semi-British Zionist Commission. [>23] While Hogarth here seemingly had a very accurate crystal ball, he did not pick up on the logic that, if British concern for the friendship and partnership of the Moslem world as well as the local Arabs was so great as his words indicated, HMG should not be "thankful" for a Zionist "takeover" of Palestine, but should drop Zionism like a hot potato.

A few years later, on 17 October 1921, according to Huneidi, Hogarth also wrote two perceptive comments to CO Middle East Department head John Shuckburgh. First,

⁴³⁷ FO 371/4178, pp 267-68.

that the 'independence of the Arabs' as applied to the Palestinians is not really consistent with a Jewish National Home, as the Zionists understand this! But I suppose it is consistent with 'Palestinian citizenship' in independence of the Turks. [Secondly, he] pointed out that the Palestinians were presently basing their claims against the terms of the Balfour Declaration on their status as a majority in Palestine, not on the McMahon pledges.⁴³⁸

Their status as a majority, however, counted for nothing up until the MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939. [>410]

⁴³⁸ Huneidi 2001, pp 66-67, citing CO 733/38.

37.* Faisal-Weizmann Agreement

3 January 1919

Palestine was historically and politically, not to mention culturally, part of Syria, even if at times the British tried to claim the opposite⁴³⁹, and Emir Faisal ibn-Hussein, with British material and political support, was as of 1 October 1918 head of a provisional Syrian government in Damascus, not to be confused with the intended permanent government he headed between March and July 1920 [>26; >28; >69; >71; >91]. The indigenous population of Syria – later partitioned into Syria, Palestine, the Lebanon and Transjordan – regarded Syrian unity as both a fact and, in knowledge of the Sykes-Picot agreement, a demand. Thus it is artificial at this stage of the chronology to exclude Faisal's dialogues with the British from consideration, and also artificial to focus only on southern Syria, i.e. Palestine. After partition became a fact, and after Faisal exited the Syrian scene in mid-1920, I will limit the entries to the British-Palestinian dialogue, regarding it as immaterial that several figures, for instance George Antonius and Sheikh Izz ed-Din al-Qassam, were not born in what became Palestine. This entry can thus be classified as one of the few covering Arab-Jewish Zionist or Palestinian-Jewish Zionist dialogues. [see others, e.g. >52; >53; >60; >71; >213]

The roles of Faisal, his father Sherif Hussein and his brother Abdullah were of great importance to the Palestinians at the time, their dialogues with the British (and French) bearing characteristics similar to those of interactions between the British and Palestinians, with similar issues, demands, and refusals. That said, given the Palestinians' closeness to Faisal, pro-Zionists have often taken Faisal's statements which were, or sounded, conciliatory towards Zionism, as evidence for a broader Palestinian approval of Zionism, ignoring all (yes, all) other Palestinians.⁴⁴⁰ One recent example of such unreflected distortion and current weaponisation of the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement is the utterly baseless 2020 statement by Efraim Karsch that Faisal “endorsed the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine in line with the Balfour Declaration...”⁴⁴¹

Nobody invited any Palestinians to the table in Paris, but Faisal came with a Syrian delegation to London on 10 December 1918, went to Paris about a month later, and thanks to the French was allowed to “sit at the Peace Conference table”, where he made a statement on 29 January 1919 demanding independence; the Supreme Allied Council's rejection on 20 March 1919 of this demand “caused commotion in Syria”.⁴⁴² During much of 1919 he was in Paris as the main and uncontested spokesman for the independence from the war victors of all parts, or former vilayets, of the Arab Near East. As the resolutions of the General Syrian Congress, held at the beginning of July 1919 [>52], and the report of the

⁴³⁹ Tibawi 1977, pp 301, 307.

⁴⁴⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 68, citing FO 371/4181 (Clayton to Foreign Secretary 19 June 1919); see also FO 371/4181, pp 120-33 on Faisal's attitudes; also Friedman 1987, pp 173-95.

⁴⁴¹ Karsch 2020, p 7.

⁴⁴² Tannous 1988, pp 80, 82-83.

King-Crane Commission at the end of August 1919 [59] would prove, the preferred solution for the Palestinians no less than the other Syrians was a Syrian, decentralised and democratic civil constitutional monarchy with Faisal as monarch.⁴⁴³

The Faisal-Weizmann Agreement was a document⁴⁴⁴ signed by a Jewish Zionist who was also an influential Briton heading the semi-official Zionist Commission active in Palestine [e.g. >23], and an Arab from the Hejaz who was influential amongst Palestinians and under whose leadership the Syrian Congress was established in Damascus. Its text in fact states that it is an agreement between “the Arab state and Palestine”. I take “Arab state” to denote the large area covering Yemen and the Hejaz, Jezireh and some of Syria, while “Palestine” denoted one of two possible entities:

- 1) one of the “provinces of Arab Asia”, as Faisal referred to Palestine in his own separate memorandum or ‘manifesto’ of either 1 or 4 January 1919;⁴⁴⁵ or
- 2) a future Jewish state on all or most of the land of Palestine, as intended by Weizmann and the two top Zionists who accompanied him to the meeting with Faisal at the Carlton Hotel in London, namely Herbert Samuel and Nathan Sokolov, who was then secretary general of the World Zionist Congress, and with T.E. Lawrence present as translator.

These are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but I believe that in this particular Agreement “Palestine” referred to a Palestinian state which in some degree would be Zionist, perhaps a Zionist province of some sort within the “Arab state”.

While the term ‘Jewish national home in Palestine’ was *not* used, Article 3 of the Agreement read:

In the establishment of the Constitution and Administration of Palestine all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government’s Declaration of the 2nd of November, 1917.

And that Declaration, of course, did call for such a Jewish national home [16], and the “Palestine” entering an agreement with “the Arab state” would arguably belong to the Jewish Zionists.

Practically every other aspect of the Agreement, including its authenticity and the circumstances surrounding Faisal’s famous ‘reservations’ in a ‘codicil’ – which was recorded in the hand-writing of Lawrence (*see* just below) – is the subject of fierce debate.⁴⁴⁶ The Agreement was nevertheless often employed by both HMG and Zionists to attempt to show Palestinian acquiescence in the British pro-Zionist policy – starting directly fol-

⁴⁴³ FO 371/4182, p 208.

⁴⁴⁴ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 28-29; Jewish Virtual Library <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-weizmann-faisal-agreement-january-1919>, all citations.

⁴⁴⁵ Faisal 1919.

⁴⁴⁶ CO 733/343/7, pp 3-18; also Antonius 1938, pp 281-88; Jeffries 1939, pp 259-65; Allawi 2104, p 188.

lowing its signing and continuing throughout the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and, for instance, in testimony before the Shaw Commission in 1930 [-220], by Weizmann in the *Jerusalem Post* on 15 June 1936⁴⁴⁷, by Leo Amery in the Commons in May 1939⁴⁴⁸, etc.

The Agreement held *inter alia*:

All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale, and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants upon the land through closer settlement and intensive cultivation of the soil. In taking such measures the Arab peasant and tenant farms shall be protected in their rights and shall be assisted in forwarding their economic development. (Art. 4)

The phrase ‘close settlement of Jews on the land’ would re-appear in Article 6 of the Mandate text. [-146]

The bait, as all throughout the Mandate, was economic development:

The Zionist Organization proposes to send to Palestine a Commission of experts to make a survey of the economic possibilities of the country, and to report upon the best means for its development. The Zionist Organization will place the aforementioned Commission at the disposal of the Arab State for the purpose of a survey of the economic possibilities of the Arab State and to report upon the best means for its development. The Zionist Organization will use its best efforts to assist the Arab State in providing the means for developing the natural resources and economic possibilities thereof. (Art. 7)

While these two Articles focus on economic development and Jewish immigration, they make no mention of the establishment of a Jewish political entity.

Whatever the document’s body said, what were Faisal’s famous ‘reservations’, sometimes called his ‘codicil’, written in both English and Arabic and stating the pre-condition for the rest of the Agreement? There are several versions of this caveat, but all of them make compliance with the body of the Agreement dependent on full independence for Syria (and/or the “Arab state”). This is decisive, because it meant that whatever immigration and development that could be called ‘Zionist’ would be under the control of an independent indigenous government.

One version read:

Provided the Arabs obtain their independence as demanded in [my] Memorandum dated the 4th of January, 1919, to the Foreign Office of the Government of Great Britain, I shall concur in the above articles [of the Agreement]. But if the slightest modification or departure were to be made I shall not then be bound by a single word of the present Agreement which shall be deemed void and of no account or validity, and I shall not be answerable in any way whatsoever.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ CO 733/343/7, pp 4, 5.

⁴⁴⁸ Hansard 1939, cc2005-06, 1939a, cc2183-84.

⁴⁴⁹ CO 733/343/7. Also Abdul Hadi 1997, p 29; Allawi 2014, pp 188-89.

A slightly different version, written by Lawrence in English and signed by him on behalf of Faisal, was that obtained by Jeffries, and read:

If the Arabs obtain their independence as demanded in my memorandum of the 4th January 1919 to the Foreign Office of the Government of Great Britain, I shall agree to the contents of the above clauses. But if the slightest change or modification is made I shall not then be tied or bound by any of its provisions, and the agreement will then be null and void, not binding and of no account, and I shall not be liable in any manner whatsoever.⁴⁵⁰

In both versions, Faisal was saying that without overall, ultimate sovereignty there was no agreement to large-scale Jewish immigration or teamwork with Zionist development agencies.

Faisal's referred-to memorandum of early January was dated either 1 or 4 January, was addressed either to the British Foreign Secretary or the Peace Conference, and it might have also been signed by Weizmann⁴⁵¹. It said that Arab "independence" was to be in the large area south of a line between Alexandretta (today's Turkish Hatay province) and Persia all the way to the Indian Ocean, and that independence meant not sacrificing any political freedom. Quoting:

We feel also that foreign technical advice and help will be a most valuable factor in our national growth. We are willing to pay for this help in cash; we cannot sacrifice for it any part of the freedom we have just won for ourselves by force of arms. ... In Palestine the enormous majority of the people are Arabs. The Jews are very close to the Arabs in blood, and there is no conflict of character between the two races. ... My father [Sherif Hussein, >10] and the Arabs of Asia... expect the powers to think of them as one potential people, jealous of their language and liberty, and ask that no step be taken inconsistent with the prospect of an eventual union of these areas under one sovereign government.⁴⁵²

Freedom would not be used as the currency with which to pay the Zionists for economic help, and in effect the codicil, through its reference to this more or less simultaneous memorandum, was re-stating the *sine qua non* of absolute final say.

According to Ali A. Allawi,

The agreement was not made public until 1936, when Weizmann first revealed it in a letter to *The Times*. But it was given to the American delegation at the peace conference by the Zionist movement, without either Faisal's codicil in Arabic or Lawrence's (mis)translation of it, and played its part in the conference's favourable position on the Zionist demands.⁴⁵³

Pro-Zionist positions allegedly uttered by Faisal at a meeting which took place on 1 March with Weizmann, Lawrence and Felix Frankfurter⁴⁵⁴ would, arguably, also be constrained or nullified by Faisal's reservations or codicil. Faisal furthermore himself strove for democracy, albeit as usual in collusion with the British, as witnessed by his role in

⁴⁵⁰ Jeffries 1939, pp 264, 261-62.

⁴⁵¹ Tannous 1988, pp 92-93; Jeffries 1939, p 264.

⁴⁵² Faisal 1919; also Kuhn 2011, p 22; Allawi 2014, p 197.

⁴⁵³ Allawi 2014, p 189.

⁴⁵⁴ Allawi 2014, pp 213-17.

the Syrian state established on 8 March 1920 [⁵²; ⁷⁸; ⁶⁹] and much later, on 8 November 1929 as King of Iraq, when he formulated for the British authorities in Baghdad his own solution for Palestine, namely “a national government... in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants” and which did not include a Jewish ‘national home’.⁴⁵⁵ [²¹³]

At any rate, a short while later Major J.N. Camp, Gilbert Clayton’s successor as Chief Political [intelligence] Officer of the O.E.T.A. in Cairo, wrote:

In my opinion, Dr. Weizmann’s agreement with Emir Faisal is not worth the paper it is written on or the energy wasted in the conversation to make it. On the other hand, if it becomes sufficiently known among the Arabs, it will be somewhat in the nature of a noose about Faisal’s neck, for he will be regarded by the Arab population as a traitor. No greater mistake could be made than to regard Faisal as a representative of Palestinian Arabs...; he is in favour with them so long as he embodies Arab nationalism and represents their views, but would no longer have any power over them if they thought he had made any sort of agreement with Zionists and meant to abide by it. But it seems that he is capable of making contradictory agreements with the French, the Zionists and ourselves, of receiving money from all three, and then endeavouring to act as he pleases. This is an additional reason why his agreement with Weizmann is of little or no value.⁴⁵⁶

Musa Kazem al-Husseini was one leading Palestinian whose opinions constituted evidence for Camp’s observation that Palestinians by no means endorsed the Faisal-Weizmann text without the codicil.⁴⁵⁷ [*see* ⁶²] Another was Haqqi Al-Azm, who at that time, when Faisal was hoping for Zionist help in Syria’s bid for independence, was clear that this should not mean placing Palestine in Zionist hands.⁴⁵⁸ Whatever Faisal’s position in early 1919, in July 1919 he told General Clayton that he accepted Zionism only “in its limited sense of a certain amount of immigration and the retention of the existing Jewish colonies. The wider Zionist aspirations had, however, frightened the people of the country and he now finds them determined not to have any form of it.”⁴⁵⁹ [⁵³]

Eighteen years later, on 30 January 1937, historian and eyewitness (in 1919) A.L. Tibawi, c/o the Education Office in Yaffa, would send to the Royal (Peel) Commission still meeting in Jerusalem [³³⁶] “two memoranda”⁴⁶⁰ expressing in exhaustive detail his “candid opinion and complete conviction” concerning matters pertaining to “The so-called Faisal-Weizmann Pact of 1919” [³⁷] (as well as “The Hussain-McMahon Correspondence of 1915” [¹⁰]). Concerning this “pact” between Faisal, Weizmann and Lawrence, four of his main points were, paraphrasing his monograph dated 15 or 16 June 1936:

1. There are many discrepancies concerning dates, handwriting and the placement of insertions surrounding Faisal’s Reservations.

⁴⁵⁵ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 66-67.

⁴⁵⁶ FO 371/4182, p 353.

⁴⁵⁷ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 36.

⁴⁵⁸ Ayyad 1999, pp 74-75, 80-83.

⁴⁵⁹ Also Friedman 1987, p 37, *reproducing* FO 608/99, Cable 311, Clayton to the Foreign Office.

⁴⁶⁰ CO 733/343/7, pp 3-18.

2. Why was the Agreement not prominently published before 1936? When and where, if at all, was it ever published in Arabic?
3. Assuming the document is genuine, Faisal's rock-bottom condition for "a Jewish district within an Arab Empire" was the *unity* at least of Syria – including Palestine and Transjordan.
4. Faisal *did*, in late 1919 in the *Jewish Chronicle*, promise that if the Jews helped the Arabs to wrest such a unified, independent Arab Empire from Britain and France, the Arabs will 'constitute for them a Jewish district within our Arab Empire'.

A "district" is as far from a 'state' as it gets.

Given Faisal's codicil of 'reservations' and these other instabilities in the document, the Peel Commission [[336](#)] was dead wrong in 1937 when it claimed:

If King Hussein and Emir Faisal secured their big Arab State, they would concede little Palestine to the Jews. ... There was a time when Arab statesmen were willing to concede little Palestine to the Jews, provided that the rest of Arab Asia were free.⁴⁶¹

Not only did the Peel Commission offer no evidence for this claim – to my knowledge, there is none – but the texts presented in this entry show positively that Faisal insisted on independence as a precondition for anything else. Moreover, had he 'agreed' to the Zionist program by "conceding" "little Palestine", as envisioned by Weizmann, he would have been repudiated by the General Syrian Congresses of early July 1919 and early March 1920 [[52](#); [69](#)] – but he wasn't. Another indication that Faisal saw the Zionists in a minor role is the "memorandum of his own" already mentioned above, submitted to the Paris Peace Conference in early January and "claiming the independence for the Arabs", as well as the "similar memorandum to the Supreme Allied Council" dated 29 January which cited the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 and proposed what turned out to be the King-Crane Commission visit to Syria. [[28](#); [59](#)].⁴⁶²

⁴⁶¹ Peel 1937, II. §26, XXIII. §5.

⁴⁶² Furlonge 1969, p 71.

38. Kidston and Graham to Foreign Secretary 20 January 1919

The London Bureau of the Zionist Organization, headed by Chaim Weizmann, had submitted to the Foreign Office for use at the Paris peace conference the “Resolutions adopted by Jewish Organisations in various parts of the world... united in favour of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.”⁴⁶³ [see also >34; >35] The importance at this stage of the term ‘Commonwealth’ as opposed to either ‘state’ or ‘home’ should not be underestimated. The Peace Conference, actually a meeting of the victors who would decide among themselves what to do with their conquered territories, including Palestine, was beginning. And a Jewish Commonwealth (State) was the true Zionist, and British-Zionist, goal. On 20 January 1919 Weizmann forwarded eight telegrams to Ronald Graham at the Foreign Office, from Zionist organisations in the U.S., Germany, Galicia, Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, all naming the goal as either a “Jewish Commonwealth” in all of Palestine, a “Jewish Palestine”, or a “National Home in Undivisible Palestine”. A resolution, moreover, of the American Jewish Congress held in Philadelphia 15-18 December 1918, attended by 375 delegates and allegedly “speak[ing] in the name of the whole of American Jewry”, re-interpreted the Balfour Declaration to mean that “there shall be established such political, administrative and economic conditions in Palestine as will ensure... the development in Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth...”

How did Foreign Office officials such as Graham and George Kidston deal with this departure from the text of the Balfour Declaration? Kidston noted internally that the phrase “a Jewish Commonwealth” was used in almost all the telegrams and by Weizmann himself, to which Graham commented that “In replying we should avoid the phrase and should refer to the reconstruction of Palestine as a Jewish National Home”; another official noted that “the ‘Home’ will be pushed aside... and finally the ‘Commonwealth’ will emerge triumphant.” Graham was apparently oblivious of the debate over and ultimate relinquishing of the phrase “reconstitution of Palestine” during the drafting of the Balfour Declaration (which we analysed above [>16]), because the “reconstruction” of (all of) *Palestine* would be no more publicly palatable than the term “commonwealth”, the word Graham wanted to “avoid”.

⁴⁶³ FO 371/4153, pp 70-82, all quotations and citations.

Sometimes called the All-Palestine Conference, **the 1st Palestine Arab Congress (PAC)** met in Jerusalem starting on 27 January 1919 and was attended by 27 prominent Moslems and Christians including Aref al-Dajani, Izzat Darwaza and *Filistin* editor Yusef al-Isa.⁴⁶⁴ [Appendix 2] It had been preceded on 11 January by a “memo to the Peace Conference” from “the A'yan leaders of Nablus” protesting against Zionist plans and any separation of Palestine from Greater Syria⁴⁶⁵; commenting at the Foreign Office, Arnold Toynbee called this petition “rather a formidable document”⁴⁶⁶. The Palestinians were not allowed any official position or representation at the Paris Peace Conference, but the Congress cabled the Peace Conference declaring “that they will forcibly resist any attempt to set up in this land a Jewish State or anything resembling it”, protesting “that Palestine should be called Southern Syria and united with Northern Syria”, and demanding “that the Government of Palestine should be constitutional and independent.”⁴⁶⁷ Relevant to our theme of the frequent absence of British-Palestinian dialogue is that the Nablus and PAC “petitions” to Paris were seen at the Foreign Office by officials no higher-ranked than Kidston and “buried in the files of the delegation at the Peace conference.”⁴⁶⁸ Balfour conveyed and supported the Zionist voice to the Conference, but “ensured the denial of any hearing of that of the Arabs of Palestine.”⁴⁶⁹

Growing out of, or indeed constituted by, the several Moslem-Christian Associations,⁴⁷⁰ this first of seven meetings of the nationalist Palestine Arab Congress (PAC)⁴⁷¹ [Appendix 1] chose delegates⁴⁷² to go to the planned General Syrian Congress [52], but, according to Abdul Wahhab Kayyali, the British would not let them travel.⁴⁷³ According to Lesch, this travel ban ended up “forcing the Palestinians to rely on Emir Faysal”⁴⁷⁴, who was in Paris, assisted by Awni Abdul Hadi (who spoke French) but relying on Lawrence to translate from English⁴⁷⁵.

The adopted statutes (resolutions)

⁴⁶⁴ FO 608/98, p 362.

⁴⁶⁵ Ayyad 1999, p 77.

⁴⁶⁶ Friedman 1987, p 17, *reproducing* FO 608/99, p 114.

⁴⁶⁷ FO 371/4153, pp 321-23, 325 (The Palestine Conference, 2 March 1919); also Lesch 1973, p 14.

⁴⁶⁸ Tibawi 1977, pp 354-55.

⁴⁶⁹ Tibawi 1977, p 346.

⁴⁷⁰ For a full list of members of the MCAs from Jerusalem, the villages, and Jaffa, see Muslih 1988, p 159.

⁴⁷¹ For an overview of Arab political organization, 1919-1939, see Lesch 1979, p 78.

⁴⁷² Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, Haidar Abdul Hadi, Sheikh Ragheb Abu Sioud, Jubran Kazma, and Izzet Darwaza. (FO 608/98, p 359)

⁴⁷³ Kayyali 1978, pp 60-63, *citing* FO 371/4153. *I have not yet found this.*

⁴⁷⁴ Lesch 1979, p 88.

⁴⁷⁵ Tibawi 1977, p 343.

called for the preservation of the material and moral rights of the people; the advancement of the agricultural, industrial, economic, and commercial conditions of the 'homeland'; the revival of learning; and the education of the new 'nationalist generation'.⁴⁷⁶

The younger, strongly anti-French delegates, who made up a majority at the Congress, declared:

Our wishes are only in Arab unity and complete independence. ... [W]e desire that one district Southern Syria or Palestine should not be separated from the Independent Arab Syrian Government and to be free from all foreign influence and protection. In accordance with the rule laid down by President Wilson [>20] and approved by most of the Great Powers we consider that every promise or treaty concluded in respect of our country and its future as null and void and reject the same.⁴⁷⁷

This message, congruent with all Syrian stances since and including the Damascus Protocol [>9], was sent to “the British, French, Italian and Spanish representatives in Jerusalem” as well as being aimed at all countries at the Peace Conference, which had begun in Paris on 18 January 1919.⁴⁷⁸

In addition, a telegram dated 3 February to the Peace Conference from the “Jerusalem Conference” (1st PAC), signed by all delegates,⁴⁷⁹ held the following:

All the inhabitants of Palestine consisting of the Arab Districts of Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre, both Moslems and Christians... submit to your Supreme Conference their strong protest owing to what they have heard – that the Zionists have been promised to have our own country as their own National one, that they intend to immigrate to this country and to colonize it. (p 370)

A similar “Decision submitted to the Peace Conference” by the PAC on 5 February notably did not mention Zionism, speaking only in positive terms about the independence advocated in word but apparently not in deed by the Powers:

In view of the fact that the Declaration of President Wilson [>20] is considered to be one of the fundamental principles on which the Peace Conference is based for the freedom of nations liberated from the Turkish yoke, the cancellation of all secret treaties concluded during the war and the promise to nations to choose the kind of government they desire for themselves and their country... we the delegates... have decided at a meeting held in Jerusalem to submit this decision in the name of the Arabic Nation, Moslems and Christians living in this country, the population of which is one million souls, to state our wishes and demands for the future of our country and its ruling placing all our trust in the great conference being convinced that it will admit our rights, comply with our demands and grant our requests. (p 363)

Giving more arguments and detail was a 2- or 3-page “list of objections offered through the Military Governor of Tul Keram [Karem] to the Government of Great Britain”:

⁴⁷⁶ Muslih 1988, p 162, citing Zu'aytir Papers File B/MS 1.

⁴⁷⁷ Kayyali 1978, p 62; Ayyad 1999, pp 78-79.

⁴⁷⁸ Kayyali 1978, p 63.

⁴⁷⁹ FO 608/98, all further citations.

We, the undersigned, Moslems and Christians from the inhabitants of the District of Beni Saab, attached to Nablus, and one of the Arab districts of Palestine,... wish to say that as it is being repeated that Palestine is to be the native land of the Jews, and that they will emigrate to it and colonize it, and as the principle which is publicly spread out by President Wilson and is receiving the approval of the Allied Powers, is the safeguarding of the rights of the weak races, we raise our objections against the claims of the Zionists believing that the Justice of the Allies would judge in our favour and would strengthen our rights in this country. (pp 372-73, in Arabic pp 374-77)

It was then argued that the Jews had only a weak and very old historical claim to presence and strength in Palestine, compared with the strong, lengthy and more recent one of the Arabs:

Palestine is not their original country. Their independence in it has not continued but for a short time, and our Ancestors have taken it from the Romans and have, towards its conquest and safe keeping, during the last thirteen centuries, shed a great deal of blood. Also, we have always been, by the right of 'absolute' majority, the Masters of the land. ... If it holds true that a nation that has for a certain time taken possession of a land, has now the right of retaking it and colonizing it, then it would be a right for every nation to demand the possession of the land which it has colonized during any historical period. The Greeks and the Roman 'Italians' would have the right to raise such claims, also the Arabs would claim Spain and other countries which they have colonized. (p 372)

Akram Zuaytir, born in Nablus in 1909, re-stated this analysis in 1958:

[T]he Jews were not the original inhabitants of Palestine but were intruding outsiders who never possessed more than a portion of the country and at no time constituted the majority of its people. We have noticed that neither the kingdom nor the unity of the Jews lasted for long in Palestine and that they were confined only to the reigns of David and Solomon in which period the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Iraq and Syria were passing through a phase of weakness. We have also seen... that the period of Jewish settlement in Palestine came to an end as a result of the wars between the Jews and the original inhabitants... Moreover, when the Jews left Palestine two thousand years ago no monuments, indicative of civilisation, were left by them in the country.

Zuaytir added that if "historical connection" entails current political rights, "the State of California... would go to Mexico, Mexico to Spain and Spain to the Arabs, who had possession of it for many centuries;..."⁴⁸⁰

Furthermore, the PAC held, the ties of Moslems and Christians to the Holy Land were very close, the population at the moment was at least 90% non-Jewish, the emigrating Jews would not integrate with Arab society, and the planned domination of Palestine by the Jews will cause "future trouble". (pp 372-73)

⁴⁸⁰ Zuaytir 1958, pp 50-51.

Basing ourselves upon [our] clear rights we object to the request of the Zionists to create for themselves a Motherland in our country, to emigrate to it, to colonize it, and we ask the justice of Great Britain to look carefully into our demands, to sanction our rights in our own country and not to sever it from Arabic Syria which is a natural part of it. (p 373)

The irrefutable demand claimed Palestine for the Palestinians, and the Powers were bound by their own words praising self-determination to regulate things accordingly.⁴⁸¹ Lost in the millions of subsequent words and liters of spilled blood during the next thirty years was the utter simplicity of the conflict: freedom vs tutelage-cum-Zionism.

early 1919 *Journalist, lawyer and politician Hassan Sidqi Dajani sets up and leads the Muntada Al-Adabi (the Literary Gathering) in Jerusalem. ... Aref Dajani becomes President of the Moslem-Christian Association in Jerusalem.*

Late January-6 February 1919 *Faisal at the Paris peace conference pleads both behind the scenes with a Memorandum dated 29 January and, on 6 February, before the Council of Ten, for independence and 'that the only legitimate rule for Syria must be based on the will of the people expressed through a plebiscite. ... The Arabs were as advanced as the Greeks or Romanians, who had their own national states, and had no need for a foreign mentor.'*⁴⁸²

1917-1920 *'In the period between 1917 and 1920 ... more than forty Arab political associations sprang up, with a total membership of over 3,000. ... These associations were nationalist bodies whose main objective was the thwarting of the Zionist program and the establishment of an independent Arab Palestine or an independent Greater Syria with Palestine united with it.'*⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ Qumsiyeh 2011, pp 50-52.

⁴⁸² Allawi 2014, p 198. The 6 February meeting was attended by French hosts Georges Clemenceau and Stephen Jean-Marie Pichon, President Wilson, U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Lloyd George, Balfour, Italian Premier Vittorio Orlando, and a Japanese group headed by Prince Saionji Kinmochi. (Allawi 2014, p 199)

⁴⁸³ Muslih 1988, pp 156-57.

40. The British interpret the 1st PAC

January-March 1919

The absent Palestinians were sending protests to the Paris Peace Conference from all over the world as well as from Jerusalem where, in one British view of the 1st Palestine Arab Congress,⁴⁸⁴ "... a conference was hastily convened by Christian and Muslim Palestinian Arabs [>39] to express their opposition to the [Balfour] Declaration, preferring a union with Syria which they considered themselves connected to 'by national, religious, linguistic, natural, economical and geographical bonds'" (p 353) Reports of this PAC, attended by the renowned leaders and publicists of "Palestine or Southern Syria", were sent to Lords Curzon and Balfour by Cairo Intelligence Chief J.N. Camp and by General Gilbert Clayton and Colonel Ronald Storrs who were attached to the OETA South (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration) based in Cairo. (p 358)

The Foreign Office summarised the Congress's position:

General opinion favours retention of Palestine as Arab country included within Syria; mistrust of Great Britain has risen owing to her encouragement of Zionism, the influence of which Arabs greatly suspect. (p 360)

Clayton concurred:

All [delegates] are unanimous in asking that Palestine should remain an Arab country and should not be separated from Syria, and although the delegates cannot be considered entirely representative they may be held to voice general opinion on this particular point. ... [F]ear and dislike of Zionism has induced the present attitude in the population of Palestine. ... [W]ith Palestine joined to an Arab Syria the people of Palestine with the help of other Arabs would be able successfully to resist Jewish immigration and Zionist plans. (pp 360, 352, 355)

The delegates were anything but united on several issues: some wanted Palestine to be called 'Palestine', others 'Southern Syria'; some were pro-British, some pro-French, some against both; some were more vehement than others about the unity of Syria. Aref Daudi and Yacoub Farraj, both Jerusalem delegates, wrote to "His Excellency the Military Governor of Jerusalem [Storrs] arguing in detail that the other delegates were improperly chosen, not elected by the proper "Palestine Societies". (p 366)⁴⁸⁵ But, as corroborated by Intelligence Officer J.N. Camp, they all did agree on one thing, anti-Zionism. For example, according to Tibawi, Faris Nimr's newspaper in Cairo, *al-Muqattam*, was "known for its pro-British tendency, but on the Zionist issue it was frankly hostile."⁴⁸⁶ In Camp's view their resolutions were first and foremost an

energetic protest against Zionist aspirations in Palestine, with lengthy arguments attempting to refute various Zionist claims, and with statements showing the essentially Arabic character of the country. ... However difficult it may be to understand the exact meaning

⁴⁸⁴ FO 608/98, *all quotations*; Friedman 1987, pp 1-5; Kattan 2009, p 43.

⁴⁸⁵ Also FO 371/4153, pp 328-29.

⁴⁸⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 273, also 356.

of various resolutions passed by the Conference, one thing is clear, and that is the unalterable opposition of all non-Jewish elements in Palestine to Zionism. ... I am convinced that if it were not for Zionism ninety percent of the people of this country [i.e., the non-Jews] would come out without qualification in favour of a British Administration and Protectorate. (p 360)⁴⁸⁷

There was still considerable anti-Turkish, anti-French, pro-British feeling amongst the locals (pp 356, 359), friendship which would be frittered away by Britain's selfless support for a Jewish commonwealth.

Camp went on to note that the locals whose state he was tasked with monitoring

are dumbfounded at these declarations [the Balfour Declaration and pro-Zionist statements by President Wilson] and cannot understand how people who talk about the rights of small nations, protection of the minority, self-determination, etc. can proceed, as they interpret it, to hand over Palestine to an alien people, now in the minority, who would eventually dispossess them of their lands and undoubtedly tyrannise over them. ... I have personally heard many Arabs, both Christians and Moslems, declare that they will forcibly resist any attempt to set up in this land a Jewish State or anything resembling it. (pp 360-61)⁴⁸⁸

Thirty years before it happened, these Palestinians saw that their dispossession was the logical outcome of British policy. According to John McTague, Camp on 12 August 1919 stated that carrying out the British policy would require military force and that it would be better if Jewish applicants for immigration were not given preferred treatment.⁴⁸⁹

Storrs at one point noted, oblivious to the irony, that the conference "can hardly be described as representative of Palestine" because of "strict orders... that no official of the Administration should take part..." (p 356) That is, there was a ban on attendance for British employees – perhaps one reason for the predominance of the wealthy and those in the self-employed professions. Concerning representativeness Camp, for his part, reported:

The four Jerusalem delegates were chosen by a mixed Moslem-Christian Committee composed of twenty representatives from the villages, ten Moslems from the city, five Latins, and five Greek Orthodox. (p 359)

He went on:

The chief causes that led up to the Conference were Zionism and the expression by the Allies from time to time of the ideas of self-determination and liberty for small nations and formerly oppressed peoples. [>14; >18; >20; >21; >22; >25; >28] The fact is that the non-Jewish peoples of Palestine are convinced that they will be more oppressed than in the time of the Turks if Jewish domination is set up in Palestine or if the Jewish population should come to outnumber the Moslem and Christian. (p 358)

⁴⁸⁷ Also FO 371/4153, pp 321-22.

⁴⁸⁸ Also FO 371/ 4153, p 322; Kayyali 1978, p 61; Tibawi 1977, pp 355-56.

⁴⁸⁹ McTague 1978, p 59.

These allegedly uneducated and inferior Palestinians assessed their situation and their future correctly.

There were pro-French delegates, but

The pan-Arab influence of certain members of the *Muntada-el-Adabi* and *Nadi al-Arabi* was very persistent. It was the object of these young patriots to urge the members of the Conference to pass a resolution in favour of union with a Sherifian Syria [i.e., under Faisal, >60, >69], which should be absolutely free and independent. There were also many pro-British friends at once anti-French, anti-Zionist, and anti-Sherif, who exerted their influence on the Conference delegates to declare in favour of a British Administration or Protectorate. (p 359)

That is, we have a normal democratic, debating, political gathering. But the common denominators were immediate or early independence, anti-Zionism, the country's Arab identity and the non-partition of Syria. They continued to disagree over whether their country should be called Southern Syria or Palestine, and over the degree of ties to Britain or France, but

[T]he natural inclination of nearly all the non-Jewish population (who form at least six sevenths of the total population of Palestine) is profoundly affected by Mr. Balfour's and President Wilson's declarations... (pp 360-61)

The Palestinians were communicating clearly and there is no evidence that any British official or politician misunderstood anything.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁹⁰ Also Tibawi 1977, p 356.

41. Balfour to Lloyd George (1)

19 February 1919

The truth about the feelings, opinions and intentions of the local Palestinians was thus well-known to Britain's elite. [p.34-40] Anglican Cardinal Bourne, in Jerusalem, saw the need for corresponding British clarity, sending on 25 January 1919 his views on Zionism to the British Delegation at the Paris conference:

I write to beg you to urge on the Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour the immediate need of a clear and definite declaration on the subject of Zionism. Mr. Balfour's only declaration so far was very vague and is interpreted in different ways. ... Both Christians of various kinds and Moslems... feel that they are being handed over unjustly to those whom they dislike more than their late Turkish oppressors. Unfortunately, for some unaccountable reason Mark Sykes has been favouring this movement. ... Let Jews live here by all means if they like and enjoy the same liberties as other people; but that they should ever again dominate and rule the country would be an outrage to Christianity and its Divine Founder.⁴⁹¹

Writing to Prime Minister Lloyd George in answer to Bourne, Balfour conceded that silence may be impossible and that a public statement of our views may be the lesser of the two evils. ... The weak point of our position is of course that in the case of Palestine we deliberately and rightly decline to accept the principle of self-determination. If the present inhabitants were consulted they would unquestionably give an anti-Jewish verdict. Our justification for our policy is that we regard Palestine as being absolutely exceptional; that we consider the question of the Jews outside Palestine as one of world importance and that we conceive the Jews to have an historic claim to a home in their ancient land; provided that home can be given them without either dispossessing or oppressing the present inhabitants.⁴⁹²

This admission 'says it all' about the Mandate. It also explains the next twenty-eight years of British equivocation and mendacity.

Establishing a Jewish Palestine was being construed as in the general interest, not merely of the Palestinians or of Great Britain or of the Jews, but of nothing less than the "world". This *cantus firmus* of the British message to the Palestinians thus also contains the theme that would become 'Israeli exceptionalism'.⁴⁹³ But its mysticism meant that no dialogue was possible.

⁴⁹¹ FO 371/4179, pp 307-08, Adam to Kerr, 25 March 1919.

⁴⁹² FO 371/4179, pp 309-10; Ingrams 1972, p 61; Friedman 1973, pp 303-05; Kayyali 1978, p 64; Kattan 2009, pp 121-22.

⁴⁹³ Alam 2009.

On 28 February 1919 Gilbert Clayton, formerly Chief Political (Intelligence) Officer stationed in Cairo and now Military Governor of Palestine, **in his report to the Foreign Office**⁴⁹⁴ wrote of the “uncertainty regarding settlement of Syria and Palestine”:

Fear of Zionism among all classes of Christians and Moslems is now widespread, and has been greatly intensified by publication in Zionist journals and utterances of leading Zionists of a far reaching programme greatly in advance of that foreshadowed by Doctor Weizmann in his discussions with Christians and Moslems here. [24] It is convenient in certain circles to attribute local anti-Zionist feeling to influence of ‘Effendis’ who are spoken of as corrupt and tyrannical landowners, whom it is necessary to consider. This is not a fair statement, as not only are they worthy representatives of their class, but fear and dislike of Zionism have become general throughout all classes.

The majority had hitherto seen Britain as their best post-war hope, but

this majority is now realising that Great Britain has one hand tied by her agreements with France, and the other by declaration to Zionists. The result is twofold: (a) the rise of young Arab party with a programme of complete independence, free from all foreign control,... (b) a strong combination of Christian and enlightened Moslems in Palestine, Syria and Egypt [who] argue: (1) that Syria must be one and undivided and must include Palestine. ... (4) that Great Britain is debarred by her agreements with France and Zionists from comprehending only policy which they consider can alone produce a stable and prosperous Syria.⁴⁹⁵

The Palestinians’ message had gotten through to the Foreign Office with perfect clarity. So did the Zionist message from the likes of Ormsby-Gore, Samuel, Sokolow and Weizmann, who criticised officials working in Palestine, such as Allenby, then Chief Administrator Arthur Money and Clayton, for diverging from HMG’s pro-Zionist policy.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ FO 371/4179, pp 53-57, *all quotations*; Friedman 1987, pp 13-16.

⁴⁹⁵ Also Ingrams 1972, pp 63-64.

⁴⁹⁶ Tibawi 1977, p 359.

43. Damascus to France (and Britain)

18 March 1919

Greater Syria as well, whose partition was artificial and new, let the colonial powers know what it wanted. On 18 March 1919 Military Governor of Palestine General Gilbert Clayton sent another report to Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour containing a message from the indigenous Syrians that would be repeated thousands of times during the next three decades. Clayton wrote:

Following on a demonstration at Damascus to protest against the speech of M. PICHON 350 petitions have been received gist of which is as follows: 'We Syrian and non Syrian inhabitants of liberated territory, sinking all differences of caste and religion, write in protest that SECULAR rights claimed by France have absolutely no foundation and that we do not admit to any nation any right whatever – ancient or not – within the limits of our Motherland. Business relations based on the freedom of commerce cannot constitute any right whatever over the inhabitants, their liberty, or their national independence.'⁴⁹⁷

What is Clayton's or his translators' own "gist", and what was written by the "petitioners", I do not know. In my reading "secular rights" were meant to contrast with possible French claims for Catholic-church rights and/or with the rights to "business" and "commercial" activity explicitly mentioned – and a "nation" referred to any ethno-religious group claiming political standing.

Since this intelligence fell within Clayton's realm, Palestinians were certainly included, the "non Syrian" category probably referring to Mesopotamia and the Hejaz. The "ancient" claims are the Jewish-Zionist ones to political rights based on a Jewish connection to Palestine long ago, and the primacy of the political stands out in that "commerce" is declared secondary to "liberty". On 18 June 1919 Clayton would again write to the Foreign Office (by that time headed by both Balfour and Curzon) warning that "any real development of the ideas which Zionists hold to be at the root of the [Balfour] declaration... entails a measure of preferential treatment to Jews in Palestine..." which could not but cause problems for "other interested communities".⁴⁹⁸ Conceptually, "preferential treatment" was built into "Zionist ideas" and the Balfour Declaration, meaning that declaration's two tasks towards the two groups, Jews and non-Jews, were irreconcilable: "preferential treatment" for one group logically entails violation of the "civil... rights" of the other. [>16]

⁴⁹⁷ FO 371/4179, p 292.

⁴⁹⁸ McTague 1978, p 58, citing FO 371/11053/130342.

44. Yaffa Moslem-Christian Committee to HMG 24 March 1919

On 24 March 1919, **the Yaffa Moslem-Christian Committee sent a telegram to Lloyd George** at the Paris Peace Conference:

Moslems Christians are in danger of being persecuted by Zionists though few. Stop. Their danger increased since Balfour's and Zionist leaders' declarations that the Allies agree to give our Arabian country Palestine to Zionists. Stop. We never believe that. Stop. If true would be political death as nation for Moslem Christian Arabs. Stop. ... What fault have we Palestinian Arabs committed to be thus ignored. Stop. Release us from the Zionists greed which is increasing from day to day. Stop. Prevent their immigration and let your help to small nations be without reproach. Stop. Being the aborigines of this country and the majority of the population and proprietors we refuse making Palestine Jewish National Home or their immigration to it.⁴⁹⁹

"Aborigines" of course implied very long unbroken residence, while the use of "proprietors" can be nothing but a claim to ownership of the polity.

Four days later, on 28 March 1919, Ragheb Dajani sent a telegram "on behalf of Jaffa Moslems and Christians" to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Balfour in Paris, Curzon in London] saying that

all mentioned facts compel us to approach again every European with living conscience to assist in removing the European tendency of compressing the majority for the sake of the minority who do not exceed nine per cent of the whole population. We prefer to perish altogether rather than hand over our country to the Jewish. Were we liberated by the Allies from the Turkish yoke to be put under the Zionist yoke?⁵⁰⁰

The indigenous residents were not crying wolf: Around this time a Foreign Office meeting in London attended, among others, by Lionel Walter Rothschild, Gertrude Bell and T.E. Lawrence, seriously discussed the Zionist plans of Weizmann and James de Rothschild to forcibly transfer Palestinian Arabs to Egypt, northern Syria and Mesopotamia; this met with no objection from Bell or Lawrence, contrary to their allegedly pro-Arab sympathies.⁵⁰¹ Allenby, for his part, according to Tibawi "sought and received the approval of the Foreign Office to prevent the Jaffa notables from freely expressing their wishes", while Norman Bentwich and pro-Zionist military governors in three towns "prevent[ed] delegates from attending the Arab Congress" [>52].⁵⁰²

British support for transferring Palestinians out of Palestine would later make its way into the Royal Commission ("Peel") Report of 1937 and into Labour Party policy in 1944.⁵⁰³ [>336; >425] Prominent Briton Weizmann knew it would free up both literal and political

⁴⁹⁹ FO 608/99, p 222; Suárez 2016, pp 42-43.

⁵⁰⁰ FO 608/99, p 235; Suárez *ibid*.

⁵⁰¹ FO 608/99, p 218; also Masalha 1992, *passim*.

⁵⁰² Tibawi 1977, pp 360, 361.

⁵⁰³ Peel 1937, XXII §36, 39-43; also IX §64.

space for Zionist immigrants, and for him separating the wheat from the chaff was moreover desirable because their mixture would “level down the Jew politically to the status of the native”,⁵⁰⁴ whose evil nature was well-known:

The Arabs, who are superficially clever and quickwitted, worship one thing, and one thing only – power and success. ... [The British know] the treacherous nature of the Arab [who would] stab the Army in the back [and who] screams as often as he can and blackmails as much as he can.⁵⁰⁵

A focused, comprehensive study of British and/or Zionist racism towards Arabs – as well as the other side of the coin, namely belief in Jewish superiority – has to my knowledge not yet been written in English. Some examples of this racism scattered through this chronology are from Samuel [>8; >115; >242; >429; >456], Ormsby-Gore [>17; >192], Balfour [>55], Meinertzhagen [>61; >74; >204]⁵⁰⁶, Weizmann [>24; >44; >390; >391], Lloyd George [>242], Lord Melchett [>289], Churchill [e.g. >147; >327; >378], Peel [>327], Reginald Coupland [>327; >334], Hathorn Hall [>324], W.D. Battershill [>350], Malcolm MacDonald [>383], Lord Halifax [>389], James de Rothschild MP [>342; >411], Josiah Wedgwood MP [>411] and Leo Amery [>424] – as well as the *Jewish Chronicle* [>124]. See also the book's Theme Index. Zeina Ghandour gives examples of British attitudes reflecting, or constituting, racism, including their alleged inefficiency, clannishness, volatility, violent criminality, and political unconsciousness.⁵⁰⁷ The nine explicit expressions of British anti-Arab racism quoted by Edward Said as permeating “the attitudes and practices of British scholars, administrators and experts who were officially involved in the exploitation and government of Palestine since the mid-nineteenth century” would make a fine starting point for such a study.⁵⁰⁸

13 April 1919 ‘Britain massacres between 379 and 1000 nationalist protesters in Jallainwala Bagh, a walled garden in Amritsar, Punjab. In 1920 the House of Commons forced the commander in charge, Colonel Reginald Dyer, into retirement.’⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁴ FO 608/99, p 288; Weizmann 1949, pp 151-52.

⁵⁰⁵ FO 608/99 281-82; Weizmann 1949, pp 145-46; Suárez 2016, p 40.

⁵⁰⁶ See Meinertzhagen 1959, *passim*.

⁵⁰⁷ Ghandour 2010, pp 2-3.

⁵⁰⁸ Said 1979, pp 79-81.

⁵⁰⁹ Wikipedia, > ‘Amritsar Massacre’.

45. Clayton to locals and HMG

March-May 1919

On 28 March 1919 the Jerusalem Moslem-Christian Committee planned a demonstration for 1 April which was forbidden by Chief Administrator Arthur Money.⁵¹⁰ On 30 March General Clayton in Cairo sent to Foreign Secretary Curzon the “full text of the protest submitted by the Moslem-Christian Society of Jerusalem to the Secretary of the Peace Conference” which among other things compared the historical connections of the Arabs and the Jews to Palestine:

[T]he Zionist Commission... pretend that they are the inhabitants and owners of the soil. As their declarations are incorrect we are therefore compelled to present this telegraphic protest in addition to the several others previously submitted on behalf of the whole of Palestine. If history is consulted it will be clearly observed that Palestine was an Arab country before the Moslems, Christians, or Jews. The Jews emigrated from Mesopotamia to Egypt where they remained 400 years and subsequently proceeded to this country and owned a part of it for a short period. Over 2000 years ago they evacuated it and were scattered in all parts of the world and did not leave in it any relics, ties or rights. The country was ours from an older time, and is ours now. We have lived in it much longer than the Jews and their claim of historical right to it does not entitle them the right of re-occupying it as such a claim does not entitle us, we the Arabs, the right of re-taking possession of Spain, and other countries we have lost. The Arabs, whether Moslem or Christian, are much more connected with the country than the Jews. ... [T]he Jews do not possess properties, historical rights or a great enough number of inhabitants in Palestine to confer on them the right of their claims and pretensions.⁵¹¹

Around this time Emir Faisal put it in a nutshell: “The Arabs were Arab before Moses, Jesus and Mohammed.”⁵¹² The Zionist argument that the Jewish past in Palestine implied present collective political rights stood or fell with the truth of its assumption that Jews’ historical connection trumped that of all others. This assumption would be essential for Zionist success during the Mandate, top on the list of political talking points and expressed by the Mandate’s determining document, the Churchill White Paper of June 1922 [>142], as the assertion that the Jewish national home “should be formally recognised to rest upon ancient historic connection”.⁵¹³ Concerning this all-determining premise Walid Khalidi has written:

The Palestinians and other Arabs did not see the emerging conflict as one between two rights. They could not accept that after a hiatus of two millennia contemporary Jews had

⁵¹⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 64.

⁵¹¹ Friedman 1987, pp 23-24, reproducing FO 371/4154.

⁵¹² Boyle 2001, p 79.

⁵¹³ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

a political title to Palestine that overrode the rights of the contemporary Palestinians. The Palestinians saw themselves as the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of the land, including the pre-Hebraic and post-Hebraic ethnic strands.⁵¹⁴

Despite its being couched in terms of Palestinian perceptions rather than objective truth, this analysis is a concise demolition of the premise.

The first violent mass protests against Zionism were still a year away, but native opposition to Britain's course was deep, with Clayton writing to the Foreign Office on 2 May:

The Palestinians desire their country for themselves and will resist any general immigration of Jews however gradual, by every means in their power including active hostilities. ... India and Egypt are quoted as examples of the tenacity of Great Britain's hold on countries on which she once lays her hand. ... Moreover recent events in Egypt have greatly impressed the people of Palestine. Nevertheless fear of Zionism by Moslems and Christians is the main issue, and if this were removed a large majority would vote for a British mandate. ... In conclusion, the idea that Great Britain is the main upholder of the Zionist programme will preclude any local request for a British Mandate and no mandatory power can carry through Zionist programme except by force and in opposition to the wishes of the large majority of the people of Palestine.⁵¹⁵

According to Muslih, Curzon had similarly written to Balfour on 18 April: "In Palestine, the feeling of both Christians and Moslems against our Zionist policy has now reached fever heat..."⁵¹⁶ And indeed a few months later an overwhelming majority of petitions from people in Greater Syria to the King-Crane Commission would in fact prefer the U.S. over the U.K. as Mandatory – by a ratio of 1129 to 70 – on the assumption that the U.S. would not implement Zionism.⁵¹⁷ [-59] But the main significance of Clayton's remarks here is his realisation that only British "force" – i.e. killing the locals – could achieve the Zionist goal.

⁵¹⁴ Khalidi 1986, p 104.

⁵¹⁵ FO 371/4180 pp 177-79, Clayton to Middle East Commission – Palestine, 2 May 1919; Kayyali 1978, p 65; McTague 1978, p 58.

⁵¹⁶ Muslih 1988, p 185, citing FO 371/4153/2117/60671, Curzon to Balfour 18 April 1919. *I have not yet found this.*

⁵¹⁷ King & Crane 1919a, pp 15-16 ('Summary of Petitions' Part D); also pp 21-22 ('Geography of the Claims' Part D); *NY Times*, 3 December 1922.

Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, dated 28 April 1919,⁵¹⁸ would for almost three decades provide international 'legal' cover for the Palestine Mandate. It addressed the question of what to do with the countries or territories militarily taken over during World War I which had been colonies of the defeated powers, mainly Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The entire Covenant was technically the first 26 of the 440 Articles of both the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Sèvres [>92] – officially the 'Treaty of Peace with Germany'. The Treaty of Versailles went into effect on 10 January 1920, so it was the Covenant which governed the Powers' behaviour in former Ottoman possessions when, for instance, they met at San Remo in April 1920.⁵¹⁹ Both the colonisers and the colonised would in fact for the next twenty-five or so years treat the Covenant as an authoritative guide to how to rule a foreign country by 'mandate'.

That said, however, since the Treaty of Sèvres was never ratified by Turkey, and since the Treaty of Lausanne between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey, eventually ratified and in effect only as of 6 August 1924, made no mention of the Covenant's Article 22 and ceded no Ottoman/Turkish territory to any other country or group of countries,⁵²⁰ the Covenant was technically and legally not even applicable to Palestine, whatever it said, did not say, meant, or did not mean. It was a supreme British diplomatic achievement that this piece of paper was for so long taken so seriously by so many, because neither Britain nor the League of Nations had any right, aside from 'rights' achieved by military might, to exercise any policies in Palestine without the consent of the governed people of Palestine – whose lack of power however rendered their participation in the charade understandable, even necessary.

The Covenant's authors nevertheless stated their intentions over against these areas now in their *de facto* possession, their set-up having three assumptions:

1. One should 'do' something with these people and territories rather than do nothing at all, thereby leaving them alone, independent, to work out their political future on their own.
2. The doing – the ruling – would be done by the League of Nations itself, a departure from the colonial practice where a powerful country took over and ran a territory on its own with no explicit international backing.
3. 'Colonies' were out of fashion, so a new word was invented: a 'mandated territory', taken over by a 'Mandatory', i.e. one of the victorious Powers.

Not contained in Article 22 were the exact boundaries of the to-be-mandated territories. Mesopotamia/Iraq was regarded as an undivided unit, albeit with uncertainty about the status of the vilayet of Mosul, but in the case of Greater Syria, it would only a bit later be decided that the boundary would more or less follow the Sykes-Picot Agreement [>12],

⁵¹⁸ League of Nations 1919.

⁵¹⁹ Antonius 1938, p 352.

⁵²⁰ Quigley 2022, pp 2, 51, 65, 72-73, 77, 80, 82-87, 89-94.

thus making separate Mandates for Northern Syria (eventually Syria and Lebanon) and Southern Syria (eventually Palestine and Transjordan) rather than a single one covering the traditional *Bilad al-Sham*, called Syria.

The forerunner of the Covenant's scheme for colonisation was a set of **resolutions decided on 30 January 1919** by the five Allied Powers U.S., U.K., France, Italy and Japan which called for "disposing of" the former colonies and stated that they required "tutelage" because their people "were not yet able to stand by themselves"⁵²¹ – a reading of the situation that provided a somewhat plausible *ethical* justification for the conquerors' remaining in control. As the U.S. and Russia did not join, the League at its inception had 42 member states, of course excluding Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and was dominated by colonial powers Britain and France.

Exegesis

Article 22 was a supremely important political document, however shaky its status as a legal document given that it was merely a set of intentions enunciated by the Powers, but it was a masterpiece of rhetoric which sounds simple but is not, so either bear with me through some exegesis, or skip to the sub-heading 'Background and Use' below. Article 22 comprised nine paragraphs: §1-3 giving the general nature of and justification for mandates, §4 saying what was to be done with former "Turkish Empire" territories, §5-6 saying what was to be done with other territories in Africa and the South Pacific, then §7-9 obliging Mandatories to annually report to the League of Nations Council, granting the Council ultimate authority, and setting up "a permanent Commission" (the Permanent Mandates Commission) to advise the Council with respect to the submitted annual reports.

The first two paragraphs read:

(§1) To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. (§2) The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

1 and §2 covered all "peoples" newly ruled by the victors – the "advanced nations" with "resources" – who were willing to take on a sacred "responsibility" to "develop" those people into "well-being". As would soon be pointed out by the Palestinian Arab Executive Committee when answering the Colonial Office's proposal for a Constitution for Palestine which would officially incorporate the national home for all the Jews in the world⁵²²

⁵²¹ King & Crane 1919a, p 35.

⁵²² Cmd. 1700, p 11/§2b.

[>137], the mandates system was here in Article 22 limited to the “peoples” actually “inhabiting” these occupied “territories”, meaning as a consequence that people strewn all over the world were *not* among those whose “well-being and development” were to be furthered. Furthermore, since Article 22 defined “peoples” in terms of “territories” and (former e.g. Ottoman) “colonies”, Rashid Khalidi is correct that this part of the Covenant “applied to the entire population” of Palestine, not to any sub-group.⁵²³ The British side could, however, point to the ‘s’ which had been added to the word ‘people’ and say that since there were people inhabiting Palestine who were Jewish, the entire Jewish “people” thereby did indeed fall within the remit of the mandates system. Such is the stuff of legalisms.

But those peoples varied in their ability to master the “strenuous conditions” of the “modern world” (which, to be sure, had been created by these selfsame victors through their colonisations and wars):

(§3) The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances. (§4) Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

§1, §2, and §3 together usurp for the victors the power to define “well-being”, “development” and “stages [of development]”, while §4 separates out what came to be the ‘Class A’ mandates for Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, since their “communities” were at a relatively high “stage of development”.

Multiple readings of Article 22 confirm that the text is nonsensical, walking a tightrope between appearing non-colonial while declaring intention to colonise. The language of §4, particularly, is mind-bogglingly complex, even if it does state three things unequivocally: 1) these ‘Class A’ “communities” are still toddlers who can’t yet stand alone; 2) since no other criteria are specified, it lies in the victors’ subjective judgment to determine when they “are able” stand alone; and 3) until that time the role of the victorious Mandatory is limited to “advice and assistance”. A fourth fairly clear point was that the ‘A’ communities needed no further, higher level of “development” before their “existence as independent nations” qualifies for “recognition”. Their “stage of development”, that is, was not something to be achieved in the future, but which Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine etc. “have” already achieved.⁵²⁴

But problems arise. For one, the wording leaves a large loophole for the mandatory power: independence “can” be recognized, but it *must not* be. Thus, since the Mandatory – or officially the League Council (not the entire League) – would determine the toddler’s ability to “stand alone”, it would also determine the end of the Mandate, enabling Britain, without blushing, to retain the Palestine Mandate for almost 30 years. Next, the text said

⁵²³ Khalidi 2020, p 32.

⁵²⁴ Jeffries 1939, p 479.

that the Mandatory would give only “administrative advice and assistance”, but did this phrase include actually ruling over a sovereignty-less mandated country? Clearly not. Similarly, what did “tutelage” in §2 mean operationally? Based on definitions known to the English language, neither “advice” nor “assistance” nor “tutelage” can mean “rule”: they mean helping out, teaching. [see also >52] Yet as it turned out, Britain *ruled* Palestine; as the very first Article of the Mandate for Palestine would state: “The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this mandate.”⁵²⁵ [>146] The afterthought after the words “save as” can be ignored or safely chuckled over; this Article 1 of the Mandate text can on no interpretation be consistent with mere advice, assistance and tutelage.

Let us strip the first part of the first sentence of §4 of its terms “existence as” and “provisionally” and its reference to Turkey. It then reads: “Certain communities can be recognized as independent nations.” What “provisional” recognition is, is anybody’s guess, but the overall message seems to be that *although* these communities cannot quite stand alone, they should be independent; “recognizing” them as independent would seem to mean letting them be independent. Accordingly their toddler status, so the apparent logic, somehow does not prevent their independence from being “recognized”. But unless an independent country asks for tutelage, tutelage is not compatible with independence. So §1 and §2 would not even apply to Palestine.

Next, the second sentence of §4 gives “the wishes” of these peoples – for some reason now called “communities” – the place of “a principal consideration” in assigning a Mandatory. The word “a” implies there are other principal considerations, unnamed, and thus weakens or even cripples the principle of the consent of the people. That is, the drafters did *not* straightforwardly write:

The selection of the Mandatory is determined by the wishes of (a majority of) these communities.

Had the sentence been thus written, and if Britain had insisted on writing the establishment of the Jewish national home into the Mandate (as it in fact did) or even insisted on giving unwanted tutelage, this clause would from the outset have ruled Britain out as Mandatory. For 90% of the “community” in (citizens of) Palestine did not “wish” the immigration of Zionists with political claims and aims, a fact ascertainable by the League either through its own surveys and Intelligence and Political Officers or, at any time after its publication on 28 August 1919, from the Report of the King-Crane Commission.⁵²⁶ [>59] Nor did it “wish” tutelage, much less outside rule.⁵²⁷ [e.g. >52] In sum, the second sentence of §4 without the phrase “a principal consideration” would in fact strictly imply self-determination, for a to-be-mandated community could refuse all applicants for the job of Mandatory until one to its liking came along. As it was actually written, however, Britain and the League could say, ‘Oh, their wishes are only one consideration among many.’

⁵²⁵ Mandate Text 1922.

⁵²⁶ King & Crane 1919a, pp 15-16 (‘Summary of Petitions’ Part D) & pp 21-22 (‘Geography of the Claims’ Part D); Toynbee 1970, p xix, *Foreword* to John & Hadawi 1970a.

⁵²⁷ FO 371/4182, pp 208-09.

A distillation of the verbiage, in the end, gives no unequivocal argumentative advantage to either Britain or the Palestinians, yet its mere dangling of the prospect of “standing alone” in the foggy air meant that surely, under some conditions, Article 22 was foreseeing independence. And the Palestinians, as the incomparably weaker party, could only rely on this vision of a promise made by the ‘international community’ as it over the decades appealed in vain to Britain’s and the League’s conscience. After all, misleading murkiness notwithstanding, the most reasonable and ethically most just reading of Article 22 §4 was that applied in the case of the Iraq Mandate, leading to its substitution already in 1922 by a *treaty* with Britain: immediate recognition of independence and temporary “advice and assistance” – with no political content forced upon the indigenous “people”, at least on paper.⁵²⁸

Thus, despite its ambiguities regarding colonialism, and lack of mention of self-determination, and despite the Syrians’ (including Palestinians’) rejection of the premise that they could not politically stand on their own (i.e., they rejected Article 22 altogether [52])⁵²⁹, Covenant Article 22 was the straw of ‘international law’ which the inhabitants of the Class A territory of Palestine clung to until 15 May 1948. The overall rhetorical ‘music’ of the text was that eventual independence, after an unspecified period of advice and assistance, was being pledged. Readers are however invited to spend their own hours refuting, modifying or supporting the results, here, of my own head-scratching.

Note however that the same caveat applies here as applies to the McMahon-Hussein pledges [10], whatever they actually were, and to the clear promises of for instance the Anglo-French Declaration [28]: The Palestinians of course expediently appealed to such promises of independence, trying to make the Powers take their own words seriously. But their underlying argument, which stood independently of anything anybody else promised or did not promise, was that independence was their natural right – by virtue of long-standing, uninterrupted life on the land, development of a common linguistic and cultural identity, and experience under the Ottomans as a political unit.

The Covenant also, by the way, contained two other arguments for freedom. The first is direct, in Article 23, which prescribed that “the Members of the League... undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control.” The Balfour Declaration was arguably “unjust” to the natives by the very fact of not considering their wishes, neither with regard to their independence as such nor to the Jewish national home the Mandatory imposed upon them.

The second argument derives, as already noted, from the fact that the “Jewish people” (aka world Jewry) cited in the Balfour Declaration and Mandate text does not even meet Article 22’s description of the people it is therein concerned with. In §1 the peoples or communities being dealt with are described as those “inhabiting” the former Turkish or German “colonies and territories” – but these were uncontestedly not “inhabited by”

⁵²⁸ Tibawi 1977, p 452, >85; *but see* Fieldhouse 2006, Ch. 3; *also in particular* al-Husseini 1932, pp 16, 20, >263.

⁵²⁹ Allen 2017, pp 386, 398.

world Jewry. Further, §4 deals with “communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire”, and “the Jewish people” of the Balfour Declaration, living all over the world, were not claimed by anybody to have “belonged to the Turkish Empire”.⁵³⁰

Background and Use

As for the background of the Covenant, President Wilson was one of its main drafters but, according to Jeffries, South African Zionist Jan Smuts penned the final draft on 1 & 2 February 1919. In December 1918 Smuts proposed a draft which, again according to Jeffries, explicitly denied the Palestinians the rights to “self-determined autonomy”, to “consent” to their Government or to choose their Mandatory – on the grounds that its population was “heterogeneous” and that its heterogeneous groups were incapable of “administrative co-operation”, a claim for which no evidence was offered.⁵³¹ Smuts, by the way, had for the previous eleven years been at work at home, constructing the heterogeneous British dominion which would become Apartheid South Africa.⁵³²

Palestinian appeals based on the Covenant, implying their acceptance of its dubitable authority, were directed mainly to Britain, but also to the entire League of Nations, or its Council or its Permanent Mandates Commission, which was charged with overseeing the conformity of the Mandatories’ behaviour with the principles of the Covenant. [178; 182; 183; 188; 191; 227; 257; 284; 338; 343; 345; 360; 413].⁵³³ In the real world, as shown not only by its principled ambiguity but by the ineffectiveness of mandated people’s appeals to Article 22, the only thing that mattered in the wording of Article 22 was that it approved of colonial rule.

On, 30 April 1945, to be sure, almost exactly a year before its dissolution, the ‘League of Nations’ (Council or Assembly) in a basic document dealing mainly with the Eastern Mediterranean mandates and titled ‘The Mandates System: Origin – Principles – Application’, finally spoke more clearly:

[T]he following main principles emerge...: The *aim* of the institution is to ensure the *well-being and development of the peoples* inhabiting the territories in question. The *method* of attaining this aim consists in entrusting the *tutelage* of these peoples to certain advanced nations. The acceptance by a nation of this mission carries with it certain obligations and responsibilities established by law. Like guardians in civil law, they must exercise their authority in the interests of their wards – that is to say, of the peoples which are regarded as minors – and must maintain an entirely disinterested attitude in their dealings with them. The territories with the administration of which they are entrusted must not be exploited by them for their own profit.⁵³⁴

The people who had within the Ottoman Empire filled hundreds of high administrative posts, sent representatives to the parliament in Istanbul, and enjoyed a lot of autonomy, “were regarded as minors”. After a quarter century the authors were including Palestine

⁵³⁰ See Kattan 2009, pp 56, 129, 138.

⁵³¹ Jeffries 1939, pp 528-32, 536, 541-43.

⁵³² Ngcukaitobi 2018, pp 231-39.

⁵³³ See also UNSUPR 1978a, >“The Mandate”.

⁵³⁴ League of Nations 1945, II.1, use Search function.

in the Class 'A' Mandates, meaning according to Article 22's text that although it could not yet "stand alone", its "inhabitants had reached a more advanced stage of development and their independence could, in principle, be recognised by the Covenant itself...", a blatant contradiction.⁵³⁵

No word was lost, however, on the fact that Zionism had been an interest of Great Britain, meaning its "attitude" in its dealings with the Palestinians was not "disinterested". While Great Britain certainly derived no "profit" from its Palestine Mandate, neither financially nor strategically, its self-proclaimed "interest" in establishing a Jewish national home and the "interests" of its Palestinian "wards" clashed loudly. Therefore, according to this official League of Nations statement, Britain had been for some twenty-five years violating, without so much as a slap on the wrist, the "aims" of the "institution" of the Mandatory system. A final deception is that, according to John Quigley, the term 'mandate' derived from the French *mandat*, and that term described the transfer of certain powers by request of the to-be-mandated person or persons.⁵³⁶ But none of the mandated people made such a request.

By spring 1919 *'Moslem-Christian Associations existed in major towns and the youthful "Black Hand" group had been founded in Jaffa, "opposing Zionism and demanding government by the Sherif of Mecca."*⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ League of Nations 1945, II.2, use Search function.

⁵³⁶ Quigley 2022, p 63.

⁵³⁷ Seikaly 1995, pp 151-52, 163; Wasserstein 1978, p 36; Muslih 1988, pp 157-62.

47. Yaffa Moslem-Christians again

6 May 1919

According to Tom Segev, **the Jaffa (Yaffa) Moslem-Christian Society held a meeting** on 6 May 1919 at the Zohar Cinema attended by more than 500 people.

The assembly promised equality for the country's Jewish inhabitants, but would not agree to additional Jewish immigration. 'We do not at all oppose the Jews,' one speaker said. 'We only oppose Zionism. That is not the same thing. Zionism has no roots at all in Moses' law. It is an invention of Herzl's.' He noted happily that many Jews also opposed Zionism, and these, he said, would not be denied entry. Another speaker remarked that the Arabs should show their hospitality to the Jews, so long as the Jews did not espouse separatist aspirations. [At the assembly] the backdrop on the stage was composed of four cloth screens – red, green, black and white... [for] blood, liberty ["Arabia will not be divided."], [white] an homage to Prince Faisal, and the black one represented the Zionist migration.⁵³⁸

Segev paraphrases their demands:

The Arabs made three basic demands: independence, no Jewish immigration, and a prohibition against Jewish land purchases. The demands were reworded from time to time at national congresses but remained unchanged in principle. Countless petitions inspired by these conditions were sent to the British administration; many protested the authorities' support for Zionism and discrimination against the Arabs. They repeatedly cited the right to national self-determination and the democratic principles the world had adopted after the war...⁵³⁹

"Arab rule in Spain had lasted for more than seven hundred years, one petition noted. The Arabs had considered Spain to be their home and had left their imprint on its culture. Would anyone dare suggest they should now be allowed to return there?"⁵⁴⁰ This meeting was held at more or less the same time as, but does not seem to be identical with, the 2nd Palestine Arab Congress. [>82]

May-June 1919 [*Black U.S. activist and editor William Monroe Trotter, denied a passport by President Wilson to go to the Versailles Peace Conference, sneaks across the Atlantic anyway in order, as the representative of the National Colored Congress for World Democracy and the National Equal Rights League, to lobby for equal rights for all races.*]⁵⁴¹

early June 1919 A meeting of nationalists in the house of Ismail Husseini, attended by Mufti Kamel Husseini, Salih Husseini, Izzat Darwaza, Hafez Kanaan, Ragheb Nashashibi, Yaqoub Farraj, Khalil Sakakini and Ragheb Dajani, agrees to present... demands to the King-Crane Commission. [>59]

⁵³⁸ Segev 1999, pp 105-06, citing Minutes of the fifth assembly of the temporary commission, 9 June 1919, pp 112ff., CZA J1/8777. See evidently also CZA L4/769.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Segev 1999, p 107, citing Arab protest, 1918, ISA M/4/1401-II.

⁵⁴¹ Trotter Timeline, <https://trotter.umich.edu/timeline/219/LifeOfTrotter/>

8 June 1919 British Military [Chief] Administrator for Palestine, Arthur Money, writes that Zionist aims would require 'the indefinite retention in the country of a military force considerably greater than that now in Palestine'.

1919 Al-Jamiyya Al-Filastiniyya (The Palestinian Society) is founded in Damascus with the aim to promote the Palestinian cause and to enlist the support of the Arabs in Syria and Palestine.

48. Jerusalem Moslem-Christian Circular

May/June 1919

With approval from Kidston in London, General Allenby forbade the distribution of a **circular** prepared by the Moslem-Christian Society of Jerusalem for the announced “Inter-Allied” Commission which was to come to the Near East to find out what the locals wanted. (This became the U.S.-only King-Crane Commission after the Europeans backed out, and would begin its work in June 1919. [>59]) The circular was as usual anti-Zionist and for Syrian unity:

We completely refuse to allow Palestine to be turned into a national home for the Jews. We also do not admit any Jewish immigrant into our country and energetically protest against the Zionist movement. The native Jews who are previous inhabitants of the country, should be considered as native and possess the privileges and misfortunes as we do.⁵⁴²

Practically all Jewish immigration was at that time Zionist immigration.

Around this time a “political wire” from either Clayton or Allenby in Cairo, addressed to the War Office for use at the Paris Peace Conference (which had been convening since 18 January 1919) noted that

a dividing line between spheres of France and England... will be interpreted both in Syria and Palestine as a direct negation: – First, of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations [>46]. Second, of the principle of self determination of peoples [e.g. >20]. Third, of the Anglo French Declaration of November 1918 [>28]. An attempt to force this solution upon the country will involve hostilities with Arabs and Moslems who are united against any division of Palestine and Syria.⁵⁴³

Everybody knew that this was the Palestinians’ unanimous attitude, and most likely that is why the British and French boycotted the King-Crane dialogue with the inhabitants, choosing in this case to remain silent. The claim is not outrageous that, had they joined the ‘Inter-Allied’ Commission they could not have ignored its findings, and the Balfour Declaration would have died.

⁵⁴² FO 371/4181, p 28, Clayton to FO, 9 June 1919; Kayyali 1978, pp 66-67.

⁵⁴³ FO 371/4181, p 19.

49. More militant groups

summer 1919

There was indirect communication between Palestinians and Britain in the sense that British (and Zionist) intelligence picked up on both increased indigenous organisational efforts and a trend towards militant resistance. All Palestinians were after all aware of the partially-realised military potential of Faisal against the French in northern Syria.

Al-Muntada al-Adabi (The Literary Club) had been formed by Arabs in 1908 or 1909 in Istanbul [>4] and soon had branches throughout Greater Syria and Iraq with a membership in the thousands; in November 1918 it had “re-emerged with new members and a new political program”, its Palestinian “leadership being composed of Jamil al-Husayni [Jamal al-Husseini], Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani, Yusuf al-Khatib, Fakhri al-Nashashibi, Isaf al-Nashashibi, Fuad al-Nashashibi, Mahmud Aziz al-Khalidi, and Saliba al-Juzi”, and its program was for unified Arab independence and opposition to Zionism.⁵⁴⁴

Keeping an eye on the Arab movement and Palestinian politics was British Intelligence Officer J.N. Camp [*also* >37; >40], who noted that these younger politicians, associated with Faisal’s Damascus regime and organised in branches in Yaffa, Tulkarm, Gaza and elsewhere, were for “Arab Independence”; in Camp’s opinion *El Nadi el Arabi* (The Arabic Club), close to the Husseini family, was “not so radical” as *Al Muntada al-Adabi*, i.e., “they are not so strong on Arab independence, but are just as much opposed to Zionism and Jewish immigration”, while *El Akha w’el Afaf* (Brotherhood and Purity) was “composed of the more violent propagandists as leaders of a host of ordinary ruffians and cut-throats... expected to do the dirty work for the Muntada and Nadi...”; six Palestinians “are the most dangerous of all, and are not only anti-Zionist, but also very anti-British [namely] Muhammad Yusef el Alami, Mahmud Aziz el Khalidi, Hasan Sidki Dejani [Sidqi al-Dajani], Omar Zaani Beirut, Sheikh Reshid el Khatib, Jodet el Halabi [an organisation, not a person]”; the Dajani family, as well, had its separate *Muntada*, while the “Moslem-Christian society is composed of older and more representative Moslems and Christians of Jerusalem and the surrounding villages”; “[i]n brief, practically all Moslems and Christians of any importance in Palestine are anti-Zionists, and bitterly so.”⁵⁴⁵

Camp also listed *el-Feda’iyyeh*, i.e. “a society of persons who are ready to sacrifice themselves [and] comprising many policemen and gendarmes” – that is, potential government-armed guerrillas.⁵⁴⁶ Another “secret commando organisation”, *Jawdat* (or *Jodet*, as above) *el-Halabi*, as well as many fellaheen and Bedouins, were well-armed and declared for instance “We must all know the martyrs of the Fatherland and our honour.”⁵⁴⁷

The less militant Palestinians were at this time focussing on the questions of independence vs attachment to France, the USA or Britain, and the unity of Syria, and the prob-

⁵⁴⁴ FO 371/4182, pp 347-54; also Antonius 1938, p 108.

⁵⁴⁵ FO 371/4182, pp 347-54, Colonel French to FO, 26 August 1919; Muslih 1988, pp 164-65, 180, 188.

⁵⁴⁶ FO 371/4182 pp 351-52.

⁵⁴⁷ Kayyali 1978, pp 70, 71-72, citing Camp to CPO, GHQ, Cairo, 12 August 1919, and Hagana Archives, Jerusalem, 27 August 1919.

lem, specific to Palestine, of the Balfour Declaration and the occupation by a Power wanting to implement that Declaration; they lobbied both the King-Crane Commission and the British military government directly.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁸ Porath 1974, p 77; Muslih 1988, p 168.

A “strictly confidential” Foreign Office **report of a pre-dinner “interview”** on 24 June 1919⁵⁴⁹ in Paris between Balfour, his personal secretary Lord Eustace Percy, and two leading US-Zionists – Supreme Court Judge Louis Brandeis and later Supreme Court Judge Felix Frankfurter – reveals a full meeting of the minds on the issue of Zionism – although Percy would later, in his 1920 book *Responsibilities of the League*, display a rejection of Zionism because it violated Palestinian self-determination [>63]. Brandeis and Frankfurter would arguably prove essential to the success of Palestinian dispossession through their influence on US Presidents Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. [>37; >47; >461; >463] However little or much the Palestinians knew of the thoughts of these men who would determine their fate, those thoughts were behind, or underneath, or driving, the overwhelming bulk of the utterances made to the Palestinians, by either the U.K. or U.S., until the end of the Mandate.

Discussing now in person thoughts that had been exchanged with Brandeis in writing, starting already in 1917,⁵⁵⁰ Balfour began by saying he was “distressed and harassed” by the extremely “perplexing... Jewish problem (of which the Palestinian question is only a fragment but an essential part)”, and “rehearsed summarily the pressure on Jews in Eastern Europe...”, made worse by Jewish leadership of revolutionary movements there; rebuffing Balfour’s idea that Lenin’s mother was a Jew, Brandeis attempted to assuage the anti-revolutionary Balfour by asserting that “every Jew is potentially an intellectual and an idealist...” (p 187) This is an early example of the Judeo-centric perspective, common throughout the Mandate, which saw the Palestinians first and foremost as only a “fragment” of a larger European “problem”.

After Balfour interjected that such intellectuality and idealism “are the reasons that make you and me such ardent Zionists”, Brandeis laid out the three preconditions for Zionism’s success, all of which Britain was in a position to fulfil:

[1] Palestine should be the Jewish homeland and not merely that there should be a Jewish homeland in Palestine. That, he assumed, was the commitment of the Balfour Declaration and will, of course, be confirmed by the Peace Conference. [2] [T]here must be economic elbow room for a Jewish Palestine; self sufficiency for a healthy social life. That meant adequate boundaries, not merely a small garden within Palestine. On the North that meant the control of the water... [>51] [3] [T]he future Jewish Palestine must have control of the land and the natural resources which are at the heart of a sound economic life. (pp 188-89)

The first point just above stood in contradiction to what the final formulation of Balfour’s own Declaration had intended to convey to the public, namely that the Jewish “national home” was *not* (necessarily) to be in all of Palestine. The Declaration’s authors had struggled over this very point, in the end rejecting as too controversial, or honest, any state-

⁵⁴⁹ FO 800/217, pp 187-92, *all further references*; Ingrams 1972, pp 72-73.

⁵⁵⁰ Grose 1983, p 38.

ment that the goal was to “reconstitute” Palestine – that is, all of it – as a Jewish homeland. And Churchill and Samuel, in HMG’s White Paper of 3 June 1922, would try to dispel the Arabs’ and other’s worries by expressly stating that HMG “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*”.⁵⁵¹ [142] Point (3) would be fulfilled in Articles 1, 6 and 11 of the Mandate. [146]

At this meeting “Mr. Balfour expressed entire agreement with the three conditions which the Justice laid down” but continued:

The situation is further complicated by an agreement made early in November by the British and French [28], and brought to the President’s [Wilson’s] attention, telling the people of the East that their wishes would be consulted in the disposition of their future. One day in the Council of Four [Britain, France, Italy and the US], when the Syrian matter was under dispute, the President suggested the despatch of a Commission to find out what the people really wanted. [The King-Crane Commission, 59] ... Mr Balfour wrote a memorandum to the Prime Minister, and he believed it went to the President, pointing out that Palestine should be excluded from the terms of reference because the Powers had committed themselves to the Zionist programme, which inevitably excluded *numerical self-determination*. [see 58] Palestine presented a unique situation. We are dealing not with the wishes of an existing community but are consciously seeking to re-constitute a new community and definitely building for a numerical majority in the future. He had great difficulty in seeing how the President [Wilson] can possibly reconcile his adherence to Zionism with any doctrine of self-determination... (pp 189-91; *emphasis added*)

By rights, Balfour had to say what his neologism, “numerical self-determination”, was logically juxtaposed to, for instance self-determination by race, class, religion or simply the inhabitants of a given territory. On this subject Edward Said noted the demographic superiority of the Palestinian Arabs then judged:

The only way in which these brute, politically manipulated [through immigration] disproportions between natives and nonnatives could be made acceptable was by the rationale Balfour used. A superior idea to that of sheer number and presence *ought to rule* in Palestine, and that idea – Zionism – was the one given legitimacy right up until 1948, and after.⁵⁵²

In the case of Palestine, the legitimacy of ‘numerical democracy’, the textbook version of self-determination, had to be de-universalised.

Balfour had the backing, by the way, of the U.K. Government for this abandonment of the numerical-majority principle, with Prime Minister Lloyd George also writing around this time that

⁵⁵¹ Cmd. 1700, p 18.

⁵⁵² Said 1979, p 18.

the problem of Palestine cannot be exclusively solved on the principle of self-determination, because there is one element in the population, the Jews, which, for historical and religious reasons, is entitled to a greater influence than would be given to it if numbers were the sole test.⁵⁵³

Returning to the pre-dinner interview, in reply to Balfour Brandeis did not disagree and said that

the whole conception of Zionism as a Jewish homeland was a definite building up for the future as a means of dealing with a world problem and not merely with the disposition of an existing community. (p 191)

A U.S. Supreme Court Judge would one way or another “dispose of” the existing Palestinians.

Balfour then re-assured Brandeis of his support for the above-mentioned three preconditions for Zionist success, and Frankfurter chimed in saying:

No statesman could have been more sympathetic than Mr. Balfour was with the underlying philosophy and aims of Zionism as they were stated by Mr. Justice Brandeis, nor more eager that the necessary conditions should be secured at the hands of the Peace Conference and of Great Britain to assure the realisation of the Zionist programme. (p 192)

These transatlantic words confront us again with the exceptionalism surrounding the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and introduce into political science the new term “numerical self-determination”, with *non-numerical* self-determination in Palestine thus applying to the Jewish ‘self. Otherwise, the majority in the “existing community” in Palestine – containing not only all Moslems and Christians but many indigenous Jews – would have to be favoured with independence. As we have several times seen, and as stated explicitly here by Balfour, self-determination in Palestine should be embraced only once (Zionist) Jews were in the majority; whatever the exact ideological underpinning, and whatever the exact population-group numbers, rejection of majoritarian democracy was necessary not only to win time for a Jewish majority but even for the doctrine of political parity, which did not depend on a Jewish majority and would play a strong role in future discussions over Palestine.⁵⁵⁴ [e.g. >4; >34; >100; >85; >99; >131; >156; >161; >168; >255; >273; >282; >289; >290; >336; >353; >383; >386; >413; >452; >463; >469; >478]

⁵⁵³ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 113, citing Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, Vol. II, pp 744-46.

⁵⁵⁴ Also McMahan 2010.

51. Balfour to Lloyd George (2)

26 June 1919

Foreign Secretary Balfour wrote to Prime Minister Lloyd George on 26 June 1919 concerning the borders of the various British and French Mandates:

In determining the Palestinian frontiers, the main thing to keep in mind is to make a Zionist policy possible by giving the fullest scope to economic development in Palestine. Thus the Northern frontier [boundary to French Syria/Lebanon] should give to Palestine a full command of the water power which geographically belongs to Palestine and not to Syria...⁵⁵⁵

This would fulfill the second condition presented by Brandeis to Balfour in their talk two days earlier. [>50] James de Rothschild, who in 1918 was one of the official British members of the Zionist Commission [>23], would note in the House of Commons on 17 November 1930 that “The [border of the] Sykes Picot agreement was negotiated... simply and only because of the Jewish National Home, and when the limitation of their frontier was drawn between Syria and Palestine it was drawn north of the most northern Jewish colony in order to include that in the Jewish National Home.”⁵⁵⁶ Even if they did not have access to such correspondence amongst the pro-Zionist leaders of Great Britain, the Palestinians were thus objectively justified in their intransigence and even militancy which, as we have seen, was growing [>49].

28 June 1919 [*Versailles peace treaty between Germany and the five Allied Powers signed. Signing for Britain were Balfour and four of the War Cabinet members who on 2 November 1917 had issued the Balfour Declaration, namely Lloyd George, George Barnes, Alfred Milner and Andrew Bonar Law; Jan Smuts signed for South Africa. Signing for the King of the Hedjaz (Hussein) were Haidar Rustem and Awni Abdul Hadi. The Treaty's Part I (its 'Covenant', Articles 1-26) established the League of Nations and its mandates scheme.*]

⁵⁵⁵ FO 800/217, p 97.

⁵⁵⁶ Hansard 1930a, c181; see further McTague 1982.

52.* General Syrian Congress

2 July 1919

What is known as **the General Syrian Congress** was elected by people spread all over Syria and constituted in May 1919 with 85 members.⁵⁵⁷ Meeting just as the King-Crane Commission [^{>59}] arrived in Damascus on 26 June 1919 and just as the Principal Allied Powers on 28 June were signing the Versailles Peace Treaty with Germany, which incorporated as its first 26 Articles the Covenant of the League of Nations [^{>46}], 69 of the 85 elected delegates attended the gathering, including Emir Faisal, Izzat Darwaza (as Secretary), Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Aref al-Aref (Shehadeh), as well as Jubran Eff. Kazma from Nazareth and Abdel Fattah Bey Saadi from Acre.⁵⁵⁸ 27 of the attendees had been delegates to the 1st Palestine Arab Congress in January 1919, some of whom, according to Mazin Qumsiyeh, had soon thereafter been prevented by the British from sailing from Jaffa in the direction of Paris where they wanted to present their case.⁵⁵⁹ [^{>39}]

The delegates accepted the Covenant's purported principle of ending "conquest and colonization" and thus declined the Covenant's offer of European "tutelage". Its resolutions, comprising **the Damascus Program**, were submitted to the "American [King-Crane] section of the Inter-Allied Commission" on 2 July 1919.⁵⁶⁰ They read in part:⁵⁶¹

We, the undersigned members of the General Syrian Congress, meeting in Damascus on Wednesday 2nd of July 1919, made up of representatives from the three [military] Zones [of Syria], viz., the Southern, Eastern and Western, provided with credentials duly authorizing us to represent the Moslem, Christian and Jewish inhabitants of our respective districts, ... demand full and absolute political independence for Syria without protection or tutelage. ... We desire the Government of Syria to be a civil constitutional monarchy based on principles of democratic and broadly decentralized rule which shall safeguard the rights of minorities, and that the King be the Emir Faisal...

Reference to a "civil constitutional", "democratic" and "decentralized" government showed the Congress's rootedness in both Ottoman and Western European political practice.

The Congress rejected the whole paternalistic Mandate project:

In view of the fact that the Arab inhabitants of Syria are not less fitted or gifted than were certain other nations (such as the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and Rumanians) when granted independence, we protest against Article XXII of the Covenant of the League of Nations which relegates us to the standing of insufficiently developed races requiring the tutelage of

⁵⁵⁷ Tannous 1988, p 81.

⁵⁵⁸ FO 371/4182, p 207; also Tibawi 1977, pp 362-63.

⁵⁵⁹ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 52.

⁵⁶⁰ See King & Crane 1919a, p 19. [^{>59}]

⁵⁶¹ FO 371/4182, pp 208-09, all quotations, and bcc-cuny, current [I have combined these two translations from the Arabic]; Antonius 1938, p 440/Appendix G; Jeffries 1939, pp 296-97; Laqueur & Rubin 1984, pp 31-33; Khalidi 1978, p 97; Khalidi 1984, p 83; Abdul Hadi 1997, p 32.

a mandatory power. If, for whatever reason that might remain undisclosed to us, the Peace Conference were to ignore this legitimate protest, we shall regard the Mandate mentioned in the Covenant of the League of Nations [^{>46}] as implying no more than the rendering of assistance in the technical and economic fields without impairment of our absolute independence.

“Absolute political independence” obviously contrasted with their status under the Ottomans; they were fighting not merely for good treatment by relatively benevolent outsiders.

In this passage they were rejecting that aspect of Article 22 which denied the immediate recognition of their “existence as independent nations”, even if they would later rely on that very aspect because it did seem to promise independence sometime in the future. [^{>46}] As Mandatory, moreover, if there were to be one, they would prefer the U.S. as the country most likely to restrict its tutelage to the non-political area of “advice and assistance”.⁵⁶²

Turning to southern Syria:

We reject the claims of Zionists for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in that part of southern Syria which is known as Palestine and we are opposed to Jewish immigration into any part of the country; for we do not acknowledge their title, but consider them a grave peril to our people from the national, economical, and political points of view. Our Jewish fellow-citizens shall continue to enjoy the rights and to bear the responsibilities which are ours in common.

According to Tibawi, this formula – “*lahum ma lana wa alaihim maalaina*”, i.e. Jews are welcome as normal people with the same rights and duties as everybody else – had already been explicitly expressed by both Sherif Hussain when responding to the Hogarth Message [^{>21}] and by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Kamil al-Husseini, when responding to a speech in Jerusalem by the Anglo-Jewish leader of the Zionist Commission, Weizmann, in May 1918 [^{>24}].⁵⁶³

Partition was rejected:

We desire that there should be no dismemberment of Syria and no separation of Palestine or the coastal region in the west or the Lebanon from the mother country. ... The lofty (noble) principles proclaimed by President Wilson [^{>20}] strengthen our confidence... that the determining consideration in the settlement of our own future will be the real desires of our people... We request to be allowed to send a delegation to represent us at the Peace Conference to defend our rights and secure the realisation of our aspirations.

One of Wilson’s “lofty (noble) principles” was the invalidation of “secret treaties” [^{>20}], the one relevant to partitioning Syria being the Sykes-Picot Agreement [^{>12}]. In terms of their

⁵⁶² King & Crane 1919, p 21, Specific Requests, D.

⁵⁶³ Tibawi 1977, pp 270, also 309.

'subject position' the Arabs had to seek "allowance" – permission – to appear at the Conference deciding their fate. No official delegation of the Congress was invited to Paris by the Principal Allied Powers.

Many of the leaders of this Congress, which was intended as a permanent institution, were surviving members of the group which in 1914 had stated in the 'Damascus Protocol' their conditions for the negotiations between Sherif Hussein and Henry McMahon.⁵⁶⁴ [9] The next major meeting of the Congress, on 8 March 1920, would declare the independence of Syria with Faisal as king. [69] Both meetings re-affirmed the basic indigenous demands which had been formulated at regular meetings of Moslem-Christian Associations and other nationalists, namely a more or less immediately independent (greater) Syria and the end of the Zionist project.⁵⁶⁵ According to Muslih, "They [the MCAs] were the most conciliatory among the Palestinians, and the most willing to bargain and compromise, but not on the issue of Zionism."⁵⁶⁶

This entire chronology provides substantiation of Fayeze Sayegh's summary of the importance to the Syrians of the General Syrian Congress's resolutions, even though they were ignored by France and Britain. He writes that regarding the Jews of the world, for whom the Zionists claimed to speak and act, the Palestinians and Syrians did "not acknowledge their title" to Palestine, and:

Similar utterances of unqualified rejection of Zionism continued to be made by every Palestinian Arab gathering throughout the decades of British occupation of Palestine. Not once did a Palestinian Arab group or conference express acceptance – even partial or qualified – of Zionist colonization. And the feelings, so unequivocally expressed to the King-Crane Commission in 1919, continued thereafter to be expressed, with equal forcefulness, to the Mandatory Government and its countless Commissions, as well as to the League of Nations and the United Nations, by every Palestinian delegation that had a chance to appear before any of those bodies.⁵⁶⁷

Such was the Palestinian-British 'dialogue'. Note that Muslih and Sayegh both attest absolute unity of opinion concerning Zionism and independence through all classes of the population, whatever their other differences might be.

Tannous adds, regarding the genesis of this Congress:

The people of Syria were agitated at what had taken place in Paris and they could not tolerate the humiliation of their leader [Emir Faisal Ibn Al-Hussein, who had (briefly) returned home in April 1919]. The strongest party in Syria was the Arab Independence Party or *Hisb Al-Istiklal Al-Arabi*, and that party, in indignation, proposed to elect immediately a national assembly. Faisal agreed and a hurried election was carried out in Syria, Palestine and the Lebanon for an eighty-five member General Assembly.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁴ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 147.

⁵⁶⁵ Wasserstein 1978, p 40; Kayyali 1978, pp 66, 69.

⁵⁶⁶ Muslih 1988, p 162; also 163-64.

⁵⁶⁷ Sayegh 1965, pp 42-43.

⁵⁶⁸ Tannous 1988, p 81.

These were the 85 entitled to voting membership of the General Syrian Congress. Akram Zuaytir writes, "This Congress assumed the powers of a Chamber of Deputies and a Constituent Assembly."⁵⁶⁹ Were these people who could not 'stand alone'?

⁵⁶⁹ Zuaytir 1958, p 43.

53. Faisal to Clayton

5-11 July 1919

Palestine Military Governor Gilbert Clayton sent a “private and confidential” report⁵⁷⁰ of **a long interview in Damascus with Emir Faisal** containing something very close to the latter’s position at the Paris peace conference and his testimony on 3 July 1919 to the King-Crane Commission [59]. The Emir explained to him why France was a bad ruler of Syria and stated plainly and repeatedly the simple demand for Syrian unity and independence, tracing this demand back at least to the 1850s: “The Syrians desire to establish a Democratic Government on the decentralisation principle, safeguarding the rights of minorities and maintaining local traditions.” Clayton then added: “Zionism he stated some months ago he was prepared to accept in its limited sense of a certain amount of immigration and the retention of the existing Jewish colonies. The wider Zionist aspirations had, however, frightened the people of the country and he now finds them determined not to have any form of it.”⁵⁷¹ [see 37]

⁵⁷⁰ FO 371/4181, pp ?, Clayton to CPO in Cairo, 11 July.

⁵⁷¹ Also Friedman 1987, p 37, reproducing FO 608/99, Cable 311, Clayton to the Foreign Office.

54. Curzon to the Military Administration

4 August 1919

A **Directive** of 4 August 1919 from George Curzon to a Colonel French in Cairo shows intent to communicate openly to the Palestinians (and the Zionists) that the Jewish National Home would happen:

Following is for your information and guidance and for that of all heads of administration and their local representatives: His Majesty's Government's policy contemplates concession to Great Britain of Mandate for Palestine. Terms of Mandate will embody substance of [Balfour] declaration of November 2, 1917. Arabs will not be despoiled of their land nor required to leave the country.⁵⁷²

It seems that to Curzon, as Acting Foreign Secretary while Balfour was in Paris, it was clear that first came the British wish to support the Zionist aspirations, and then came the Mandate set-up. Would Britain have wanted the Palestinian colony in the absence of the Zionist project? Maybe, if there was anything to the arguments that it needed it for strategic or imperial reasons. Curzon deemed it necessary to deny that the indigent Palestinians would be forced to leave Palestine, implying that population transfer was being seen by some of the political actors as at least a possibility.

⁵⁷² *Documents on British Foreign Policy, First Series, Vol. IV, p 329, No. 245 Telegraphic [96834/2117/44, Foreign Office]; see John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 151, 152.*

On 8 August 1919 Curzon in London sent Balfour in Paris the minutes of a meeting, “at the Offices of the Zionist Organisation” in London, between Gilbert Clayton and fourteen Zionists, including Weizmann, during which Clayton listened to their wishes that Jews would have 50% of the seats in organs of government and that the Jewish state should at least include Transjordan. According to one Zionist historian Clayton agreed to much of the Zionist program, while Susan Boyle says he calmly rejected it; at any rate it seems that it was just after this meeting that Weizmann said he would see to it that Meinertzhagen replaced Clayton as Chief Political Officer in Palestine.⁵⁷³

Knowing Curzon’s at-best lukewarm attitude towards Zionism, Balfour in reply sent to his co-Foreign Secretary Curzon **a memorandum** dated 11 August. He did not mince his words:

The contradiction between the letter of the Covenant and the policy of the Allies is even more flagrant in the case of the ‘independent nation’ of Palestine than in that of the ‘independent nation’ of Syria. In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country, though the American [King-Crane] Commission [^{>59}] has been going through the form of asking what they are. The Four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land. In my opinion that is right. What I have never been able to understand is how it can be harmonised with the [Anglo-French, ^{>28}] declaration, the Covenant [^{>46}], or the instructions to the [King-Crane] Commission of Enquiry. I do not think that Zionism will hurt the Arabs, but they will never say they want it. Whatever be the future of Palestine, it is not now an ‘independent nation’, nor is it yet on the way to become one. Whatever deference should be paid to the view of those living there, the Powers in their selection of a mandatory do not propose, as I understand the matter, to consult them. In short, so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate;...⁵⁷⁴

Balfour here semi-privately admitted that HMG’s undertakings to the two groups of the populace, as well as its two commitments to self-determination and Zionism, were straight-out contradictory. He here outdid even his previous utterances with regard to disparagement of the Arabs, opposition to democracy and implicit reliance on British military might.⁵⁷⁵ His utter disregard for the “wishes of the present inhabitants” was magnified by his puzzling remark that King and Crane were merely “going through the

⁵⁷³ Friedman 1987, pp 109-17; Boyle 2001, pp 87-88

⁵⁷⁴ FO 371/4183, pp 21-22; UNSUPR 1978a, use Search function; Ingrams 1972, p 73; Friedman 1987, p 135; Kattan 2009, p 123.

⁵⁷⁵ FO 371/4179, pp 309-10 [^{>41}] and FO 800/217, pp 189-91 [^{>50}].

form of” consulting the affected people, and it is almost certain that Balfour had co-decided Britain’s withdrawal from the “Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry” before it set out for Palestine. [see >59]

What should not be recorded merely with academic coolness is that Balfour’s indisputably colonialist and paternalist memorandum placed the Arab race below the Jewish race: the latter had “traditions,... needs,... and hopes” while the former had mere “desires and prejudices”; the latter were by some objective measure far more “profound” than the former. A.L. Tibawi believes it is to Balfour’s credit that he admitted that the French and British had indisputably promised “‘national government’ and ‘an administration deriving its authority from the choice of the native population.’”⁵⁷⁶ In this passage he also admits the Powers’ deceptiveness.

As Edward Said adds, Balfour’s utterance was “no mere expression of an opinion; it was a statement of policy that radically altered the course of history, if not for the whole world, then certainly for the 700,000 Arabs and their descendants whose land was being pronounced upon.”⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, the world has unceasingly “pronounced upon” Palestine while Palestinians’ pronouncements, although crystal-clear, were always for one reason or another disregarded or not even ‘admitted into evidence’.

20 August 1919 *The Moslem-Christian Society in Jerusalem sends a memo to the Military High Command condemning the separation of Palestine from Greater Syria and asserting that the Palestinians will not accept the Zionist project in their country.*

During 1919 and 1920 ‘18,500 Zionist immigrants flocked to Palestine’s shores.’⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Tibawi 1977, p 367, citing FO 371/4183, paper 132187.

⁵⁷⁷ Said 1979, p 17.

⁵⁷⁸ Rogan 2015, p 401.

In 1917 Norman Bentwich, an early British, Jewish Zionist, wrote the book *Palestine of the Jews*, which was published two years later when he was Senior Judicial Officer in the Palestine military administration. (With the same duties he became Attorney General when the civil administration replaced the military one on 1 July 1920.) While most British officials came and went, Bentwich was part of the Palestine Government for more than thirteen years – until 1931 – as Legal Secretary and Attorney General, and also as Vice-Chairman of the Hebrew University. To describe Bentwich, as well as first High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, Philip Mattar accurately uses the phrase “Zionist officials”.⁵⁷⁹

Akram Zuaytir quotes from the book:

There is no need that the Palestine of the future should be confined to its historical borders. Jewish civilization is capable of expanding to all the countries promised to the Jews in the Old Testament – from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from the Lebanon to the Nile; for these are the countries promised to the chosen people.⁵⁸⁰

In many ways Bentwich was second-in-command in Palestine, and he was one Briton who wanted more than a ‘Jewish national home’ *within* Palestine.

According to Wasserstein:

In the book Bentwich talked of making ‘Palestine a Jewish country’ (p 99), argued that Jews deserved ‘special rights’ in Palestine (p 194), and referred to ‘Greater Palestine’ (defined as stretching from El Arish to the Euphrates) as an area which ‘cries for a population to redeem it’ (p 204). But he stressed that ‘state sovereignty is not essential to the Jewish national ideal’ (p 195), and affirmed ‘It is neither to be expected, nor is it desired that the Jews should occupy the whole country. There is ample room for the children of Esau and Jacob to live together in harmony’ (pp 204-05).⁵⁸¹

How Palestine could be a “Jewish country” without “state sovereignty” is not revealed, but however that may be Bentwich’s influential views were formed just around the time he entered service in Palestine in 1918. His powerful position would enable him to move Palestine closer to his vision. [*also >337*]

⁵⁷⁹ Mattar 2000, p 383; also Robson 2011, pp 51-61.

⁵⁸⁰ Zuaytir 1958, p 270.

⁵⁸¹ Wasserstein 1978, p 213.

57. H.D. Watson to the Foreign Office

16 August 1919

When the U.S. Commission headed by Henry King and Charles Crane visited Palestine from 10 through 25 June 1919 [59], Major-General H.D. Watson was Chief Administrator of Palestine (the top post, equivalent to that of High Commissioner during the Civil Administration which began on 1 July 1920). In that job he was successor to Arthur Money and predecessor of Louis Bols [Appendix 5.1], and all three advocated a high degree of self-determination for Palestine. [266] Watson **observed exactly what** the King-Crane group was observing:

On taking over the Administration of O.E.T.A. [Occupied Enemy Territory Administration] South I had an open mind with regard to the Zionist movement and was fully in sympathy with the aim of the Jews for a National Home in Palestine – and with that aim I am still in sympathy, as long as it is not carried out at the expense of the *rightful inhabitants and owners of the land*. There is no doubt whatsoever that the feeling of the great mass of the population is very antagonistic to the scheme – *not so much from a religious as from a nationalist point of view*. The people of the country, the *owners of the land* have looked with eager eyes to the peaceful development of their country and the better education of their children – for their own benefit, and not for the benefit of peoples of alien nationality. The antagonism to Zionism of the majority of the population is deep rooted – it is fast leading to hatred of the British – and will result, if the Zionist programme is forced upon them, in an outbreak of a very serious character necessitating the employment of a *much larger number of troops* than at present located in the territory. [see the events of spring 1920, spring 1921, summer 1928, summer 1929, fall 1933 and 1935-39] ... The great fear of the people is that once Zionist wealth is passed into the land, all territorial and mineral concessions will fall into the hands of the Jews whose intensely clannish instincts prohibit them from dealing with any but those of their own religion, to the detriment of Moslems and Christians. These latter, the *natives of the soil*, foresee their eventual banishment from the land... . [Britain] will lose the lives of many of her sons in a war which will be fought, against the principles of the League of Nations, in forcing upon a small country a population of aliens. (*emphasis added*)⁵⁸²

Watson, who here correctly identified the “owners” of Palestine as a political entity, was only one of many British officers and officials present in Palestine who correctly predicted that Zionism could be implemented only by military force, at high cost to the colonial power itself.⁵⁸³ (See also the Theme Index.) This dispatch also presages several further developments: the stifled needs of the expanding *local* population, the Zionist practice of selling land only to other Jews and hiring only Jews in other industries, and the transfer of Palestinians out of Palestine.

⁵⁸² FO 608/99, pp 486-88, Clayton (secret) to Colonial Office and army General HQ on 16 August 1919; Friedman 1987, pp 144-45.

⁵⁸³ E.g. King-Crane 1919, I.III.E§3; also Suárez 2016, pp 44-45. See in general Mearsheimer & Walt 2007.

According to Bernard Wasserstein, another critic of Zionist policy was General Arthur Money, who just before handing the post of Chief Administrator of the Military Administration over to H.D. Watson [^{>47}] had written:

I warned both Foreign Office and War Office many times as to what would follow if they encouraged Zionist pretensions too far. ... It's not pleasant to contemplate the fruits of the last twelve months' work being upset owing to the shadowy claims of the Jews to monopolise Palestine. ... Speaking personally and *privately*, I must confess my own inclination is on the side of the Arabs, though in my position I have to be absolutely impartial, and am if anything impelled by orders from home to assist the Zionists.⁵⁸⁴

The purpose of London's Mandate was to "assist the Zionists". I have not yet been able to trace the exact series of events which led to several dismissals from the top rungs of the Palestine Administration, for instance that of anti-Zionist Money in favour of Zionist-critical Watson, or Watson's dismissal in favour of Louis Bols (who also became very Zionist-critical), or Zionist-sceptical General Clayton's replacement as Chief Political Officer under Allenby, in Cairo, on 29 July 1919 by virulent pro-Zionist Richard Meinertzhagen who in 1959 would proudly write that in 1948 he had murdered some "Arabs" in Haifa⁵⁸⁵. It was apparently hard to find pro-Zionist Administrators, aside from Norman Bentwich [^{>56}] and a few others, but Meinertzhagen and a bit later Herbert Samuel offered themselves.

To show the contrast to the views of Watson and Money, consider Meinertzhagen's dispatch of 26 September 1919 to Acting Foreign Minister Curzon in London:

The people of Palestine are not in a fit state to be told openly that the establishment of Zionism in Palestine is the policy to which H.M.G., America and France are committed. They certainly do not realise this fact. It has, therefore, been thought advisable to withhold for the present your telegram of August 4th, 1919 [^{>54}], from general publication. So soon as Dr. Weizmann arrives I intend to draw up with him and the Chief Administrator a statement giving in the most moderate language what Zionism means, the gradual manner of its introduction, its freedom from religious or industrial intolerance, its eventual benefits to Palestine and a denial that immigration spells the flooding of Palestine with the dregs of Eastern Europe. ... At the same time I am losing no opportunity to impress on Zionists the necessity of patience and the certainty of eventual success. Whilst on the other hand I am insisting [on the part of British officials in Palestine] on official recognition of Zionism as the established policy of H.M.G. and on its being the main factor in considering the many Palestine questions always arising...⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁴ Wasserstein 1978, p 48, probably citing CZA Z4/16044.

⁵⁸⁵ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 122-23.

⁵⁸⁶ *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, Vol. IV, pp 425-28, No. C.P.O. 31/1 [141037/2117/44A]; John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 152-53.

Meinertzhagen was of the opinion that the people he co-ruled were too dim or uninformed to realise Britain's Zionist intentions – a view which, as we have already amply seen, was 180° false; he also evidently thought they wouldn't know salami tactics when they saw them.

A short time before, on 30 July 1919, Meinertzhagen had recorded in his diary Balfour's views, explained to him over lunch:

To those who argued that the fate of Palestine should be decided by a Plebiscite, in which case the Arabs would have an overwhelming majority, he would reply that in any Palestine plebiscite the Jews of the world must be consulted; in which case he sincerely believed that an overwhelming majority would declare for Zionism under a British Mandate.⁵⁸⁷

Meinertzhagen apparently agreed with Balfour's view that an entire group of people, defined ethno-religiously rather than geographically or historically, should have the vote in Palestine although not even 1% of them lived there. This was a way of making Jews the majority without a single additional Jewish immigrant. [*compare >50*]

Meinertzhagen, for his part, then told Balfour that

I did not think that Arab opposition to Zionism would last for an instant in any obstructive form, if we once made it clear that Palestine was to be the National Home of the Jews and that H.M.G. was determined to see its policy through. ... Finally Balfour told me I had a very difficult task to perform in establishing Zionism in Palestine. ... But I had his complete confidence and I should get the support of H.M.G.⁵⁸⁸

Meinertzhagen lived to see that his estimate regarding "Arab opposition to Zionism" was also 180° incorrect.

⁵⁸⁷ Meinertzhagen 1959, p 25; John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 139-40.

⁵⁸⁸ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 25-26.

IV. “can hardly be seriously considered”

This 17-page entry covers the first of the two serious dialogues between a Western Power and the Palestinians during Palestine's time as a British colony – the other being the St James Conference of February–March 1939 [386ff]. In 1919 the Power was the U.S., not the U.K., but the Palestinians and other Syrians were able to tell the world what they wanted in an official, quantifiable and heartfelt way. It relates the genesis of the King-Crane Commission, presents its findings, records several analyses of it, and reports on its suppression.

The '**Report upon Syria**' written by the King-Crane Commission was Part I of a larger report, Parts II and III dealing with Mesopotamia and the "non-Arabic-Speaking Portions of the Former Ottoman Empire" [e.g. Turkey].⁵⁸⁹ After some preparation the Commission arrived in the Near East at Yaffa on 10 June 1919, and on 28 August 1919 submitted its full report in Paris to the incipient League of Nations or individually to the victorious Powers. It is the first of the Western or United Nations documents that *must* be read in their entirety by anyone interested in the history of the Mandate. The others are the 1920 Palin Report [88], the 1922 Churchill White Paper [142], the 1930 Shaw [220] and Hope Simpson [233] Reports, the 1937 Royal or 'Peel' Commission Report [336], the 1939 MacDonald White Paper [410] and the 1947 Report of UN (Ad Hoc) Subcommittee 2 [478]. In fact, the last-mentioned document, although dated 1947, is an excellent introduction to this chronology as it employed all of its pertinent political-science conceptions and held the view that the 'self' with justified self-determination in Palestine was Palestinian. Both King-Crane and Subcommittee 2 moreover presented easy, ethically unassailable solutions in line with the unanimous opinion of the Palestinians, but Britain didn't listen.

Background and Remit

What became the King-Crane Commission was instigated at the Paris Peace Conference on 25 March 1919 by President Wilson, Emir Faisal and Howard Bliss, President of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut.⁵⁹⁰ According to A.L. Tibawi Faisal, then in de facto control of Syria and based in Damascus, already on 19 November 1918 had told commanding General Allenby straight out that the best path was to "hold a plebiscite and let the people decide whether they want an Arab government or French control"⁵⁹¹, and he repeated this to the illustrious politicians gathered at the Peace Conference in February 1919, so "The idea was Arab, not American in origin"⁵⁹². While in France, Allenby lobbied for send-

⁵⁸⁹ King & Crane 1919a, 1919b & 1919c. The page numbers in parentheses in this entry's text refer to online source 1919a; online source 1919b, which is slightly abridged, has slightly different headings, lacks page numbers, but is more legible graphically. When possible I've cited Section numbers in addition to page numbers. The Report is also at online source 1919c and in Editor & Publisher, 1922. Its Recommendations (only) are at: <https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/392AD7EB00902AOC852570C000795153>

⁵⁹⁰ Khalidi 1984, p 89; Boyle 2001, pp 84–85.

⁵⁹¹ Tibawi 1977, p 329.

⁵⁹² Tibawi 1977, pp 341–42.

ing a commission.⁵⁹³ The “Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry” which the above-named trio envisioned was to be a joint British-French-Italian-US investigation into the popular will in Syria (which included Palestine), Mesopotamia, and parts of what became modern Turkey.⁵⁹⁴

As British members of the Commission, Acting Foreign Secretary Curzon had foreseen Henry McMahon [>10], D.G. Hogarth [>21; >36] and, as secretary, Arnold Toynbee [>31].⁵⁹⁵ But the U.K., France, and Italy soon withdrew from the project, probably because they were all too aware of local opposition to the Zionism they all to some degree favoured, but that is to my knowledge an as yet not fully-told story. Britain’s withdrawal in particular, especially given the non-Zionist leanings of the three above-mentioned proposed members, was one of the huge successes of Zionism.

This left a strictly U.S. investigative team of forty people, chaired by two friends of U.S. President Wilson: Henry King, President of Oberlin College, and Charles Crane, Chicago businessman and benefactor of Robert College in Istanbul⁵⁹⁶ to whom, under the nickname *Harun al-Rashid*, George Antonius would dedicate his 1938 book *The Arab Awakening*⁵⁹⁷. According to Susan Boyle, at Crane’s invitation Antonius had become a co-author of the final Report.⁵⁹⁸ Wilson had withstood Zionist lobbying to call off the Commission, for instance by Harvard professor Felix Frankfurter, whereupon Frankfurter, realizing the huge potential danger to the Zionist cause, organised a simultaneous American Jewish delegation to travel to Palestine.⁵⁹⁹

That such a fact-finding visit was anathema to Zionists is colourfully illustrated by the diary entry for 3 June 1919 of Zionist Richard Meinertzhagen [*see inter alia* >58; >61; >65; >74; >84; >88; >114; >116; >204], who was at that time the top War Office official at the Paris conference, who in August 1919 became Chief Political Officer for Palestine and Syria on General Allenby’s staff in Cairo, and who in early 1921 became John Shuckburgh’s second-in-command at the Colonial Office’s new Middle East Department created by freshly-installed Colonial Secretary Churchill.⁶⁰⁰ Meinertzhagen wrote:

The proposed International Commission for Palestine is already a laughing stock and can achieve nothing. I shall propose that a British Commission be sent to Syria to ascertain the wishes of the Syrians and that France be told that we shall abide by the findings of that

⁵⁹³ Boyle 2001, pp 84-85.

⁵⁹⁴ Allawi 2014, pp 210-13; also Karsch 2020, p 8.

⁵⁹⁵ E.g. FO 371/4179, pp 434, 435, 467, 486; Tannous 1988, p 81.

⁵⁹⁶ For me the scientific and moral excellence of the King-Crane Commission becomes more enjoyable personally as I was an undergraduate at Oberlin College and my wife holds Bachelors and Masters degrees from Robert College’s successor institution, Boğaziçi University.

⁵⁹⁷ Antonius 1938; Ingrams 1972, pp 69-70, citing FO 371/4180.

⁵⁹⁸ Boyle 2001, p 85.

⁵⁹⁹ Allawi 2014, pp 213-14.

⁶⁰⁰ Hansard 1921, c268; Huneidi 1998, pp 24-25.

Commission [and that] the International Commission be disbanded [and that] Allenby [be] told that the Balfour Declaration stands and that he so informs both Faisal and the Palestine Administration.⁶⁰¹

A British team, that is, would presumably “ascertain” wishes somehow compatible with the Balfour Declaration which, in any case and whatever the actual “findings”, would have to “stand”. Whether Meinertzhagen was inspired by Frankfurter’s idea, I don’t know, but evidently the Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry called forth Zionist competition.

The Report’s official title is given either as *Report of the American Section of the International Commission on Mandates in Turkey*⁶⁰² or as *Report of American Section of Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates in Turkey: An Official United States Government Report*⁶⁰³. Its terms of reference given by Wilson ran under the title “Future administration of certain portions of the Turkish Empire under the mandatory system.”⁶⁰⁴ The Commission’s mission statement – i.e. “the nature of their task, as given to them by President Wilson” – took as guiding and even binding the League of Nations Covenant, Article 22 §4, then fresh off the press [>46], which, whatever its equivocations, could plausibly be construed as supporting Syrian self-determination. (p 1) So the “mandatory system” was already a *chose jugée* a year before its quasi-official birth as a child of the League of Nations in San Remo. [>78; also >146; >147; >150]

The Commission’s final report, after being submitted to and ignored by several governments in Paris on 28 August 1919, did make its way to President Wilson but was suppressed there by the U.S. government, being privately published only in December 1922 by the journal *Editor and Publisher*.⁶⁰⁵

Translator and physician for the Commission was Dr. Sami Haddad of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut,⁶⁰⁶ and the Secretary was Donald M. Brodie; another top assistant was William Yale, a pro-Arab who worked on and off as university professor, oil company executive, and U.S. State Department employee. (p 2) In addition to receiving and studying the hundreds of “petitions” submitted to it the Commission’s “method” was

to meet in conference individuals and delegations who should represent all the significant groups in the various communities, and so to obtain as far as possible the opinions and desires of the whole people. (p 2)

(For an argument that the Commission’s official remit was to determine objective facts rather than, “as far as possible”, the people’s desires, as well as a critical look at the Ori-

⁶⁰¹ Meinertzhagen 1959, p 21.

⁶⁰² King & Crane 1919a.

⁶⁰³ King & Crane 1919b.

⁶⁰⁴ Tibawi 1977, p 350.

⁶⁰⁵ *Editor & Publisher*, V.55, No. 27, 2nd Section, December 2, 1922; *The New York Times*, 3/4 December 1919. See Drake 2014.

⁶⁰⁶ Father of Farid Haddad, to whom Edward Said dedicated *The Question of Palestine*.

entalist attitudes of some Commission members who claimed to be able to ascertain the true but often unexpressed feelings of the locals, see Lori Allen's account of the King-Crane Commission's behaviour in Syria.⁶⁰⁷)

Starting on 10 June it spent 15 days in Palestine interviewing all communities of whatever religion in Yaffa, Tel Aviv, Richon-le-Sion, Jerusalem, Gaza, Hebron, Beersheba, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Nazareth, Haifa, Acre, then Tiberias on the way to Damascus; twenty-one of the 248 groups interviewed during this two-week stint were Jewish; after Southern Syria, the Commission spent another four weeks researching in the rest of greater Syria as well as Antakya, Adana and Mersin. (I.2, I.3 & I.5; pp 3-4, 7)

The Report quoted explicitly from and built upon the Anglo-French Declaration of 7/8 November 1918 [→28]:

The Commissioners have sought to make their survey of Syria, and the report upon Syria now submitted, in the spirit of the instructions given them by the Council of Four, and especially in harmony with the resolutions adopted on January 30, 1919, by the Representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan, and with the Anglo-French Declaration of November 9, 1918, both quoted at length in the Commission's instructions. (p 35)

The "resolutions adopted on January 30, 1919", by the main five victorious countries stated more or less exactly what would become Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.⁶⁰⁸ [→46]

The Report then pointed out that the Anglo-French Declaration "was spread broadcast throughout Syria and Mesopotamia" and along with other Western declarations of December 1918 [→18] and January 1919 [→21] "made a deep impression upon the Syrian people and lay in the background of all their demands"; such utterances by the future Mandatories

clearly look [to] propose that Syria and Mesopotamia shall not be colonies in the old sense at all; shall not be exploited for the benefit of the occupying power; but shall rather be directly encouraged and assisted in developing national independence as quickly as possible. (pp 36-37; II-General Considerations)

The Syrians' "deep impression" would however turn out to be a false impression.⁶⁰⁹

Findings

The Report, in a nutshell, found that the overwhelming majority of the residents of Greater Syria stood behind what the Commission called the "Independence Program", consisting of three elements:

⁶⁰⁷ Allen 2017, pp 386-87, 394-401, 404, 411-12.

⁶⁰⁸ King & Crane 1919a, p 35.

⁶⁰⁹ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 288-89.

(a) The Political Unity of Syria, including Cilicia on the north, the Syrian Desert on the east, and Palestine, extending as far as Rafa on the south; (b) Absolute Independence for Syria; and (c) Opposition to a Zionist State and Jewish Immigration. (p 18; Summary of Significant Conclusions, II.1)⁶¹⁰

The “absolute independence” of the “independence program” can be taken as saying that it was up to them whether they could “stand alone” or not, the alleged inability to “stand alone” being the justification for the “tutelage” which the designated Mandatories (Britain and France) were to bestow upon conquered regions according to the Covenant Article 22. [46] The “Independence Program” was almost identical to the “Damascus Program”. (p 19) [52]

Of the total of 1,863 petitions 260, from 248 “groups”, came from Palestine (“OETA [Occupied Enemy Territory Administration] South”); of these, 78.5% were for “absolute independence of Syria” or “independence of all Arab Countries”; 222 or 85% were “against Zionist program”, 7 were “for complete Zionist program (Jewish State and immigration)” and 8 were “for modified Zionist program”. (pp 9, 10) Zionist organisations were treated exactly like indigenous ones and submitted 0.59% of the petitions. (p 16; Petition Summaries-Syria Complete, E §1)

The methodology was to simply tally how many petitions pleaded, unasked, for a given political outcome; that is, if 78.5% were for independence that does not mean that 21.5% were against; some merely did not mention it. In non-coastal Syria and Transjordan (“OETA East”, in contrast to “OETA West” and “OETA North” which became Lebanon and coastal Syria) an even higher percentage petitioned for total independence while only 2 supported the complete Zionist program and 1,040 opposed Zionism. (pp 13, 14) A reading of the data for “Petition Summaries-Syria Complete” (including the above plus Lebanon and Antakya) is worthwhile. Of the total of 1,863 petitions 19 were for either complete or modified Zionism while 1,350 were against. (p 16) The rest didn’t mention it.

The Commission listed five reasons why its “summary tables” cannot be an exactly “mathematically accurate” reflection of the “desires of the peoples of Syria”; yet they are “fairly accurate” and “certainly representative”. (pp 17-18)

As for the “Zionist Program”:

Eleven petitions with varying wording favor the Zionist Program of a Jewish State and extensive Jewish immigration. These are all from Jewish delegations. Eight other petitions express approval of the Zionist colonies in Palestine without endorsement of the complete program. Four of these latter are statements by Arab peasants that they are on good terms with the Jewish colonies. (p 19; Summary of Significant Conclusions, II.4)

Its summary of the Zionist position:

- (a) Palestine, with a fairly large area, to be set aside at once as a ‘national home’ for the Jews.
- (b) Sooner or later the political rule of the land will become organized as a ‘Jewish Commonwealth’.
- (c) At the start authorization will be given for the free immigration of Jews from any

⁶¹⁰ Also Sayegh 1965, p 42; Ayyad 1999, p 84; see also the critical Zionist discussion by Rickenbacher (2017, pp 78-84).

part of the world; for the unrestricted purchase of land by the Jews; and for the recognition of Hebrew as an official language. (d) Great Britain will be the mandatory power over Palestine, protecting the Jews and furthering the realization of the scheme. (e) The Great Powers of the world have declared in favor of the scheme, which merely awaits execution. (p 26)

The Report thus moved from “national home” to “State” and “Commonwealth” as the Zionist aspiration. Note that this outcome, wished by a tiny minority of the petitioners, would become reality.

“Specific requests” were frequent for a “democratic, non-centralised, constitutional” or “democratic representative” government, with or without a King, as was the request for “proper safe-guarding of the rights of minorities”, reflecting the Damascus Program. (pp 11, 21; Specific Requests C §3) Based on this empirical finding of the wishes of the people, the Commissioners urged:

It is a matter of justice to the Arabs, in the recognition of the Arab people and their desire for national expression, and of deep and lasting concern to the world, that an Arab state along modern political lines should be formed. (p 38; II-General Considerations §6)

More research into the content of the petitions and interviews would be needed to answer several questions. Were there any wishes for non-“modern” or non-“representative-democratic” constitutions? Would King Faisal have real power or be like the Kings of England? Were the petitioners influenced by a desire to conform to the values of the Commissioners, or to what was generally believed to be the ‘right answer’, on these issues? Whatever the answers to these questions, the highest priorities were for independence, for an un-partitioned Syria and against Zionism.

The most radical “special request” was in line with the resolutions of the General Syrian Congress [^{>52}] and was directed against Article 22 of the Covenant *as such* because the wish/demand was for immediate unconditional independence and self-determination rather than any tutelage by any Mandatory [^{>46; >52; >370}]. (pp 41, 54-55; *also* III-Recommendations, A §7) There had been from the outset radical local opposition to this ‘International Commission’ as such: The Powers should simply turn political power over to the people, as they knew *a priori* what the people wanted – immediate independence. The idea, or “special request”, was that however magnanimous it might have been to want to find out what the inhabitants wanted, it could be left to the people themselves to find out what they wanted, with no need for a prior fact- or opinion-finding commission made up of foreigners;⁶¹¹ indeed a very large number of petitions, 1,033, specifically opposed the entire mandate system. (pp 16, 12, 14; Petition Summaries-Syria Complete, F.4)

King and Crane understood this “request” very well, and knew Britain would not comply with it. They understood

the reasons and misgivings... which led to the preference for an American mandate over a British mandate. The people repeatedly showed honest fear that in British hands the mandatory power would become simply a colonizing power of the old kind; that Britain would find it difficult to give up the colonial theory, especially in case of a people thought inferior;...

⁶¹¹ E.g. FO 371/4179, p 302.

that the interests of Syria would be subordinated to the supposed needs of the Empire;... that she would never be ready to withdraw and give the country real independence; that she did not really believe in universal education, and would not provide adequately for it;... (pp 54-55)

They thus did mention that the Arab people were “thought inferior”, but did not mention a *sufficient* reason why Britain would behave the way the Arab people predicted, namely that it had resolved to establish the Jewish home/commonwealth/state.

The report added:

These misgivings of the Syrian people unquestionably largely explain their demand for ‘absolute independence’, for a period of ‘assistance’ of only twenty years, their protest against Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, etc. (p 55)

In my opinion the British knew all of this even before they read the King-Crane Report, but did not want to admit they knew it.

At least the younger Palestinians who testified or signed petitions “appealed to the conscience of liberal Europe” and “to principles of... individual rights and social progress”:

We demand independence because we are competent and qualified. Many of us have been trained to administer high posts. You find among us doctors, engineers, commanders, officers, teachers, writers, merchants, farmers, and craftsmen. Many of us occupy important posts in Egypt and the Sudan. In Europe and America hundreds of thousands of our people have for long lived in the midst of a refined civilization. They were imbued with modern ideas; they acquired sophisticated values, became experienced men, got used to the active life. These people will greatly assist us in the administration of the country and in its progress and development.⁶¹²

While many petitioners thus wondered in what way, exactly, they were less able to govern themselves than those in military control, they were at the same time accepting the colonialists’ premise that such “competence”, “qualifications”, “experience”, education and “civilization” were a pre-condition for self-determination, that merely being human was not enough.

Under the subtitle “Wishes of the People” (in OETA South) King and Crane reported:

The organizations met at Jaffa took the position that Syria is capable of self-government without a mandatory power... Some Moslems, especially in the South, maintained emphatically that they could accept no mandate whatever. ... The Moslem and Christian population was practically unanimous against Zionism, usually expressing themselves with great emphasis. This question was closely connected with that of the unity of all Syria under one government. (pp 25-26; I-The Area under British Occupation, §3)

This subtitle itself, “Wishes of the People” not only implies that said wishes might theoretically be heeded, but also tells the story that the people were being listened to by at least one of the Powers.

⁶¹² Muslih 1988, p 197, citing Zuaytir File B/MS9.

There were also many specific anti-French and “three general anti-British” requests. (p 22) Finally, 52.9% of the petitions specifically protested against “secret treaties” made by the Powers. (p 23) Indicative of feelings of Palestinians towards Britain was their overwhelming preference for a U.S. over a U.K. (or French) mandate. On this question the Commission’s methodology was admittedly somewhat complicated:

With regard to choice of mandate, five classes of requests had to be distinguished, as shown in the tables. In addition to definite requests for a given nation as the mandatory power, a few groups gave their preference, ‘if a mandatory is obligatory,’ i.e., rather under protest, while the great majority asked for ‘assistance’ rather than a mandatory, because of a misunderstanding, and the fear referred to above that a “mandate” is a convenient cloak for colonial aggression. Petitions of these three classes have therefore been grouped in the summary as ‘Total first choice.’ In addition preferences for second choice of mandate and ‘assistance’ have been tabulated. (p 21; Specific Requests, D)

The long and short of it, though, was that of the Syrian (including Palestinian, excluding Iraqi and other) petitions 1129 preferred as Mandatory the U.S., while only 70 preferred the U.K. (pp 15-16, 21-22)⁶¹³ “From the point of view of the desires of the ‘people concerned,’ the Mandate should clearly go to America.” (p 51) The Balfour Declaration and the mixed messages from the British since had, relative to the Americans, moved Britain to the doghouse.

Recommendations

The Commission’s “Recommendations”, as opposed to their “findings”, began with support for self-determination:

We recommend, as most important of all, and in strict harmony with our Instructions, that whatever foreign administration (whether of one or more powers) is brought into Syria, should come in not at all as a colonizing Power in the old sense of that term, but as a Mandatary under the League of Nations with the clear consciousness that ‘the well-being and development’ of the Syrian people form for it a ‘sacred trust.’ ... To this end the mandate should have limited term, the time of expiration to be determined by the League of Nations, in the light of all the facts as brought out from year to year, in the annual reports of the Mandatary to the League or in other ways. (p 40; III-Recommendations, A. §1)

This last recommendation was not followed in the Palestine Mandate text [>146], which makes no mention of time limits; therefore the vague Article 22 of the Covenant held good, i.e. the limit was whenever the League of Nations deemed the inhabitants “able to stand alone”. [>46]

Finally, if “the old sense of the term” *colonization* meant denial of self-rule, then this King-Crane recommendation was utterly ignored. The main reason, after all, for British continuation of colonization “in the old sense”, and one of the reasons for prolongation of the Mandate for another 29 years, was Zionism, and on that central subject the Commission began by stating,

⁶¹³ Also NY Times, 3 December 1922.

We recommend... serious modification of the extreme Zionist Program for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a Jewish State. (p 46; III-Recommendations, E)

It then abandoned the term “State” and fell back on the deceptive term “commonwealth”:

[W]ith a deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause, the Commissioners feel bound to recommend that only a greatly reduced Zionist program be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that, only very gradually initiated. This would have to mean that Jewish immigration should be definitely limited, and that the project for making Palestine distinctly a Jewish commonwealth should be given up. (pp 49-50; III-Recommendations, E)⁶¹⁴

At least the Commissioners were labelling as “extreme” any program advocating a “State” or “commonwealth”. And to the extent that the Balfour Declaration was biased towards the Jewish Zionist “aspiration” for a “state” [16] and deprecatory of the “non-Jewish communities” interviewed by King and Crane, it was arguably thus also “extreme” and deserving of “serious modification” if not renunciation.

In dialogue with the local people the Commissioners had learned much, leading them to change their minds:

The Commissioners began their study of Zionism with minds predisposed in its favor, but the actual facts in Palestine, coupled with the force of the general principles proclaimed by the Allies and accepted by the Syrians, have driven them to the recommendation here made. ... The Commission recognized also that definite encouragement had been given to the Zionists by the Allies in Mr. Balfour's often quoted statement [and] in its approval by other representatives of the Allies. ... [However] ‘a national home for the Jewish people’ is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State; nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the ‘civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.’ The fact came out repeatedly in the Commission's conference with Jewish representatives, that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, by various forms of purchase. (pp 46-47; III-Recommendations, E)

The Commission had ascertained the people's wishes – “The anti-Zionist note was especially strong in Palestine, where 222 (85.3 per cent) of the 260 petitions declared against the Zionist program.” (p 22) – and here seemed to be trying to explain their negative wish to be free of Zionism. But more fundamentally,

If [President Wilson's] principle [20] ... that the ‘settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people’... is to rule, and so the wishes of Palestine's population are to be decisive as to what is to be done with Palestine, then it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine – nearly nine tenths of the whole – are emphatically against the entire Zionist program. (p 47)

⁶¹⁴ See also Drake 2014.

The Report went on to quote approvingly the 7th, 8th, and 10th resolutions of the General Syrian Congress [52] against Zionism, for the unity of Syria (undivided into Lebanon, Palestine and Syria) and for President Wilson's principle against secret treaties. It then singled out one of the Zionist claims:

[T]he initial claim, often submitted by Zionist representatives, that they have a "right" to Palestine, based on an occupation of 2,000 years ago, can hardly be seriously considered. (p 48/I.§III E)

This view was and is of course strong tobacco, for the claim of historical-political rights is the main and indispensable pillar of Zionism and was throughout the Mandate confirmed by the British, beginning with the Churchill White Paper's insistence that the Jewish *national home* "be formally recognised to rest upon ancient historic connection".⁶¹⁵ [142]

As for the partition agreed by Sykes and Picot [12], the Commission relied on their empirical findings in recommending that "the unity of Syria be preserved". (p 42; III-Recommendations, B) They further recommended that the government of this un-partitioned Syria be a "constitutional monarchy along democratic lines" and recommended Emir Faisal, from whom they twice received hospitality, as King – both because of his personal qualities and because "the great majority of the population of Syria sincerely desire" it. (p 45)

Confidential Appendix

"For the use of Americans only" the Commission attached a 12-page "**Confidential Appendix**" to its report, containing certain "material involving criticism of our Allies". In British-occupied Southern Syria/Palestine there had been wrangling by British officials to influence testimony in favor of the U.K., and since the Commission's policy did not allow officials to be present at interviews with locals, it was sometimes "necessary to request a [British] governor to leave the room". One example was that British "Orders had been issued at Jaffa against declaring for complete independence... with little success." (p 1 [Confidential Appendix]) Even worse:

It may be remarked that a number of the British officials... were proceeding as though expecting that Britain will remain permanently in control of Palestine. For instance, they were planning for the growth of cities, the building of roads and railways, and the construction of harbors. (p 2)

In the western section of Syria as well, the French had been quite heavy-handed, for instance by planting articles in newspapers and preventing people from reaching the Commission. (p 2)

In the Eastern section of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (O.E.T.A.), i.e. inland Syria and Transjordan, without the Lebanon and Palestine, the military authorities regarded Emir Faisal, who was in military control there, as leading a "Government" whose

⁶¹⁵ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

officials or agents went about trying to influence educated people to support the Damascus Program and to “persuade, cajole or threaten” the simpler Circassians and Bedouins around Amman, albeit non-violently, to support a simpler version of it. (p 2)

The Emir Faisal had concluded agreements with the Druses and the Greek Orthodox Christians as represented by their patriarch, in which these agreed to support his government in return for a measure of autonomy and promises of proper treatment. (p 2)

There followed an excellent one-page summary of the political claims to Palestine of both the Zionists and “the native Arabs and Christians”, coupled with their respective plans and grievances in the current situation. (p 3) As for choice of mandatory power, only the Jews favored Britain, “because of the Balfour Declaration”;

Practically all of the Moslems, who number about four-fifths of the population of Syria, are for America as their first choice. It is true that there was little direct expression of this in Palestine, since after the first declarations in Jaffa, the question of choice of mandate was held up and referred to Damascus. (p 5)

Confidentially: “Many British officials, not excepting General Allenby, think the best solution to be an American mandate over the whole of Syria.” (p 6) At this time Faisal's regime was receiving subsidies from Britain of about £150,000 (\$750,000) per month. (pp 3, 7, 8)⁶¹⁶

After a “special discussion” concerning French-British rivalries, the Commission rejected French claims to political “rights” in Syria which were based on their long-standing religious, educational and commercial ties with the country; if such a principle were accepted, the U.S. could claim “a measure of political rights in India, China, South America, and Syria itself.” (p 7) A separate “Greater Lebanon” was also rejected by the great majority of the population of entire Syria. (p 8)

In their confidential opinion Faisal

gave the impression of being kindly, gentle and wise. Whatever be the case previously, he has had during the past two years in the desert and at Damascus and Paris an excellent political education. He desires the friendly co-operation of the Moslems and Christians in Syria, and wishes to promote the education of Moslem women. (p 9)

On the “rights of minorities” in the constitution of the desired Syrian state the Commission observed attitudes that were to be crucial in the Palestinian-British discussions of the years 1938-1947. The most radical view was that taken continually by the Palestinians throughout the mandate period, from the winter 1920-21 ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ of the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress [p.99] through the St. James talks in February and March 1939 [p.386ff] as well in negotiations with both Britain and the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine in 1946-1957 [e.g. p.436; p.437; p.447; p.457ff; p.472]. To wit, short and to the point:

The answer was sometimes given, logically enough, that there would be no minorities, since all would be absolutely equal in the new state. (p 9)

⁶¹⁶ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 309, 313.

The significance of this individualistic attitude, rejecting in principle collective ethno-religious political rights, cannot be overestimated when studying the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

The Commission continued:

But ordinarily, the promise was made of constitutional guarantees [for minorities]. There was discussion in the Damascus [General Syrian] Congress [^{>52}] of a proposal to grant Moslems one-half of the seats in the future legislative assembly while the other half would be distributed among the rest of the population. ... Druses, Maronites, Shiites, Nusairiyeh, Ismailians, Turks, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics...: the mere enumeration suggests the difficulty of the problem. (p 9)

Next, the Commission described “the request for ‘complete independence’” as “going below the question of a mandate” – i.e. whether there should be mandates at all, and the “protest against the application to Syria of Article 22 of the Covenant is closely related to this”. That is, *even if*, on Western criteria, Syria or Mesopotamia could not “stand alone”, they should be left alone and mandate-less.

The Syrian Union Party, but also many others, argued that the Syrians were “in at least as advanced a condition” as for instance the Balkan states when they achieved complete independence. The Commission however recommended, in agreement with “the learned men and... others from the older and wiser among the Moslems” that “some form of mandatory control is necessary”; the “Christians and most other non-Moslem groups” agreed, as they were not sure how they would be treated by the Moslem majority. (p 10)

Further,

The programs submitted to the Commission by all the Moslems and about two thirds of the Christians of Syria were nationalistic; that is to say, they called for a United Syria under a democratic constitution, making no distinctions on the basis of religion.

There had also been discussion of “pan-Arabic or pan-Islamic schemes”. (p 11)

The people had spoken, and the Commission asked after the right Western reply:

In the war now ending, Christian Governments gave their Moslem Allies promises of fair treatment and full rights. Now the Moslems of Syria offer their hands to their non-Moslem fellow-citizens with the promise of putting religious separation out of sight. Shall they be taken at their word? Or shall they be told: we do not believe what you say; we do not trust you; we think it best to break our word with you, so that you may not have the opportunity to break your word with us? (p 12)

In the event, the reverse questions would be asked for the next three decades: It was always the *British* who were unwilling to “put religious separation out of sight” and the Palestinians had to keep hoping that the British could “be taken at their word”.

Predictions and later appreciation

Like most insiders other than Balfour, Samuel or Churchill, the Commission publicly foresaw bloodshed:

The Peace Conference should not shut its eyes to the fact that the anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted. No British officer, consulted by the Commissioners, believed that the Zionist program could be carried out except by force of arms. The officers generally thought that a force of not less than 50,000 soldiers would be required even to initiate the program. That of itself is evidence of a strong sense of the injustice of the Zionist Program, on the part of the non-Jewish population... (p 48; III-Recommendations E)

On this point Foreign Office official George Kidston commented on 19 September 1919 on the views of his boss, Balfour:

Palestine is to go to the Zionists irrespective of the wishes of the great bulk of the population, because it is historically right and politically expedient that it should do so. The idea that the carrying out of [his] programmes will entail bloodshed and military repression never seems to have occurred to him.⁶¹⁷ [>55]

I interpret “politically expedient” to refer to power and electoral politics *within Britain*. Colonel Edward Mandell House, the intimate advisor of Woodrow Wilson who had helped him write his Fourteen Points [>20] and the League of Nations Covenant [>46], and who would soon serve on the Permanent Mandates Commission, in 1917 had similarly written: “It is all bad and I told Balfour so. They are making the Middle East a breeding place for future war.”⁶¹⁸

On the topic of the actual Administration in Palestine, Charles Crane would somewhat later express his opinion that

The Zionist Commission which has so much control over the political machinery of Palestine seems to have more power than the authorised Government. Practically all of the official world is under its control, and is more ardent to carry out its instructions than to carry out the policy of the Mandate Government.⁶¹⁹

This tallied with the observations of most Palestinians [e.g. >23; >122] and of British officials at the scene, e.g. Arnold Toynbee [>31] or Ernest Richmond [>112]. Both the Haycraft [>122]⁶²⁰ and Peel [>336]⁶²¹ Commissions recorded with respect the views of the Palestinians as well as some British officials that there was evidence of an ‘imperium in imperio’ or ‘state within a state’, or what Chief Administrator Louis Bols, on the job in Jerusalem in April 1920, would call an “Administration within an Administration” [>77]⁶²². The Zionist Commission’s staff in Palestine numbered about 100 people, a list of its officials having been recorded by both Bols and Jeffries.⁶²³ This is worth mentioning in order to suggest that when the Palestinians talked or corresponded in *Jerusalem* with ‘the British’, they were in reality not dealing with a simply *British* entity.

⁶¹⁷ FO 371/4183, p 18, Memorandum Balfour to Curzon, 19 September 1919; Ingrams 1972, p 74.

⁶¹⁸ Alam 2009, pp 31, 113.

⁶¹⁹ Cmd. 1700, Document No. 6, p 23.

⁶²⁰ Haycraft 1921, pp 51, 55.

⁶²¹ Peel 1937, III §17 & 18, IV §37, VI §25, X §94.

⁶²² FO 371/5119, p 91.

⁶²³ FO 371/5119, p 91; Jeffries 1939, pp 323-24.

Before its submission on 28 August 1919, exactly two months after the signing of the finalised Treaty of Versailles on 28 June, the results of the Commission's investigations were given to co-Foreign Secretary Curzon by Colonel C. French:

That the Zionist programme for Palestine can only be carried through against the wishes of the people and by force. The opposition of the non-Jewish portion of the population was not at all realised by the members of the Commission before they reached the country. That Arab national aspirations to semi-independence under an Anglo-Saxon aegis are worthy of consideration. That the general wish of the people is for a United Syria.⁶²⁴

I do not know why Colonel French used “Anglo-Saxon” instead of “United States”.

The “wishes of the people” had been empirically discovered but alas, not by the country that actually ruled those people, Britain. It was not until one year later that the Court of Inquiry headed by Philip Palin would record that “the Administration was at one period (the date is uncertain) instructed to send out a circular asking various localities and communities how and by whom they would prefer to be governed.”⁶²⁵ [>88] When, exactly, such a British survey was proposed, and whether any of it ever took place, I don't know. But according to Palin, its remit would only be the “how” and “by whom” of outside rule, in contrast to King-Crane's much broader set of questions.

Anbara Khalidi, who herself belonged to a women's delegation that submitted a memorandum to the Commission in July 1919, later wrote that the wishes of the people were quite clear and unanimous and that her delegation's petition “did not differ in essential respects from the demands of the other nationalists”; about this particular Commission she wrote presciently, if perhaps too sceptically, that all the reports going to and from the Commission “appeared to be part of a kind of entertainment,... a children's play” put on by the “great powers” who would give them no heed.⁶²⁶

It was one thing to get these thousands of expressions of the obvious desire for independence down on paper, but after going through King and Crane they had to go through President Wilson who might have been able to influence the other Powers in Paris. As it happened Wilson had already left Paris when the Commission arrived with its report at the end of August 1919, and moreover he was not in Washington in September when Commission Secretary Brodie brought a copy to the White House.⁶²⁷

Wilson was at some point during August or September 1919 personally reminded by King and Crane of the Anglo-French Agreement of the previous November (1918) [>28] which had promised “indigenous Governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia”, i.e. ones “freely chosen by the populations themselves”,⁶²⁸ but it is likely that Wilson never read this new report, partly because of his imminent serious health problems. He was however apparently aware of the contradiction between his vision of the post-World War

⁶²⁴ FO 371/4182, p 91.

⁶²⁵ Palin 1920, §31.

⁶²⁶ Khalidi 1978, pp 96-97.

⁶²⁷ Drake 2014.

⁶²⁸ Maugham 1939, p 50 (Annex I).

I world and Zionism⁶²⁹, another reason why it might be one of Zionism's several narrow escapes that his health collapsed in the month following the Report's submission, meaning he could not give the report proper consideration even had he wanted. According to Jeffries, though, Zionist content had already been inserted into official drafts of the Mandate text in January and February 1919 by Frankfurter and Smuts⁶³⁰, so the juggernaut was already in motion. And the U.S. would not join the League of Nations anyway.

The report was suppressed in the U.S. When it was privately published and commented upon on 2-4 December 1922 in *Editor & Publisher* and the *New York Times*, the former journal wrote in its Preface:⁶³¹

One of the great suppressed documents of the peace-making period was the comprehensive King-Crane Report upon conditions in Turkey. ... It went out with instructions to report the facts as it found them. The text makes clear why the Report should have been rigorously concealed by a then spineless State Department. Yet if it had been published promptly, as intended, it would completely have altered the current of events in Turkey, and possibly also have changed the whole American attitude toward post-war international responsibilities. ... It pronounces the doom of Zionism. It portrays an incredible co-operation between Moslems and Christians, in pursuit of the goal of 'self-determination.'

The background was that

President Wilson proposed that a joint allied Commission should be sent to Turkey to ascertain the true conditions, and especially the desires of the peoples concerned, respecting the nations which should become mandatories, as was the oft-expressed intent of the peace-makers. This, be it remembered, was in the days when the principle of 'self-determination' and the other allied war aims still retained a degree of sanctity. So obviously right and reasonable was President Wilson's suggestion, that the other three members of the 'Big Four' [without Japan] agreed 'in principle.' 'In principle' is a venerable and invaluable diplomatic phrase, in this case as so often, it meant the opposite of 'in practice.' For the European nations shilly-shallyed for a time and then refused to send out commissions.

Lloyd George and Clemenceau did perhaps "shilly-shally" – i.e. deliberately delay the Commission, after deciding not to join it – but one wonders if there were further reasons why the Report's publication took so long. While Woodrow Wilson's biographer Stannard Baker did print excerpts in the *New York Times* on 20 August 1922 (three years after the Report's submission),⁶³² the full report, with its full import, would become publicly visible only four months later. That was six months after the U.S. Congress had approved the Zionist mandate [p.140] and four or five months after the U.K. had decided to take on its mandates [p.147] – although, to be sure, seven months *before* the signing on 24 July 1923 of the Treaty of Lausanne, the treaty with Turkey which contained the final texts of the mandates and gave them whatever legal force they could claim.

⁶²⁹ Grose 1983.

⁶³⁰ Jeffries 1939, p 315.

⁶³¹ *Editor & Publisher* 1922.

⁶³² <https://www.nytimes.com/1922/08/20/archives/the-craneking-report.html>

Editor and Publisher continued:

Trustful America was least of all aware of the existence of these secret treaties [mainly Sykes-Picot, >12]: President Wilson heard of them first at Paris. That is why the Americans thought that a Commission to find out and report the facts would be finally determinative. They could not escape from the dominance of those ideals of 'self-determination' or 'consent of the governed' which had come down from Declaration of Independence days. With a rude jolt our people learned, or will learn after reading the King-Crane report, that the peoples released from Turkey's sway by the war got what they did not want.

Of course the validity of the Report is denied on all possible points by Zionist academics such as Efraim Karsch who, writing for the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in 2020, claims that Faisal's "machinations" distorted the petitions of the people, that the General Syrian Congress [>52] by no means represented the views of the people, that Faisal as a Hashemite was "unpopular" among Greater Syrians, and that the so-called "evidence' submitted to the commissioners" was "flimsy" and "fraudulently secured".⁶³³

Needless to say, Britain as well suppressed the Report. To be sure, after its publication in the U.S. the report's crucial content was attested by many U.K. opponents of Zionism – journalists such as Jeffries, publishers such as Lords Beaverbrook and Northcliffe, and politicians such as Lords Islington, Lamington and Buckmaster during a House of Lords debate on the Palestine constitution on 27 March 1923 [>161]. According to Susan Boyle both Allenby and Hogarth "fully approved of the King-Crane findings".⁶³⁴ They were arguing as well for the publication of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence [>10] and indeed, as Lamington put it, of

all the Papers connected with the Palestine question. ... Your Lordships may not now remember that in January, 1919, an International Mission was to have been appointed, consisting of representatives of Italy, France, ourselves, and the United States, to inquire into the whole Palestine question, based on the famous Anglo-French Declaration of the previous year. France withdrew its representative, and finally we withdrew ours, leaving only the United States of America, who had already sent their representatives over to Europe. Those American representatives went on to Palestine. They carefully investigated the whole matter, both in Syria and in Palestine. I have repeatedly asked for the publication of their Report, but it has always been refused. It has now been given in the American Press... It is a most informing Report. ... I should like to add to the Motion that this Report, which, after all, is an authoritative one, be included amongst the other Papers to be published. It can be obtained, no doubt, from the United States Government, and it should be made known to the public of this country.⁶³⁵

⁶³³ Karsch 2020, pp 9-14.

⁶³⁴ Boyle 2001, p 85.

⁶³⁵ Hansard 1923, cc664-65.

Already on 21 June 1922 Lamington in the House of Lords had given an accurate summary of the findings of King and Crane.⁶³⁶ According to Jeffries, then Colonial Secretary Cavendish (Churchill's successor) knew, but during this debate did not tell the other Lords, that HMG had this report under lock and key.⁶³⁷

At least the natives' testimony to the Commission, particularly those petitioning for fulfilment of the demands of the General Syrian Congress or what the Commission called the "Independence Program" (the Damascus Program), enabled the distillation of many opinions into what became

later known as the three national demands ...: 1) since Palestine was part of Syria, the question of who should be the mandatory power should be decided by the General Syrian Congress; 2) the Palestinian Arabs should reject Jewish immigration and the transformation of their country into a national home for Jewish immigrants; 3) the Palestinian Arabs should insist on complete independence.⁶³⁸

A "national home for Jewish immigrants" is an accurate but seldom-used phrase. At any rate, only the first of these "national demands" would ever weaken, as its political impossibility became certain; the other two live still today.

Why did Wilson wait so long before approving its publication (through his biographer Baker), and why was it his property and not that of the U.S. Government which had commissioned and paid for the Commission's visit? What would have been the effect if the United States, already in September 1919, had not only published but *stood behind* the report of President Wilson's two friends? What would have been different had Britain (and France) not pulled out before the Commission even got underway? These questions are anything but idle, for the sinking of this report was one of Zionism's major successes in its gradual take-over of Palestine.

19 September 1919 [Weizmann to the English Zionist Federation:] '*By a Jewish National Home I mean the creation of such conditions that as the country is developed we can pour in a considerable number of immigrants, and finally establish such a society in Palestine that Palestine shall be as Jewish as England is English...*'⁶³⁹

⁶³⁶ Hansard 1922b, cc1029-30.

⁶³⁷ Jeffries 1939, p 316.

⁶³⁸ Muslih 1988, p 194.

⁶³⁹ Weizmann 1949, p 244; also *Excerpts from His Statements, Writings and Addresses*, New York, The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1952, p 48.

From Damascus in late September 1919 came another protestation from members of the General Syrian Congress [^{>52}], for Faisal to hand on to the Powers meeting in Paris, re-affirming what the Congress in July 1919 had told the “American [King-Crane] Commission” [^{>59}]:

The Great Danger of Zionism that threatens the southern part of our country and the rest of Syria in general from an economical, political and social point of view, intending to make Palestine a Native residence for the Jews, has caused the Syrians to unite and refuse the separation of Palestine from the rest of the Syrian countries... [T]he Zionists flock to Palestine, being granted permission to immigrate though country affairs are not yet settled, and though Turkish laws, still permanent, prohibit immigration of Jews for the object of residing in the country. It is acknowledged that during the last months about 5000 Jews (Roumanian, Polonian and Russian) came to Palestine.⁶⁴⁰

I do not know if thus directly beseeching the Powers was done in knowledge of the limited strength and/or pending suppression of the King-Crane Report. The protestation stood out in pointing to the fact that Britain as occupying power had no right in international law to apply new laws or policies.⁶⁴¹

⁶⁴⁰ FO 371/4183, p 223.

⁶⁴¹ Hague Convention (IV) Regulations [on war, *annexed to the Convention*] 1907, Regulations 42, 43, 49, 55; War Office 1914, Ch. XIV/VIII/ii & iii, §353-81.

As Chief Political Officer for matters relating to Palestine – under Allenby in both Cairo and Jerusalem – Richard Meinertzhagen on 26 September 1919 wrote a report on **‘the state of Zionism’** for his superior, Acting Foreign Secretary Curzon:

As the value of any opinion on controversial matters is enhanced by a knowledge of the personal leanings of the informant, I wish to make my own position *vis-à-vis* Zionism perfectly clear. My inclination towards Jews in general is governed by an anti-semitic instinct which is invariably modified by personal contact. My views on Zionism are those of an ardent Zionist... in the main [because of] the unsatisfactory state of the Jews in the world, the great sentimental attraction of re-establishing a race after banishment of 2,000 years..., and the conviction that Jewish brains and money could, when backed by such a potent idea as Zionism, give to Palestine that impetus in industrial development which it so sorely needs after lying fallow since the beginning of the world.⁶⁴²

Echoing the key elements of Herbert Samuel’s 1915 ‘The Future of Palestine’ [>8], this was Christian Zionism’s mixture of “sentimental attraction” with worship of “brains and money”. [see also >58; >65; >74; >116; >204; >165; >438] As for “industrial development”, while no date is given for “the beginning of the world”, we can safely assume that for some millennia the human beings living in Palestine had reaped nutrition from its soil and manufactured what they needed in order to sculpt their way of life. However that may be, all of the founding Anglo-Zionists shared this assumption of a neglected, stagnant, undeveloped Palestine populated by a people poor in brains and money to invest. [see e.g. >100; >147; >153; >242]

The Chief Political Officer further:

The acknowledged superiority of Jewish brains and money forces land-owners and business men to realise their impotence to withstand eventual eviction, and they look on Zionism as synonymous with complete Jewish control and possession of land and industrial development in Palestine. ... It is not therefore difficult to understand that in Palestine every man’s hand is against Zionism. ... To reconcile this mass of opposition to the policy of H.M.G. has been no easy task for our administration and the work of our officials has been rendered doubly difficult as their personal views, no matter how anxious they are to conceal them, incline towards the exclusion of Zionism in Palestine.⁶⁴³

It was their own sense of inferiority, not the well-known political intentions of Britain and Zionism, that caused their “opposition”.

A recurring theme that Zionism was a long-term project was also touched upon:

⁶⁴² Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 49–50, also 73; *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, Vol. IV, p 425; Friedman 1987, p 148.

⁶⁴³ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 50–52; *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, Vol. IV, p 426; Friedman 1987, p 149; Suárez 2016, p 45.

But in spite of all local opposition and all the many and real objections to establishing Zionism in Palestine, its eventual success is assured provided the growth is slow and methodical. In its incipient stages Zionism can only be artificial and unpopular and... [t]he great difficulty which the Mandatory Power will experience, is in giving Zionism just sufficient impetus and encouragement to prevent a stunted and disappointed growth, whilst not allowing it to out-grow itself and become strangled by its own impulsive effort. The people of Palestine are not at present in a fit state to be told openly that the establishment of Zionism in Palestine is the policy to which H.M.G., America and France are committed.⁶⁴⁴

He thought they didn't know that already.

Meinertzhagen had been a member of the British delegation at the Paris conference earlier in 1919, working for Zionism's inclusion in the Palestine Mandate. As he remembered it in his 1959 book *Middle East Diary*, when stationed in the Near East he found himself "alone out here among gentiles, in upholding Zionism", surrounded by "obstacles" to Zionism in the persons of "Allenby, Bols, and a host of minor fry".⁶⁴⁵ In the introduction to the book Meinertzhagen, aristocratic nephew of Beatrice Potter, the wife of later Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb), related that he had several times been disparagingly called "a Jew", but that he's actually pure English, Danish, or German: "Maybe if I had Jewish blood in my veins I might be more intelligent than I am; but there is none."⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁴ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 50-52; also Friedman 1987, p 150.

⁶⁴⁵ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 66-67.

⁶⁴⁶ Meinertzhagen 1959, p x.

This entry is another of the few dealing with dialogue between Palestinians and non-British Zionists [*also* >24; >62; >64; >273; >274; >278; >333] wherein the head of the Jerusalem Municipal Council (Mayor) Musa Kazem al-Husseini **filled out the indigenous picture of independence at a meeting** with Zionist Congress head Menachem Ussishkin. Responding to Zionist exploitation of Faisal's 3 January 1919 Agreement with Weizmann [>37], he said:

But we do not submit to the Emir Faisal with regard to our political demands. Nor do we rely on him in this matter. We are opposed to any special rights for the Jews. We cannot consent to language rights, immigration rights, etc. ... We have already repudiated the concessions made by the Amir.⁶⁴⁷

As to what Palestinian self-determination meant for Jews,

we have nothing against the Jews who are citizens of this country. These we know and they know us. We have lived together with them and are doing so now, and will continue to do so in peace and friendship. There is no quarrel or outcry except that we shall oppose the immigration of Jews with all our might. For they have no tact and their aims are quite clear and well-known to us. They want... to drive us out of the land and to take possession of our houses and estates.... According to them,... there is no room for two men in one chair;...⁶⁴⁸

The distinction between individual Jews, who had always been welcomed by the other inhabitants, and Jews which as a group claimed and were said to have "special rights", had long been made by most Palestinian leaders, for instance already by Ruhi al-Khalidi in 1909.⁶⁴⁹ Let us let Laura Robson make the general point:

The idea that violent sectarianism has characterized Palestine since time immemorial is widespread, powerful – and fundamentally mistaken. In fact, sectarianism did not emerge as a primary aspect of Palestinian politics until the third decade of the twentieth century when Palestine officially became part of the British Empire. Palestine's new colonial rulers permanently transformed the nature of its politics by introducing an inflexible sectarianism as a major organizing principle of the new state.⁶⁵⁰

It was Musa Kazem al-Husseini who would preside at the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress [>71], and indeed the four later PACs,⁶⁵¹ and who would sign its 'Report on the State of Palestine' [>99], perhaps the most important of all Palestinian documents.

⁶⁴⁷ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 36.

⁶⁴⁸ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 37.

⁶⁴⁹ Gribetz 2018, p 323.

⁶⁵⁰ Robson 2011, p 1; *see also* Abu Manneh 1980.

⁶⁵¹ Lesch 1973, p 17.

In his 1920 book *The Responsibilities of the League*, Balfour's personal secretary, Baron Percy of Newcastle, wrote:

In Palestine, a country peopled for the most part by an Arab race, whose independence they [the members of the League of Nations] are equally pledged to recognise and guarantee, a 'national home' is to be created for a people whose only connection with that country for 1800 years was one of historic sentiment and religious tradition. This pledge [the Balfour Declaration] violates all correct ideas of self-determination. It stands isolated and unique among the various phases of settlement."⁶⁵² [*also >50*]

Here the themes of the weak historical connection of Jews to Palestine and the exceptionalism distinguishing Western treatment of Zionism again crop up. After quoting this passage from Percy, Victor Kattan observes:

The Zionists' claim to self-determination in Palestine was indeed both 'isolated' and 'unique'. It was not based on effective occupation, the 'free will of the people', majority rule, or decolonisation. Rather, it was based on a colonial document. ... When making claims to self-determination, however, it is necessary to demonstrate a link between the people concerned and territory. ... [T]he claim of Palestine's indigenous inhabitants to self-determination was based on effective occupation and continuous habitation where the Zionists' was aligned to British imperialism.⁶⁵³

To Palestinians' minds the very old link between a small percentage of Jews to their territory, parts of which some Jews had sporadically ruled, was so weak that it would not survive comparison with their own, old as well as new, link to the same territory. As King and Crane had written, the present Jewish claim to ownership of Palestine "can hardly be seriously considered".⁶⁵⁴ [*>59*] Percy himself three years later, though, as MP during the House of Commons debate on the Mandate on 4 July 1922 [*>147*], despite his awareness of the ethics of the situation, maintained the need for Britain to uphold its prestige by upholding its promises to the Zionists and to support the Palestine Administration generally, and Herbert Samuel particularly, be that good or bad; it was to him more important than Palestinian self-determination.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² Percy 1920, p 150.

⁶⁵³ Kattan 2009, pp 118, 125.

⁶⁵⁴ King & Crane 1919a, p 48.

⁶⁵⁵ Hansard 1922c, cc308-12.

64. Awni Abdul Hadi to Zionists

19 October 1919

On 19 October 1919 Awni Abdul Hadi of Nablus and Emir Faisal met with some Zionists, some of them British, in London. Abdul Hadi was educated in Beirut, Istanbul and at the Sorbonne, was secretary to Faisal both in Paris and later in Damascus when Faisal had become King, and his wife Tarab was one of the Palestinian feminists active for independence.⁶⁵⁶ [see also >386] He had also represented Sherif Hussein at the Versailles (Paris Peace) Conference. At the meeting in London he spelled out the vision of the indigenous:

Mr. Balfour's declaration was very unfortunate, in that it aroused the opposition of the Palestine Arabs against the Jews. This opposition had been aggravated by the statements of the Zionists, especially in Palestine, in which they talked of Palestine as 'Eretz Israel', the Jewish Land. This manner of speech was very offensive to the Palestinian Arabs, who regarded Palestine as their country, having lived there for so many centuries during which time Jews had been far away. ... He advised the Zionists, in their own interests, to stop all talk of a Jewish Palestine, and limit themselves to colonisation and development of their own culture and institutions, with a maximum of self-government in internal matters and a certain degree of representation in the Government of the country. ... [I]t was to him unthinkable that the Arabs could renounce their claim to Palestine in favour of the Jews.

According to the Zionist memorandum of the interview he also "said that he would prefer to develop their country, their railways, their roads, with Jewish capital and Jewish experts, rather than French or British".⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁶ See Palestinian Journeys > 'Awni Abd al-Hadi'.

⁶⁵⁷ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 37-38; Friedman 1987, pp 180-84.

On 14 October 1919 Political Officer for Palestine **Richard Meinertzhagen** drafted a ‘**Declaration on Zionism**’ which was then approved by “the Chief Administrator of O.E.T.A. (South) [someone directly under Allenby] and by Doctor Weizmann”, in which he declared that since knowledge of the draft Mandate had spread amongst the “People of Palestine”

there is ... a genuine and sincere desire to crush at its birth the establishment of Zionism in Palestine [but] it must... be accepted that Zionism is a *chose jugée*... Any Societies or Organisations whose professed programme is directed against Zionism can therefore be looked on with disfavour, as being directed against an established policy.⁶⁵⁸ [see also >61]

Throughout the Mandate, “societies or organisations” propounding or indeed enacting Zionism would be allowed and encouraged by the British, presumably because they were “directed for an established policy”, but to my knowledge an account focussing exclusively on British discouragement and repression of non-Jewish, anti-Zionist political groups has yet to be written in English; such research would however go some way to explaining the inability of the Palestinians to defeat Zionism.

Curzon’s Foreign Office did not agree with Meinertzhagen, whose draft “commits His Majesty’s Government further than desirable in the direction of endorsing Zionist aspirations” [see >16], and the FO decided to recommend to the Cabinet that Britain swear to avoid “any interference with custody of the Holy Places [or] the flooding of Palestine with Jewish immigrants [or] spoliation or eviction of the present landowners in Palestine or grant[ing] profitable concessions to individuals... or the Government of a majority by a minority.”⁶⁵⁹ Likewise, the Cabinet-level British Empire Report No. 4 dated 12 November 1919⁶⁶⁰ recorded that in response to Meinertzhagen’s “declaration” Curzon had on 7 November solicited Allenby’s opinion of his draft reply to the Meinertzhagen tract, wherein he expressed his opinion that

as the power at present responsible for the administration of Palestine, His Majesty’s Government think it well to state clearly that the Balfour Declaration of 2nd November 1917... does not contemplate... the government of a majority by a minority.

Given the present demographics, that is, Zionism was ruled out: “As is recognized by the Zionists themselves, the foundation of a national home for the Jews must necessarily be a gradual process,....” Curzon added that this “went as far as the Government was prepared to go at present” – as far as it would go, that is, in supporting the “Jewish Zionist aspirations” of the said Balfour Declaration. Such a clear limitation of pro-Zionist policy would, had they read it, have sounded to locals’ ears like a repudiation of the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration – in agreement with all of their demands except the demand for immediate mandate-less independence without tutelage.

⁶⁵⁸ CO 733/10, pp 231-35.

⁶⁵⁹ CO 733/10, pp 227-28.

⁶⁶⁰ CAB 24/156/4, pp 2-3, all quotations.

On 10 November an undaunted Meinertzhagen would however write to Curzon urging practical pro-Zionist steps:

The following suggestions are, in my opinion, admissible, and can materialize under the strict letter of the Laws and Usages of War [*see* >19; >85]: 1) The taking over of the Wieland Factory at Jaffa by the Zionists on a lease for a term of years, with a view to the manufacture of building material. The factory is German owned. 2) The purchase of land by the Zionists to enable them to construct one or more cement factories in suitable but as yet undecided localities. I am informed that £300,000 is available on this account. ... 7) Permission to introduce some 500-700 skilled workmen into Palestine to develop the above schemes.⁶⁶¹

Other schemes named were the building of hotels, housing and a “large store in Jerusalem with branches elsewhere” as well as releasing land for sale to Zionists. In light of the roughly 90% non-Jewish majority in Palestine, HMG should undertake immigration and industrial policy to eventually lower that percentage.

⁶⁶¹ Meinertzhagen 1959, p 60.

66. A newspaper vs. immigration

November 1919

In November 1919, four months after the General Syrian Congress of early July [52], the Jerusalem newspaper *Suriyya al-Janubiyya* reported on Syria's imminent partition and wrote that "we are residents of Southern Syria, we do not want partition, we want an independent Syria, and we are against Zionist immigration."⁶⁶² **This editorial** once again named the two issues with a big future: Jewish immigration from Europe and, from the mid-1930s on, *partition* – here of Syria, later of Palestine, today still discussed as the 'two-state solution'.

While this book is mainly concerned with general statements for or against indigenous self-determination, the less abstract issues of land sales⁶⁶³, partitioning the 'self' that demanded self-determination, and – of paramount importance – immigration as the means to the Jewish majority that would give a Jewish state legitimacy, were always in the news. Other issues such as natural-resource exploitation, tariffs, education, militias, concessions for electricity works, etc. were likewise omnipresent, but it was British-enabled immigration which would increase the Jewish population from 9% in 1919 to 32% in 1947.⁶⁶⁴

December 1919 [A commission of enquiry under Alfred Milner is set up to investigate the (eventually successful) Egyptian national rebellion of November 1918 – July 1919.]

10 January 1920 The League of Nations officially comes into existence as the Versailles Treaty goes into effect; it is to resolve international disputes, reduce armament and prevent future wars.

February 1920 [The first public reading [also >77] of the Balfour Declaration, by Chief Administrator Bols, in Jerusalem.]⁶⁶⁵

20 February 1920 'British officials gathered notables in Jerusalem to tell them that Britain was seeking a mandate over Palestine which would include the Balfour Declaration;...'⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶² Khalidi 1997, p 166, citing *Suriyya al-Janubiyya*, 11 November 1919.

⁶⁶³ Beška 2016, pp 75-94.

⁶⁶⁴ > Appendices 7 & 8; McCarthy 1990, pp 35-36.

⁶⁶⁵ Lesch 1979, p 202.

⁶⁶⁶ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 54.

67. Moslem-Christian Society to British

~12 February 1920

Through the Military Governor of Nablus **the ‘Moslem-Christian Society, Palestine’ sent a petition**⁶⁶⁷ to the ‘Representatives of Great Britain at the Peace Conference’ in Paris recalling that the Allies had allegedly fought to “free the weak nations”, had promised to “establish native Governments on National desires”, and had written “the 22nd Art. of the League of Nations”:

For these three above mentioned reasons we had hoped that our wishes will be the strongest factor in determining our future. We therefore explained to the American [King-Crane] Commission that had come to investigate into our wishes [-59]... that we desire the independence and unity of our country, Syria, and that we regret the illegal Zionist claims and the Jewish Immigration. Having done this we waited, expecting to see the Peace Conference give its decisions regarding our future in accordance with our wishes. But we have been greatly astonished to learn from various sources that Palestine shall be separated from Syria, and to understand from the statements of the Chief Administrator in Nablus, on 7.1.20, that the Peace Conference will give its decisions contrary to our wishes by allowing Jewish immigration.

The petition then denounced the divide-and-conquer tactics of the Allies and denied the Allies’ right to dispose of Palestine:

The separation of Palestine from Syria plainly points out the fact that such an action is intended to tear the Arab lands into pieces in order to further the interests of colonization. [see >12] ... We really cannot explain how ‘Justice and Right’ which have been the motto of the Allies during this War, allow the scattering of an already united nation. ... Our only apparent fault is that we are a weak oriental nation while the interests which demand our disintegration are the interests of strong European Nations. ... We reject absolutely Jewish immigration, and we do not see the Peace Conference has any authority whatever to force us to accept it, nor even is it entitled to consider the question. ... We now repeat what we previously said that the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, whatever their religion may be, are the only persons who have any legal and natural right in the country.

Double standards were discerned:

How does Justice grant the Jews the right of immigration into Palestine against the desire of its owners and inhabitants, while other nations, large and small, which are not even affected by immigration, pass laws prohibiting it in case it does not agree with their own interests?

Not only the independence and immigration questions, but also the land question, was addressed:

Moreover all the lands of Palestine were and are still owned by the people. There is nothing known as Government lands except the *Mudawara* lands which the late Sultan Abdel Hamid seized and made his own private farms. These lands were all the property of original owners

⁶⁶⁷ FO 371/5117, pp 50-51.

who still mostly hold documents proving their ownership and who are still in possession, cultivating them and living with their families which amount to tens of thousands on their produce. They have built villages in them and have tried their best to improve them. Consequently they are the first persons entitled to them on account of both long possession and labour and original ownership.

In addition to political ownership, the retention of ownership of the land was demanded.

68. Moslem-Christian Association demonstration 27 February 1920

The newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* in February 1920 interviewed Chief Administrator Louis Bols, who tried to convince the Palestinians that Britain's support for Zionism did not entail harm to them.⁶⁶⁸ Unconvinced, the Arab street on 27 February 1920 spoke by means of **a demonstration headed by MCA President Aref al-Dajani** in Jerusalem and others in Yaffa and Haifa, all in all involving several thousand people.⁶⁶⁹ Banners read 'Death to Traitors', 'Stop Zionist Immigration', and 'Our country for Us'.⁶⁷⁰ Soon after Faisal's becoming King of Syria in the first week of March a larger demonstration was held on 8 March supporting Faisal, independence, and an end to Zionism, but one planned for the Nebi Musa festival in April was prohibited by Bols.⁶⁷¹ The street therefore rioted seriously in Jerusalem 4-7 April 1920, leading to the formation of a committee to investigate its causes, the Palin Court of Inquiry [>88].

⁶⁶⁸ Wasserstein 1978, p 59; interview text in the *Palestine Weekly*, 27 Feb. 1920.

⁶⁶⁹ Porath 1974, pp 96-97.

⁶⁷⁰ Mattar 1988, p 16.

⁶⁷¹ Porath 1974, p 97; Kayyali 1978, p 74; Wasserstein 1978, p 60; Muslih 1988, p 168; Seikaly 1995, p 169.

69. General Syrian/Palestine Congress

27 Feb-8 March 1920

On 6-8 March 1920 the representatives of the Syrian people declared its independence and proclaimed the unity of Greater Syria, i.e. today's Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.⁶⁷² Signed by Abd el Kader el-Muzzafar, **a summary of decisions** reached “by the representatives [including Syrian Fares al-Khoury] of the three zones of the Syrian nation” who met at the Arab Club building, Damascus, on 27 February 1920, was sent to the multi-national Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Cairo, still under Allenby, and on to the British Foreign Office.⁶⁷³ The group was made up of

the national defence Committee... and the representatives of the political parties, *visè*: The Arab Independence party, the Syrian Union, the Syrian Covenant, the Irak Covenant, the Syrian National Arab Club, the princes of the Arab tribes of Hauran, El-Soukhour, El-Fadle, El-Kerak, the Circassians, the notables of Kus, the Clergymen, the lawyers, the doctors, the journalists, the chief merchants and a big number of students of high schools of all sects and creeds.

(This method of determining membership in the Congress reminds one of how the Palestine Liberation Organization would later compose itself.) The Congress asserted their readiness to “defend [Syria’s] rights till they shed the very last drop of blood they have in their veins”, reiterated their stance against the separation of Palestine from Syria, as they had before the “American [King-Crane] Committee” [[>]59], and “united to oppose the Zionists actually if the Allies persist to enforce their well known policy.”

Emir Faisal had returned from Paris to Damascus on 14 January 1920, and immediately preparations were made for declaring independence. A ‘General Palestine Congress’ was part of the General Syrian Congress [[>]52] which would become the legislature of the Syrian Kingdom, independent as of 8 March – although Faisal’s *de facto* rule had begun already in autumn 1918, tolerated and financially supported by Britain, a fact which undoubtedly led many Syrians to distrust him⁶⁷⁴. 8 March was a day of “jubilant” celebration all over Syria, as recorded by Tannous, who was in Jerusalem on this “joyous occasion, not as a witness, but as a participant in the boisterous demonstrations”.⁶⁷⁵ The Congress, attended by about 120 people, was presided over by Hashim al-Atasi and unanimously resolved

(1) The complete independence of Syria within its geographical limits including Palestine, the rejection of the Zionist claim for a national home in it and the recognition of the autonomy of Lebanon within its pre-war boundaries. (2) The election of Faisal as a constitutional monarch and his proclamation as King on Monday 17 Jumada II 1338 / 8 March 1920 at 3 p.m.

⁶⁷² Also Ayyad 1999, p 90.

⁶⁷³ FO 371/5034, pp 150-55.

⁶⁷⁴ See *e.g.* Parsons 2016, pp 41, 43.

⁶⁷⁵ Tannous 1988, p 85.

(3) The end of the military occupation and administration in the three Syrian regions and their replacement by civil governments, responsible to Congress, according to the principle of administrative decentralisation.⁶⁷⁶

On 8 March there was “universal jubilation and festivities throughout the Syrian interior... and more overt demonstrations in Jerusalem, under French and British restrictions”, and “Christian-Moslem solidarity” was evidenced by a letter to King Faisal from the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Damianos, “blessing him and ‘the new state’...”⁶⁷⁷ Whether or not the jubilation was truly “universal”, support for a constitutional democracy was widespread.⁶⁷⁸

Herbert Samuel, getting ready to take over in Palestine after being groomed to do so by Lloyd George and Balfour, intervened by writing indirectly to Allenby, who was favourable towards Faisal [see >70]:

‘I can see no reasons sufficient for the recognition of Faisal as king of Palestine. I doubt whether he or his supporters expect it.’ Such recognition, he continued, could not be reconciled with ‘complete British control’ and he added the significant note that it ‘would tend to take life out of the Zionist movement.’⁶⁷⁹ [also >74]

Samuel was correct in his opinion that Syrian unity under Faisal would have killed the Zionist project. Faisal would become a long-term king, but in Iraq, not Syria, being kicked out by the French in July 1920 [>91].⁶⁸⁰

27 February 1920 A proclamation issued by Major-General Louis Bols, Officer Administering the Government of Palestine, stating that the British Government intends to carry out the Balfour Declaration is followed by a demonstration of over 1,500 Arabs marching through the city in protest of Zionist immigration and settlement.

6-8 March 1920 The General Syrian Congress proclaims the independence of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan. Emir Faisal is crowned as King of Syria (March 20).

9-11 March 1920 [A] demonstration was held in Jerusalem demanding [self-determination]. The demonstrations spread on March 11, 1920 to all major Palestinian cities.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 389-90, citing Sati al-Husri, *Yaum Malsalun*, Beirut 1945, pp 220-23, 255-59, 261-65 & 265-68; also Parsons 2016, p 70.

⁶⁷⁷ Tibawi 1977, p 392.

⁶⁷⁸ Also Parsons 2016, p 70.

⁶⁷⁹ Tibawi 1977, p 397, also p 424; FO 371/5034, p 57, Meinertzhagen to Curzon, 27 March 1920.

⁶⁸⁰ Tibawi 1977, p 412.

⁶⁸¹ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 54.

Herbert Samuel was due to become Palestine's first High Commissioner. Weizmann had explained to Balfour already on 27 September 1919 that Samuel "would very much like to go out to Palestine himself, if a suitable position could be made for him" and "would prefer to work there even to a great political career here".⁶⁸² Weizmann kept educating Samuel, e.g. in a five-page letter dated 22 November 1919 covering frontiers, Meinertzhagen, Bols' replacing Watson, the "Arab situation", the Sheriffian Administration in Damascus, the trouble-maker Mustapha Kemal, Jewish immigration, education, agriculture, and "colonizing activities".⁶⁸³

It was time for a two-month visit to Palestine. Exactly at the time of his visit independent Syria was proclaimed, with Faisal as King of Syria, Palestine and the Lebanon. Samuel's host, Chief Administrator Louis Bols, as well as Lord Milner and Generals Allenby and Waters-Taylor of Occupied Enemy Territory South, were urging HMG to in some sense recognise the fledgling government in Damascus; Allenby to 'Sub-Committee' on 8 March 1920:

Suggest that situation would be calmed if it was permitted to Feisal to announce at Congress that Powers accepted him as representative of Arab State including British provinces of Mesopotamia and Palestine and French provinces of Lebanon and littoral. Remainder of Arab provinces under direct control of Feisal but for which he can claim European advisers. ... This will simplify Zionist problem as Feisal understands situation and will not oppose national home, as long his [sic.: he is?] overlord and Syria is recognised.⁶⁸⁴

Astoundingly, Bols, Milner, Allenby and Waters-Taylor were advocating nothing less than overturning the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the planning of the Supreme Allied Council (mainly Britain and France), begun in earnest in December 1919, to set up 'mandates' in the manner decided only six weeks later at San Remo. [;>12; >78] They were overruled by their immediate boss Curzon.

Wasserstein reports as well on Samuel's confrontation by local Palestinians:

In Nablus [Samuel] met a deputation of Arabs who told him: 'If the Zionists are going to immigrate into the country a terrible revolution will break out. We will do our utmost to oppose Zionism.' Samuel's rejoinders evoked further protests from his audience. He said: 'If the Jews come to your country they will colonise the spare lands that are not cultivated. ... They have historic rights in this country. ... Their claims are religious and not commercial ones. ... I am not a Zionist.' Shortly afterwards Samuel met the leaders of the Zionist Commission,

⁶⁸² Friedman 1987, p 173; also p 102.

⁶⁸³ Friedman 1987, pp 221-25.

⁶⁸⁴ FO 371/5032, p 126; Wasserstein 1978, p 61.

Eder and Ussishkin, and he expressed forcefully his criticism of the Commission's policy towards the Arabs: 'The Zionists have not recognised the force and value of the Arab nationalist movement. ... It is very real and no bluff.'⁶⁸⁵

If Wasserstein is correct, Samuel lied about his Zionist identity when directly faced with Zionism's opponents. Or perhaps Samuel was simply emphasising to his listeners that he came and would come again to Palestine as a *Briton*. Relevant also is that Samuel mentioned historic, religious and commercial claims, but not political ones.

I do not know whether Samuel talked with his future subjects about the new Syrian Government next door in Damascus with whom he and the coming Mandate could possibly share sovereignty in Palestine. [>52] The British-French juggernaut would assure that Samuel won this battle through the French military overthrow of Faisal's constitutional monarchy on 25 July 1920 [>91], and France recognised Britain's sovereignty in Southern Syria.

Samuel wrote a report of his visit which I have not been able to access but which had been circulated, for instance to Foreign Secretary Curzon. Knowing this, Lord Sydenham in a House of Lords debate on 29 June 1920, two days before Samuel was to take over in Palestine, asked Curzon to reveal its contents, to which Curzon replied:

Sir Herbert Samuel went out really in a private capacity to Palestine, at the suggestion of Lord Allenby. He went round the country and wrote a Report, which he afterwards allowed me to see, but I do not think it was written for publication. There was nothing in it in the least unsuitable for publication, but I certainly could not undertake to lay it as a Parliamentary Paper without his consent, and I would far rather wait for the results of his administration, after he has been there three or four months, than rely upon the results of his journey three or four months before he took up the post.⁶⁸⁶

Puzzling is the contradiction between Curzon's earlier (and later) anti-Zionist stances [>16; >65; >72] and these words and this action of Curzon, not to mention his later compliance with British pro-Zionist policy as chief negotiator at San Remo in spring 1920 and as a member of the Cavendish Committee in the summer of 1923 [>78; >165-167]. It seems, in addition, that no Arab representatives of Palestine were in London following such Parliamentary debates; the first Delegation would not arrive there until mid-August 1921. Nor were Palestinians present in San Remo on 19-25 April 1920 during the Allies' conference [>78] which decided Palestine's fate.

⁶⁸⁵ Wasserstein 1978, pp 68ff, citing 1) Zionist intelligence report, Nablus, 9-16 Feb. 1920 (CZA L4/276 III) and 2) al-Nafir (an Arabic newspaper published in Haifa) and reproduced in a Zionist Commission press bureau report dated 7 Mar. 1920 (Weizmann Archive, Rehovot) and 3) Eder to Weizmann, 14 Mar. 1920 (CZA Z4/16078).

⁶⁸⁶ Hansard 1920d, cc1013, 1033.

71. Faisal-Jeffries interview

March 1920

The London *Daily Mail* published **J.M.N. Jeffries' interview with Emir Faisal**, held in French sometime in March 1920.⁶⁸⁷ Eyewitness Jeffries had been reporting from Cairo and Palestine, and met Faisal in Damascus when he was still a relative novice concerning the Syrian/Palestinian situation. Of the many thriving nationalist political groups there, he found the Arab Club to be the most important [*also >75*]. The Syrian Government's Cabinet had just been formed, made up of four Moslems and four Christians, and they as well as many Congressmen acknowledged the need of some "disinterested" help from Britain to build an administration. Their Declaration of Independence of 6-8 March [*>69*] came when the Allied Powers had not yet "come to a decision concerning us". Officially, that would not happen until 24/25 April in San Remo [*>78*].

Thinking back over the last few years since the start of the Arab revolt against Turkey, Faisal said to Jeffries:

The Arab people have waited a very long time, and during this delay all kinds of contradictory reports have been spread about the fate which will be doled out to them. Men... are convinced that the Allies mean to leave Syria divided into three parts as it is now [O.E.T.A. South, East and West], and that the promised union of the Arab people in an Arab kingdom or confederation is a myth. ... I could have waited, I *would* have waited myself, for I am sure of the Allies' good intentions, but the public opinion of this country cannot be reined in any longer for a period of unfixd length.

Faisal's faith was misplaced.

Jeffries asked him whether he should not accept the Allied Powers' invitation to return to London, where he had been for most of 1919, to "lay your people's demands before the Allied meeting there". Faisal replied that the risk was too great of his returning from the West once more empty-handed; now he needed acceptance of the basic "Arab demand... for one thing, which is the recognition of the independence of an integral Syria, instead of its division into three zones." As for accepting a 'mandate', he said that

a Mandate was a wide term. I've not yet arrived at a clear understanding of what a Mandate means. It may mean nothing but friendly support and relations: it may mean colonization. It is too elastic a phrase. Everything depends on how the 'Mandate' would be exercised.

Ambiguity, once again, worked on the side of the Europeans. Finally, asked about Zionism, Faisal referred Jeffries to his "understanding... with Dr. Weizmann", i.e., to what is known as the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement [*>37*] but which Jeffries called a 'Treaty of Friendship'. Logically, though, his Syrian Government's control over all of Syria, including Palestine, meant that the development of whatever Jewish colonies would be established would be subject to the rules and laws of that Government, not those of the Allied Powers.

⁶⁸⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 337-40, all quotations.

Zionism never convinced the entirety of the British political elite, one example being, at times but not in the end, Lord Curzon, who had replaced Balfour as Foreign Secretary on 23 October 1919. On 20 March 1920 while at the San Remo conference [^{>78}] Curzon was reading drafts of the coming Mandate's text and once again weighing the words (Jewish) 'state', 'commonwealth' and 'home'. **His sarcastic commentary:**

Acting upon the noble principles of self-determination and ending with a splendid appeal to the League of Nations, we then proceed to draw up a document which reeks of Judaism in every paragraph and is an avowed constitution for a Jewish State. Even the poor Arabs are only allowed to look through the keyhole as a non-Jewish Community. It is quite clear that this mandate has been drawn up by someone reeling under the fumes of Zionism. ... I would like to see something worded differently. ... The Zionists are after a Jewish State with the Arabs as hewers of wood and drawers of water. ... That is not my view. I want the Arabs to have a chance and I don't want a Hebrew State.⁶⁸⁸

Two-and-a-half years earlier in the War Cabinet his interventions against the Balfour Declaration, such as they were, had been too weak [^{>15}], and these musings would have no anti-Zionist effect at all: too little, too late.

According to McTague, Curzon had already on 16 March 1920 minuted his objection to the formulation in an early draft of the Mandate text calling for "the development of a self-governing commonwealth" because "it is a euphemism for a Jewish State, the very thing [the Zionists] accept and we disallow."⁶⁸⁹ William Mathew writes that Curzon actually refused to recognize that "the connection of the Jews with Palestine, which terminated 1200 years ago, gives them any claim whatsoever. On this principle we have a stronger claim to parts of France. ... [The Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration would be] nothing but trouble and expense for a generation or more."⁶⁹⁰

It was too late to change the Balfour Declaration, whose inclusion in the Palestine Mandatory's remit Curzon was supporting at San Remo on 24/25 April [^{>78}], but in the early summer of 1920 the Foreign Office under Curzon did intend to "retreat" from strongly pro-Zionist drafts for the Mandate text, and on 30 June 1920 Foreign Office official Hubert Young wrote to diplomat Vansittart that Curzon had minuted a comprehensive letter of 21 June from Vansittart with the comment, "I am quite willing to water [water down] the Palestine mandate, which I cordially distrust."⁶⁹¹ On 1 July the Foreign Office's Eastern Department communicated to Vansittart that in Curzon's view

⁶⁸⁸ FO 371/5199 pp 64-67, embedded in 'Palestine Chapter of Draft Treaty of Peace with Turkey', 11 or 20 March 1920); Ingrams 1972, pp 96-97; McTague 1980, p 284; Kattan 2009, pp 123-24.

⁶⁸⁹ McTague 1980, p 284, citing FO 371/860/1447; also Boyle 2001, p 220.

⁶⁹⁰ Mathew 2011, p 34, citing FO 371/5244, but I have not yet located this; also McTague 1980, p 287.

⁶⁹¹ FO 371/5244, p 184.

fewer references to the special position of the Zionist Organization should be made in the Mandate and... this can best be done by employing as far as possible the same wording as that adopted in the Mandate for Mesopotamia, while including one or two special Articles on the subject of the Zionist Organization.⁶⁹²

Perhaps Curzon could have won the intra-governmental debate. Again according to Mathew:

[A] full four-and-a-half years lay between the Balfour Declaration and the final approval of the Mandate, and it is not at all fanciful to suppose that an anti-Zionist British foreign secretary [Curzon], working alongside an anti-Zionist India secretary [Edwin Montagu] and aware of what was, as we shall see, a wide range of informed opposition within Parliament, officialdom, and beyond [e.g. >42; >57; >58; >85; >112; >124; >134; >144; >155; >161]), could have contrived at the very least to moderate Britain's mandated obligations to the Zionists.⁶⁹³

Until the Mandate chiselled Zionism in stone there had been no cause for utter Palestinian pessimism.

Tibawi has a different take on Curzon, in effect indicting him for compromising his anti-Zionist beliefs (my paraphrase/summary): 1) already in "the autumn of 1919" he was "an aspirer to [Balfour's] high office" of Foreign Secretary; 2) he then supported French, not Faisal's, control over northern Syria; 3) he supported Samuel's appointment as governor (High Commissioner) although he knew he was "as extreme as" any other Zionist; and 4) although he did remain adamant in denying the Jewish historical claim to political rights in Palestine and in rejecting the term 'commonwealth' to replace the euphemism 'national home', he did not even order or himself write a full and clear alternative Palestine Mandate draft.⁶⁹⁴ On Curzon's "ineffectualness and surrender even to subordinates" Tibawi quotes Curzon's biographer Harold Nicolson to the effect that while Curzon came up with good advice, "he allowed that advice to be disregarded".⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹² FO 371/5244, p 183.

⁶⁹³ Mathew 2011, p 34.

⁶⁹⁴ Tibawi 1977, pp 425, 428, 430.

⁶⁹⁵ Tibawi 1977, p 432.

In early 1920 Herbert Samuel became Chairman of a non-governmental 'Advisory Committee on the Economic Development of Palestine'⁶⁹⁶ [see >35] soon before being appointed first Palestine High Commissioner by Prime Minister Lloyd George on 25 April 1920, right at the time the Balfour Declaration was more or less approved by Japan, Italy, France and Britain at the San Remo conference [>78]. The man who in 1914/15 wrote the Zionist road map 'The Future of Palestine' [>8] was to be in the driver's seat. Together with Chaim Weizmann, who had easy access to the Foreign and Colonial Offices even after Lloyd George's time as Prime Minister ended in October 1922, Samuel during the decade 1915-25 equalled the achievement, from the Zionist perspective, of Theodor Herzl.

Samuel had been defeated in the 1918 Parliament general election and his tour of Palestine in early 1920 was nominally as a private citizen, but given his probable naming as High Commissioner public interest was great. [also >70] Upon being queried about Samuel's Palestine holiday in the House of Commons on 19 February 1920, Lloyd George had answered:

On the invitation of Field Marshal Lord Allenby and with the approval of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, it was arranged that the right hon. Herbert Samuel should proceed to Palestine with a view to advising upon questions of Administration and Finance. A communication in this sense was made to the Press on the 9th January last.⁶⁹⁷

Upon returning home from Palestine Samuel thus saw fit on 25 March 1920 to issue a press release.⁶⁹⁸ In it, he mainly played the economic-development card:

The country, taken as a whole, is undoubtedly under-populated and under-cultivated. With a proper equipment of roads, railways and harbours its prosperity is capable of great expansion. With modern methods of irrigation and of dry farming the question of water supply presents no grave obstacle. ... The Water power of the Upper Jordan is sufficient to provide adequate electric force for all parts of the country [to] enable numbers of industries. ... Now that railway communication has been established with Egypt the tourist traffic will undoubtedly shew a very great extension.

The British would relentlessly attempt to justify their colonial policy in Palestine and to convince the Palestinians Britain was good for them by using this "language of development".⁶⁹⁹

The stage Samuel was setting was one suitable for large-scale European-Jewish immigration and for the money required for "safeguarding the public health" and "rebuilding of roads for the development of postal, telegraph and telephone services", etc.

⁶⁹⁶ Ingrams 1972, p 81.

⁶⁹⁷ Hansard 1920, 19 February, c1027.

⁶⁹⁸ FO 371/5114, pp 69-71, *all further quotations*.

⁶⁹⁹ Ghandour 2010, Ch. 2; Norris 2013, *passim*.

But all this work of development depends absolutely upon the maintenance of a settled, efficient and honest Government. That is the first condition for the growth of revenue and for the introduction of capital.

The main thing was good investment conditions.

On “the question of Zionism” Samuel then maintained that the non-Jews’ well-known fears of a “Government of the Jewish minority”, of being “dispossessed of their property”, and of “administrative offices ... filled by Jews to the prejudice of others” were based on assumptions that are “untrue”.

Although I am not a member of the Zionist Organization I am fully acquainted with its policy, and I know that none of these ideas are entertained by it. I know that even if they were the British Government would never permit the adoption of such policies.

Let us generously call this passage disingenuous. [*see >105*]

Paving the way for his Zionist immigration policy he added, putting it in an economic rather than political light:

There is ample room in Palestine for a far larger population than now exists, and those who will come will arrive gradually as the conditions of the country allow; they will not be a pauper class to be a burden upon the rest, but of the same industrious progressive type as those who in the last thirty or forty years have founded the Jewish Colonies in various parts of the country.

About his closeness to the Zionist organisations, other entries demonstrate that Samuel was lying. [*>8; >17; >35; >88; >105; >108*] He was setting a pattern of soothing, inaccurate words [*e.g. >105*] combined with steady pro-Zionist deeds, as noted by Zeina Ghandour: Even when it came to Samuel’s declared motto ‘not to govern too much’, “What he did was different from what he said ... [By] 1925, Samuel had enacted some 130 ordinances.”⁷⁰⁰

Also wanting the job of High Commissioner, by the way, was Ronald Storrs, Military Governor of Jerusalem as of 28 December 1917 and civil Governor up until late 1926; Storrs was a lifelong Zionist, if considerably more critical of it than Samuel.⁷⁰¹ Reflecting on his time at the top of the ruling machinery, Storrs wrote that his

staff complained rightly that they were not doing straight administration but the political work of establishing Zionism. And were bothered by leaks to the Zionists from Jewish employees.⁷⁰²

And it was he who wrote, some 17 years later to be sure, of how “Mr Lloyd George’s madness” came across to the locals:

⁷⁰⁰ Ghandour 2010, p 54.

⁷⁰¹ Storrs 1937, pp 276, 285, 301, 329-36, 340-41, 350-54 (*but see 341-49, although possibly sarcastic*), 375-76, 378, 384-85.

⁷⁰² Storrs 1937, pp 367-68.

The thinking Arabs regarded Article 6 [of the Mandate] as Englishmen would regard instructions from a German conqueror for the settlement and development of the Duchy of Cornwall, of our Downs, commons and golf-courses, not by Germans, but by Italians 'returning' as Roman legionnaires.⁷⁰³

Had Storrs gotten the post, things might have been different.

Returning to the topic of Herbert Samuel, it was Storrs who would write:

The names of the dynamic four who will go down to history in the rebuilding of Zion will be Theodor Herzl, who saw the vision; Chaim Weizmann, who grasped the occasion; Arthur Balfour, who caused the world to renew the ancient Promise in a modern Covenant; and Herbert Samuel, who turned principle into practice, word into fact.⁷⁰⁴

He omitted Winston Churchill. (It is by the way very likely that Storrs' general praise of Zionism in his later memoirs⁷⁰⁵ was sarcastic.)

⁷⁰³ Storrs 1937, pp 334, 356.

⁷⁰⁴ Storrs 1937, p 437.

⁷⁰⁵ Storrs 1937, e.g. pp 340-49.

74. Meinertzhagen to Foreign Office

31 March 1920

The attitudes on the respective qualities of the Jewish and Arab people put relatively clearly by Samuel, Balfour, Churchill and others were stated more explicitly **in a later report** on 31 March 1920 by Chief Political Officer Richard Meinertzhagen, who had just replaced Gilbert Clayton, the latter having failed the pro-Zionism litmus test⁷⁰⁶; the report at the same time re-iterated Samuel's economic justification for British policy [73] and welcomed the future Zionist takeover of Palestine in the form of a Jewish state:

[O]nly one motive prompts anti-Zionist feeling Palestine. It is the general and very real fear of superior Jewish brains and money. The knowledge that the eventual dispossession of Arabs by Jews in Palestine is inevitable during the course of time, and that Jewish immigration spells an eventual Jewish state not only in Palestine but in Syria, very naturally frightens the Arab. ... The very factors which constitute that [National] Home [for Jews] and the methods which His Majesty's Government will be compelled to grant for its successful establishment, can only lead to predominant Jewish influence and possession in Palestine if not throughout the Near East. It is not doubted that Zionism will and must succeed to the benefit of Palestine and all its inhabitants. Should the Arab, as is inevitable, fail to compete with a superior civilisation, and from his nature it is probable he will not attempt to compete, is it fair that Palestine, with its undeveloped resources, should be refused progress because its inhabitants are incapable of it? The Arabs will be compelled under Zionism to enjoy increased prosperity and security, though they will lose that delightful atmosphere of idle possession and an undeveloped wilderness...⁷⁰⁷

They will get "increased prosperity and security" whether they want it or not.

That the "eventual dispossession" referred to by Meinertzhagen was a *necessary* consequence of the Anglo-Zionist Mandatory/colonial program was later, in 1965, argued by Fayeze Sayegh:

The people of Palestine has lost not only *political control* over its country, but *physical occupation* of its country as well: it has been deprived not only of its inalienable right to *self-determination*, but also of its elemental right to exist on its own land! ... For Zionism, colonization would be the instrument of nation-building, not the by-product of an already-fulfilled nationalism. ... The alliance of British Imperialism and Zionist Colonialism, concretely expressed in the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, at last opened Arab eyes to the true significance of what was happening, and brought home the realization that nothing less than dislodgment was in store for the Arabs, if Zionism was to be permitted to have its way.⁷⁰⁸

Denial of self-determination entailed, so this argument, denial of the Palestinian self's literal presence in Palestine.

⁷⁰⁶ Tibawi 1977, pp 415, 420.

⁷⁰⁷ FO 371/5034 pp 191-92, Meinertzhagen from Cairo, 31 March/14 April 1920; Meinertzhagen 1959, p 73; Ingrams 1972, p 83.

⁷⁰⁸ Sayegh 1965, pp v, 1-2, 40.

Again, a necessary background condition for this pervasive British attitude was a racist attitude towards Arabs. According to Wasserstein, “Meinertzhagen’s opinion of the Arabs... was one of total contempt: in his eyes ‘the Arab ... is an admirable looter and jackal among mortals.’”⁷⁰⁹ This assessment of Meinertzhagen – high official in the British Civil Service, nephew by marriage of Lord Passfield – is correct. A year earlier Meinertzhagen had expressed such views in a “personal” letter to Lloyd George, dated 25 March 1919, when both were in Paris:

We are very wise in allowing the Jews to establish their National Home in Palestine; we have also freed the Arabs from the Turkish yoke and we cannot forever remain in Egypt. This Peace Conference has laid two eggs – Jewish Nationalism and Arab Nationalism; these are going to grow up into two troublesome chickens; the Jew virile, brave, determined and intelligent. The Arab decadent, stupid, dishonest and producing little beyond eccentrics influenced by the romance and silence of the desert. The Jews, despite dispersal, have distinguished themselves in the arts, music and science and gave Britain one of its distinguished Prime Ministers. ... In fifty years time both Jew and Arab will be obsessed with nationalism, the natural outcome of the President’s [Wilson’s] self-determination. Nationalism prefers self-government, however dishonest and inefficient, to government by foreigners however efficient and beneficial. ... A National Home for the Jews must develop sooner or later into sovereignty; I understand that this natural evolution is envisaged by some members of H.M.G. Arab nationalism will also develop into sovereignty from Mesopotamia to Morocco. Jewish and Arab sovereignty must clash. The Jew, if his immigration programme succeeds, must expand and that can only be accomplished at the expense of the Arab who will do his utmost to check the growth and power of a Jewish Palestine. That means bloodshed. The British position in the Middle East is paramount; the force of nationalism will challenge our position. We cannot befriend both Jew and Arab. My proposal is based on befriending the people who are more likely to be loyal friends – the Jews; they owe us a great deal and gratitude is a marked characteristic of that race. Though we have done much for the Arabs, they do not know the meaning of gratitude; moreover they would be a liability; the Jew would be an asset.⁷¹⁰

History would prove his faith in the “gratitude” of “the Jews” to be misplaced⁷¹¹, but relevant to our story is that neither Foreign Secretary Curzon nor Prime Minister Lloyd George found these words grounds for firing Meinertzhagen. General Allenby however, in Cairo, did request in April 1920 from Foreign Secretary Curzon the recall of Meinertzhagen due to insubordination – but not racism – and Meinertzhagen’s allegedly unfair criticism sometime in mid-April that the O.E.T.A. (South) Administration was not sufficiently pro-Zionist.⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁹ Wasserstein 1978, p 52; Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 17, 142.

⁷¹⁰ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 17-18.

⁷¹¹ E.g. Suárez 2016 & 2023.

⁷¹² FO 371/5118, pp 8-13, 26-30, 152-63 and FO 371/5119, pp 1ff. and FO 371/5203, pp 108-10.

The Chief Political Officer's attitude led him to also radically misjudge the Palestinians' political acumen, for instance **in a despatch** in early April 1920 to Allenby in Cairo and the Foreign Office in London wherein he claimed that Britain's indigenous subjects were not motivated by nationalism, which was something political:

[W]e are now faced with a solid block of anti-Zionist opposition in Palestine. I believe this opposition to be shallow and based on vested interests. If it were based on a deep national feeling, which I am convinced is not the case, there would be cause for apprehension. ... Arab feeling against the Jew is that of the poor for the rich, of the uneducated for the educated. I do not believe there is any genuine religious or national factor in anti-Zionism, though both are used ad nauseam as convenient arguments and as excuses for stirring up trouble.⁷¹³

It was moreover inconceivable to Meinertzhagen that the indigenous should be left to do with their land as they wished:

The fact is that the acreage of Palestine is much too large and wasteful for its present population. Idle possession is an Arab idyll which lends a picturesque atmosphere to the Holy Land, but which is an odious obstruction to progress. ... Land can and will be made available for Zionist requirements. There is no lack of land, only a lack of will to allow Jews to possess such land. A cadastral survey, the re-opening of the Land Registries [and thereby land sales] to an eventual unlimited degree and the establishment of the principle that the Zionist Commission will get preferential treatment in the matter of State Lands, will soon revolutionize, democratize and improve the land question in Palestine.⁷¹⁴

He did not take into consideration that the Arabs themselves would increase in number, requiring the use of this allegedly fallow "acreage".

Incidentally, on the question of supposedly unused or inefficiently used land, and how much should be devoted to European-immigrant settlement, there were later many objective or technical studies. [e.g. >220; >233; >234; >246]⁷¹⁵ This issue, which arose only because of Britain's devotion to immigration from Europe, would continue for twenty years to distract from the political point made by the indigenous, namely that this was their business and their business only. It was easy to get involved in this argument on one side or the other while forgetting this basic point.

4-5 April 1920 *Clashes between Jews and Arabs flare up in the Old City during the Nabi Musa procession, marking the beginning of violent riots.*

April 1920 *The British remove Jerusalem Mayor Musa Qassem [Kazem] al-Husseini from office for opposing their pro-Zionist policies. [The more moderately anti-Zionist] Ragheb Nashashibi replaces him (until 1934).⁷¹⁶*

⁷¹³ Meinertzhagen 1959, p 76.

⁷¹⁴ Meinertzhagen 1959, p 77.

⁷¹⁵ Also French 1931, 1932; Stein 1984.

⁷¹⁶ See also Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 112, 119.

4 April 1920 *'The first military demonstration made by the Jews was when Colonel Jabotinsky led demobilized Jews in an attack on the Arabs during the uprising in Jerusalem on April 4, 1920. It was Jabotinsky who later founded the Revisionist Zionist Party, which represents fanatical Zionism, or to be more precise, frank and open Zionism...'*⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁷ Alami 1949, p 376.

75. Arab Club to Allenby

early April 1920

On behalf of its members (the “petitioners”), the Director of the Arab Club, Jerusalem, in early April addressed **a letter to Allenby**.⁷¹⁸

We avail ourselves of the opportunity of your being in Jerusalem to write to Your Excellency this our protest against the deeds and intentions of the Jews in this country, our native land, to which you have been sent to carry out the principles of your Government and those of the Allied nations. How glad we are to see you returning to the town that you have liberated from the slavery of oppression, in accordance with cause for which this dreadful war took place!

The Arabs remain peaceful, but not “because of humiliation or abasement” but “so that they may prove to all concerned that they are intimate friends, who do not want to do harm first.” However,

Be sure, Lord, that they... will accept no regime or rules which will do them harm and cause their children to be humiliated. They will emancipate themselves alone... This, they will do, when they see that the [Paris Peace] Conference has abandoned its principle [of self-determination]. ... We declare that we cannot accept the [immigrant Zionist] Jews in our country. Should they be permitted to do what they intend doing, we shall fight against them till death. ... [N]either do we admit or approve of their language being used in any office whatever. How can two languages, the Arabic and the Hebrew, be recognized as the official language of a country, which is the native land of one nation, the Arabic nation, when there are only a few amongst the Jews themselves who can speak Hebrew? The official language of this country is and has been for a long time the Arabic language, which should continue to be so until such time as the earth itself changes. ... The Jews come into this country; which thing the English Administration allows.

By the way Ronald Storrs, the long-serving political officer and Military Governor of Jerusalem (until 1926), devoted much of a chapter of his autobiography to the introduction of Hebrew as an official language of the Palestine Government.⁷¹⁹

As for their awareness of Zionist *intentions*:

We protest against the article of Monsieur Bion [Leon] Simon, a member of the Zionist Society in London, which was published in *Zionist di Wobo* newspaper. ... It does not suffice them [Zionists] to state certain things with regard to their being desirous of immigrating into our country, but they say other things relative to their being desirous of driving us forcibly out of it, this they are unable to do. ... The twentieth century allows us to lift up our voices, causing them to be heard by all the world, and never permits other people to encroach upon our rights, which it wants us to defend. We will either defend them or die.

Leon Simon was also a member of the Zionist Commission in Palestine.

⁷¹⁸ Quoted in full by Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 74-76.

⁷¹⁹ Storrs 1937, pp 301-15.

Finally,

We have heard about the organization of a new government [the Civil Administration to replace the Military one, on 1 July 1920], for which we thank the Government, which thinks of the benefit of this country. But as we completely recognize Palestine as only a part of Syria, the natives of which have declared or owned [earned?] their independence [69], within its natural boundaries, and as His Excellency Emir Faisal was chosen king over it, we ask that the Government be formed according to the opinion of our laudable king and 'Capital'. Kindly accept our respectful regards, (signed) Mohammed I. Derweesh, Director of the Arab Club (Moslem and Christian Society)

This demand for ownership of their country defines that country as greater Syria, and reminds us of the “natural boundaries” of *Bilad al-Sham*, limited by the Taurus Mountains and Turkish speakers in the north and the Euphrates in the east. Greater Syria during the late Ottoman period had been the accepted name for the area between Egypt and Turkey⁷²⁰ and “the name Syria was inclusive for the Lebanese and Palestinians as well as the Syrians in the current parlance at the time in England and America”⁷²¹. This petition was sent just after the official establishment of Faisal’s independent government in Damascus. As late as 1925 a People’s Party emerged in opposition to French rule which worked for a Greater Syria extending from Aqaba in the south to the Taurus Mountains in the north.⁷²²

⁷²⁰ Ayyad 1999, pp 8-13, 24-25, 35.

⁷²¹ Tibawi 1977, p 250.

⁷²² Parsons 2016, p 65.

V. “so much the worse for the Balfour Declaration”

This entry records the fact of the first violent clashes between Palestinians, Zionists and the police, which happened around Nebi Musa weekend, 4-7 April 1920, without going into much detail. These few days were a perfect example of non-verbal 'dialogue' between the three groups, and happened only 2½ years after the Balfour Declaration and British military takeover. Subjects rebel, rulers repress. There are many records of these 'disturbances' in libraries and online.⁷²³ I have read the official British reports on both this outbreak and the one of a year later, under the chairmanship, respectively, of Philip Palin [>88] and Thomas Haycraft [>122], and believe that the history of the concrete events of these days – who threw which stones, when and where – would not add much to this book. Important is only that both the ruled and the rulers were expressing themselves in ways clearer than words. The same applies, as well, to the disturbances of August 1928, August 1929, and indeed the entire Revolt of 1936-39.

In later entries I will show some of what British and Arab *documents relating to* such clashes reveal about attitudes, intentions and political control. In general, we will see that the several British 'Commissions of Enquiry' into such manifestations of resistance were for political reasons complicated and wordy, while written statements by the Palestinians were the much simpler *cantus firmus* of the desire for justified freedom. Not only militarily but at the *political* level it was still the British who were throwing the first stones.

One political detail concerning the aftermath of these 1920 Nebi Musa protests is related by Mazin Qumsiyeh:

The British administration sentenced Aref Al-Aref and Amin Al-Husseini *in absentia* to ten years' imprisonment each, but they had both fled to Syria. ... Aref Al-Aref was born in Jerusalem in 1891 [and] advocated aggressive but nonviolent resistance. ... He edited the newspaper *Suriyya Al-Janubiyya* published in Jerusalem from 1919.⁷²⁴

(That newspaper was replaced by *Al-Sabah*, founded by Kamel al-Budeiri in October 1921; close to the Palestine Arab Congress, it continued a relatively hardline rejection of British presence in Palestine.⁷²⁵) Both men were later pardoned by the British.

April 1920 *'There were some sections of the Sephardic Jews resident in Palestine who, in April 1920, responded to an appeal by the MCA [Muslim-Christian Association], signed an anti-Zionist petition and three years later held a meeting in a synagogue expressing support for these views.'*⁷²⁶

⁷²³ E.g. McTague 1978, pp 67-70; Farsoun & Zacharia 1997; Mazza 2015.

⁷²⁴ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 54.

⁷²⁵ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 131.

⁷²⁶ Regan 2017, p 97, citing Porath 1974, p 61.

77. Bols to Allenby and press

21-26 April 1920

Chief Administrator Louis Bols, who had been on Allenby's staff already in 1918, had found since becoming Chief Administrator of Palestine in January 1920 that the Zionist Commission [23; 59] was a rival administration, moreover working for the country's Jewish Zionists rather than for the country as a whole, and should be abolished. **Writing to his superiors** in Cairo.⁷²⁷

I submit the following report in amplification of my recommendation to abolish the Zionist Commission as such and to constitute an Advisory Jewish Council attached to my Administration and under my orders. ... It was only lately, during the visit of the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, that I appreciated the size and growth of the Zionist Commission, which he informed me comprised an organization of 100 individuals, dealing with the self-same administrative questions and problems as my own Administration. I attach a list of the Zionist Commission's Composition at the Headquarters and in the districts. It will be seen that a complete administrative machine is operating, in fact its departments correspond in numbers exactly to my own. This Administration within an Administration renders good government impossible, the Jewish population look to their Administration and not to mine, and the Moslems and Christians can only see that privileges and liberties are allowed to the Jews which are denied to them. [The Zionist Commission] seek not justice from the Military Occupant but that in every question in which a Jew is interested discrimination in his favour must be shown. (p 91)⁷²⁸

Bols went on to attach letters from Zionist Commission officials proving his claims, and showed the Commission's undue influence in the areas of the courts, education, police (rejection of non-Zionist Jewish policemen), and also concerning several issues raised by the riots of early April 1920 [76] already under investigation by the Palin Court of Enquiry [88]. Bols urged HMG to consider the interests of Great Britain. (pp 105-06)

Regarding the native population:

It is no use saying to the Moslem and Christian elements of the population that our declaration as to the maintenance of the 'status quo', made on our entry into Jerusalem, has been observed. Facts witness otherwise: the introduction of the Hebrew tongue as an official language; the setting up of a Jewish Judicature; the whole fabric of Government of the Zionist Commission of which they are well aware, the special privileges given as regards travelling and movement to members of the Zionist Commission, has firmly and absolutely convinced the non-Jewish elements of our partiality. (pp 105-06)

According to Jeffries, the Zionist Commission insisted as well on screening Jewish applicants for posts in the gendarmerie.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁷ FO 371/5119, pp 87-107, 21 April 1920 SECRET to B.G.G.S., G.H.Q. Cairo, *all citations*; text also at Barbour 1946, pp 96-97; Jeffries 1939, p 359; Tannous 1988, pp 91-92.

⁷²⁸ Also Wasserstein 1978, p 66, *calling Bols' message a 'dithyramb'*.

⁷²⁹ Jeffries 1939, p 373.

Bols continued:

This Administration has loyally carried out the wishes of H.M.G. and has exceeded in so doing strict adherence to the laws governing the conduct of the Military Occupant of Enemy Territory,⁷³⁰ but this has not satisfied the Zionist who appears bent on committing the temporary military administration to a partialist policy before the issue of the Mandate. It is manifestly impossible to please partisans who officially claim nothing more than a National Home but in reality will be satisfied with nothing less than a Jewish State and all that it politically implies. (p 106)

He concluded:

I recommend, therefore, in the interests of peace, of development, of the Zionists themselves, that the Zionist Commission in Palestine be abolished. ... [I]f... it is decided to back the demands of the Zionist Commission and to allow the continuance of their activities, which will in no wise diminish but rather increase, then H.M.G. must be prepared for opposition, and for the forces necessary to crush it. If on the contrary the Balfour Declaration is announced to mean that Britain will administer the country with equality both politically and economically to all creeds and sections, I fear no opposition. The declared formation of a Jewish National Home will be facilitated and the Zionist members of my Administration can assist to that and under me and not in opposition to the Moslem and Christian elements. (pp 106-07)⁷³¹

Bols's successor as top British official in Palestine, Herbert Samuel, disagreed with Bols's judgment,⁷³² and as we know, not only Bols, but the Military Administration, were gotten rid of as of 1 July 1920 – by the way illegally, because according to the Hague Conventions of 1907, in the absence of a treaty with Turkey, Great Britain was still the belligerent occupant who could not change any laws or institutions⁷³³. On that date Bols famously handed over to Samuel a pile of files and a 'receipt' for the country, labelled 'One Palestine, Complete'.⁷³⁴ [>429]

A few days after this dispatch to Cairo, around 27 April, an article in a Jerusalem newspaper based on an interview with Bols paraphrased the Chief Administrator's ideas for managing the Zionist-indigenous conflict:

1. On condition that all rights of native population are safeguarded Balfour's declaration [is] endorsed by Allies. 2. Jewish immigration will be strictly limited to numbers which country can economically support... 3. Interests of native land-holders will be safeguarded. ... 5. No Bishop [sic.] setting up Jewish Government. Native Government will be proportionally representative of entire population and officials of mandatory power will train the population to self government.⁷³⁵

⁷³⁰ See >60; >68; >99; >147.

⁷³¹ Also Barbour 1946, pp 96-97.

⁷³² Huneidi 2001.

⁷³³ Quigley 2022, p 52; War Office 1914; Hague Convention (IV) Regulations 1907.

⁷³⁴ Samuel 1945, p 154; Segev 1999.

⁷³⁵ FO 371/5119, p 20; also FO 371/5118, p 202.

(The phrase “numbers which country can economically support” was perhaps the first formulation of what became the ubiquitous phrase allegedly governing the quantity of immigration, namely the country’s “economic absorptive capacity”. [>85; >105; >142; >147; >233; >234; >247; >284, etc.]) Bols conveyed the same message in a speech in Acre on 28 April.⁷³⁶

Also on 28 April, in Nablus, he publicly read out the text of the Balfour Declaration, possibly the first time the British had deigned to communicate this document to its subjects.⁷³⁷ (As Henry Cattani said before the United Nations three decades later, on 9 May 1947, this Declaration of British intent was made “without the consent or the knowledge of the Arabs”.⁷³⁸) Bols told them that the Balfour Declaration would be included in the British Mandate but that “in no sense will a minority be allowed to control the majority of the population when the time arrives for any form of representative government...” and concluded, “The decision has at last been given and henceforward there must be an end to political strife and unrest.”⁷³⁹ The time for “any form of representative government”, however, would never “arrive”. The closest it came was with Parliament’s adoption of the White Paper of 17 May 1939 [>410; >411], but that Statement of Policy had just enough reservations about normal democracy to prevent, as well, the majority from ‘controlling’ its minorities.

⁷³⁶ FO 371/5118, pp 186–87.

⁷³⁷ FO 371/5118, pp 186–87. *But see* Tibawi 1977, p 423.

⁷³⁸ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946–47, 5. f. §5.

⁷³⁹ John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 156–57.

The ‘Principal Allied Powers’, aka the ‘High Contracting Parties’, who met in San Remo, Italy, in late April 1920, **are often said to have passed a resolution on 24/25 April** incorporating the Balfour Declaration into the planned British mandate for Palestine, in effect stating what they had already agreed on at Versailles while finalising the Peace Treaty with Germany on 28 June 1919. John Quigley is correct, however, that the convening Powers Britain, France, Italy and Japan, who in the first months of 1920 were actually drafting a treaty with Turkey which would transfer sovereignty to themselves, passed no formal or signed resolutions; what is documented, and all we have to go on, are the *minutes* of these two meetings.⁷⁴⁰

The minutes

These minutes⁷⁴¹ say only that a “draft resolution was formulated by the British delegation for consideration” and that after consideration it was accepted verbally:

It was agreed:- To accept the terms of the mandates article as given below with reference to Palestine, on the understanding that there was inserted in the *procès-verbal* an undertaking by the mandatory Power that this would not involve the surrender of the rights hitherto enjoyed by the non-Jewish communities in Palestine.... (b) That the terms of the mandates article should be as follows:- The High Contracting Parties agree that Syria and Mesopotamia shall, in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 22, Part I (Covenant of the League of Nations) [p.46], be provisionally recognised as independent States subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. ... The High Contracting Parties agree to entrust... the administration of Palestine... to a Mandatory, to be selected by the said Powers. The Mandatory [for Palestine] will be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 8 [sic.], 1917, by the British Government [p.16], and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, 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. The terms of the mandates in respect of the above territories will be formulated by the Principal Allied Powers and submitted to the Council of the League of Nations for approval. (pp 922, 927, also 918)

“Syria” here did not include Palestine. At any rate, this would achieve the merger of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate.⁷⁴² [p.16 & p.146; also p.92] But what were “the rights hitherto enjoyed by the non-Jewish communities”? They were those they’d enjoyed under the Ottomans, including political rights.

⁷⁴⁰ Quigley 2022, pp 38-49, 150.

⁷⁴¹ San Remo Minutes 1920, pp 917-28, all further citations; also San Remo conference 1920.

⁷⁴² Muslih 1988, p 203.

The minutes reveal that it was Britain's representative, Foreign Secretary Curzon, who insisted on including the caveat about the non-Jewish communities:

He thought that it was impossible for the Supreme Council to determine, that day, exactly what form the future administration of Palestine would take. All they could do was to repeat the declaration that had been made in November 1917. That declaration contemplated, first, the creation of national home for the Jews... Secondly, it was of the highest importance to safeguard the rights of minorities; first, the rights of the Arabs, and then of the Christian communities. (p 919)

This bizarre characterisation of the Arabs as a minority, as well as the bizarre implication that the Christians were not Arabs, gives cause for pause. Was the Conference Secretariat, writing the minutes, at fault? Did Curzon misspeak? Did he, or anyone else who might have proofread the minutes, believe this characterisation? If so, was it a mathematical error or was Arab minority status computed assuming that the population of Palestine conceptually included the some 14 million Jews in the world? Was it the Palestinians' deeper invisibility, their erasure?

Curzon had also either misspoken or dissembled when lecturing the Zionism-critical delegates from France and Italy, namely M. Berthelot and Signor Nitti, on what the Balfour Declaration said:

As regards Palestine, His Britannic Majesty's Government had, two years previously, promulgated a formal declaration which had been accepted by the Allied Powers, that Palestine in future was to be the National Home of the Jews throughout the world. (p 918)

This was false: that "formal declaration" had on purpose been re-formulated so as to avoid the impression that HMG (sorry, HBMG) wanted (all of) Palestine to be identical with the Jewish national home.⁷⁴³ Literally, Palestine wasn't "to be" that home, but rather that home was to be "in" Palestine – in order to avoid the idea of "reconstituting" (all of) Palestine as such a national home.⁷⁴⁴ [[>]16]

The minutes capture in other ways this fantasy of a relatively unimportant number of Palestinians. Answering the French representatives' objection that all four Supreme Allies had never formally approved the Balfour Declaration, Curzon replied that the Italian Government had indeed "expressed its approval of the terms of the declaration" and there had been approval by

the President of the United States, and also by Greece, China, Serbia and Siam. (p 919)

From California to Athens to Rangoon to Peking, there was nothing but agreement about what to do with a few hundred thousand natives near Jerusalem.

The French found the draft too pro-Zionist and wanted to go farther than the British proposal of simply incorporating the Balfour Declaration word-for-word into a Conference 'resolution' and eventually into the Mandate text.⁷⁴⁵ Namely, in formulating what it

⁷⁴³ Quigley 2022, p 43.

⁷⁴⁴ Also CAB 24/115/98, p 435.

⁷⁴⁵ McTague 1980, p 286.

was that had to be “safeguarded” (i.e. kept safe from Britain’s Jewish home), the French suggested the broader terms “the traditional rights of the inhabitants” (p 920) and even their “political rights” (p 921), not merely their “civil and religious rights”. Their idea was to strengthen the second clause of the Balfour Declaration before incorporating it into the Mandatory’s job profile, even at one point declaring that Declaration “a dead letter”, to which “Lord Curzon indicated his dissent”. (p 921)

Intervening apparently with the interests of the Christians in mind, but perhaps also of the native non-Christians, the Italian representative then supported formulating the good to be safeguarded as “the existing political rights, that is to say, the right to vote and take part in elections” of the non-Jewish communities. (p 922) According to Antonius, already in 1918 Italian Foreign Minister Baron Sonnino had wanted to substitute the words “juridical and political rights” for the words “civil and religious rights” in a version of the Balfour Declaration to be incorporated into the Mandate text.⁷⁴⁶ But apparently, Italy never fought for what it knew to be right.

In the end the compromise on what was “agreed”, penned by the British delegation, was that the takeover by the “mandatory Power” did not imply the “surrender of the rights” of the native Palestinians (as quoted at the start of this entry). (p 922) But this was to be kept out of any printed report, appearing only verbally, i.e. in the “*prôces-verbal*”; and the term ‘political rights’ was assiduously avoided – although careful readers could note that “the rights hitherto enjoyed” by the Palestinians would include the political rights accorded them by the 1908 Ottoman Constitution, including the right to vote and hold office.

Background

The Versailles ‘Treaty of Peace with Germany’ having been signed on 28 June 1919, the Allied Supreme Council (Britain, France, Italy and Japan with the U.S. ‘observing’) held regular meetings to clarify their stance on what would be the ‘Treaty of Peace with Turkey’ (which would not be signed until 24 July 1923). The two determining members, Britain and France, had already on 12 December 1919 reconfirmed the Sykes-Picot arrangement and agreed on how to divide the spoils.⁷⁴⁷ They had worked on this in London from 12 February until 3 March 1920, and re-convened in San Remo 19–26 April in the knowledge that the Syrians (including Palestinians) had declared their independence (including Palestine) and of course wished, or demanded, recognition. [^{>52; >69}].⁷⁴⁸ The assembled powers nevertheless proceeded to give themselves the authority to rule over Syria and Mesopotamia/Iraq – as well as Cyprus, Libya and Constantinople. As Prime Minister Lloyd George told the House of Commons on 11 March 1920:

The distribution of the mandates between the Powers who are to hold them was... settled by the Supreme Council in Paris last summer; but it has not yet been possible to complete

⁷⁴⁶ Antonius 1938, p 394 note.

⁷⁴⁷ CAB 24/95/94, pp 336–37.

⁷⁴⁸ Also Antonius 1938, pp 305–06; Tannous 1988, p 85.

the preparation of all the instruments defining the terms of such mandates. I hope, however, that it may be possible to reach a definite agreement on this point shortly, so that the mandates may be signed at an early date.⁷⁴⁹

The text for the Palestine Mandate was then as good as written, and Britain would get it.

On 18 March the relationship between HMG and the people and new government of Greater Syria was again defined in Parliament when William Ormsby-Gore

asked the Prime Minister whether he can give the House any information regarding recent political or military developments in Syria; whether His Highness the Emir Faisal has been proclaimed king of a sovereign independent Syrian state by a Constituent Assembly at Damascus and with the approval of the great mass of the Syrian people in the former vilayets of Syria and Aleppo; and whether the Allied and Associated Powers will recognise this independence; and, if so, within what territorial boundaries? [⁶⁹]

Lloyd George replied:

It appears that the Emir Faisal was proclaimed King of Syria, including apparently Palestine and Syria, by a Congress at Damascus on March 8th [⁶⁹]; but of whom this Congress was composed, or what authority it possessed, it is not yet known. As it is obvious that the future of the territories which have been conquered from the former Ottoman Empire can only properly be determined by the Allied Powers, who are at present assembled in Conference [in San Remo] for the purpose, the Emir Faisal has been informed by the British and French Governments, acting in concert, that they cannot recognise the validity of these proceedings, and the Emir has been invited to come to Europe to state his case [^{also >71}].⁷⁵⁰

“Of whom this Congress was composed” was of course “known”, so that part was a lie. In the event, Allied Power France would defeat Faisal militarily in July and take over the Syrian state.⁷⁵¹

Unsettling for Zionists, though, was a separate exchange in the Commons between Ormsby-Gore and Lloyd George on 22 March:

Mr. Ormsby-Gore asked the Prime Minister whether in informing the Emir Faisal that the Allied Powers cannot at present recognise the validity of the recent proceedings in Syria, whereby the sovereign independence of Syria has been proclaimed, they have reassured him and the Arabs that the Allied Powers will adhere to the pledges given by the British authorities to King Hussein when the Arabs came into the War with us against the Turks [^{>10}], and also to the joint Anglo-French declaration of November, 1918 [^{>28}]; and whether he will issue a White Paper setting out the various undertakings and promises given during the War by the British Government to the Arabs?

Lloyd George's answer:

⁷⁴⁹ Hansard 1920, 11 March, c1535.

⁷⁵⁰ Hansard 1920, 18 March, cc2359-60.

⁷⁵¹ See *e.g.* Parsons 2016, pp 49-53.

The Emir Faisal was informed that the question of Syria would shortly be examined by the Peace Conference with a view to arriving at a settlement in accord with the declarations that have been exchanged between the British, French and Arab Governments. It would not be desirable at the present moment to lay correspondence on the matter.⁷⁵²

While the Syrian situation was complicated due to the Jewish national home, for *Mesopotamia*, according to Lloyd George on 25 March, policy was clear:

It is not proposed that we should govern this country as if it were an essential part of the British Empire, making its laws. That is not our point of view. Our point of view is that they should govern themselves and that we should be responsible as the mandatory for advising, for counselling, for assisting, but that the government must be Arab. That is a condition of the League of Nations, and we mean to respect it. ... That is a view that is accepted by the whole of the Allies, and, I am perfectly certain, by every Member in this House. We will respect the solemn undertaking which we gave to the Allies in November, 1918 [28], upon that subject...⁷⁵³

It was never more clearly stated that Mesopotamia/Iraq was to be treated as straightforwardly Arab, with no plans for European immigration and no indefinite postponement of self-determination (which was finally fully achieved on 3 October 1932, roughly a decade after the British-held Mandate for Iraq was replaced by the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty after the Iraqis rebelled in 1920). This in contrast to the southern Syrians, who would not be allowed to “govern themselves” due to the priority given the Jewish national home. As well, it had probably already been decided, even before King Faisal’s overthrow, to install him as King of Mesopotamia.⁷⁵⁴

Supreme significance

San Remo was the major British/Zionist victory in smoke-filled rooms of the period 1917-1931 (the year of the Black Letter [246]). At least one staunch Zionist academic thought so when writing in 2020:

There is probably no more understated event in the history of the Arab-Israel [sic.] conflict than the San Remo Conference of 1920 [which] appointed Britain as mandatory... with the specific task of ‘putting into effect the [Balfour Declaration]...’ ... The importance of the Palestine mandate cannot be overstated. Though falling short of the proposed Zionist formula that ‘Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people,’ it signified an unqualified recognition by the official representative of the will of the international community of the Jews as a national group – rather than a purely religious community – and acknowledgement of ‘the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine’ as ‘the grounds for reconstituting their national home in the country.’⁷⁵⁵

Here we have it all: the “national” nature of the Jews, the “historic connection” and Balfour’s sleight-of-tongue re-ordering of the words denoting what, exactly, would be “re-

⁷⁵² Hansard 1920, 22 March, c42.

⁷⁵³ Hansard 1920a, c663.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, c712.

⁷⁵⁵ Karsch 2020, p 5.

constituted”, Palestine or the Jewish nation? [>16; >146] Official Zionist delegate Herbert Samuel was present in San Remo to lobby for laying down these terms for the Mandate. Two months later he would take over the Palestine Administration and two years later, with Churchill and Shuckburgh, would write the Zionist Mandate principles into the purely British 1922 White Paper [>142].

As the Shaw Commission in 1930 would observe, “the Arabs of Palestine were not directly represented” at San Remo⁷⁵⁶ [>220], while Jeffries notes only that “an ‘Arab delegation’... led by one of the wealthy Loutfallah family,... not dispatched by the [General Syrian] Congress” was present⁷⁵⁷. The British were officially represented by Foreign Secretary Curzon, Prime Minister Lloyd George and Balfour, Liberals and Conservatives all, but backed up by a strongly pro-Zionist statement by the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress.⁷⁵⁸ The Zionist Organization was present in the persons of Nahum Sokolow, Chaim Weizmann, and the ubiquitous Herbert Samuel, whose parallel jobs for Zionism and Britain would never be more clearly visible. After this predetermination of the route at Versailles and San Remo, Britain and the Jewish Zionists would steer the Balfour Declaration through its next three tests, incorporating it into the Treaty of Sèvres on 10 August 1920 [>92], passing it in the House of Commons on 4 July 1922 [>147], and putting it into the text of the Palestine Mandate approved by the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922 [>146].

Street protests against the Balfour Declaration grew in number and intensity now that countries other than Britain were formally lining up behind the unwanted Jewish national home – as did criticism and anger in the press, e.g. in *Falastin*, *Al-Karmel*, *Al-Quds as-Sharif*, and *Merat al-Sharkh*. Eyewitness Izzat Tannous, the prominent Jerusalem medical doctor, writes:

The publication on May 5, 1920 of the decision taken by the Supreme Allied Council at San Remo put the whole Arab world in fury. In Syria and Palestine, the reaction was immediate and clashes were reported. ... The Allied decision at San Remo was more than bad news to the Arabs. It was a shock. The Arabs never expected that the Allies would betray them to such a degree. I am not writing these facts as an historian, but as one who was shocked by these sad events. My feelings were, and are still the same, that the lesson the Arabs learned on that day cost the West, and the Christian West in particular, something which no amount of material wealth can replace. ... Consequently... *Kilmeh Ingliziyah* or ‘an English word’ which was the slang used by us to mean ‘the word of truth,’ became ‘the word of deceit.’⁷⁵⁹

Later on Tannous became an important interlocutor. [e.g. >303; >345; >361; >364; >367; >428]

⁷⁵⁶ Shaw 1930, p 128.

⁷⁵⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 356, 368.

⁷⁵⁸ Jeffries 1939, p 357.

⁷⁵⁹ Tannous 1988, pp 85-86.

79. Lloyd George on San Remo

29 April 1920

Prime Minister **Lloyd George** reported in the House of Commons on 29 April what had happened at San Remo.⁷⁶⁰ He effused: "There never was such a Conference for achieving the satisfaction and the agreement of all parties concerned!" (c1459) The bulk of his statement was about relations with defeated Germany and Turkey, and with regard to the occupied Turkish territories secrecy was required until things were settled with that country. (c1469) (The theoretical period of secrecy would last long, since the Treaty of Peace with Turkey was not settled and signed until 24 July 1923.) He did reveal a minimum of information:

I will only say one word about the mandates. The mandate of Syria has been accorded to France; for Mesopotamia, including Mosul, it has been given to Great Britain; and the mandate for Palestine has also been given to Great Britain, with a full recognition of the famous Balfour declaration in respect of the Jews. (c1470)

Herbert **Asquith**, Lloyd George's predecessor as Prime Minister, rose to object, appealing for more international democracy and transparency:

It is time, or the time is approaching, when these meetings of the Supreme Council should come to an end. I am not for a moment withdrawing or qualifying what I have already said as to the advantage which they have been in the settlement of the intricate questions connected with Peace. But we are looking forward to a future in which international relations will not be regulated by the decisions of two or three Powers, however eminent, and however great the services they rendered in the War. What we want to see is what was in the very forefront, not only of the Treaty of Versailles, but of the other Treaties – the establishment of the League of Nations, which shall represent not merely three or four of the Allied or Associated Powers, but which will be the vocal and authentic organ of the vast number of States, both small and great, which are already parties to that great Covenant... (c1478)

Horatio **Bottomley** then argued for a larger role for Parliament in treaty matters, and *ipso facto* mandate matters:

Why cannot we see the despatches which passed between this country and France prior to San Remo? ... We, in these hours of reconstruction, have to bear the whole burden of the £8,000,000,000 which the War has cost us. We have to go cap in hand to President Wilson to help us with Armenia and the position is unsatisfactory and undignified. I do not think the San Remo Conference has done one atom of good. It has sent a draft Treaty to Turkey. It amazed me to hear the right hon. Gentleman... say we shall have an opportunity of discussing it later on. We have no opportunity of discussing peace treaties in this House. That is reserved for America and Continental countries. We are told to take it or leave it. So it will be with Turkey. (cc1482, 1483-84)

And great secrecy there was. Even as late as 6 July 1920 the Leader of the House of Commons told a questioner that the Government was opposed to publishing the terms of the

⁷⁶⁰ Hansard 1920, 29 April, all citations.

Palestine mandate before the League of Nations Council dealt with it.⁷⁶¹ Also of some relevance to this book is not only that mandate matters often bypassed Parliament, but also that Britain was susceptible to pressure from its creditor, the U.S.

Returning to 29 April in the Commons, Earl **Winterton** brought the discussion around to Palestine:

I wish to say a word as to the mandate on Palestine. In a short time it will be too late to speak effectively on this matter, for there will be no alteration possible to the Treaty. ... Let me say, in the first place, that I, in common with, I suppose, the majority of people in this country, responsible people, entirely support the declaration made on behalf of the Government by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London (Mr. Balfour) in his famous declaration in December, 1917, in regard to the settlement of Palestine on a Zionist basis. ... One [concern] is that the rights of the existing Palestinian inhabitants, especially the Moslems and Christians, the resident cultivators, should be carefully safeguarded. The vast majority of the resident cultivators of Palestine are very poor men. Ninety per cent. are either Christian or Moslem. The Jews form less than 10 per cent, of the whole of the inhabitants, and of that 10 per cent. the majority are in the towns engaged in the small retail trade, money-lending and occupations of that kind. Therefore, if there is to be any settlement of Jews from abroad, I think the rights of the existing cultivators must be most carefully safeguarded. (c1512)

Winterton then reported on an anti-British expression of political will from certain “Arabs” who had just the day before attacked British and Indian soldiers in Palestine, and pleaded that his friend Emir Faisal be supported and urged to quell such attacks. (cc1513-14) There would however be recurring violent action against anything (such as Zionism) which stultified the “legitimate aspirations of the Arab people”, and

I say that without such an arrangement [with Faisal] both the French and ourselves will have a period of the utmost difficulty in carrying out the mandate which has been given us respectively for Palestine and Syria. It would be intolerable if the legitimate hopes of the Zionists were in any way affected by serious disturbances in that country. I deplore the attacks which have been made by the Arabs upon the peaceable inhabitants of Palestine, but we have got to realise that this irritation, this running sore, does exist, and, short of military operations on an enormous scale, which I do not believe either the French or ourselves are prepared to face at the present time, the only way which I think is absolutely essential is to come to some arrangement with the Emir Faisal and his representative men. (c1514)

The Emir, so Winterton, had rejected offers of alliance from Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] while

He has defended, at the same time, the attitude he is taking up in demanding for his country the rights to which his people are entitled. ... Therefore there is all the more reason why care should be taken to arrive at a settlement that will satisfy him and his people. ... I hope

⁷⁶¹ Hansard 1920e, c1227.

that those two great peoples, the Jews and the Arabs, may live together in the future on terms of amity and friendship, and that the assistance that they can be to each other may be forthcoming. (c1515)

That is, even the formula of the Syrians' best friend in Parliament, Winterton, was somewhere between that of Faisal – a constitutional monarchy ruling united Syria under which Zionism, in some non-sovereign form, would take place [c.1916] – and Lloyd George, ever since 1916 a committed political Zionist; he did not simply unqualifiedly support Faisal's vision. For Winterton challenged neither the basic idea of France's and Britain's colonial ('mandatory') rule in the Near East nor this Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration.

Those in charge of Palestine at this time thus rejected the path wished by the vast majority of the inhabitants of Syria. [c.1916] In this Commons debate Lloyd George merely vaguely praised their mutual friend Faisal – who had contributed so decisively to 'Allied' victory over Turkey – and said matter-of-factly that the League of Nations, not Faisal, would soon take over sovereignty in the Near East. (c1518-19, 1521-23) The debate held as well early instances of two themes that would recur again and again in British takes on the 'Palestine problem', namely casting it in racial rather than political terms, and bemoaning the burden accepted selflessly by Britain, an attitude put thus by Balfour's cousin Robert Cecil:

I am exceedingly glad that it is now definitely and finally settled that the mandate of Palestine is to be given to this country. I say that not with any megalomania and not from any belief that it is going to be of great or any advantage, direct advantage, to this country. I believe it will be a burden and responsibility of a very serious kind. I believe that the mandatory of Palestine will have one of the most difficult tasks that could possibly be allotted to a nation. The mandatory will have exceedingly complex racial questions to settle and will have to deal with them with great tact and judgment, and in all probability without receiving any return for such exertion, except what he may hope for in the gratitude of those races who will benefit by those exertions. (c1498)

This scion of perhaps the oldest statecraft family in England, architect of the League of Nations and head of the Foreign Office's League of Nations section, was bluntly saying that the Balfour-Declaration mandate was, for the U.K., a losing proposition. He was evidently one who disagreed with the proposition that the Zionist Mandate would bring Britain net benefits in the form, for instance, of protection for the Suez Canal, communication with the British East, or getting friendly access to Near East oil. For that matter, the Palestinians urged Britain time and again to go ahead and feel free to lay down the heavy Mandatory burden, and as for Cecil's fantasy of an "exceedingly complex racial questions", they had never had any racial enmity towards Jews as Jews.

28 April & 1 May 1920 [*It is likely that at meetings in Acre and Nablus Chief Administrator Louis Bols for the first time conveys officially the words of the Balfour Declaration to the Palestinians.*]

80. Nazareth, Transjordan and Nablus to Bols

early May 1920

The Western Powers had thus ignored the wishes of the Palestinians and other Syrians [>52; >60; >69], declaring their intent to give Palestine to Britain at the end of the San Remo conference [>78]. In reaction, **a Nazareth group of Moslems and Christians sent a letter** on 4 May 1920 to the British Military Governor of Nazareth signed by forty-three citizens:

In view of the declaration of the decision of the Peace Conference regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, we hereby beg to declare that we are the owners of this country and the land is our national home.⁷⁶²

Since being a national home in Palestine was already a full-time job for the Palestinians, the country's also being a Jewish national home must have seemed to the owners of Palestine far-fetched, even absurd.

On 8 May Chief Administrator Louis Bols **received a message** from twelve "Beduins of the East residing beyond the Jordan and the Dead Sea"; these

Chiefs of Transjordan can not but run when need be to the aid of our brethren the Palestinians who groan under the horrible Zionist Colonization... We read the declaration which your Government pronounced in the presence of the notables of Jerusalem, on 28.4.20 [>77], including the separation of Palestine from the United Syria and making it a national home for the Jews ... This displeased us very much because it contradicted the wish of the nation who declared, often times, that they wholly refuse the Zionist Emigration. ... Palestine is dear to us and therefore we can never accept that the new comers should rob it from our hands. ...It is not just... that you should give no heed whatever to our requests...⁷⁶³

Transjordan was politically still a part of Palestine, and would only a year later be split off into a separate mandate, by Churchill.

For its part, the Moslem-Christian Society of Nablus on 5 May had written:

As it is well known to the Allies that Palestine is an Arabic tract of land bounded by Arabic Countries on all sides, furthermore the population are of kindred blood with the Arabs, it would therefore be impossible to demolish this relation and dissolve it. ... The Allies have declared that they have actually fought to avoid war and establish Peace, and restore scattered people to their countries. Is it therefore admissible for them under right and justice to create in the Arabic country a national home for foreigners causing the country terrible material and moral injuries [and] destroy the inhabitants thereof [?] ... Since the war declaration, the people of Palestine have been anxiously pleading to every ruling power on the surface of the globe that it is unreasonable to find in this country a spare space for admitting the residents of a foreign nation...⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶² FO 371/5114, p 44; Ingrams 1972, p 92; UNSUPR 1978a, use Search function.

⁷⁶³ FO 371/5114, pp 45-46; Ingrams 1972, p 93.

⁷⁶⁴ FO 371/5114, p 47; Ingrams 1972, p 93.

Continuing their “pleadings and cries” to the British and the League of Nations, the Nablus Society wrote of “the Jews who form 7% of the population and possess 1% of the land” and protested the “unfair decision” that the “Balfour Declaration... be included in the Turkish Peace Treaty”:

The Allies' Declaration that they had plunged into the World Conflagration with the intention of liberating the weak nations thus insuring world peace does not tally with their present action in wanting to tremble [trample] our sacred rights. What right have they to go back on their principle and establish in our land a nation of foreigners, thus causing material and social harm? ... [Our] land should not be given to foreigners who have no right to it... In reply to the declaration of the... Military Governor that Palestine is under a British Mandate we say that this is contrary to the promises and clear treaties. The Arabs unsheathed the sword on the Allies' side with the hope of becoming one day FREE and INDEPENDENT. ... [R]elying upon the decision of the International Council [and on the “Might of Right”] that the future fate of the countries depend upon the wishes of the inhabitants, we reiterated and still reiterate our demands as given to the American Commission [59]; we want complete independence...⁷⁶⁵

The complaint here was that the Zionist Jews were European foreigners with no connection to Palestine, not they were Jews. One wonders how aristocrats such as Balfour, Meinertzhagen and Churchill reacted to such far-from-Oxbridge language.

⁷⁶⁵ FO 371/5114, p 114, Nablus MCA through Bols to Peace Conference, 29 May 1920.

General Allenby oversaw from Cairo, as head of the overall Military Administration, the work of the Palestine Chief Administrator, from January through June 1920 General Louis Bols. HMG's plan now was to replace Bols and the Palestine Military Administration with Herbert Samuel and a Palestine Civil Government, whereupon Allenby wrote to the Foreign Office in a "very urgent, private and very confidential" telegram:

As regards effect on native population, I think that appointment of Jew [Herbert Samuel] as first Governor will be highly dangerous. The Mahometan population are already in a state of great excitement owing to news that Mr. Balfour's declaration is to be included in treaty of peace ... They will regard appointment of a Jew as first Governor, even if he is a British Jew, as handing country over at once to a permanent Zionist Administration.⁷⁶⁶ ... The indigenous Christian population, protestant, catholic, and Greek Orthodox will also deeply resent transfer of Government to Jewish Authority, and will throw their weight against Administration. I hope that these opinions will not be taken as directed in any way against Mr. Samuel, who is best choice that could be made if it is decided that a Jew should be appointed as first Civil Governor.⁷⁶⁷

In May or June Foreign Office official Hubert Young in London wrote to his colleague J.A.C. Tilley:

Mr Samuel will have a very difficult task... to establish friendly relations with the non-Jewish inhabitants... I presume that the idea in appointing a Jew as the first Head of the new administration in Palestine is to make it clear that H.M.G. really propose to carry out their Zionist policy, but it may defeat its own end...⁷⁶⁸

W.G. Osborne added:

I should have thought that in order to allay Arab suspicions it would have been preferable that the Civil Administrator should not be a Jew – at any rate the first one. ... I cannot see that the Zionist policy of H.M.G. entails a Jewish Administrator; the combination of the latter with martial law will ensure a disastrous opening for the National Home.⁷⁶⁹

In the House of Lords on 29 June 1920 Lord Sheffield would judge against Samuel's appointment in light of the principle of majority rule, noting that he was of the religion of the 10% minority, objecting to the circumstance that "preference should be given to one-tenth who have gone to the country only lately over the nine-tenths who have been there, from father to son, for generations."⁷⁷⁰ [85] Bols, as well, would soon report

⁷⁶⁶ See Samuel 1945, especially pp 156, 176 [429].

⁷⁶⁷ FO 371/5203, p 126; Ingrams 1972, pp 105-06.

⁷⁶⁸ FO 371/5203, p 117; Ingrams 1972, p 106.

⁷⁶⁹ FO 371/5203, pp 113, 117.

⁷⁷⁰ FO 371/5114, p 176, 29 June 1920; Hansard 1920d, c1035; Huneidi 2001, pp 45-46.

his accurate observations about the populace's opposition to Samuel. [^{>84}] The effect of Samuel's founding role in British Zionism on the Palestinians was a subject for debate in House of Commons deliberations on 4 July 1922, as well.⁷⁷¹

On 9 June Allenby sent another telegram to the Foreign Office saying that Emir Faisal had telegraphed him urging cancellation of Samuel's appointment "since Mr. Samuel is universally known to be a Zionist whose ideal is to found a Jewish State upon the ruins of a large part of Syria, i.e. Palestine."⁷⁷² Samuel, for his part, around 12 June then tried to placate the local population and others sharing Faisal's concerns with the usual formula that yes, a Jewish "home" would be established, but there would be "scrupulous respect for the rights of the present non-Jewish inhabitants" and economic development enabling a large Jewish immigration "with much advantage to the present inhabitants."⁷⁷³ In a few weeks' time, that is, HMG would start blessing the locals with greater prosperity even if they preferred political freedom.

⁷⁷¹ Hansard 1922c, cc296-98, 311. [^{>147}].

⁷⁷² FO 371/5120, p 4; Ingrams 1972, p 107.

⁷⁷³ CAB 24/107/75, pp 285-86; Ingrams 1972, p 108.

82. 2nd Palestine Arab Congress

Spring/15 May 1920

The background for this meeting of the Palestine Arab Congress (PAC): In early March 1920 the first elected Syrian General Congress [^{>69}], in Damascus, had rejected the Sykes-Picot Agreement [^{>12}] and the Balfour Declaration [^{>16}] and established a constitutional monarchy. The spring of 1920 also saw the Nebi Musa riots in Jerusalem [^{>76}], Bols's prohibition of Arab political gatherings and the founding of more anti-Zionist Moslem-Christian Societies. The news that the San Remo conference from 19-26 April 1920 had set up the mandates system, which included the Jewish-home project, was read out in Palestine on 28 April. To top everything off, the appointment as High Commissioner of a Jewish Zionist, Samuel, was an example of disrespect for the wishes of the local population.⁷⁷⁴ I find no evidence of anti-semitism in the locals' wish for a local ruler who was not a declared Zionist. Most utterances on record are like that of a Palestinian speaker at the Yaffa MCA meeting a year earlier on 6 May 1919 [^{>47}]: "We do not at all oppose the Jews. We oppose Zionism. That is not the same thing. Zionism has no roots at all in Moses' law. It is an invention of Herzl's."⁷⁷⁵

Since "the British prevent[ed the] Second Palestinian National Congress from convening"⁷⁷⁶, the participants in this Second Palestine Arab Congress met in secret, probably on 31 May 1920, to found the Palestine Arab Society. To my knowledge **no English-language document** resulted from this meeting, but there were reports in the Arabic press. That the meeting took place at all in such tumultuous circumstances warrants mention. It was probably this meeting which Storrs, as Military Governor of Jerusalem, was instructed to coercively prevent.⁷⁷⁷ It was probably identical to the "Syrian Congress, with strong Palestinian representation", which is "reckoned as the second" PAC by Tibawi.⁷⁷⁸ On that date also, "following the announcement of the Palestine Mandate... and the appointment of Samuel as the first High Commissioner," a perhaps separate group including Hajj Amin al-Husseini, Izzat Darwaza and Aref al-Aref met in Damascus to protest against Palestine's status as a non-self-governing Mandate.⁷⁷⁹ The indigenous parliament and government, with Faisal as King and several southern Syrian (Palestinian) ministers, still held power in northern Syria.

May – August 1920 [*Revolts against British rule all over Iraq cost thousands of Iraqi lives.*]

⁷⁷⁴ Ayyad 1999, p 87; see Samuel 1945, especially pp 156, 176 [^{>429}].

⁷⁷⁵ Smith 1996, pp 70-71; Segev 1999, pp 106-10; Ayyad 1999, pp 84-86; Pappé 2002/2010, pp 202-03.

⁷⁷⁶ Khalidi 1984, p 89; also Zuaytir 1958, p 59.

⁷⁷⁷ Storrs 1937, p 361.

⁷⁷⁸ Tibawi 1977, p 448.

⁷⁷⁹ Kayyali 1978, pp 78-79.

83. Arabs to Military Governors

May 1920

According to historian Bernard Wasserstein, political protest was running high:

In Jaffa Arab nationalist slogans were posted on walls. In Damascus *al-Difa* reported that terrified Zionists were fleeing Palestine. In Nablus the local Moslem-Christian Association lodged a protest with the Military Governor against Zionism and the impending British mandate. Zionist agents reported traffic in arms at the Arab village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem. ... At the Western ('Wailing') Wall in Jerusalem, orthodox Jews were stoned by Arabs.⁷⁸⁰

A "petition from the 'Arabs' of Tiberias protesting against Zionism" was concise:

In view of the decision of the Peace Conference regarding a Jewish National Home in Palestine, we protest that we are the owners of the country which is our National Patrie. This decision cannot be accepted by us and we absolutely refuse it as well as we refuse the partition of Syria. Will you kindly inform our voice to your Government by the name of the Tiberias Arab Population?⁷⁸¹

The petition carried fifty signatures from men of different faiths and trades (merchants, boatmen, lawyers, priests, imams), including the Presidents of the Moslem Committee, the Christian Committee and the Moslem-Christian Committee.

⁷⁸⁰ Wasserstein 1978, p 69.

⁷⁸¹ FO 371/5120, pp 113-14, date late May 1920.

84. Bols to All Sects and FO

7 June 1920

Getting ready to leave Palestine, Louis Bols on 7 June 1920 submitted his thoughts to local religious leaders and to the Foreign Office.⁷⁸² **Meeting in Jerusalem** with “the leaders of all communities”, Bols again read out the short Balfour Declaration and told them that the Supreme Council in San Remo had indeed decided for the Jewish National Home, yet that he himself understood the Balfour Declaration in its softest sense:

Immigrants will be allowed to enter the country only as they are required for the development of the country... Present land owners will not be evicted or spoliated, and profitable concessions will not be granted to individuals or groups of individuals to the detriment of others. The British Government will govern, and in no sense will a minority be allowed to control a majority of the population when the time arrives for any form of Representative Government. (pp 58-59)

While believing that “under these conditions” all would be well, Bols’s message to the FO showed that he comprehended the true anti-Zionist stance of the population [*also >77*]:

On 30th April, 1920, I [Bols] received a telegram stating that the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, P.C. had been offered and accepted the appointment of High Commissioner of Palestine. Colonel Meinertzhagen interviewed the Zionist Leaders requesting them to keep this appointment quiet. ... It was not long before the news was public, and from a comprehensive tour of Palestine... I am able to judge to some degree the effect on the people. Consternation, despondency and exasperation express the feelings of the Moslem and Christian population, the Christians being, if possible, even more bitter than the Moslems. ... [They cannot] accept Mr Herbert Samuel as a British statesman of Jewish religion, they look upon him first and foremost as a Jew and a Zionist, and a long way after as a British Statesman. They are convinced that he will be a partisan Zionist... (p 59)

Also on 7 June 1920, in the House of Commons, Lloyd George announced the change from a military to a civil administration and the appointment of Herbert Samuel as its head, “directly responsible to the Government”.⁷⁸³ According to Wasif Jawhariyyeh, it was the two-faced Ronald Storrs who, in his role as Jerusalem’s Military Governor, was responsible for drawing up the policies of the new Civil Administration.⁷⁸⁴

With Samuel in the Zionist corner was Chief Political Officer Colonel Meinertzhagen [*>58; >61; >65; >74; >116; >204; >429*], who regarded Bols, Bols’s Chief of Staff Colonel Waters-Taylor, Mrs Waters-Taylor and Ronald Storrs – as well as Allenby and General W.N. Congreve in Cairo – as anti-Zionist underminers of British policy who were in cahoots with the “villain” Amin al-Husseini.⁷⁸⁵ [*see >266*]

⁷⁸² FO 371/5114, *all quotations*.

⁷⁸³ Hansard 1920b, c22.

⁷⁸⁴ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 187-191.

⁷⁸⁵ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 56, 66-67, 87, 112.

Returning to **Bols's dispatch**, after describing opposition to Samuel from the Orthodox Jews, the Greek Orthodox Community, the Latins and even some Zionists, Bols believed that

Mr. Herbert Samuel can conquer Moslem and Christian opposition and suspicion if he is able to maintain his policy so ably laid down in his communication to the Press dated March 25th, 1920 [<73], of which I attach a copy. If, on the contrary, he is persuaded to force unduly the pace with Jewish immigration, substitution by Jews of British or Syrian officials in large numbers, or in any way to set up what the people will consider a Jewish Government, he will meet with strenuous opposition. (p 65)

He then noted that since the end of Ottoman rule Palestinian indigenous agriculture was steadily improving and, referring to maps of Bedouin movements and settlements, that

Jewish immigration to the land, if in any large numbers, will necessitate a complete revision of the present system of tenure and the abolishment of old tribal grazing rights and customs. ... All my Governors are unanimous that any large influx into their districts is impossible without military protection. (p 66)

His fear that Samuel would follow the immigration line of Weizmann and the Zionist Organization can be read only between the lines, but he concluded that if immigration is very limited and all things political and economic are done with no bias in favour of Jews, Britain can “live down the Moslem-Christian opposition”. (p 66) In affirming the warning of the King-Crane Commission [>59] that deep and prolonged conflict could only be avoided by a severe toning-down of the Zionist project Bols was not a prophet; he was saying what everybody knew.

Recall that in the previous months Bols had written to his superiors that “90 per cent of the population of Palestine is deeply anti-Zionist”, that due to the pro-Zionist policy Jews would be “driven out of the land unless they are covered by powerful military forces of the mandatory power”, and that “the Zionist Commission in Palestine be abolished”.⁷⁸⁶ [>77] Had HMG not replaced Louis Bols with Herbert Samuel, the Palestinians might have had a chance – another narrow escape for Zionism.

⁷⁸⁶ FO 371/5119, p 106, also 90-106; Jeffries 1939, pp 373-75; Abcarius 1946, p 69; Barbour 1946, pp 96-97; Furlonge 1969, p 77; John & Hadawi 1970a, p 157; Ingrams 1972, p 85; Tannous 1988, pp 90-91.

On 25 June 1920 **in the House of Lords** Foreign Secretary Curzon relapsed into promising independence to its to-be-mandated subjects. Although Mesopotamia was the subject of the sitting, his words critical of British “annexation” of territory in the Near East arguably applied to all the pending Mandates. He began by saying that during the previous three years “the Foreign Office, India Office, War Office, Admiralty, in fact every Department concerned, drew up a series of propositions which were, so to speak, to be the dossier, the instructions upon which our representatives should work at [the peace conferences in] Paris.” Namely:

What did the Government say on the subject of Mesopotamia? There should be no annexation of any of these territories by Great Britain. It is the object of His Majesty’s Government to set up an Arab Government or Governments of the liberated areas, and not to impose upon the populations any Government which is not acceptable to them. Whether there should be a single Arab State or a number of Arab States in these areas is a matter upon which educated native opinion in the areas affected is now being consulted.⁷⁸⁷

If “any of these territories” – those mentioned in the Covenant [>46] – included Palestine, this would rule out any special place for Zionism or a Jewish national home. I do not know to what specific “consultations” he was referring.

Apparently speaking concretely of the Iraq Mandate, Curzon continued:

Under this draft Mandate, Article I provides for the framing of an organic law. An organic law is really a synonym for the future constitution of the country and the phrase employed is as follows.— This organic law shall be framed in consultation with the native authorities, and shall take account of the rights, interests, and wishes of all populations inhabiting a mandated territory.⁷⁸⁸

Comparison of the Iraq and Palestine draft mandate texts indeed shows how Article 22 of the Covenant [>46] could and should (ethically and legally) have been applied, if it should have been applied at all and not simply ignored; in Tibawi’s analysis,

No two documents on similar subjects could be so different. While Iraq’s independence was recognised and assistance to the native population was guaranteed so that eventually they could stand on their own, Palestine was merely to be ‘administered’ by Britain with the sole definite duty of putting into effect the Balfour declaration.⁷⁸⁹

This is a good place to note that the draft text for Mesopotamia remained only a draft, as that territory never became mandated; instead, between summer 1920 and 10 October 1922 a deal was worked out in the form of a treaty between Britain and a *de jure* independent Iraq.

⁷⁸⁷ Hansard 1920c, c874.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, c878.

⁷⁸⁹ Tibawi 1977, p 452.

Four days later, on 29 June, two days before the Civil Administration took over, **a second Lords sitting dealt explicitly with Palestine**, and revealed some detail of what the British were saying about, and indirectly to, the Palestinians.⁷⁹⁰ Pro-Arab Lord Sydenham first doubted that the “the rights of the immense, non-Jewish majority of the population” could be safeguarded “while setting up a ‘National Home’ for the Jewish race”:

[W]e respect, and wish to take into full account, [the Jews’] strong sentiment inherited from the five hundred years during which they were a ruling people. We cannot, however, go back three thousand years, and we must consider the equal rights of the present inhabitants of Palestine. (c1005)

The “present inhabitants” had for several years been denying that any *current* political weight should be given to *past* political constellations (much less of 3,000 years earlier), yet Sydenham, the pro-Palestinian, was giving “the Jewish race” “equal” status with “the present inhabitants of Palestine”, an early statement of the *political parity principle* which would often be floated during the next twenty-seven years (as well as in current attempts to replace the two-state solution with ‘bi-nationalism’) and which was always rejected by the Palestinians.⁷⁹¹ Later in the debate Lord Sheffield chastised Sydenham on this, saying “it is the duty of the Government to hold an absolutely fair balance and not to consider that there should be a balance of equality between one-tenth and nine-tenths.” (cc1035-36)

However that may have been, Sydenham went on to describe the equal or superior power of the Zionist Commission [23] relative to the *British Administration*, for instance with regard to banking and to the appointment and dismissal of civil servants on the basis of their stance on Zionism. (cc1007-08) He also found remarkable the unity of Christians and Moslems against the Jewish national home and put into evidence an appeal from “all Christian Churches in Palestine” that was recently

addressed to ‘the Loyal Members of the British Parliament, to the ardent members of the House of Lords, to the British Liberal-Labour Party, to the Anglo-Saxon Churches, to the Professors and students of British Universities and Colleges, to the noble and just British Nation’. ... [It stated:] Since Mr. Balfour’s announcement to make our country, Palestine, national home for the Zionists, the Zionists began treading upon our National Rights, monopolizing influences, appropriating every thing to themselves and insulting all that is sacred to us... all this thanks to the money pouring on them from outside and the privileges given to them. ... What will be the result if the Zionist influx of immigration, permitted by the British Government, continues? ... Will it not be the destruction of Moslems and Christians together? ... To allow Palestine to be a Jewish national home would be to condemn us to death. (cc1009-10)⁷⁹²

As for Samuel’s appointment as High Commissioner, Sydenham was

⁷⁹⁰ Hansard 1920d, *all further quotations*.

⁷⁹¹ See Hattis 1970, pp 64, 105-06, 137, 182, 196-98, 223-24, 306-07, 313; Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, pp 110-12 & *passim*; also the Theme Index.

⁷⁹² Also Robson 2011, pp 71, 81-84, *passim*.

perfectly certain that Sir Herbert Samuel will do his utmost to be completely impartial, though the forces which will be brought to bear upon him might be too much for a stronger man. But is it reasonable to suppose that the Moslems and Christians of Palestine will ever believe that we can be impartial, and must it not be thought that this appointment was designed to pave the way for a complete Zionist Government of the country? I cannot think that His Majesty's Government had full and accurate information of the conditions in Palestine when this appointment was made. (c1011)

Fellow pro-Palestinian Lord Lamington had three years previous been a supporter of the Jewish national home, even giving a speech at the Zionist celebration at the London Opera House on 2 December 1917 [17]. But first-hand experience in Palestine had changed his mind, and he had concluded that because “we have made this war partly to secure the self-determination of small communities”,

it is... entirely contrary to so-called international law that we should at the present time be making any serious departure in the government of Palestine. Article 354 of the Laws and Usages of War lays down that in occupied enemy territory (which, of course, it is, because we have not made peace with the Turk) it is not permissible to alter the existing form of administration, to upset the constitutional and domestic laws, or to ignore the rights of the inhabitants. [also >60; >99; >144; >147] That is what we are doing now. Therefore, we have violated the very principle with which we entered the war, we have violated the pledges given to the Arabs, and we have violated technically the laws and usages of war. (c1015)⁷⁹³

After supporting Faisal and his 3-month-old Syrian Kingdom and criticising Samuel's appointment, Lamington proposed that the

best solution... is that you should give some confidence to the Arabs by saying that the administration of the country will be carried on in some degree by Arabs, Jews, and Christians as far as possible in proportion to the number of those different creeds in that country, and that the administration will be conducted under the suzerainty of the Emir Faisal. (c1017)

While the possibility of a unified Syria would fade away, the principle of representation in government bodies “proportional to... number” would be promoted throughout the Mandate by the Palestinians and by sympathetic British officials.

In the House of Lords, Government spokesman Curzon's answer to this was, first, that the election of Faisal as king had been “irregular”, and that concerning Britain's taking control over Palestine,

Everybody insisted upon our remaining. ... it was as the result of the practically unanimous request of all parties that we, by no means eagerly or joyously but very reluctantly, accepted a mandate for Palestine which we could not refuse. (cc1025-26)

This last claim of “reluctance” contradicts all the evidence. What after all had been the point of writing the Balfour Declaration if not to go apply it on the ground? Had HMG “reluctantly” sent the Zionist Commission to Palestine? It also contradicts the minutes of the San Remo Conference where some of the other delegations had to try to curb HMG's

⁷⁹³ See also Tibawi 1977, pp 235, 451.

eagerness and joy. [>78] Among a plethora of dishonest statements, this one stands out – made by the most anti-Zionist of the influential politicians. Curzon also did not explain what was “irregular” about Faisal’s election, although it was true that many Syrians were wary of his closeness with colonial power Britain.

But his main argument was the good of economic development:

We found a country which, owing to the long and pestilential blight of Turkish administration, had become depopulated, impoverished, and relatively poor. ... Whatever your views about the potential resources of the country, there cannot be any doubt that Palestine is a country where there is scope for more people, for more scientific cultivation, for the construction of more railways, for better sanitation, for afforestation on a more scientific scale, and for development of all the resources of the country, whether great or small. Where is that development to come from? The Turks were quite incapable of doing it. The Arabs are equally incapable. There is no friend of the Arabs who will claim that they have the resources, wealth, or energy to do it on the scale at which, at any rate, we should like to see it done. It was in these circumstances that an opportunity was afforded to the Jews to undertake this task in their old home. (cc1027-28)

This speech could really have been written by Samuel [e.g. >70; >73], who in two days would take power in Jerusalem. On the criterion, that is, of what the British “should like to see... done”, the Arabs were not up to the mark.

Curzon then, as had Bols [>77], presaged the principle of ‘economic absorptive capacity’ as a limit to Jewish immigration which two years later would become a pillar and bone of contention of Britain’s Zionist policy all throughout the Mandate [>142; >146], saying that “no man or woman shall be admitted whom the country is incapable of supporting”. (c1031) Replying as any Palestinian would have replied, Lord Sheffield accused Curzon of ignorance of the true aims of Zionism, shown openly in their English-language journal *Palestine*, namely that of “giving priority to a small minority of Jews over the mass of people in Palestine”. (c1035)

Bols's impending departure and Samuel's impending arrival seemed to have confirmed the Palestinians' worst suspicions:

In an effort to counter the advantages enjoyed by the Zionists through their accessibility to the British public, the Palestinian Arabs published a paper in English as a supplement in *The Times* under the name of the *Jerusalem Gazette*. Its first number on 22 June 1920 was full of bitter attacks on Zionism and Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner to Palestine.⁷⁹⁴

The *Times* on 22 June 1920 confirmed this, printing a short item "from our Zionist correspondent, Jerusalem", saying that the *Gazette* came into being "following the closing of the *Jerusalem News*, the newspaper published here by Americans,..." apparently to appear also in Palestine itself.

On 23 June, according to Mazin Qumsiyeh,

[Samuel's] appointment sparked immediate protests and boycotts. Many Palestinians responded by mass resignation from government jobs (a notable example was Khalil Sakakini), strikes, protests, petitions and pleas for change. Letters of protest poured in from the Moslem-Christian Society in Jaffa on June 23, 1920 and from women in north Palestine, among others.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁴ FO 371/5120, pp 100-101, 26 June 1920; Kayyali 1978, p 124 note 8.

⁷⁹⁵ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 56.

Ragheb An-Nashashibi, who had been appointed Jerusalem mayor upon Musa Kazem al-Husseini's resignation (or dismissal by the British) from the post in April 1920,⁷⁹⁶ and who would remain mayor until 1934, **met Herbert Samuel** on the latter's arrival a day before his five-year reign as High Commissioner began:

Jerusalem welcomes your arrival, the High Commissioner whom His Majesty the King of Great Britain has delegated. You act on behalf of the greatest king on earth in order to bring happiness to the inhabitants and to pave for them the roads to progress and success. You are to maintain justice by being indiscriminate between the inhabitants of the country. These are the main objectives of the British Government in all countries. We are confident of receiving support of Great Britain – the motherland of liberty and peace.⁷⁹⁷

There are many other examples during these early years of trust in the British and appreciation of their military efforts in World War I [e.g. >99]; but also of disappointment.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁶ Also Tamari & Nassar, pp 112, 119.

⁷⁹⁷ Ayyad 1999, p 87.

⁷⁹⁸ See Huneidi 2001; also Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 112, 125, *passim*.

This 8-page entry covers the first of the seven British Enquiries into the causes of dissatisfaction among the people of Palestine, the others being the Haycraft, Shaw, Hope Simpson, Peel, Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady Commissions [*>122; >220; >233; >336; >438; >442*]. Britain had not participated, as originally intended, in the King-Crane Enquiry of exactly a year earlier [*>59*].

British occupation of Palestine was military, and thus by definition violent, and replies to it were at times likewise non-verbal and violent, for instance during the Nebi Musa/Easter/Passover weekend of 4-7 April 1920 [*>76*]. Already on 12 April a '**Court of Inquiry**' was appointed to

record the evidence as to the circumstances which gave rise to the disturbances which took place at and near Jerusalem on the occasion of the Nebi Musa Pilgrimage on 4th April and following days [and] the extent and causes of racial feelings that at present exist in Palestine. (very beginning of Report)

Its Report appeared on 1 July 1920, the day the Civil Administration of High Commission Herbert Samuel took over power from the Military Administration of Chief Administrator Louis Bols.⁷⁹⁹ It contained three parts dealing with this book's topic: Section A ('Causes of Racial Feeling') "The Arab Case" (§1-34); Section C ('Extent of Racial Feeling in Palestine') (§68); and Section D ('Conclusions') (§69). Section A, "The Jewish Case" (§35-45), is less relevant, and Section B (§46-67), which dealt with the *specific* "circumstances which gave rise to the disturbances... at and near Jerusalem", is mostly off-topic. Although its task was investigative rather than judicial, the Report ended up, both on and between the lines, judging the many accusations against the Administration.

Palestine was until 1 July 1920 under military rule by the OETA South, so General Allenby, in his role as Special High Commissioner in Egypt, named the Court's members: as President Major General Philip C. Palin, plus Brigadier General G.H. Wildblood and Lieutenant Colonel C. Vaughan Edwards, as well as A.L. McBarnet as Legal Adviser. Palin had fought alongside Allenby in the Near East and at the time of his appointment was commanding the 3rd (Lahore) Division, stationed in Palestine.

The violence of 4-7 April had indeed been mainly between Arabs and Jews, and the British thus framed the problem in race-religion terms. In this light the riots indeed cried out for explanation, seeing as in all of the Arab world, if we ignore the Crusades, there had for centuries been virtually no ethno-religious conflict between Moslems, Christians and Jews but rather "complete amity", and "No serious attack on the Jewish population is recorded since the time of Ibrahim Pasha in 1840." (§2)

⁷⁹⁹ Palin 1920, all citations, given as paragraph numbers taken from the online source which in turn is taken from FO 371/5121 verbatim; see also the different and earlier 'Interim Report' of the Palin Court of Enquiry of the last week of April 1920 (FO 371/5119, pp 181-93) and some testimony by Churchill before Parliament the last week of April (FO 371/5118, pp 169-71).

Before looking at the meat of the Court's report, two salient meta-facts about it are that its general tenor was anti-Zionist and that it was suppressed until 1968. Concerning the latter point, its suppression: According to Tibawi, at the time of its submission "Allenby suggested to the War Office and the Foreign Office that the findings of the court of enquiry should be published. It was, however, at Samuel's express request that publication was withheld."⁸⁰⁰ This is documented in a note by Foreign Secretary Curzon signed by J.A.C. Tilley, on 18 August 1920:

In light of the change in the Administration which has taken place [Samuel's arrival on 1 July] and of His Majesty's High Commissioner's expressed desire that the report should not be published [the Foreign Office] does not contemplate taking any further action.⁸⁰¹

From the British and Zionist points of view it was well worth suppressing because, as Churchill would say to the House of Commons on 14 June 1921, "The cause of the unrest in Palestine, and the only cause, arises from the Zionist movement, and from our promises and pledges in regard to it."⁸⁰² [>106] That is, in terms of its causes it was not a race riot. One of the Palin Court's early salvos declared that "The Balfour Declaration ... is undoubtedly the starting point of the whole trouble." (§7)

Samuel, incidentally, would later actually agree with the Court's overall assessment, as shown by his letter to Churchill dated 9 March 1922, during the time the two were drafting their 1922 White Paper [>142] which, it was hoped in vain, would resolve the contradiction between independence and colonisation.⁸⁰³ Nevertheless not only Samuel but Zionism-critical officials like Allenby, Clayton and Curzon officially approved the suppression, so it is likely that the decision was made at Cabinet level.⁸⁰⁴ Previous to its official revelation to the public in 1968, the Shaw Commission [>220] had looked for it and found it, in late 1929⁸⁰⁵, but kept it suppressed⁸⁰⁶, as in 1937 did the Peel Commission [>336], which however did very briefly thus summarise it in its own Report:

It appeared on investigation that the causes of the trouble had been (1) the Arabs' disappointment at the non-fulfilment of the promises of independence which they believed to have been given them in the War; (2) the Arabs' belief that the Balfour Declaration implied a denial of the right of self-determination, and their fear that the establishment of the National Home would lead to their economic and political subjection to the Jews; (3) the aggravation of those sentiments on the one hand by propaganda from outside Palestine associated with the Proclamation of the Emir Feisal as King of a re-united Syria and with the growth of Pan-Arab and Pan-Moslem ideas and on the other hand by the activities of the Zionist Commission, supported by the resources and influence of Jews in the world at large.

⁸⁰⁰ Tibawi 1977, p 421; also Zuaytir 1958, p 53.

⁸⁰¹ FO 371/5121, p 82; also Lesch 1979, p 203, citing telegram of 15 July 1920; Regan 2017, p 79, citing Kattan 2009, p 85.

⁸⁰² Hansard 1921, c283.

⁸⁰³ CO 733/19, pp 576-84, *passim*.

⁸⁰⁴ Huneidi 2001, p 41.

⁸⁰⁵ CO 733/178/3, p 13, dated 12 December 1929, Lloyd to Williams; Kayyali 1978, p 78.

⁸⁰⁶ Shaw 1930, p 12.

It was pointed out that Jewish immigration before the War had not unduly alarmed the Arabs and that there were some among them who recognized the economic value to the country of a reasonable number of Jewish residents. But, as an influential Arab remarked at the time, ‘Who that wants salt empties the whole cellar into his plate?’⁸⁰⁷

Note in passing that despite couching its summary in terms of what the Arabs merely “believed” and “feared”, rather than what they rationally knew to be fact, this passage is indicative of the supreme clarity and depth of the unsurpassed Peel Commission Report. [336] Note also that the Palin Report was the product of British soldiers long stationed in Palestine and Egypt: Allenby, Palin, Wildblood and Edwards; a team from London, where Zionists were dominant, would likely have written a report not needing suppression.

The suppression was effective in the long term, for although released to the public in 1968, it is rarely cited, and is for instance not mentioned, despite its powerful arguments for “the Arab case”, in Rashid Khalidi’s list of the most important British reports and White Papers.⁸⁰⁸ It is similarly overlooked in Penny Sinanoglou’s list of British “major commissions” during the Mandate.⁸⁰⁹ I have no concrete evidence that the Palestinians ever had access to the Report; but had it not been suppressed, it would have greatly helped their case. It was such a hot potato that not even the 400-page Royal (‘Peel’) Commission Report mentioned it by name, although it named and quoted from the Haycraft [122], Shaw [220], and Hope Simpson [233] reports.⁸¹⁰ Peel Commission Secretary Martin did secure one single copy to take with him to Palestine to be shown to members, but not to staff, but on 21 June 1937 “deferred to the wishes of the Army Council in the matter and in their Report have avoided direct reference to the Report of the Court of Enquiry”. The War Office, which possessed the document, was afraid that Parliament would feel legally allowed to publish whatever the Peel Commission itself mentioned.⁸¹¹

Now to **the content of the Report**: according to Palin and his two fellow investigators, blame for the violence rested on Britain for rendering essential assistance to the plan of establishing a foreign ethno-religious state:

There can be little doubt that the declared policy of the Allies in favour of the self-determination of small nations encouraged the Palestinians to think that, whether they were to be permitted to unite themselves to the great Arab State forming on their borders or not, they at least, under the mandate of one of the Great Powers, would be permitted to work out their own salvation and be masters in their own house. They [the Palestinians] made no effort to reconcile the apparent contradiction between this solemnly declared policy of the Allies and the Balfour Declaration: if the Balfour Declaration did not agree with the sacred promise of self-determination, so much the worse for the Balfour Declaration. (§6)

⁸⁰⁷ Peel 1937, III §17; Antonius 1938, p 313; Lesch 2004.

⁸⁰⁸ Khalidi 2020, p 41.

⁸⁰⁹ Sinanoglou 2019, p 28.

⁸¹⁰ Peel 1937, III §67.

⁸¹¹ CO 733/346/21, pp 4-19, ‘The Disturbances of 1920’.

As the Colonial Office in 1937 put it in its summary of the Report, the Arabs believed “the Balfour Declaration implied a denial of the right of self-determination”.⁸¹² Whether the “contradiction” between self-determination and the Balfour Declaration was real or merely “apparent”, the phrase “so much the worse for the Balfour Declaration” deserves a place as a motto for the Palestinian resistance during the entire Mandate.

Among its eleven Conclusions the Court listed British responsibility for:

- 1) Disappointment at the non-fulfilment of promises made to them by British propaganda.
- 2) Inability to reconcile the Allies’ declared policy of self-determination with the Balfour Declaration, giving rise to a sense of betrayal and intense anxiety for their future.
- 3) Misapprehension of the true meaning of the Balfour Declaration and forgetfulness of the guarantees determined therein, due to the loose rhetoric of politicians and the exaggerated statements and writings of interested persons, chiefly Zionists. (§69)

Its Conclusions blamed Zionism as much as Britain, though, saying there had been

Zionist indiscretion and aggression since the Balfour Declaration aggravating [Arab] fears and [t]hat the Zionist Commission [p.23] and the official Zionists by their impatience, indiscretion and attempts to force the hands of the Administration, are largely responsible for the present crisis. (§69)

The Zionists’

impatience to achieve their ultimate goal [is] largely responsible for this unhappy state of feeling. ... They are ready to use their powerful foreign and home influence to force the hand of this or any future Administration. If not carefully checked they may easily precipitate a catastrophe, the end of which it is difficult to forecast. (§68)

Thus the Court conceded that the British did have the power to “check” the Zionists; the *ultimate* responsibility was Britain’s.

One Conclusion does show the Court somewhat unclearly distinguishing between British and (non-British) Zionist blame: Arab willingness to riot was partly due to their “Fear of Jewish competition and domination, justified by experience and the apparent control exercised by the Zionists over the Administration.” This mixture of attribution of responsibility, though, is excusable in light of the real closeness between Zionist wishes and British policy. Indeed, another Conclusion expressed this by singling out officer-on-the-spot Richard Meinertzhagen:

[T]he Administration was considerably hampered in its policy by the direct interference of the Home Authorities, and particularly by the fact that the late [i.e. former] Chief Political Officer, Colonel Meinertzhagen, acted as a direct channel of communication with the Foreign Office independent of the High Commissioner [Allenby in Cairo] and submitted to the Foreign Office advice, not only independent of the High Commissioner, but at times contrary to the latter’s considered opinion. (§69)

No responsibility for the explosion of underlying anti-Zionist, anti-British indigenous political feeling, on the other hand, could be laid at the feet of the Palestinian *leaders*:

⁸¹² CO 733/346/21, p 21.

It has been said by the Zionists that the popular excitement is purely artificial and largely the result of propaganda by the effendi class, which fears to lose its position owing to Jewish competition. It is sufficient to quote the evidence of Major Waggett with which the Court finds itself in full accord, when he says: 'It is very important to realise that the opposition is by no means superficial or manufactured, and I consider this a very dangerous view to take of the situation'. (§68)

Summing up, and presaging the hoary Mandate *leitmotif* that the immovability of the Balfour Declaration left no option but to attempt to balance the rights of the two sides:

We are faced with a native population thoroughly exasperated by a sense of injustice and disappointed hopes, panic stricken as to their future and as to [up to?] ninety per cent of their numbers in consequence bitterly hostile to the British Administration. ... [W]hile the Balfour Declaration is a *chose jugée* which will most inevitably be executed, the Administration will nevertheless hold the scales as between all parties with rigid equality. (§68; also §44)

The “disappointed hopes” and unfulfilled “promises” cited above – of “an independent Arab State which would include Palestine” – refer of course to British statements and propaganda during and just after the war that were known to everybody. (§5) [>10; >14; >18; >21; >22; >25; >28]

The bulk of Section A (§1-34), under the title ‘Causes of Racial Feeling’, concerns “The Arab Case”, that is, “the case made by the Arab population against the Government”. (§35) In rhetoric and tone and taken together with the Court’s conclusions these thirty-four paragraphs show that the three investigators by and large agreed with the Arab case. Some examples: Great respect was shown for Arab depictions of the history of Palestine (§1-5); when one leading Zionist wrote of “a state of Palestine containing a number of Arab inhabitants” the Court commented that “One might almost imagine he was referring to a handful of gipsy nomads such as infest the waste lands of Alexandria rather than to the great majority of the population of a country” (§17); the Arabs had been “exasperated beyond endurance by the aggressive attitude of the Zionists” (§33); and – as expressed in the Conclusions – the Zionist program for a state must be “checked” if “catastrophe” is to be averted (§68)⁸¹³. The indigenous inhabitants are throughout referred to as “the people” or “the native population”, and no reader can doubt, moreover, the investigators’ agreement with the Wilsonian principles of self-determination which they brought with them into the investigation.

Treatment of “The Jewish Case against the Administration” (§35-45) (conflated in the text with “the Zionist case”) is by contrast laced with scepticism or disdain. Zionists are recorded as absurdly characterising the events of 4-7 April as a “pogrom” and the Arab protesters as “lower lawless elements” (§35); the Zionists pushed policies “favouring their pretensions” and flouted the rule that the occupier must retain the legal “Status Quo” (§36) [also just below and >19; >60; >115]; Zionist “accusations... of persistent bias” in the Administration “completely fail” and amount to a mere unsupported “contention” (§37); witness

⁸¹³ See also King & Crane 1919a, pp 46, 49.

Meinertzhagen, officially appearing for the British but testifying for the Zionists (in contrast to witness Norman Bentwich), “is wholly unable to appreciate the justice of the native case” and could not accept as fact Zionist intentions to become “the minority ruling the majority” and to set up a “State” – with moderation and denial coming from Zionists only when “on their best behaviour” (§38). As for Zionist intentions over against the Palestine “Administration”,

they adopted the attitude of ‘We want the Jewish State and we won’t wait’, and they did not hesitate to avail themselves of every means open to them in this country and abroad to force the hand of [the] Administration... (§29)

In the Court’s opinion the Balfour Declaration was “the starting point of the whole trouble” because it was known and/or felt on all sides that that Declaration’s “national home” actually meant “commonwealth” or “state”:

President Wilson brushed away all doubts as to what was intended... when, in March 1919, he said to the Jewish leaders in America, ‘I am moreover persuaded that the allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our own Government and people are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth.’ The late President [Theodore] Roosevelt declared that one of the Allies’ peace conditions should be that ‘Palestine must be made a Jewish State.’ Mr. Winston Churchill has spoken of a ‘Jewish State’ and Mr. Bonar Law [see >16] has talked in Parliament of ‘restoring Palestine to the Jews’. (§7)⁸¹⁴ ... There was no question of moderate colonisation or a National Home, but a declaration of Palestine as a Jewish State, ‘as Jewish as England is English’. Mr. Israel Zangwill added his literary gifts to fan the flame. ... Mr. Eperlin wrote a pamphlet entitled ‘An open book by one Zionist to the Arabs’ telling the Arabs they must leave Palestine and emigrate to the Hedjaz. (§17)⁸¹⁵ ... Dr. Eder, the political officer attached to the mission himself declares that what is contemplated eventually is ‘a Jewish National State under Great Britain’. (§18; also §16, 29) [see also >15; >38; >131; >230]

Realisation that “home” was a euphemism is what the Court meant by “full comprehension of the Balfour Declaration”. (§16) What was meant was a Jewish state. (§8) One of the main British investigators of the situation in Palestine, John Hope Simpson, would ten years later also attest that a Jewish state and its corollary, dispossession of the Arabs, was the visible goal of the settlers.⁸¹⁶

Against this Zionist vision the Court noted that it contradicted “the declared policy of the Allies in favour of the self-determination of small nations”. (§6) Its own agreement with this “declared policy” is perhaps implicit in its tacit loyalty to self-determined Britain, which was one of the said Allies; who at that time, indeed, could have openly disagreed with self-determination? Of course the idea was in the air that reconciliation of the Balfour Declaration with self-determination could be achieved by defining the dispersed Jews as the “small nation” which, in this case in Palestine, deserved self-rule. And one witness evidently argued this, namely Herbert Samuel’s nephew Edwin, but Palin, Wildblood and Edwards regarded “Colonel Samuel’s theory that the ‘majority of the potential

⁸¹⁴ Also CAB 24/282/4, p 36.

⁸¹⁵ See also Ingrams 1972, p 59.

⁸¹⁶ CAB 24/215/1, §7, 14 [>230].

population of Palestine is outside the country” as one of Zionism’s “refinements of argument”. (§6) Yet in London about two weeks later, on 12 July, Balfour himself would argue precisely for this inclusion of all Jews, wherever they lived, in Palestine’s polity, thus broadening the Palestine ‘self’ to include another 14,000,000 people.⁸¹⁷_[see >90]

While not, like the King–Crane Commission [^{>59}], declaring that Jewish political claims in Palestine that are based on ancient history “can hardly be seriously considered”,⁸¹⁸ it did write:

The Jewish title based on the tenacious historical memory of the race and a profound religious sentiment which appeals so strongly to those European and American peoples who have absorbed the Old Testament narrative and prophesies with their earliest essays in their native tongue, means less than nothing to a people who see themselves menaced with deprivation by a race they have hitherto held in dislike and contempt. So far as the claim is historic, they can only see in the Jews a people who, after an independent history of less than three hundred years, were twice expelled from their territory by Great Empires as a standing menace to Imperial peace and order. (§6)

The Court was thus able to put itself in the shoes of the Palestinians.

The Report gave a piece of analysis that raises several questions. Of the Palestine population, “ninety per cent of its numbers [are] definitely hostile to the British Administration” and:

If this intensity of feeling proceeded merely from wounded pride of race and disappointment in political aspirations, it would be easier to criticise and rebuke: but it must be borne in mind that at the bottom of all is a deepseated fear of the Jew, both as a possible ruler and as an economic competitor. Rightly or wrongly they fear the Jew as a ruler, regarding his race as one of the most intolerant known to history. (§8, 9)

However, the rest of the Report showed that the “hostility” was mainly against British pro-Zionism as well as the specific British “Administration”. Second, why should “political aspirations” be particularly susceptible to “rebuke”? Third, Arab insistence on independence, which the Palin Report so sympathetically characterised, contradicts the implication that rule by others than “the Jew” might be more acceptable; equally “feared” would logically be rule by the British or by Christian Crusaders, Hindus or Greeks.

The Court gave some weight to the economic, as opposed to the political, consequences of British policy, writing for instance that “it is as an economic competitor that the Jew really inspires the profoundest alarm in the minds of the native.” (§11) It also claimed outright that “the immigration of the Jews will be wholly for the benefit of the country” (§13), without noting that such economic benefit was of subordinate importance for the Palestinians. [^{>73}; ^{>74}; ^{>81}; ^{>85} etc.]

Still within the economic, as opposed to the political, discourse, the Report then agreed with the Arab point that, given the limited “carrying capacity” of the land, “the natives

⁸¹⁷ Kattan 2009, p 250.

⁸¹⁸ King & Crane 1919a, p 48.

have a right to demand that the claims of the natural increase of their population should be first considered.” (§14) [*also >122; >220; >233*] In this connection the Court reviewed the “wide diversity” of estimates of the quantity of land still available for settlement and was unable to “arrive at any definite conclusion on this point”; but the important normative premise was that all decisions on the quantity of Jewish immigration should be made “after allowing for the natural expansion of the population” (§15) – i.e., births minus deaths rather than immigration. Whatever the carrying capacity turned out to be, that is, at any level of agricultural technology (product per hectare), the local Arab community should have first dibs on land and be the primary beneficiaries of economic development.

The Court trio gave ‘London’ sufficient reason to suppress its Report alone through its description of the activities of the Zionist Commission – the organ of the Zionist *Organization*, which the Mandate text in 1922 would task with preparing the ground for the Jewish national home in Palestine⁸¹⁹ [*>146*]:

It appears to have been Mr. Herbert Samuel who first enlightened the Chief Administrator [Bols] as to the extent to which the Zionist Commission had assumed the role of a full blown Administration. For full details reference must be made to the despatch of Sir Louis Bols filed in the exhibits [*probably >77*]: it will be sufficient here to point out certain special features of the organisation. It amounts to this that every department of the official administration is duplicated in the Zionist Commission. The organisation consists of no less than a hundred individuals and it is clear from an examination of the details given that a complete administrative machine is in active operation. (§25)

Its freedom struck the Palin Court as “curious”:

The Court has not had the opportunity of hearing any evidence as to the negotiations of this [Zionist] Commission with His Majesty’s Government, but it is curious to note that the Commission seem to be in a position to define their own mission, nor does it seem to have occurred to the Government to establish any similar body entrusted with the duty of advising as to native interests. The whole of the arrangements appear to have been made in England by the Zionist organisation there. (§19)

What the Court knew, though, was that on orders from William R. Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the Zionist Commission had in 1918 been given the freedom and wherewithal to fulfil the task laid out by Balfour and Weizmann, including opening Jewish banks and a Jewish university, strengthening Jewish institutions in Palestine, surveying land suitable for Jewish settlement, helping Jewish refugees and “establishing friendly relations with the Arabs and other non-Jewish communities”. (§19) The Palin Court’s main offence in the eyes of HMG was perhaps not that it had recorded the Zionist Commission’s support for the Zionist “Extremists” or their “considerable extension of their activities” (§20), but rather the fact that the British had *delegated* the building of the national home away from the (British) Government of Palestine, thus relinquishing full control.

The Court described in detail many such “extensions”, “incidents” and “interferences” which had aroused the ire of both the Palestinians and Chief Administrators Arthur

⁸¹⁹ Mandate Text 1922, Art. 4.

Money and Louis Bols. (§21-28) One was the joint Zionist-British “veto on the Agricultural Loans” scheme which had long helped Palestinian peasants (§24) – such schemes having been approved by Chief Administrator Money but vetoed after consultation with Weizmann – a veto which can count as well as a non-verbal, non-documentary message and which hit the locals at the source of their livelihoods.⁸²⁰ Another such message, perhaps deserving a separate entry given the importance to the Palestinians of Faisal’s reign in Syria, was Britain’s refusal (despite the dissenting views of Lords Allenby and Milner) to recognise Faisal as King of Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine/Transjordan. (§33, 34, 43)

Mainly with these examples the Court committed its other offence deserving of suppression, namely pointing out the Mandatory’s violation of the “Status Quo” provisions of “the Manual of Military Law, Chapter 14, Articles 353 et seq”. (§36, 20, 24)⁸²¹ Its legal judgment, in support of the Arab case, was that Britain as occupying power had no right to change existing law, quoting the *Manual’s* §354:

It is no longer considered permissible for him [the occupier] to work his will unhindered, altering the existing form of Government, upsetting the constitution and domestic laws and ignoring the rights of the inhabitants. (§36) [*also e.g.* >60; >99; >147]

Yet it did so in introducing Hebrew, revising numerous land laws and the court system, etc. John Quigley goes into this issue in detail, adding that Britain had wanted to get around the problem by setting up the ‘Civil’ to replace the ‘Military’ Administration, but “Britain remained a belligerent occupant regardless of what it might call itself” and was thus obliged not to change the laws of the still-sovereign, i.e. the Ottomans.⁸²²

Citing evidence submitted by Bols, the Court concluded:

It is difficult, however, to resist the conclusion of the Chief Administrator [Bols] that this state of affairs cannot continue without grave danger to the public peace and to the prejudice of the Administration. The situation is, in truth, intolerable. (§26/p 31)

Because the Palin Court was not listened to by British higher-ups the “intolerable situation” would continue for 28 more years.

⁸²⁰ Also FO 371/4225, pp 373-89; Jeffries 1939, pp 325-26; Kayyali 1978, p 73; McTague 1978, p 65, citing FO 371/73497/102596 & /131815; Friedman 1987, pp 119-21.

⁸²¹ See War Office 1914, Ch. XIV.VIII.ii & iii, §353-81 (= pp 288-92); also Hague Regulations [on war] 1907, Articles 42, 43, 49, 55.

⁸²² Quigley 2022, pp 52-56.

In reply to the government's announcement of meetings between the public and fresh High Commissioner Samuel, set for 7 July at Jerusalem and 8 July 1920 at Haifa, the Palestinians called for boycotting the meetings.⁸²³ The meetings did however take place, and Samuel recorded his account of them **in a dispatch to Foreign Secretary Curzon** dated 12 July.⁸²⁴ After arriving on the ship H.H.S. 'Centaur' on 30 June, he reported, he had arranged to speak before "assemblies of notables"; each was attended by around 250 people, indicating less than full adherence to the boycott. He proudly yet modestly wrote:

The reports which have so far been received are unanimous that the pronouncements at these assemblies have had an excellent effect. The Jewish population is very satisfied; while the Moslems, who had expected the declaration of a much more drastic policy, are relieved and reassured.

One of his first "pronouncements" was a message from King George V saying that the "Allied Powers... have entrusted to my country a mandate to watch over the interests of Palestine and to ensure to your country that peaceful and prosperous development which has so long been denied to you." This message, and countless others throughout the Mandate, belied the fact that it was *Britain* which had "entrusted to" Britain the country of Palestine.⁸²⁵ Further, it was assumed that Palestine needed "watching over". Even if it did, so the newspaper *al-Karmil's* advice to Samuel, then please, not by means of a Jewish national home; further, so the newspaper, his speeches did not make sense:

We do not understand how the making of a national home for strangers in our country can be without prejudice to our religious and civil rights... We strongly protest against separating Palestine from its mother, Syria, and making it a national home for Jews and we appeal to the British Government and the liberal British Nation for Justice.⁸²⁶

For Samuel had revealed in his words to the public that yes, the "Allied and Associated Powers have decided that measures shall be adopted to secure the gradual establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people", but "These measures will not in any way affect the civil or religious rights or diminish the prosperity of the general population of Palestine." Again, no mention was made of the "general population's" *political* rights; the workhorse phrase "civil and religious rights" was doing its duty. He also tried to evoke feelings of gratitude by "recalling with pride" that Britain freed the Palestinians from the Turks, neglecting mention of the role of Emir Faisal and his war-time allies, and he promised an administration of "absolute impartiality".

⁸²³ Ayyad 1999, p 87.

⁸²⁴ FO 371/5121, pp 24-26, *all quotations*.

⁸²⁵ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 392-97; Quigley 2022, p 54.

⁸²⁶ Kayyali 1978, p 87.

Samuel then noted that as a Mandatory “Great Britain asks for no privileges for itself. No tribute is drawn to swell her own revenues. The taxes paid by the people are spent for the benefit of the people.” This turned out to be a correct statement in that as Mandatory, Britain would not only never derive revenue from Palestine, but in terms of money, lives, military resources, and international political capital would pile up huge costs to itself; the Mandate was an act of British altruism – for Zionism. Next he promised “equal justice for every person in the land, regardless of his station, his race, or his creed”, followed by a description of his planned Advisory Council: the exclusively British members were to be “official” while the ten Palestinian members were to be “unofficial” and would only “advise”, not decide.

Then came the promise of economic prosperity by means of a host of improvements in the areas of land use, banks, railways, public works (communications, electricity, swamp-drainage, etc.), Public Health, Education, historic Jerusalem buildings, etc. The punch line:

The development of the country will not only promote the well-being of its present population, but will furnish a livelihood to a large additional number. Indeed, it cannot be carried out without the introduction of additional man-power. The ports and frontiers will shortly be opened to a limited immigration...

Britain had a (vague) development plan, and was looking for workers. He did not say why the “large additional number” of people required should be European immigrants, moreover ones of a specific ethnicity and political persuasion, rather than members of the growing indigenous population or perhaps Arab immigrants from other parts of the Near East, or Palestinian returnees from, say, Latin America. Finally, that the immigration would be “limited” was never the issue for the Palestinians, as declaimed by them *ad nauseum* over the next decades; they opposed any and all such Zionist immigration.

Circa 7 July 1920 [*Under the new Civil Administration Saturday was declared Palestine’s day of rest, rather than Friday (Moslems) or Sunday (Christians).*]⁸²⁷

July 1920 *Jerusalem Mayor Ragheb Nashashibi welcomes High Commissioner Herbert Samuel to the city.*

24-27 July 1920 *Faisal forced by the French to leave Syria.*⁸²⁸

Summer 1920 *‘Matters came to a head when the Sursok family, Lebanese absentee landlords, sold 50,000 acres of land [ca. 20,000 ha] in Palestine to the Zionist Commission, and some 8,000 Arab tenants were evicted.*⁸²⁹

1920 *‘What with the decisions of the San Remo conference, the occupation of the whole of Syria by the French, the consolidation of British control in Iraq on a basis which denied even*

⁸²⁷ Quigley 2022, p 55.

⁸²⁸ Wikipedia, > Faisal I of Iraq.

⁸²⁹ Ingrams 1972, pp 109-10.

*the outward forms of self-government, and the emergence of a policy of intensive Zionist development in Palestine, the year 1920 has an evil name in Arab annals: it is referred to as the Year of Catastrophe (“Am al-Nakba”).*⁸³⁰

⁸³⁰ Antonius 1938, p 312.

90. Balfour to Zionist Federation

12 July 1920

On 12 July 1920, back in England, **Balfour spoke to the English Zionist Federation**, led by Walter Rothschild, at Royal Albert Hall, words probably overheard by many Palestinians:

The critics of this [Zionist] movement shelter themselves behind the phrase – but it is more than a phrase – behind the principle of self-determination, and say that, if you apply that principle logically and honestly, it is to the majority of the existing population of Palestine that the future destinies of Palestine should be committed. My lords, ladies and gentlemen, there is a technical ingenuity in that plea, and on technical grounds I neither can nor desire to provide the answer; but, looking back upon the history of the world, I say that the case of Jewry in all countries is absolutely exceptional, falls outside all the ordinary rules and maxims, cannot be contained in a formula or explained in a sentence. The deep, underlying principle of self-determination really points to a Zionist policy, however little in its strict technical interpretation it may seem to favour it.⁸³¹

Balfour's phrase "absolutely exceptional" shows that he knew that the principle of democracy and the derivative principle of self-determination – the "existing population's" democratic decision to want to rule itself – had become, over centuries of thought and discussion, universal ethical standards. Yet he was demoting them to mere technicalities. It was Balfour's "deep and underlying" concept of "self-determination" – which included "Jewry in all countries", and was mystical rather than logical – which in the field of political science was "ingenious". [also >88] In any case, the real and historically unbroken connection of the Arab people was for him nothing compared to the *racial* claims to that territory supported by Britain.

Other parts of Balfour's often-quoted speech are by comparison anticlimactic. As part of the broader problem of Zionism's injection into the Arab world he perceived

the inevitable difficulty of dealing with the Arab question as it presents itself within the limits of Palestine. It will require tact, it will require judgment, it will require above all sympathetic good will on the part both of Jew and Arab. So far as the Arabs are concerned – a great, an interesting and an attractive race – I hope they will remember that it is we who have established the independent Arab sovereignty of the Hedjaz. I hope they will remember that it is we who desire in Mesopotamia to prepare the way for the future of a self-governing, autonomous Arab State. And I hope that, remembering all that, they will not grudge that small notch – for it is no more geographically, whatever it may be historically – that small notch in what are now Arab territories being given to the people who for all these hundreds of years have been separated from it.⁸³²

There was an "Arab question" – but what was that? The Arabs are "required" to produce "good will" towards the Zionist immigrants – why? And why shift responsibility in the di-

⁸³¹ Quoted by Kattan 2009, p 250, citing Cohen, Israel, 1928, *Speeches on Zionism by the Right Hon. The Earl of Balfour* (London: Arrowsmith), pp 25-26.

⁸³² Peel 1937, II §27.

rection of “Jew and Arab”, away from himself and Britain? Self-determination of the Hejaz was evidently not simply a pre-existing natural right but had to be actively “established”, or bestowed, from the outside, by Britain. Likewise, the British were needed to “prepare the way” for the people of the Tigris and Euphrates to become “self-governing”. Furthermore, if Palestine was a “small notch” on the British Empire’s map it shouldn’t be such a big deal for the Arabs living there to give it up and move on. Absent from Balfour’s mind were individual Palestinians, individual Palestinian families, Palestinian villages and towns, whom he wanted to “separate” from “Arab territories” and for whom Palestine was no more a “notch” than Scotland was for Balfour. At least he said the quiet part out loud: that Britain would “give” Palestine away.

July-October 1920 *‘Rebellion against British control in Iraq between July and October 1920 cost 4,000 Arab lives and 2,200 British casualties, and the British taxpayer £40,000,000.’*⁸³³

⁸³³ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 160.

At this time a **non-verbal signal** was also being sent from the Sykes-Picot powers, namely the British-tolerated French ousting of Faisal from Syria, completed during the last week of July 1920 by a military invasion led by General Henri Gouraud. This said a final No to any wishes of either independence or Syrian unity including Palestine.⁸³⁴ Faisal was allowed to go into exile on 28 July, first to Italy and then to England as the guest of Earl Winterton MP, before the British made him King of Iraq on 23 August 1921. The strivings of the Arabs of *ash-Sham* since well before and during World War I [>2; >4; >9; >25], and more recently by the Palestine Arab and General Syrian Congress [>39; >43; >52; >59; >60; >69], were thus crushed. In return for a free hand in establishing a Jewish 'home' in Palestine, and notwithstanding the pro-Faisal efforts of British officials such as Allenby and Curzon, Britain gave France a free hand in northern Syria.⁸³⁵ George Antonius in his 1938 book, by the way, sketched and evaluated the French mandate from this month in 1920 until the Franco-Syrian Treaty of 21 September 1936.⁸³⁶

⁸³⁴ Kuhn 2011, pp 51-54; Parsons 2016, pp 49-53.

⁸³⁵ See for instance Tibawi 1977, pp 387-88.

⁸³⁶ Antonius 1938, pp 376-86.

92. Treaty of Sèvres, Article 95

10 August 1920

The ‘Treaty of Sèvres’ is the abortive draft of the ‘Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Turkey signed at Sèvres August 10, 1920’ which was agreed upon by the Western powers.⁸³⁷ The “Powers” were the “Principal Allied Powers” Britain, France, Italy and Japan, plus nine other countries. It was also signed by Turkey, but not ratified: it relinquished Turkish sovereignty over too much traditionally Turkish and Ottoman territory, and the war begun by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk rendered it without effect: the treaty defining the “Peace” with the Turkey actually controlling the country⁸³⁸ was thus realised only three years later with the Treaty of Lausanne, which recognised the modern Republic of Turkey and was signed by all parties on 24 July 1923. Like the Treaty of Lausanne which replaced it, the Treaty of Sèvres also included as its first 26 Articles the Covenant of the League of Nations creating the Mandate system. [>46]

It is of interest here only for its Articles 94 and 95 which expressed the difference between the proposed Mandates without, and the one with, the provisions of the Balfour Declaration. Its **Article 94** held:

The High Contracting Parties agree that Syria and Mesopotamia shall, in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 22. Part I (Covenant of the League of Nations), be provisionally recognised as independent States subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. [also >46; >78]

Syria, which in the eyes of the High Contracting Parties (formerly “Allied and Associated Powers”) now included only today’s Syria and Lebanon, but not Palestine and Transjordan, was thus, on paper, offered a straight road to independence. By contrast, **Article 95** blocked that road for Palestine (still, until March 1921, including Transjordan) by depositing across it the Balfour Declaration:

The High Contracting Parties agree to entrust, by application of the provisions of Article 22, the administration of Palestine, within such boundaries as may be determined by the Principal Allied Powers, to a Mandatory to be selected by the said Powers. The Mandatory will be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the British Government, and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people... [>16]

Conveniently overlooked was Part (sentence) II of the “fourth paragraph of Article 22” stating, “The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.” They were not even a minor consideration, with “the British Government” and unnamed France straightforwardly taking over Greater Syria. Concerning

⁸³⁷ Treaty of Sèvres 1920; also https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Sèvres ; Quigley 2022, pp 65, 69-73, 77, 80-81, 89, 94.

⁸³⁸ Weber 1958, p 33.

the boundary between the two, it would have been considerably farther north and east had Britain had its way, but on French insistence Palestine turned out smaller, namely within the well-known borders recognised *de facto* still today.⁸³⁹

These 'Class A' Mandates were thus not being treated equally with respect to the basic declared goal of independence.⁸⁴⁰ It is correct, as the Jewish Agency would say before the First Committee of the General Assembly in May 1947 [^{>458}], that

Unlike other mandates in Category 'A,' the Palestine Mandate contained no clause declaring that the object of the Mandate was to prepare the country for independence. Its primary purpose was the establishment of the Jewish National Home.⁸⁴¹

And as Article 1 of the Palestine Mandate boldly stated, "The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration". [^{>146}] On the other hand and in rather clear contradiction, Article 2 said that the Mandatory had to see to the "development of self-governing institutions", which is arguably a circumlocution for 'independence'.

Still reflecting the Treaty of Sèvres' distinction between Syria & Mesopotamia (Article 94) and Palestine (Article 95), the Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon of 12 August 1922,⁸⁴² most of whose other Articles are very similar to those of the Palestine Mandate, would state:

The... organic law for Syria and the Lebanon... shall be framed in agreement with the native authorities and shall take into account the rights, interests and wishes of all the population inhabiting the said territory. The Mandatory shall further enact measures to facilitate the progressive development of Syria and the Lebanon as independent States. (Art. 1) ... Nationals of Syria and the Lebanon living outside the limits of the territory shall be under the diplomatic and consular protection of the Mandatory. (Art. 3) ... No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Syria and the Lebanon on the ground of differences in race, religion, or language. (Art. 8)

Regarding Art. 1 of this Syria/Lebanon document, on paper the inhabitants' wishes, not those of any group of non-residents, were the standard. Regarding Art. 3, "nationals" overseas were unconditionally nationals, unlike Palestinians overseas, who were ignored in the Mandate text and whose status according to Art. 7 of the Palestine Mandate would be settled in a future "nationality law" which moreover must "facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine". [^{see >186}] In comparison with Art. 8 above, the weaker non-discrimination clause in the Palestine Mandate text, its Art. 2, would safeguard only the inhabitants' "civil and religious rights", expanded a bit in its Art. 6 to "not prejudice" the "rights and position of other [non-Jewish] sections of the population". [^{>146}]

Art. 16 of the Syria/Lebanon Mandate laid down only Arabic and the colonialists' language, French, as official languages, whereas for Palestine its Mandate in Art. 22 laid

⁸³⁹ See CO 733/17B/20, /21, /22, /26, /28, /29; Jeffries 1939, pp 396-404.

⁸⁴⁰ Quigley 2010, pp 29-30.

⁸⁴¹ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

⁸⁴² UNOG Archives, current online, C. 528. M. 313 1922 VI.

down a third language as well – Hebrew. Furthermore, in regard to natural resources in Syria and Lebanon, their development was mentioned in the same sentence as the obligation “to safeguard the interests of the local population”; concessions must be granted “without distinction of nationality”. (Art. 11) Art. 11 §2 of the Palestine Mandate, on the other hand, specifically privileged the Jewish Agency (“may arrange with the Jewish agency”), and thereby the Jewish “nationality”, “to develop any of the natural resources of the country.” [>146]

Thus, the actual Mandates formulated in 1922 honoured the distinction made in Articles 94 and 95 of the Treaty of Sèvres between Palestine and the other Class A Mandates, whose *present* populations were the only concern. Britain had by August 1920 – in fact already by April 1920 at the San Remo Conference [>78] – succeeded in securing international support for denial of self-determination for the benefit of the Jewish Agency. The only roadblock might be opposition *within* the U.K. [>77; >84; >85; >112; >122; >124; >126; >144; >155; >161; >165-67] Tibawi is correct, however, in saying that this opposition within the U.K. Government, which wanted to formulate the Palestine Mandate in terms similar to those of Iraq and Syria, aiming at independent states, had actually already in May 1920 been defeated.⁸⁴³ The relatively early complete draft of the Mandate text dated 12 May 1920 – about two weeks after the San Remo conference closed – included all the special mentions of the Jewish National Home and what it required which appeared in the final text [>146], and colonial official Vansittart was wrong that this formulation “should by its moderation avoid rousing the susceptibilities of the present majority of the population.”⁸⁴⁴ These were mere “susceptibilities”, and the *future* majority might be different.

The gist of the Treaty’s position on Palestine, insofar as it was based on Article 22 of the Covenant [>46], was expressed by Jeffries:

Since clause 95 denied to South Syria the independence which clause 94 conceded to North Syria, under the rules of the game, as they were enounced officially, this could only be because North Syria was ‘able to stand by itself under the strenuous conditions of the modern world,’ but South Syria, Palestine, was not.⁸⁴⁵

This was in fact the only criterion stated in §1 & §4 of Article 22 of the League of Nations’ constitution, or Covenant, the ones dealing with the relationship between mandatories and mandated with respect to self-determination, absent any mention of immigration, other races’ political claims, or extraneous wishes of a mandatory. [>46] Yet nobody ever claimed that the Palestinians were less able than the other Syrians or the inhabitants of Mesopotamia to “stand by themselves” or “stand alone”.

⁸⁴³ Tibawi 1977, pp 430, 431, citing FO 371/5244, [p 101], Vansittart to Curzon 12 May 1920.

⁸⁴⁴ FO 371/5244, pp 102-14, Vansittart quotation p 101.

⁸⁴⁵ Jeffries 1939, p 396.

93. Samuel's early actions

August 1920

In August 1920 High Commissioner **Herbert Samuel appointed a Land Commission** to see what land would be suitable for European-Zionist settlement and to find out the “additional number” of people the land could support, as he had told the ‘Arabs’ on 7 & 8 July. [89] Such immigration and settlement was planned by the British although, as the Palin Court of Inquiry [88] had just found, “the natives have a right to demand that the claims of the natural increase of their population should be first considered.”⁸⁴⁶ What’s more, the work of this Land Commission was beginning two years *before* Article 6 of the Mandate [146] would approve of and prescribe “close settlement by Jews on the land”.

Its three members, who travelled the length of the land, represented the three points of the Palestine Triangle: Faidi al-Alami (Musa Alami’s father) as the native Palestinian, Chaim Kalvarisky of the nascent Jewish Agency (i.e. Zionist Organization) and Albert Abramson for Britain.⁸⁴⁷ It tried to establish current land ownership, a daunting task due to often overlapping and vague legal records of land titles. At this time it was also presumably public knowledge that the Palestine Administration’s Attorney General Norman Bentwich, an “active and enthusiastic Zionist” who had been a delegate at several World Zionist Congresses, had been tasked with straightening out land rights.⁸⁴⁸

Abramson would later be a member of a similar Committee appointed by High Commissioner Herbert Plumer in 1927 to investigate the displacement of rural Palestinians due to land sales to Zionist organisations.⁸⁴⁹ Concerning this theme of development’s implications for dispossession, in the later 1920s some of the displaced, including farmers in the Haifa area, fought their dispossession and were represented by attorney Wadi al-Bustani, who would attend the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress in December 1920 [95], would be elected to the Executive Committee of the 6th PAC in 1923 [164] and would be a member of the Palestinian Delegation to London in 1923 [169].⁸⁵⁰

On 26 August Samuel issued the **Immigration Ordinance**, an unspectacular yet sweeping set of twelve Articles leaving the local population no say whatsoever in what people could settle in their country. Its first Article gave the High Commissioner complete power to regulate “entry into Palestine... according to the conditions and needs of the country” – conditions and needs defined by the HC. Virtually no objective rules were stated, leaving it all to the discretion of the HC and his appointed Director of Immigration (as of 1921 A.M. Hyamson), with the exception that those who had “been permanently resident in Palestine since the British Occupation”, were they temporarily to leave Palestine, could re-enter.⁸⁵¹ Already on 16 June Samuel had submitted his eventually accepted draft of an

⁸⁴⁶ Palin 1920, §14.

⁸⁴⁷ PIWP current; Forman & Kedar 2003, p 512.

⁸⁴⁸ Forman & Kedar 2003, *passim* & p 519.

⁸⁴⁹ Shaw 1930, p 116.

⁸⁵⁰ Forman & Kedar 2003, pp 525-28.

⁸⁵¹ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 39-40; FO 371/5184, pp 119-31, 11 & 23 August 1920 (former paper E 9773).

ordinance⁸⁵² to Foreign Secretary Curzon, which opened with a lament that under the Military Administration “nothing has been begun” in order to bring in the Jewish immigrants necessary for the “establishment of the Jewish National Home”. He then laid out the rules whereby his Administration would set the number of immigrants who were employable, given a certain amount and type of “Government”, “Zionist”, or “private” investment, and without whom “the economic development of the country will be retarded”. British Consulates and the local branch of the Zionist Organization in the potential emigrants’ countries would determine both the number and identity of suitable people and would issue them visas for entry into Palestine. The JNH had to be, and economic ‘development’ had to be, so Jewish immigration had to be.

⁸⁵² FO 371/5183, pp 195–98 (former paper E 6531) and FO 371/5184, pp 112–16 (former paper E 9523); Tibawi 1977, p 443.

The first meeting of the Advisory Council which High Commissioner Samuel had promised to set up when speaking to his subjects on 7 & 8 July 1920 [>89] was held on 6 October. Soon thereafter, on 26 November, having read a report of the meeting, the then Secretary of State for India, Samuel's first cousin Edwin Montagu, **wrote "as a member of the Cabinet" to Foreign Office chief Curzon:**

I learn from it that there are ten official and ten unofficial Members. The unofficial members consist of four Moslems, three Jews and three Christians. I believe I am right in saying that at least 70% of the population of Palestine is Mohammedan. [It was 78%.] I, therefore, with great respect wish to bring to your notice my opinion that this composition of the Council, which places Mohammedans in a minority, is a monstrous and a flagrant violation of the principles to which I understood His Majesty's Government were committed, that the Government of Palestine should be composed of the various races therein living in proportion to their numbers.⁸⁵³

Whitehall official Sir J.A.C. Tilley, or a colleague by the name of Hubert Young, objected that "Mr. Montagu's protest is based on a misconception. ... The only specific commitment of H.M.G. in respect of Palestine is the Balfour Declaration constituting it a National Home for the Jewish People".⁸⁵⁴ [also >146] Within the Cabinet Montagu had already in the latter half of 1917 been a vocal but unsuccessful opponent of the Balfour Declaration. [>16]

For this Advisory Council the British were offering the Moslems and Christians, together 90% of the population, 35% of the advisory power; what's more, the Council was merely advisory, not determinative. All of the Legislative Councils proposed at various times between 1922 and 1935 shared these characteristics of indigenous under-representation and lack of power, i.e. ultimate subordination to the High Commissioner and/or the British Cabinet. The 1922 proposal, for instance, offered the 90% majority only 30% of the seats. [>133-37]

Commenting on these unrepresentative and powerless Advisory and Legislative Councils in the House of Commons on 17 November 1930, one MP employed and built on a well-known analogy, noting first that many Parliamentarians defending the Zionist Mandate had mistakenly blamed the increasingly intractable political situation on the Arabs, namely their "refusal" of such offers of a voice in government; they

had referred to the English saying that a horse might be brought to the water but it was impossible to make him drink. The horse might, however, in this case have come to the conclusion that the water was unwholesome and that he had very good grounds for refusing to drink it.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵³ FO 371/5124, pp 149-50, Montagu to Curzon 26 November 1920 (former paper E 14973); Ingrams 1972, pp 111-12.

⁸⁵⁴ FO 371/5124, p 148.

⁸⁵⁵ Hansard 1930a, c154.

Montagu's early, rare and clear statement pointing out the obvious violation of the democratic principle of proportional representation was unpopular. Again, in a bit more detail, the comment by Tilley:

The Advisory Council is not an Executive body and forms no part of the 'Government of Palestine'. ... The unofficial half is symbolic of the interests of the Palestinians. The symbolism recognizes Moslem preponderance inasmuch as there are four Moslems to three Christians and three Jews. But this does not constitute representation.⁸⁵⁶

Tilley was creating a new category in political science – “symbolic” representation unrelated to numbers; in addition, by ignoring the official half, which was purely British, he was able to represent the Moslems Christians as a 70% “preponderance”. Also noteworthy is that by implication British “commitments” to the non-Jewish communities were not “specific”, and therefore had to take a back seat to the “National Home”.

It was moreover honest but injudicious of colonial officers Tilley and/or Young, in light of the history of the formulation of the Balfour Declaration and the tension between ‘Jewish National Home’ and ‘Jewish State’, to write that HMG was “constituting it a National Home for the Jewish People” [see >16; >78], and to this phrase Curzon in reply duly took exception:

No. ‘Establishing a National Home in Palestine for the Jewish people’ – a very different proposition.⁸⁵⁷

Curzon had made similar objections to certain wording in 1917 [>15] and was now pointing out that “constituting” Palestine and “establishing” something in it, as the Balfour Declaration referenced by Tilley and/or Young had it, were miles apart. And perhaps in adding the two words “in Palestine” to the civil servants’ rendering he was recalling relatively recent suggestions that said home might be established elsewhere, e.g. in Africa, South America or Russia.

The broader point highlighted by Montagu's criticism would over the years be that proportional representation would stymie any attempts to “reconstitute” Palestine at all, or indeed “establish” anything in it at all. In John Quigley's words:

On November 30, 1920, Curzon alerted the Cabinet that France and Italy had complained in regard to an early draft [of the text for the Mandate] that Arab rights were being ignored. France and Italy objected to a draft preamble clause that read: ‘Recognising the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute Palestine as their National Home.’ This formulation, which Britain never made public, would have altered the Balfour Declaration phrasing about a national home in Palestine to read that the whole of Palestine was to become the national home.⁸⁵⁸

In fact the Mandate's Preamble would in July 1922 again shy away from the concept of “reconstituting” (all of) Palestine – or in the civil servants’ formulation “constituting it a National Home for the Jewish People”. As for the meat-and-potatoes issue of the make-

⁸⁵⁶ FO 371/5124, p 148, comment of 29 November 1920, seen by Curzon.

⁸⁵⁷ FO 371/5124, p 148; Ingrams 1972, p 112.

⁸⁵⁸ Quigley 2010, p 35; Gilmour 1994, p 523.

up of this new Advisory Council or the later proposed but never implemented Legislative Councils, the principle of governing organs formed more or less proportionally to ethnic or religious numbers would be ignored by Britain during the entire Mandate.

VI. The “non-Jewish community” speaks

The landmark 3rd Palestine Arab Congress (PAC) got underway in Haifa around 4 December 1920. Convened by Suleiman Taji al-Faruqi and Musa Kazem al-Husseini, it created the Arab Executive Committee which would express political positions for full independence and against any degree of Zionism until 1934.⁸⁵⁹ The newspaper *El-Bachir* on 28 December 1920 printed a short report of the meeting, titled 'The present state of Palestine', by its "Jerusalem correspondent", which as translated in the Foreign Office Political Report for January 1921 went like this:

The inhabitants of these regions are not satisfied with their present condition. ... If we were to review the acts of the High Commissioner, we should find that he always sides with those of his own faith. He is a Britisher and looks to the interests of Great Britain but he is Israelite before all. As an instance of this it may be mentioned that certain natives applied to him for concessions or rights to form a Tramway Company and to import goods from Egypt to help the poor, but they were refused on the plea that such privileges were only to be granted to Jews, and so on. When the people heard of this and drew comparisons between their own state and that of the Syrians under the French, they made a move and formed committees with a view to putting an end to this situation. On the 14th December, the deputies for Palestine (to the former Turkish Parliament) assembled at Haifa under Kazim Pasha El-Husseini, in order to form a National Govt and stop the Jewish invasion of their country, and they continued to meet there and have supporters abroad.⁸⁶⁰

Early on, the Southern Syrians started comparing their plight with that of the Northern Syrians – and the Iraqis and Egyptians. Musa Kazem informed Samuel of the Haifa conference and its demands, in the form of a copy of the PAC's resolutions as a 'memorandum', on 18 December.⁸⁶¹

According to Muhammad Muslih,

Few details on the debates of the Third Palestinian Arab Congress existed before Akram Zuaytir, who was a member of the Istiqlal Party and later a highly placed diplomat in the Jordanian government, deposited his private papers at the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut. The congress held nine sessions over a period of seven days.

Muslih then lists the number and allegiances of the members of the 9 sessions, noting that it was at its fifth session that the Congress "appealed" to Britain to establish a national government; it was still unthinkable – or impossible without incarceration – to establish one oneself, a project which only much, much later, in 1947-48, would be adopted (in vain) by a group around Hajj Amin al-Husseini [>477].⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁹ Ayyad 1999, pp 88-89.

⁸⁶⁰ FO 371/6374, pp 177-78; also Lesch 1973, p 20.

⁸⁶¹ Ayyad 1999, p 88; Tibawi 1977, p 448.

⁸⁶² Muslih 1988, pp 205-06.

Two summaries by present-day historians of the resolutions of the thirty-six delegates are worth noting:

The slogan of the congress was 'Equality with the Mandate of Iraq'. The text of Iraq's mandate stipulated that it would have a parliament elected on the democratic principle of one citizen, one vote. It acknowledged Iraq as a *watani* (national entity) that would eventually become independent.⁸⁶³ [see >92]

The so-called Third Palestine Arab Congress, which can be seen as the conceptive venue of the Palestine Arab national movement, meeting in Haifa in mid-December 1920, called on the new British rulers to establish a government 'to be chosen by the Arabic-speaking people who had lived in Palestine before the beginning of the [world] war.' It completely, flatly rejected Jewish claims to Palestine...⁸⁶⁴

Another historian recorded a petition [see >99] from the Haifa Congress dated 14 March 1921 to Churchill, with whom its representatives would meet in Jerusalem about two weeks later [>99; >100]: "1. We refuse the Jewish immigration to Palestine. 2. We energetically protest against the Balfour Declaration to the effect that our Country should be made the Jewish National Home."⁸⁶⁵

This Congress established the *Arab Executive Committee* (AEC), initially with nine members headed by Musa Kazem and further consisting of Aref Dajani, Ibrahim Shammās, Hajj Tawfiq Hammad, Sheikh Abdul Latif al-Haj Ibrahim, Sheikh Suleiman Taji al-Faruqi, Abd al-Fatah al-Saadi, Dr Burtcoush and Muein al-Madi.⁸⁶⁶ Musa Kazem had in April 1920 been sacked as Mayor of Jerusalem by Ronald Storrs, the Governor of Jerusalem, and replaced by Ragheb Nashashibi.⁸⁶⁷ From this 3rd Congress and its AEC emerged the most important Palestinian document of the 1920s, the 'Report on the State of Palestine'.⁸⁶⁸ [>99]

Also in December 1920, talks between the Foreign Office, under Curzon, and Emir Faisal began, a detailed account of which, given by A.L. Tibawi,⁸⁶⁹ reveals the nature of the 'dialogue' at this time between Britain and its Arab allies/subjects. It involved (1) denial of the right of Sherif Hussein to be heard, (2) the declaration, without argument, that "old pledges" were irrelevant, (3) skirting around the League of Nations Covenant, and (4) subordinating all else to the British "bargain with the Zionists". Further, (5) "Kazem Pasha's memorandum of 18 December 1920 [to Samuel, certainly forwarded by him to Curzon] embodying the resolutions of the third Palestine Arab Congress on self-government and an elected assembly... was put aside as unworthy of even acknowledgment...". (6) The claim by Samuel, who maintained "a virtual dictatorship", that the Congress was "unrep-

⁸⁶³ Pappe 2002/2010, p 208.

⁸⁶⁴ Morris 2009, p 88; also Porath 1974, p 109.

⁸⁶⁵ Gilbert 1976, p 6; also Wasserstein 1978, p 94.

⁸⁶⁶ Wasserstein 1978, pp 94-95; also Robson 2011, pp 42-43.

⁸⁶⁷ Huneidi 2001, p 38; Tibawi 1977, p 420; Qumsiyeh 2011, p 55.

⁸⁶⁸ al-Husseini 1921.

⁸⁶⁹ Tibawi 1977, pp 459, 462-63, 466, 467, 468-70, citing inter alia FO 371/6374, paper E 501.

representative of the Arab population” was approved [by the Foreign Office] without question... Finally, (7) Turkish rules on land ownership and on public land which were relatively favourable to Arab tenants were overturned by Samuel.

25 December 1920 *‘The proceedings and resolutions [of the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress] were published in the Haifa newspaper al-Karmil, 25 December 1920.’*⁸⁷⁰

23 December 1920 [King George tells the House of Lords he has ‘accepted’ the Mandate for Palestine ‘under the Covenant of the League of Nations.’]⁸⁷¹

1 January 1921 *‘The Official Palestinian Government Paper’ begins circulation as the monthly British Mandate Publications Department paper, produced in three languages: Arabic, English and Hebrew.*

25 January 1921 *‘For those immigrants who did arrive and Zionist enterprise could not absorb [Samuel] found employment by initiating public works that were not for the benefit of the country as a whole. The practical meaning of this policy was the taxing of the native Arab majority in order to provide for the livelihood of foreign immigrants admitted against the will of the majority...’*⁸⁷²

⁸⁷⁰ Tibawi 1977, p 448.

⁸⁷¹ Hansard 1920f, c951.

⁸⁷² Tibawi 1977, p 467, also 473.

Samuel reported to Curzon in his **Political Report for January 1921**, dated 1 February 1921.⁸⁷³

The promoters of the Conference at Haifa held in December [>95]... felt called upon to vindicate its representative character, and shortly afterwards the Government received several telegrams signed by various groups in different parts of Palestine affirming the representative character of the Congress. On the 8th January a public meeting was held at Nablus. The rain fell heavily. From 2,500 to 3,500 people were present. ... The object of the meeting was to emphasise the leader's contention that this town's delegates at the Haifa Conference represented the people of Nablus. ... At Gaza the Governor was asked to sanction [permit] a similar demonstration. The suggestion was not encouraged and no meetings took place. In Jerusalem leaflets were circulated declaring that the Haifa Congress was representative of the Arabs in Palestine.⁸⁷⁴

Ann Mosely Lesch is of the view that an Arab assembly would only be considered "representative" by the British if it did not issue resolutions contrary to the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration.⁸⁷⁵ But the Arabs were willing to put it to the test in asking for representative government for all of Palestine, as witnessed for instance by Samuel, who was minuted as saying:

Musa Kazem Pasha, on behalf of his friends, mentioned the fears of the community in regard to Mr. Balfour's statement and Jewish immigration. He also raised the question of representative government. The High Commissioner in the course of his reply stated that it was not within his competence to discuss the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government; that it was his duty to carry out the Balfour declaration as a whole...⁸⁷⁶

"Representative government" was always openly disallowed by the British. Note moreover that in passing the buck upwards, the very hands that had penned 'The Future of Palestine' in 1914/15 [>8], helped pen the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and co-drafted the Mandate text were now said to be tied by others. Samuel was merely following orders.

⁸⁷³ FO 371/6374, pp 192-94.

⁸⁷⁴ Also Ghandour 2010, pp 151-52.

⁸⁷⁵ Lesch 1973, p 21.

⁸⁷⁶ Also Tibawi 1977, p 451.

In a confidential **Enclosure to Curzon**⁸⁷⁷ High Commissioner Samuel **reported** that on 12 February 1921 he “received this morning Awni Abdul Hadi, who was the Emir Faisal’s secretary at Damascus”. After demurring to Awni’s request that Britain intervene diplomatically with France to redress some injustices done to the people of Syria, the “long conversation” turned to Palestine:

The Arabs did not like the present form of government in Palestine, but they thought that the country was well administered, and they had complete faith in the sincerity of His Majesty’s Government and of my own in desiring the welfare of the population. They were convinced also that self-governing institutions would be allowed to develop in the future. ... I explained the course of events with reference to my recent conversations with the members of the Arab Nationalist Conference [Palestine Arab Conference] that had met at Haifa [>95; >96], with regard to which he had received information from them. He [Awni] was of opinion that the political difficulties in Palestine largely arose from a misunderstanding on the part of the Arabs of the meaning of the term ‘Jewish National Home.’ Translated into Arabic the phrase really meant that Palestine was to be a Jewish National Fatherland, and the people consequently were convinced that the Arab population would be obliged to go elsewhere. ... He had had a conversation in Egypt with Sir Alfred Mond and Dr. Weizmann [see >64], and was convinced that the fears that were entertained with regard to Zionism were unfounded. I said I would be glad to receive suggestions from him as to particular measures which he thought might be carried out with advantage in Palestine, and he said that he would be glad to write to me on the subject.

Even if many of the terms in this Political Report are ambiguous, this portrayal of Awni’s positions is not consistent with anything else we know about them. [e.g. >243; >263]

The English neologism ‘national home’, in Arabic, was apparently close in meaning to ‘state’, or “Fatherland”, and Samuel could easily have confirmed this rendering by giving Awni copies of his own writings on the meaning of a Jewish *National Home*, including his “The Future of Palestine” [>8] – as well as the proposals he co-authored for the attention of the Paris Peace Conference [>35; also >73]. Awni could thus have seen that the “fears” of the Arabs with regard to Zionism were indeed well-founded. I do not know if Samuel had yet seen the 3rd Congress’s ‘Report on the State of Palestine’, composed sometime since the December 1920 PAC [>95] and given by Musa Kazem to Churchill in March 1921 [>99], but that Report would have cleared his mind as to whether any Arabs “misunderstood” Zionism. Samuel moreover shifted the topic from the basic Zionism problem to “particular measures” that might address Arab concerns.

Tibawi relates that around this time, February 1921, in the run-up to the Cairo Middle East Conference [>98],

⁸⁷⁷ CO 733/13, p 349.

a telegram was received [by the Foreign Office] from the president of the national (Christian-Muslim) association in Jaffa *explicitly* accepting the British mandate, which no responsible body had done until now, and [but] demanding the establishment of an elected representative government (in place of Samuel's autocracy), the rescinding of the Balfour declaration and the stoppage of Jewish immigration.⁸⁷⁸

Thus, there was perhaps on the part of both the Jaffa MCA and Awni a readiness to accept Britain's temporary, nominal tutelage as long as these hard Arab preconditions were met – a Mandate emptied of Zionism.

⁸⁷⁸ Tibawi 1977, p 472, citing CO 733/161, p 85 and FO 371/6375, paper E 5613 (= FO 371/6375, pp 78-79).

98. Cairo Middle East Conference

12-30 March 1921

The Colonial Office had taken over the running of Palestine from Curzon's Foreign Office on 14 February 1921, placing the Colonial Secretary job in the safe Zionist hands of Winston Churchill, who switched from the job of Secretary for War.⁸⁷⁹ This **conference in Cairo**, invoked by Churchill from 12 to 30 March 1921, **gathered British officials from all over the Near East**⁸⁸⁰ and focussed mainly on military expenditure and the future of Mesopotamia and Trans-Jordan⁸⁸¹. It agreed that France should have Syria, Faisal become King of Iraq, Faisal's brother Abdullah become ruler of Transjordan (Southern Syria east of the Jordan River), and Sherif Hussein become King of the Hejaz – while Britain should retain direct rule in Palestine in order, *inter alia*, to set up the Jewish national home.⁸⁸²

In order to insulate the pro-Zionist policy, Palestine was to be separated administratively from the rest of the Near East:

We are of the opinion that having regard to the fact that His Majesty's Government, as the Mandatory for Palestine, have undertaken to give effect to the proclaimed policy of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and to the special international importance of the country, it would not in any case prove feasible to combine into one service the administration of Palestine and of the other areas within the sphere of the new Department. We therefore recommend that the Palestine Service should remain distinct from whatever service it may be necessary to set up to fulfil British responsibilities in other areas of the Middle East.⁸⁸³

Evidently the Cabinet regarded its colonies as "responsibilities". According to the agreement on 25 April 1920 in San Remo by those Powers that mattered, Northern Syria was France's anyway, and Mesopotamia was foreseen as a separate Mandate. [>78; >92] But on the argument above Transjordan would be separated from Palestine to form a separate mandated territory in which a Jewish national home was not foreseen.

It was during this time that Churchill journeyed to Palestine to meet with both indigenous and Jewish-Zionist leaders [>100], but not before meeting briefly while in Cairo, on 22 March, with Palestinian delegates Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Hajj Tawfiq Hammad, Ibrahim Shammash, Dr. Burtcoush, Muein el-Madi and Aref Pasha Dejeni – who had been invited to dinner by Herbert Samuel, also in Cairo, two days before.⁸⁸⁴ In Palestine in the

⁸⁷⁹ CAB 24/126/23, pp 119, 125; Tibawi 1977, p 470; Huneidi 1998, p 24.

⁸⁸⁰ Including Samuel, Allenby, Lawrence, Major Hubert Young, Percy Cox and Gertrude Bell.

⁸⁸¹ Also Hansard 1921, cc270-83.

⁸⁸² CAB 24/126/23, Churchill to Cabinet, 'Report of the Cairo Conference', 11 July 1921. Also Abu Sitta 2016, p 40; Wikipedia, >'Cairo Conference (1921)'; CO 935/1/1, *Report on Middle East Conference held in Cairo and Jerusalem, March 12th to 30th, 1921*, Appendix 19, p. 109-111, June 1921.

⁸⁸³ CAB 24/126/23, p 128, §36-37.

⁸⁸⁴ CO 733/2, pp 47-48.

meantime British regional Military Governors were forbidding Palestinians from ‘greeting’ Churchill’s impending arrival with demonstrations, for instance in Haifa and Yaffa, against the British Jewish-home policy.⁸⁸⁵

Churchill’s official 200-page **Report on the Middle East Conference**, which was “circulated” within Whitehall only on 11 July 1921, included 32 Appendices, taking up its last 99 pages, with Appendices 17-23 pertaining to Palestine.⁸⁸⁶ His summary of his meetings with “influential Moslem and Jewish deputations”, including “the Palestine Mission under Sir Herbert Samuel [which] arrived in Cairo on the 16th March and left on the 23rd for Jerusalem with the Secretary of State [Churchill]” (p 121), were covered in more detail in his Appendix 23 but summarised at the beginning of the Report’s sections on Palestine thus:

[T]here would be no change in the declared policy of His Majesty’s Government. The Balfour declaration contained two distinct promises, one to the Jews and one to the Arabs; both would be fulfilled. He was convinced that the Zionist cause would bring good to the whole world and welfare and advancement to the Arabs of Palestine. He appealed to the Jews to dispel the exaggerated fears of the Arabs by a good and friendly attitude and by the exercise of due restraint as well as of enthusiasm. He advised the Arabs, on the other hand, to give help and encouragement to the Jews, whose success would bring general prosperity and wealth to all Palestinians. (p 122)

In claiming Zionism to be a boon for “the whole world” and for “the Arabs of Palestine” Churchill was re-iterating the fourth and first points of Samuel’s 1915 case that Zionism was a win-win-win-win proposition – alongside boons for Britain and for Jewry. [8] In addition, speaking to and of the Arabs in this way as economic rather than political human beings was thus early on a characteristic of the British-Palestinian dialogue. Finally, Samuel’s team was called “the Palestine Mission”: No Arabs were invited to this Conference. Taking part on the fringes, though, was Palestinian leader Awni Abdul Hadi of Nablus, the Sorbonne-educated lawyer who had been private secretary to Faisal in Damascus and one of the two Syrian delegates to the Paris Peace Conference – and who was at this time described by T.E. Lawrence as “a *garçon de cabaret*”.⁸⁸⁷

Internal British discussions in Cairo on Palestine (pp 166-188) – in large part organised and chaired by General W.N. Congreve, an anti-Zionist [126] – led off, on 17 March, with Churchill’s understatement that “There was some probability of controversy in Palestine for some years on the question of Zionism...” (p 166) T.E. Lawrence (‘of Arabia’) agreed there’d be controversy, but only for some years; he “trusted that in four or five years, under the influence of a just policy, the opposition to Zionism would have decreased, if it had not entirely disappeared...” (p 166) In this instance Lawrence’s knowledge of ‘the East’ was deficient. Whatever the future may hold, though, Churchill went on to declare “recognition of an elected Jewish Assembly [Vaad Leumi]”. (p 133) He did not simultaneously “recognise” the Palestine Arab Congress, or arrange for officially-permitted elec-

⁸⁸⁵ CO 733/2, pp 45, 46.

⁸⁸⁶ CAB 24/126/23, pp 116-223, all citations and quotations; also CAB 24/122.

⁸⁸⁷ Tibawi 1977, p 471.

tions under universal suffrage to an Arab legislature, and by and large the questions of Transjordan's separation and the futures of the brothers Emir Abdullah and Emir Faisal received far more attention at the Conference than the question of Zionism.

18-19 March 1921 '[A] day of general strikes and protests was called for throughout Palestine and one demonstration was met with a hail of British bullets killing several people at the funerals of Edward Mansour and Mustafa Al-Ajouz. In... Tulkarem, thousands gathered... The march was led by students followed by religious leaders,... tribal and political leaders, merchants and ordinary people, all carrying black flags.'⁸⁸⁸

March 1921 'Palestine to the east of the Jordan River - 'Transjordan' - is separated from Mandatory Palestine and given to Emir Abdullah, one of Sherif Hussein's sons.'⁸⁸⁹

25 & 28 March 1921 'When demonstrations protesting Churchill's visit are prohibited in Haifa and Jaffa, Muslim shops remain closed and a large demonstration in Jerusalem against Churchill & Balfour does take place.'⁸⁹⁰

28 March 1921 The Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress of Palestinian Arabs hands a memorandum to visiting Colonial Secretary Churchill protesting against Zionist activity in Palestine.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁸ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 58.

⁸⁸⁹ Alam 2009, p 113.

⁸⁹⁰ Kayyali 1978, pp 92-93; Ayyad 1999, pp 91-92.

⁸⁹¹ Also Seikaly 1995, pp 105-06.

This 10-page entry covers the key early Palestinian manifesto, key in the sense that all following documents added few new concepts to its basic argument for self-determination faced with the British threat. I first obtained its full text from of Hassan Eltaher, to whom I am grateful.

This early independence document⁸⁹² entitled 'Report on the State of Palestine' had in essence been resolved by the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress (PAC) in December 1920 [>95]. Although it was written during the winter of 1921 I have dated it 28 March 1921, the day it was presented in Palestine to Colonial Secretary Churchill.⁸⁹³ Churchill had come to Palestine from the Middle East Conference in Cairo [>98], where he had refused to meet with a Palestinian-Arab delegation which had come there to meet him, saying he would receive them in Palestine. When he 'received' them in their home country they politely confronted him in print and verbally with this Report. According to Tibawi, it was first handed to Churchill personally in Gaza on 24 March at the local Arab Club, where Churchill's train had temporarily stopped, or been stopped by a large gathering of local people; Churchill was in fact "flooded with petitions repeating the national demands and telegrams supporting the Palestine Arab Executive Committee from all over the country."⁸⁹⁴

The tract expressed the ethical and political philosophy of a standard post-Enlightenment democracy and is the first on the following list of *required reading* order to understand the verbal, conceptual part of the Palestinians' challenge to Great Britain:

- 1) the Report on the State of Palestine of 28 March 1921 (this entry)
- 2) the Arab Delegation to London's debates with the Colonial Office in February-June 1922 [>117; >135; >137; >143];
- 3) the reports and petitions of the Arab Executive Committee (AEC) of the Palestine Arab Congress to the Permanent Mandates Commission of 6 October 1924 and 8/12 April 1925 [>178; >182; >183];
- 4) the AEC's objections to the Passfield White Paper and the MacDonald Black Letter [>243; >247];
- 5) Jamal al-Husseini's article of November 1932 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* [>262];
- 6) Musa Alami's historical and political tract of September 1933 [>266];
- 7) The Arab Higher Committee's position on the MacDonald White Paper in May and June 1939 [>412];

⁸⁹² Al-Husseini 1921, *all quotations*. I cite the page numbers of this original document (pp 1-39), for the possession of which, in facsimile, I am most grateful to Hassan Eltaher. Use the PDF at <https://blakealcott.jimdofree.com/rare-writings/>. The virtually identical text is in CAB 24/126/23, pp 188-92 (*stamped page numbers*) or pp 142-50 (*printed page numbers*), also in CO 733/2, pp 56-67, and also in FO 371/6375, pp 63-73 (also in French).

⁸⁹³ CAB 24/126/23, title page; Tibawi 1977, p 484.

⁸⁹⁴ Tibawi 1977, pp 477, 483.

- 8) Elias Koussa's letter to High Commissioner MacMichael of 6 November 1942 [^{>422}];
- 9) the Palestine-Arab testimony to the Anglo-American Committee in March 1946 [^{>436}];
- 10) UN Ad-Hoc Committee's Subcommittee 2's full-blown constitution for an unpartitioned democratic Palestine of 11 & 19 November 1947 [^{>478}]; and
- 11) the Arab Higher Committee's plea to the UN Security Council of April 1948 [^{>488}].

The title page of this 40-page booklet reads: 'Report on the State of Palestine Presented to The Right Honourable Mr. Winston Churchill P.C., M.P. By the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE THIRD ARAB PALESTINE CONGRESS. Jerusalem, March 28. 1921'. The British bureaucracy called it the 'Official Report of Deputation of Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress'.

The tract first proclaimed that it speaks the will of the people. Because Samuel and other British officials were known to challenge the democratic legitimacy of the Congress, already in the Report's second and third paragraph we find:

The Congress... is a true representative of Palestine, her mouthpiece. In it all classes are legally represented. Town, village, factory and farm – in fact, all the live aspects of the nation – acknowledge its leadership. But the enemy of Palestine, ever on the watch, has willed to distort the truth, and to paint Palestine to the Government other than she really is by questioning the representative status of the members of the congress. ... [Yet] the whole nation rose as one man and from Dan to Beer-Sheba cried out backing the Congress and calling upon the Government to recognise it as their true and legal representative. (pp 3-4)

This skirmish over who represented the will of (the 90% majority of) the ruled populace is a good place to reflect briefly on the 'subject positions' of the British and their subjects, for instance by absorbing the observations of Zeina Ghandour:

The Home Government balked before the prospect of talking to the organized, secular Palestinian leadership under the pretext that they were not official representatives. ... For whilst much was made of preserving local élite prestige, the reality was that in London, no one wanted to talk to the Arab politicians. ... *Yet who was the British Mandate representing in Palestine, and why did the Arab politicians not refuse to talk to them on the basis that they had not been chosen by the local population?*⁸⁹⁵

This conflict concerning the pre-conditions, or environment, of the 'dialogue' this book is trying to chronicle was exactly analogous to the armed police or military conflict 'on the ground': 1) Why should we, the occupied, have to talk to you, the occupiers? 2) Why should you be here with your army in the first place? Please just leave or we will have to try to throw you out. But given the overwhelming physical power of the British, it was hard to find any third way other than either accepting the subordinate subject position or boycotting any talks. Speaking of "throwing the British out", Aref Abdul Razzak would in 1938 at the height of the Rebellion ask the British, "Why are you in Palestine?" [^{>370}]

This chronology, that is, presenting almost exclusively the *verbal* back-and-forth between the two opponents, would suffer if it did not maintain clarity concerning the fact that the Palestinians *had* to speak to the British whenever it was not pursuing the other

⁸⁹⁵ Ghandour 2010, p 159, *emphasis added*.

two options of silence (boycott) and armed rebellion. The Palestinians did try both those other options: they boycotted for instance the Peel Commission in 1936/37 until the last week of its 'hearings' in Palestine [>336] and stayed away from the British/Arab States dialogues in September 1946 [>444]. And of course they physically rebelled in 1920, 1921, 1928, 1929, 1933 [>76; >103; >198; >202; >268] and 1936-39. There might have been a way to talk to the Mandatory without granting it legitimacy, perhaps by making loud and explicit their rejection of the whole set-up, i.e. denying allegiance to the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration at the beginning of every written or verbal communication. But it is fair to say that the Palestinians were *coerced* into talking, even at the St. James Conference of 1939 [>386ff].

In any case, the 3rd Congress's words were clear. Britain had betrayed Palestine, but:

[Palestine] neither complained nor was unfaithful to her first friend [Britain], but when sorrow filled her breast she breathed a sigh and dropped a tear, and lo the Third Arab Palestine Congress was born. (p 3) ... Unfortunately ... peaceful demonstrations were powerless to convince the High Commissioner [Samuel] of the good faith of the people of Palestine, so he persisted in ignoring their congress, knowing full well that this was their one hope and their true spokesman;... (p 4) When the opportunity presented itself to their leader, King Hussein, [the Arab] rose in revolt against the Turk, and joined Britain and her Allies, heedless of the fact that in so doing he was combatting an Islamic Power to whom he was bound by many strong and permanent ties. (p 5) ... The Arabs trusted that such fidelity would be remembered by Great Britain who had given such binding paths to their leader, King Hussein. The Arab did not dislike the Turk because he was Turk; nor did he love the Englishman because he was British; he hated the one because he desired complete independence, and he loved the other hoping and believing that the Englishman would help him to attain this goal. (pp 6-7)

The Congress also asserted that Britain was acting against its own self-interest:

Fleets and armies cannot conquer the heart of a nation. England could have conquered the Arabs' hearts by safe-guarding their country's integrity. Then all these huge millions required for the up-keep of her large armies would be saved to her and her taxpayer. (p 8) ... In the interests of universal peace,... if not for love of the Arab, England should refrain from taking this false step. Zionists can never be true to her, as they can be true to no-one, and to this their mischievous work in Austria, Germany and Russia can testify. (p 9)

According to Susan Boyle, this thought was later shared by George Antonius, one of the most effective of Palestine's intellectuals, who was of the opinion that

Within a federative framework, the British could have supported Arab independence and self-governance in return for Arab respect and trade and security privileges for the British Empire.⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹⁶ Boyle 2001, p 69; see in general Mearsheimer & Walt 2007.

Such a future was ruined by their support for Zionism. Not only would managing the Mandate-produced conflict be costly in terms of money⁸⁹⁷ and blood, that is, but while the Arabs had proven during the war that they could “be true” to Britain⁸⁹⁸, Britain would be paid back by the Zionists with betrayal.

The Congress was aware of Zionism’s demographic plans. The separation of Palestine and Syria, for instance,

was done to enable Zionists to gradually become the majority in Palestine through immigration. ... According to the present rate of immigration Jews will in a few years compose a large proportion of the population, and consequently claim a larger share in the Government of the country. (pp 10, 11)

The last remark indicates that the principle of proportional representation was self-evident in their thinking.

As for the Palestinians’ attitude towards Zionists as opposed to Jews:

Had Zionists come to Palestine simply as visitors, or had matters remained as before the war, there would be no question of Jew or non-Jew. It is the idea of transforming Palestine into a home for the Jews that Arabs resent and fight against. The fact that a Jew is a Jew has never prejudiced the Arab against him. Before the war Jews enjoyed all the privileges and rights of citizenship. The question is not a religious one. For we see that Christian and Moslem alike, whose religions are not similar, unite in their hatred of Zionists. (pp 10-11)

This was a very early expression of the fact that Palestinian resistance was to British-enabled Zionism, not to Jews as such, a fact later attested thus by Edward Said:

[A]s even Zionist historians like Yehoshua Porath and Neville Mandel have empirically shown, the ideas of Jewish colonizers in Palestine (well before World War I) always met with unmistakable native resistance, not because the natives thought that Jews were evil, but because most natives do not take kindly to having their territory settled by foreigners;...⁸⁹⁹

The British, by contrast, made a big deal in the Balfour Declaration out of “Jewish” and “non-Jewish” communities [16], and would in the coming 26 years repeatedly portray the conflict as an ethno-religious one.

The Congress similarly objected to Herbert Samuel not because he was Jewish, but because Jews were a small minority in Palestine [about 11%]:

England, moreover, disregarding the feelings of the inhabitants, has appointed a Jew as High Commissioner. With every respect to the person of Herbert Samuel, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the predominating majority of the people he governs are not of his own race or faith. ... In Syria, France, acting more in sympathy with the inhabitants, appoints natives to fill exalted positions, and reserves to herself the right of counsel and advice. [see >46] Again to the most important post of justice in Palestine, namely that of Legal Secretary, or

⁸⁹⁷ See Smith 1993, p 58.

⁸⁹⁸ Also Antonius 1938, pp 216-42.

⁸⁹⁹ Said 1979, p 81.

Minister of Justice, a Jew has been appointed. And what is worse, this official [Norman Bentwich] is an out and out Zionist. In a book he recently wrote he strongly advocates the quiet persecution of the Arab in order to force him finally to quit the country. (pp 11-12) [⁵⁶]

As we will see the manifesto does later make some negative generalisations about the Jews or Israelites of ancient Palestine and about European Jews (see pp 21-24); these racist generalisations should, however, be weighed against the historical fact of centuries-long non-discrimination on the ground and against this declared non-racist, or a-racist, attitude.

Beginning with the legal consequences of Britain's deal with King [Sherif] Hussein [¹⁰], the Congress went on to "dissect the Balfour Declaration" [¹⁶]:

Before drawing a contract with Zionists for the sale of Palestine England had drawn a contract with King Hussein by virtue of which he was to be given Arab lands. Consequently the contract with King Hussein annuls that with the Jews. ... King Hussein paid a price for his contract by rising against the Turks. This was part of the contract. England's contract with the Jews, therefore, can have no legal value as long as King Hussein is ignorant of it. So far, then, as the Arabs are concerned the Balfour Declaration is not valid. (pp 13-14)

A second part of their legal argument was based on collective ownership and at the same time defined the 'self' that wanted self-determination:

Countries with their civil and other rights and privileges are the property of their inhabitants and constitute an heirloom of the nation, handed down from father to son. Now the people of Palestine inherited this country from their ancestors, as these did from those who had gone before them. Palestine, therefore, with its air, water, land and roads, commerce, industry and agriculture, is an inalienable possession of the nation, and neither England nor any other Power can bring a foreigner in to share this inheritance. (p 14)

Therefore,

Great Britain, though occupying the country, does not possess it. (p 15) ... There can be no question but that Palestine belongs legally to the Arabs. They inherited it from their ancestors, and have been occupying it for more than twenty centuries. (p 18) ... How then could England conclude a treaty with a religion and register it in the League of Nations? (p 16)

They then supposed for the sake of argument that the Zionists were right, that all Jews comprised a nation, and asked,

[I]f there exists... a Jewish Nation, what is the status, amongst others, of those high Jewish officials who are serving England to-day? Are they Jewish nationals or English nationals? For it is obvious they cannot be both at the same time. Sir Herbert Samuel and Lord Reading are Englishmen and Jews. Now if Jew-ism is a nationality what about their English-ism? (p 17)

The British had moreover invalidly bought into the Zionists' claim to Palestine on historical grounds:

Zionists and Great Britain appeal to history in confirmation of their claim. Because at one period of history the Jews conquered this land and lived in it, hence, it is argued they possess it forever. The argument contains more of poetry in it than logic. According to it the

Arabs should claim Spain since once upon a time they conquered it and there developed a high civilisation. ... The Turks too, at one time conquered all the Balkan States right up to Vienna, why does Europe then keep these back from them? (p 19) ... It might be argued, too, that the Jews' claim to Palestine rests on the monuments and buildings which their ancestors built and left behind them. As a matter of fact, no nation in history has left less behind it than the Jews;... (p 20)⁹⁰⁰

One early expression of Great Britain's embrace of the Zionist argument from ancient history, here being ridiculed, had come from Balfour on 19 February 1919, when he claimed that the Jews – all of them – “had an historic claim to a home in their ancient land”.⁹⁰¹ [>4] A few months after this crucial statement by Balfour, the authors of the King-Crane Report said what the 3rd PAC was here saying: “a ‘right’ to Palestine, based on an occupation of 2,000 years ago, can hardly be seriously considered”.⁹⁰² [>59]

As for the Congress's own historical claims:

Even while in possession of Palestine for about 400 years⁹⁰³ the Jews' right to it was always contested by their neighbours. ... [I]t was only during the reign of King Solomon that peace prevailed. But the Arabs' reign in Palestine was undisturbed for a long time until the Crusades arrived, and they [the Arabs] bought the country again, for the second time, after having once bought it from the Romans, by shedding rivers of blood. Besides, they were always at peace with their neighbours – an achievement which the Israelites cannot claim. (p 20)

The term “Israelites” was more political than “Jews”:

It is surprising to think that students of ancient Jewish history interest themselves in the religion and kingly glory of this people and neglect that other part of it dealing with revolts, mutinies, internal troubles and those wars with their neighbours which finally led to their expulsion from the land. Have statesmen never found out the reasons why the Israelites could not get on with their neighbours, or why they were so detested by all surrounding tribes? ... Arabs, on the other hand, have lived here for centuries at peace with all their neighbours... (p 21)

Their first argument had been that the Zionist historical claim was weak because Jewish presence as rulers was temporary and so long ago; that is, even if that rule had been peaceful and benevolent, it would not justify a 20th-century claim. The second argument was that that rule had been rejected by other locals.

The Congress had convened just as the anonymous book *The Jewish Peril: Protocol of the Learned Elders of Zion* was published. That that book was a fake would be exposed only on 16 August 1921, by Philip Graves in the *Times*. The Congress was thus falsely assuming that the book was “a collection of the minutes of a secret society of prominent Jews”

⁹⁰⁰ See Whitelam 1996; *The New Yorker* 2020.

⁹⁰¹ FO 371/4179, pp 309-10.

⁹⁰² King & Crane 1919a/1919b, p 48/I.§III.E,

⁹⁰³ The official British version gives for the Jewish “possession of Palestine” not 400 but “4,000 years”. (CAB 24/126/23, p 145 printed/p 190 stamped)

(pp 22-23) and concluded that “The Jews have been amongst the most active advocates of destruction in many lands, especially where their influential positions have enabled them to do more harm.” (p 22)

The book is replete with an overflowing hatred of mankind and Christendom in particular. It points out in detail ways and means for upsetting the present order of things so that out of the ensuing chaos Jews might come out masters of the world. (p 23)

This defense against the British-Zionist intrusion relied, illogically, on the past alleged evil of “prominent Jews” elsewhere.

Coloured by their take on ancient Palestinian history and the misinformation of *The Jewish Peril*, the manifesto then went on to describe what the Zionists had done to date in Palestine:

Wherever [Jewish colonies] exist the surrounding peasant population has had to sell out and migrate. Because of their clannishness Jews will, as far as they can help it, not employ a native [see e.g. >233] or buy at his store or benefit him in any way;... In commerce and finance they are pitiless foes. Since Palestine opened its doors to them its trade has gradually drifted into their hands. They depreciate the value of land and property and at the same time manipulate a financial crisis in order that landlords, under the stress of need, should sell out at ruinous prices. (p 24)

With hindsight one knows the facts about the foreign capital which Zionist colonisation agencies brought to the market, and also about the Zionist policy of hiring and selling or leasing land to only Jews.⁹⁰⁴ But in early 1921 the PAC conflated this with “the Jew”:

The Jew, moreover, is clannish and unneighbourly, and cannot mix with those who live about him. ... The Jew is a Jew all the world over. He amasses the wealth of a country and then leads its people, whom he has already impoverished, where he chooses. ... Palestine suffers in this manner from her Jewish colonies. ... Can Europe... expect the Arab to live and work with such a neighbour? (pp 23, 24)

In order to judge pages 21-24 of the manifesto it would be necessary to further contextualise them, not only against the background of peaceful centuries-long living and working alongside indigenous Jews but against the rest of the manifesto. Were the previous invaders, the Crusaders, talked of in similar ethnic or religious terms? How did various groups at that time refer to each other – as ‘the Turk’, ‘the Arab’, ‘the Jew’, ‘the Armenian’? Given the inferior ‘subject position’ of the locals, who were not listened to, should we judge these Palestinians of 1921 any differently than we judge, for instance, contemporary Blacks who might refer to ‘Whitey’? What are the comparative weights of the words of negative generalisations as opposed to the actions of non-discrimination? The falsely-presumed factuality of *The Jewish Peril* played a role as well.

Moving to “the economic difficulties in Mr. Balfour’s declaration”, the Palestinians bemoaned the passing of the openness of borders under the Ottomans. Now, barriers were everywhere, and due to British/Balfour policy

⁹⁰⁴ See Hope Simpson 1930; Bethell 1979, p 25; Stein 1984; Lehn & Davis 1988; Shilony 1998.

Palestine... is in dire need of money. ... Now Jewish immigration has raised the cost of living, and the Government, in order to keep prices down in the interest of the Jewish consumer, has prohibited the export of certain cereals, with the result that the granaries of the land are stoked [sic.: stocked] with products, and merchants cannot find an outlet for their trade. (pp 27, 26)

Tax revenue collected from the population moreover went mostly to “unnecessary” infrastructure works “in order to give employment to the thousands of Jewish immigrants...” – to the neglect of things like “public education”; furthermore “the highest posts with fat salaries are given to the Jews, while the native official, who is more conversant with local needs, is relegated to a third-class position...” (pp 27-28)

Returning finally to the “Political Effects” of British/Balfour policy:

Zionists are ambitious. If to-day they accept the Mandate of England they may not do so tomorrow. Their one aim is to establish a Jewish kingdom, bring back the glory of Israel in the ‘Land of Promise,’ and gradually control the world. This ideal is expressed by their leader, Mr. Herzl, and by other Jewish writers. ... They propose that a Jewish army be created to take the place of British troops. (p 30)

The intention to take over Palestine and “the world” are here once again attributed to “Zionists” (not ‘Jews’) operating under British patronage.

Another political complaint was that “the Arabs have not been consulted, and never will consent [to the Balfour Declaration].” (p 17) In underlining this non-consent they also wrote:

When the Great War was over the Allies, in conformity with Mr. Wilson’s Fourteen Articles [^{>20}], recognized the principle of self-determination for smaller nations. An American Commission [^{>59}] was sent out to the East to learn the wishes of the people. All declared in favour of independence and national government. (p 33)

Despite Britain’s absencing itself from what was to have been the “Inter-Allied Commission of Enquiry” [^{>59}], “Has Great Britain learnt our wishes? She knows them, but refuses to carry them through.” (p 35)

A purported international consensus was, in any case, for “self-government”,

But statesmen... created the novel principle of Mandate. ... [And] England has kept us out of the first class [of Mandates] entirely, though she does not say so in plain terms. ... It can be shown, however, from the very terms of the mandate that we belong to the third class... [as set out in the League of Nations Covenant, ^{>46}] (pp 33, 34)

For proof of this they relied on available draft mandate articles. [see ^{>146}]

[W]e do not see where the Jews come in in the mandate, and where the Government derives her right of handing over to them Crown lands which are not her own. Nor can we see why the Zionist Commission should be appointed as the Government’s advisory body on all economic questions and public works. These crown lands are the property of the nation, and belong to the tenants who from time immemorial have lived on them and cultivated them. (pp 35-36)

Since the people of Palestine rightfully possess its natural resources, moreover, Britain had no rights to them:

Again in article '11' it is stated that the Mandatory power shall have full powers to provide for public ownership or control of any of the natural resources of the country. Are these powers, again we ask, in keeping with self-government granted to nations of the first category? We have gone carefully through the Mandate but can find in it no hope. (p 34)

They knew how to self-determine:

Under the Turks we governed ourselves through our representative parliament, and the only Turkish official in our midst was the *Wali* or *Mutasarrif* who had his advisory native elected council to help him. In the majority of cases even these officials were from amongst ourselves. In the courts, too, all the judges and members of the bench were natives, and each one of us could work up to the highest legal position. ... The whole country awaited the coming of the English with boundless joy, but as soon as these arrived and their policy began to unfold itself disappointment reigned everywhere. ... Now all this has changed. We have no voice or say in the government of the country, no representative parliament. (pp 37-38)

The manifesto then concluded:

For all the above reasons, we ask in the name of Justice and Right that: First. The principle of a National Home for the Jews be abolished. Second. A National Government be created which shall be responsible to a parliament elected by the Palestinian people who existed in Palestine before the War. (p 39)

That is, the citizens or electors would be those who were Ottoman citizen-residents of Palestine in 1914.⁹⁰⁵ The demand was for a democratic, parliamentary state.

Signed:

For the Executive Committee of the Arab Palestinian Congress, Moussa Kazem El Asussaini [al-Husseini], President.

There have been many analyses and evaluations of this manifesto, which on 1 April 1921 was also submitted to the President of the League of Nations⁹⁰⁶. Boiled down, as summed up by Tibawi, the tract demanded “the creation of a national government responsible to a representative assembly, and the renunciation of the ‘principle’ of the Jewish national home”; all its further demands, both economic and political, and even rejection of the Balfour Declaration, were “all depend[ent] on the vital question of self-government.”⁹⁰⁷ It also illustrated “the love-hate syndrome towards the West from which many Palestinian[s] suffered during the Mandate period.”⁹⁰⁸ As we have seen, this document stressed

⁹⁰⁵ See also >178; >454 and PLO 1968, Article 6.

⁹⁰⁶ Quigley 2010, p 36; Quigley 2011, p 263, citing League of Nations, Official Journal, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 331-340, at p. 333; also Ingrams 1972, p 118.

⁹⁰⁷ Tibawi 1977, p 487, citing CO 733/161, pp 92ff and FO 371/6375, pp 160ff.

⁹⁰⁸ Khalidi 1981, p 72.

the “boundless joy” at liberation from the Turks and their willingness to be the “ally” of Britain through thick and thin. “The friendship of the Arab for the Englishman is too obvious to require proof. ... [But] the Arab suffered on account of his love for England.” (p 4)

The Report also distinguished between opposition to the “novel principle of Mandate” – i.e. foreign rule in general – and the characteristics of their own particular Mandate which imposed on them a Jewish national home: “Though we reserve to ourselves the right of claiming the carrying out of our demands as expressed to the American Commission, we will here discuss certain essential aspects of this Mandate.” (p 33) What they had expressed to the King-Crane Commission was freedom from any kind of mandate. [>59] Even in regard to self-determination, and not just in regard to the Jewish national home, this particular Mandate – *de facto* of the “third class” – was not logical:

Palestine should be treated like Syria and Mesopotamia at least, for she is not below them in her capacity for self-government. ... Is England to be less liberal than France and usurp powers in Palestine which her great Ally has so generously left in the hands of the natives of Syria? (p 35; also p 12)

A further political point deconstructed the articles in the Balfour Declaration and draft Mandate specifying that they would still have rights:

The Mandate is replete with the assurance that our civil and religious Rights would be strictly observed. This is quite superfluous as no government on earth, however low its ideals, dare interfere with the religious tenets of a people. Consequently the assurance grants nothing new. ... As to our civil rights these too mean nothing more than that equality and justice will be given us before the law. Obviously no privilege is contained in this. (p 36)

These rights were not a generous, optional gift.

In somewhat moderately calling for “self-government under British hegemony” it aroused criticism from “younger and more vigorous” Palestinians.⁹⁰⁹ Its concrete demands – echoing the declarations of independence of many other people around the world – were for “a citizen assembly to set up a national government”, after renunciation of the Balfour Declaration.⁹¹⁰ Regarding the fate of this last, positive, basic demand, Kayyali writes that when Samuel in February 1921 had spoken to the Third Congress’s leaders in Jerusalem – more than a month before they met with his boss Churchill – he blocked all prospects for any representative Arab assembly by demanding acceptance of the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration as a precondition for talks, a price the Palestinians were not willing to pay. [see >135]⁹¹¹ Until the 1939 ‘MacDonald’ White Paper [>410] Britain, as well as the League of Nations and its Permanent Mandates Commission [>182; >183; >191] refused to even discuss the legitimacy of the Mandate.

29 March 1921 *Abdullah of Transjordan visits the Haram Ash-Sharif. When he later tries to address the Muslim crowd gathered outside he is interrupted by shouts of ‘Palestine for the Arabs’ and anti-Zionist slogans.*

⁹⁰⁹ Kayyali 1978, pp 88-89; Seikaly 1995, p 170.

⁹¹⁰ Quigley 2011, p 264; Huneidi 2001, pp 145ff.

⁹¹¹ Kayyali 1978, p 90.

A meeting took place in Jerusalem on 28 March 1921 between Churchill, Musa Kazem and other delegates who had written and signed the manifesto just read to the visitor to their country. [>99]. At least one further meeting was held a day later, attended on one side by members of the Executive Committee and also by Emir Abdullah and Awni Abdul Hadi, who had both been at the Middle East Conference in Cairo [>98], and on the other side by Churchill, Samuel, T.E. Lawrence, Wyndham Deedes, and Hubert Young.⁹¹² Before Churchill or Samuel replied to the manifesto, Abdullah sketched his own 'future of Palestine':

If His Majesty's Government could agree that there should be an Arab Emir over Palestine and Trans-Jordania in the same relation with the High Commissioner for Palestine as that of the Emir Faisal with the High Commissioner for Mesopotamia, he was convinced that the present difficulties as between Arabs and Jews would be most easily overcome. ... He would very much like to know what British policy really aimed at. Did His Majesty's Government mean to establish a Jewish kingdom west of the Jordan and to turn out the non-Jewish population? If so, it would be better to tell the Arabs at once and not to keep them in suspense. Mr. Churchill had referred to the decisions of the Allies; these were not, in his opinion, beyond challenge. The Allies appeared to think that men could be cut down and transplanted in the same way as trees. (p 172)

(After the rebellion in Mesopotamia, Britain and the indigenous there were in the process of ditching the Iraq Mandate in favour of a treaty. Furthermore, separating Abdullah's Transjordan off from Palestine – just done in Cairo [>98] – also served to avoid watering down the Jewish-Zionist presence in the part of Southern Syria foreseen for the Jewish commonwealth.)

Briefly replying to Abdullah,

Mr. Churchill said that there was, in his opinion, a great deal of groundless apprehension among the Arabs in Palestine. They appeared to anticipate that hundreds and thousands of Jews were going to pour into the country in a very short time and dominate the existing population. (p 172)

If so, they "anticipated" with remarkable acumen. Samuel then interjected that "There was no question of setting up a Jewish Government there. ... No land would be taken from any Arab, nor would the Moslem religion be touched in any way." He also rejected Abdullah's proposal for a united Mandate east and west of the Jordan. (p 173)

A reaction from Awni Abdul Hadi, native of Nablus who was a top secretary to Emir Faisal both in Paris and Damascus, is not recorded. But he had been present a day earlier when

⁹¹² CAB 24/126/23, pp 171ff, the next four quotations.

the deputation from the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress [^{>95}] presented its 'Report on the State of Palestine' [^{>99}] to Churchill and Samuel (pp 188-92), after which Churchill was now replying to the Palestinians (pp 192-94).

There was by the way also a meeting at the site of the Hebrew University with a Jewish deputation (pp 194-95) and Churchill's words to them, so the Official Report, included:

When I go back to London, I have no doubt I shall be told that but for the Zionist movement there would be no need to keep up such a large British garrison, at so great an expense, in this country. ... I wish to be able to say that a great event is taking place here, a great event in the world's destiny. ... I earnestly hope that your cause may be carried to success. ... If I did not believe that you were animated by the very highest spirit of justice and idealism, and that your work would in fact confer blessings upon the whole country, I should not have the high hopes which I have that eventually your work will be accomplished. (p 195)

Churchill was here acknowledging the high military costs to Britain of installing Zionism, but was claiming there were counter-balancing benefits – to “the whole country” and for “the world's destiny” – a textbook case of altruism, not British self-interest. The “great event” outweighed the costs and consequences of imposing Zionism by brute force – one consequence being the cost to the indigenous of the loss of their freedom. This speech by Churchill to the Zionists, by the way, was not matched by one to any broader congregation of locals.

As shown by Churchill's opening words at this 29 March 1921 meeting – recorded by the British bureaucracy as '**Reply by Mr. Churchill**' (to the 'Report on the State of Palestine')⁹¹³ – when it came to flesh-and-blood dialogue it was not the Palestinians who were receiving the British in Jerusalem, but the reverse:

Let me make it clear in the first place why it is I am receiving you here. I came out to Cairo to hold a conference mainly about Mesopotamia [^{>98}], and my friend Sir Herbert Samuel invited me, as I was so close, to come on up and pay him a visit in Palestine, so as to be able to see something of the country and to discuss with him some of its problems on the spot. You must not suppose that my coming here in any way supersedes him. [And] any direction which I may give him in the name of His Majesty's Government I shall send by despatches from London in the usual way. ... But as I was here in the country some of you asked to come to see me, and at the request of the High Commissioner I have done so as a matter of courtesy and of goodwill and not in any sense as a formal conference. (p 150)

He had “come on up”, for the first and, I believe, last time to the country whose future he and Samuel were moulding, with Churchill henceforth giving “direction” from “London”.

His attitude showed the huge gap between the 'subject positions' of the two parties in terms of power; he regarded himself in no way obliged to listen to a single word of his subjects, as would be the case at a “formal conference”. Perhaps the Palestinians, as normal human beings, could accept that Samuel and Churchill were there to problem-solve magnanimously, but what did they make of the arrogance of his “receiving... as a matter

⁹¹³ CAB 24/126/23, all further citations, giving printed pages numbers, not stamped ones. The same text is in CO 733/2.

of courtesy” the group of Palestinian leaders in their own country? Their reaction to this aspect of the dialogue is beyond my knowledge, but Churchill’s language and tone were objectively emblematic of the first twenty years of the British-Palestinian relationship. (It changed somewhat in 1938-39 and in 1946.) At best the Palestinians had a slippery dialogue partner, at worst no partner at all.

The Palestinians had meanwhile been ‘receiving’ Churchill with unambiguous non-written ‘statements’ against his policy and person in the form of large street protests. According to a report by Wyndam Deedes, Civil Secretary for Palestine who accompanied Churchill in Cairo and Palestine and who would eventually get fed up with Zionism [p.126], already upon the arrival of Churchill’s train in Gaza on 27 March the crowds shouted “Down with Balfour” and similar slogans, and on 29 March in Jerusalem he and Samuel heard “Palestine for the Arabs” and “Down with the Zionists”; also, in Haifa on 28 March, two Palestinians, one a boy aged 13, had been killed when a demonstration forbidden by the Governor was held anyway; and telegrams protesting British policy were sent from many towns “in support of the Arab-Palestinian Delegation and of the resolutions of the recent Haifa Conference”.⁹¹⁴

As for what Britain intended to do from its offices and barracks, Churchill painted a picture of *parity*: there are two sides to the story, two groups with (allegedly equal) collective rights in Palestine:

In the very able paper which you have read [to me], there are a great many statements of fact which we do not think are true, and I think everyone of you knows in his heart that it must be taken as a partisan statement and one side of the case rather than as a calm judicial summing up of what is for us all to do in the difficult circumstances in which we find ourselves. (p 150)

This sentence has several features characteristic of many other Colonial and Foreign Office statements right up to the year 1946 [see also p.135; p.234; p.443; p.452]: 1) the compliment (“able paper”); 2) the claim of better knowledge (“we do not think are true”); 3) the demand that the Arab *party* be neutrally “judicial” rather than “partisan”; 4) the lack of questioning *why* the “circumstances” were “difficult”, or who caused them to be “difficult” – one simply “found oneself” in those circumstances; and 5) the parity premise of “one side of the case” confronting an equally valid or even peremptory “other side”. The inference from Churchill’s framing is that the colonists, whether seen as Zionists or as British, are morally equal to the homeland-owner. (Leading Jewish-British Zionist Alfred Mond [Lord Melchett] would once go even further, claiming that “the Jews” had a right to political parity and said, generously, “let us give it as a right to the Arabs”.⁹¹⁵) Any priority in terms of political standing was denied the indigenous.

At least Churchill spoke relatively clearly at the meeting:

You have asked me in the first place to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and to veto immigration of Jews into Palestine. It is not in my power to do so, nor, if it were in my power,

⁹¹⁴ CO 733/2, pp 44-47. The other slogans in the document are defaced and illegible. Also Kayyali 1978, p 92.

⁹¹⁵ Storrs 1937, p 378.

would it be my wish. The British Government have passed their word, by the mouth of Mr. Balfour, that they will view with favour the establishment of a National Home for Jews in Palestine, and that inevitably involves [see >142] the immigration of Jews into the country. This declaration of Mr. Balfour and of the British Government has been ratified by the Allied Powers who have been victorious in the Great War;... It must therefore be regarded as one of the facts definitely established by the triumphant conclusion of the Great War. ... After all, the British Government has a view of its own in this matter [of the Balfour Declaration], and we have a right to such a view. Our position in this country is based upon the events of the war... (pp 150, 151)

This might be the first instance of the use in Palestine of “facts”-on-the-ground to *normatively* justify political installations – a case of the naturalistic fallacy of deducing an ought from an is. More prosaically, Churchill was saying that as military conquerors the U.K. had a “right” to say what goes – as if he had not yet heard of the anti-colonialism principles of Wilson, the League of Nations and scores of British parliamentarians.

Thus, right is made by military might – the “events of the war” – but it is also

manifestly right that the Jews, who are scattered all over the world, should have a national centre and a national home where some of them may be reunited. And where else could that be but in this land of Palestine, with which for more than 3,000 years they have been intimately and profoundly associated? We think it will be good for the world, good for the Jews and good for the British Empire. But we also think it will be good for the Arabs who dwell in Palestine, and we intend that it shall be good for them, and that they shall not be sufferers or supplanted in the country in which they dwell or denied their share in all that makes for its progress and prosperity. (p 151)

These four “goods”, i.e. benefits, of Zionism in Palestine – for the world, the Jews, the British Empire and, last and not least, the Arabs – were exactly those expounded in the seminal ‘The Future of Palestine’ pamphlet in 1915⁹¹⁶ [>8] whose author, Samuel, was now sitting next to Churchill. Churchill’s claim here was that because it was Britain that defeated the Ottomans, sacrificing “over 2,000 British soldiers”, “the position of Great Britain in Palestine is one of trust, but it is also one of right. ... ” (p 151)⁹¹⁷ Not only world Jewry, and indeed “the world”, but also the British, held rights that would trump Palestinian ones. Note also the non-sequitur from the scattered Jews’ right to their own political home to its having to be in Palestine, nowhere else.

Within the framework of “impartial, even-handed justice” it then sounded reasonable for Churchill to tell the Arabs some things that would find their way into the momentous Samuel/Churchill White Paper of June 1922 [>142]:

I would draw your attention to the second part of the Balfour Declaration, which solemnly and explicitly promises to the inhabitants of Palestine the fullest protection of their civil and political rights. ... I would also draw your attention to the very careful and exact nature of the words which were used by Mr. Balfour. ... He did not say he would make Palestine the

⁹¹⁶ CAB 37/123/43.

⁹¹⁷ Also CAB 24/126/23, p 193; Ingrams 1972, pp 118-19; Gilbert 1976, p 6.

National Home for the Jews. ... The fact that Palestine shall contain a National Home for the Jews does not mean that it will cease to be the National Home for other people... ... [T]he officers of this Administration... make no distinction as between Arab and Jew... (p 151)

Here the “civil and religious rights” of the Balfour Declaration – the “careful and exact” wording of which the underlings were admonished to carefully read – were incorrectly mouted by Churchill, who had evidently not read carefully, into “civil and *political* rights”. (According to Jeffries, by the way, the Italian Government at one point had argued for this phrase, which should replace weak “civil” with the stronger “political” rights in any reformulation of the Balfour Declaration.⁹¹⁸)

Similarly, the indigenous population had mouted from the “non-Jewish community” of the Balfour Declaration to “other people”. Finally, the supplicants had not been listened to carefully, as their clearly-expressed beef was not primarily with “officers of the Administration” but with the Zionist project itself and the Balfour Declaration, which black-on-white had indeed “made a distinction as between Arab and Jew.” But they did not need to be listened to, for as Churchill omnisciently told them, “I do not think you have any need to feel alarmed or troubled in your minds about the future.” (p 151)

Churchill then played the economic-progress card – intended to trump the ethical or political cards. In his view the “great event” (p 155) of the Jewish National Home

is increasing benefits and prosperity and happiness to the people of the country as a whole. ... [S]andy wastes have been reclaimed and thriving farms and orangeries planted in their stead. It is quite true that they have been helped by money from outside, whereas your people have not had a similar advantage, but surely these funds of money coming largely from outside and being devoted to the increase of the general prosperity of Palestine is one of the very reasons which should lead you to take a wise and tolerant view of the Zionist movement. ... There will be more food, there will be more freedom, there will be more people, there will be more health among the people... (p 152)⁹¹⁹

The argument is similar to that of the ‘trickle-down’ theory in economics.

He did hear correctly that

you will say to me, are we to be led by the hopes of material gain into letting ourselves be dispossessed in our own house by enormous numbers of strangers brought together across the seas from all over the world?

He was however thereby turning the discussion towards the “numbers” of the strangers and away from the Palestinians’ worry, namely their “dispossession”.

Spiritually, furthermore, so Churchill in poetic advertising-slogan mode, the Moslems had nothing to fear, because “the British Empire... is the greatest of all Moslem States in the world”. (p 151) Moreover, the picture painted of life under the Ottomans in the ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ “had no relation whatever to the truth...” (p 152), as if he, and not the authors of that Report, had been there. Finally,

⁹¹⁸ Jeffries 1922/23, p 30; Andersen 2017, p 173; see >78.

⁹¹⁹ Also Ingrams 1972, pp 119-20.

I am sure if you take my advice you will not find in the future any difference in the life you have led in the past, or in the part you have played in your country, except an improvement. ... If I thought that the fears expressed in the memorandum submitted by the deputation were well-founded I should regard the situation as very serious. But I am absolutely convinced in my heart and conscience that these fears are unfounded, and that events will prove that that is so, and when you are convinced by your own experience and by facts that these fears are unfounded, I believe that my policy of promoting good-will among the three sections of the community will yet prevail. (pp 152, 153)

His prediction that the Arabs would at some point find their fears illusory was dead wrong.

As for the Moslem state just set up east of the Jordan River, by the way, according to David Cronin its nominal ruler Abdullah, who had been the first to speak at this meeting, had obtained his throne only “on the understanding that he used his influence to prevent anti-French and anti-Zionist propaganda [and] no anti-Zionist disturbances [or] agitation” in Transjordan. Abdullah had agreed to this.⁹²⁰

As Ruhi al-Khalidi had already written just before World War I, “most of [Zionism’s] leaders now understood that they would have to ‘colonize Palestine little by little.’”⁹²¹ It couldn’t happen rapidly and therefore, so Churchill, neither could the self-government officially promised to the populace happen rapidly:

The present form of government will continue for many years, and step by step we shall develop representative institutions leading to full self-government. All of us here to-day will have passed away from the earth and also our children and our children’s children before it is fully achieved. (p 152)⁹²²

The demographic change through forced immigration to a Jewish majority would take time. J.M.N. Jeffries saw the bias in this Churchillian policy, which “meant that while a Jewish majority of inhabitants in due time was to make of Palestine a Jewish State, yet an Arab majority of inhabitants must not at any time make of it an Arab State.”⁹²³ [also >327] Jeffries also gives evidence that Balfour himself, in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Charles Hughes in January 1922, acknowledged that this was the vision of HMG.⁹²⁴

These ideas of Samuel, Balfour and Churchill are still alive today, for instance that the very old historical connection of (some) Jews with Palestine trumps others’ more recent, indeed current, historical connections,⁹²⁵ or that economic “progress and prosperity” should be seen by the Palestinians as worth curtailment of their independence and political power. To be sure, HMG at times linked the political and economic aspects, as

⁹²⁰ Cronin 2017, p 19, citing CO 935/1/1.

⁹²¹ Khalidi 1997, p 83.

⁹²² Also Sykes 1965, p 68.

⁹²³ Jeffries 1939, pp 374, 473-75, also 388-89.

⁹²⁴ Jeffries 1939, pp 473-75.

⁹²⁵ See Baihum 1957; Toynbee 1961.

when it argued “that the Arabs had no prescriptive right to a country which they had failed to develop to the best advantage.”⁹²⁶ But the bait on offer, sincerely or otherwise, was a higher material standard of living.

Similarly the idea of parity – fairness, even-handedness between two sides with equal moral claims – today underlies offers, sincere or otherwise, of an albeit unequal two-state solution. But as well-paraphrased by Christopher Sykes:

This policy of fairness was thoroughly unwelcome. When a man’s country has been opened to an invader, does he seek first and foremost that the apportioning of billets and spoils should be organised with a strict regard to equity; that bias should never be admitted in hearings accorded to the invaders and the invaded; that judgments pronounced after such hearings should never make the smallest scruple of discrimination between one and the other? Was that the sort of thing that Arab leaders thirsted for? Of course not. They wanted the invasion stopped and a counterattack, preferably a bloody one, on the invaders. The regime knew that this was the feeling of the Palestine majority...⁹²⁷

It can be safely assumed that Churchill had not only the information to know that the Palestinians were not after such parity – the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress had just supplied him with that information – but also the common sense to see that the Palestinians were worried about their title to their house as such.

At this meeting Musa Kazem also re-iterated verbally to Churchill, in Samuel’s presence, one of the sore points that had been stated in the Report on the State of Palestine [>99], namely an action which revealed British intentions:

England, moreover, disregarding the feelings of the inhabitants, has appointed a Jew as High Commissioner. With every respect to the person of Sir Herbert Samuel, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the predominating majority of the people he governs are not of his race or faith.⁹²⁸

Churchill replied that it was precisely by appointing a Jew that the British dedication to even-handedness would be served:

[W]e moved His Majesty the King to appoint Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner. ... [I]n selecting him we knew we had a trained and experienced man who would understand what ought to be done and what the full meaning and purpose of British policy was. Moreover, he is himself a Jew, and therefore we knew that in holding the balance even and securing fair treatment for all he could not be reproached for being hostile to his own people... (p 152)

The paternalism of “what ought to be done” aside, Churchill was saying that the main criterion was irreproachability from the Zionists’, the minority’s, point of view.

⁹²⁶ CAB 23/24; Ingrams 1972, p 144.

⁹²⁷ Sykes 1965, p 33.

⁹²⁸ CO 733/2, p 58; Wasserstein 1978, p 73, address to Churchill 28 March 1921.

The aforementioned “deputation of representatives of the Jewish community” had given Churchill a memorandum wherein they also, quite candidly, covered the issue of Samuel’s being Jewish:

The Palestine Jews, and with them the Jewish people in all countries, recognise in the appointment of the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Samuel, a brother Jew, as the High Commissioner to our historical country, the first practical step towards the realisation of the declaration of the British Government given through Mr. Balfour on the 2nd November, 1917, and towards the fulfilment of the decision of the Allied Powers at San Remo on the 24th April, 1920. (p 153)

In fact Samuel himself, by the way, had regarded it as likely to be tactically detrimental for Zionism were a Jew appointed as “first Governor”,⁹²⁹ but nevertheless took the job. The team working for Zionism was evidencing great determination and dedication in the face of unanimous opposition from over 90% of the people being ruled in Palestine. But it had the military and police power.

Churchill also told the Palestine Jewish deputation and those gathered “at the Hebrew University site” something which might have made it to non-Jewish ears:

[T]he Zionist movement... is transforming waste places into fertile; it is planting trees and developing agriculture in desert lands;... it is making two blades of grass grow where one grew before;... I think we have given it its best chance of accomplishment with the appointment which His Majesty has made of Sir Herbert Samuel. ... Personally, my heart is full of sympathy for Zionism. This sympathy has existed for a long time, since twelve years ago [1909], when I was in contact with the Manchester Jews. I believe that the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine will be a blessing to the whole world, a blessing to the Jewish race scattered all over the world, and a blessing to Great Britain. ... The hope of your race for so many centuries will be gradually realised here, not only for your own good but for the good of all the world. (pp 156, 157)

He also repeated to this Jewish-Zionist delegation the unfoundedness of the “fears” of the indigenous people, mistakenly referring to them as “the Moslem inhabitants” represented by “the Moslem deputation”. (p 155)

Concerning this rare meeting between a Secretary of State for the Colonies and the political leadership of Palestine, Tibawi in 1977 wrote:

[T]he encounter between Churchill and Kazem Pasha represented the end of an era and the beginning of another in Anglo-Arab relations. Coming as it did after the Cairo conference and the settlement of the questions of Iraq and Trans-Jordan [1918], the sacrifice of Palestine proved to be a turning point. Its repercussions still reverberate in strife and bloodshed from Dan to Beersheba and far beyond.⁹³⁰

I believe Tibawi is referring to the good-will, respect and even love, towards Britain which in March 1921 died. The next such fundamental moment of change for the worse would be the ‘Black Letter’ ten years later on 13 February 1931, to Weizmann from then Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. [246]

⁹²⁹ Wasserstein 1978, p 81.

⁹³⁰ Tibawi 1977, p 490.

Churchill left Palestine without, as planned, visiting Nazareth, as protests were increasing in frequency; Samuel and Storrs banned a demonstration in Jaffa, the reaction being a day-long strike in that city; Musa Kazem defied a similar ban in Jerusalem, while a demonstration did take place in Beisan, and another in Haifa resulted in the deaths of one Christian and one Moslem Arab when police, on orders by Samuel, fired into the crowd.⁹³¹

It was left to Samuel to try to refute, on 30 March, twenty-five specific points made by the “Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress”. Most points, and Samuel’s replies, had to do with economics, and some were mere one-sentence denials, but two went to the gist of the matter:

1) Non-recognition of the Congress was not due to any question of its representative character, but the fact that it opposes the principles embodied in the Mandate. 2) ... Should the Haifa Congress Committee take the same course as the Jewish Committee... [which] accepts the principles of the Mandate and makes no representations inconsistent with them... they will be similarly recognised. (p 157)⁹³²

The reason behind the false claim that the AEC did not represent majority Palestinian views was thus candidly revealed to be the anti-Zionist *content* of those views: of course the British knew that the Palestine Arab Congress accurately presented the views of the indigenous population. And if the Congress would give up self-determination, the British might be as nice to them as they were to the Zionists.

An example of a concrete application of Samuel’s criterion for dialogue-worthiness, and of the imbalance between the two potential interlocutors, is given by Sahar Huneidi: shortly after Churchill’s visit Samuel invited the AEC to a meeting to discuss a Palestine Constitution (Palestine Order In Council). The AEC said it would attend only on condition that the constitution is not based on the Balfour Declaration. Since the High Commissioner refused, there was no meeting.⁹³³ Further in this vein, Samuel strictly censored the press and did not quote it in his reports to London, also banishing the journalist Yusuf al-Isa, brother of Isa al-Isa.⁹³⁴ As Churchill would say a few months later in August 1921 to the Palestine Arab Delegation that had come to London, “so long as they persisted that the Balfour Declaration should be repudiated there was nothing to say.”⁹³⁵

29 March 1921 [*Assisted by Awni Abdul Hadi, Emir Abdullah, the son of Sherif Hussein and brother of Emir Faisal, met in Jerusalem with Samuel and Churchill, after local celebrations of his arrival were censored or prevented by Military Governor Ronald Storrs.*]⁹³⁶

⁹³¹ Tibawi 1977, pp 483–84, citing FO 371/6375, paper E 6636.

⁹³² Also Lesch 1979, p 81.

⁹³³ Huneidi 2001, p 126.

⁹³⁴ Tibawi 1977, p 488.

⁹³⁵ CO 733/14, p 246.

⁹³⁶ Tibawi 1977, p 480.

101. Mohamed Osman to Churchill

9 April 1921

On 9 April 1921 Mohamed Osman “of Palestine”, then in Port Said, **submitted a memorandum to Churchill**⁹³⁷ criticising the latter’s “Reply... to the Moslem Delegation during his visit to Jerusalem” [>100]. He first sarcastically hoped and at the same time doubted it was true what Churchill had claimed, namely that he was merely expressing his own views and “not necessarily those of the British Government or of the British Public”; then he asserted:

The reply of Mr. Churchill is objectionable both in form and in spirit. The spirit shows a mighty man taking advantage of his adversary’s weakness to intimidate and coerce him. The form is vindictive, contemptuous, and disconcerting. ... In our opinion he ought to have [shown] his courtesy by maintaining an obliging attitude rather than cut them so bluntly and abruptly. In his very agreeable reply to the Jewish Deputation, Mr. Churchill says it was his duty to encourage both parties. Comparing the two replies together we are of opinion that he did not accomplish his admitted duty towards the party representing the ‘overwhelming majority’ in the country. His words are the words of a dictator and not of an adviser as he professes to have been. (p 339)

Moving to the content, rather than the “form and spirit”, of Churchill’s talk, Osman wrote:

Mr. Churchill says, ‘It is manifestly right that the scattered Jews should have a National centre and a National home to be reunited, and where else but in Palestine?’

But his reuniting the Jews in this way means Palestine “should have the privilege of being a National Home for a race of about 15 millions...” Yet this was both not “feasible” and lacked “wisdom”: at most 1 million could fit into Palestine, leaving 14 million “still... scattered”, so the goal of reuniting them cannot be reached; and “enforcing the Zionist programme with such pressure...” meant “the intention is to introduce a foreign and powerful element among the Moslem Arabs in order to break up their political unity...”. This disproved Mr. Churchill’s statement “in the same speech that the British Government is ‘well disposed to the Arabs and cherishes their friendship’”. (p 340)

The Arabs, moreover,

are entirely opposed to the introduction of such an element and we shall do so to the last atom of our blood. Our being is in danger and so also are our homes. ... Our country is our own and it is only legitimate that no foreign element should be forced upon us. [We remember the Jews’] treatment of the ‘Aralik’... and their disposition to their old neighbours only aggravates our apprehensions. We have had enough of them during the past two years and we have resolved to fight them to the last. (pp 340-41)

Osman’s distinction between “our being” and “our homes” revealed a mixture of spiritual and existential, political and economic, forebodings.

The Jewish historical claim, so Osman, didn’t hold water:

⁹³⁷ CO 733/17B, pp 338-47, 9 April 1921, *all citations*; Huneidi 2001, pp 307-12.

The truth is that a new market has been opened in the East and a party of Zionist agitators, through the medium of Great Britain, are trying to hold its reins under the guise of a National Home for the Jews. This cannot be done without prejudice to the vital interests of the overwhelming majority in the country and we are prepared to oppose it with our tooth and main. ... We have a natural right to our country and we are determined to keep this right. ... It takes a man at least five years' actual residence in a foreign country before he can obtain naturalization papers but we have never heard of a country being given wholesale to a people who have never seen it or whose fathers never lived in it. It is true that the Jews have been associated with this country for three thousand years but this is only a sentimental consideration and should not go so far as to establish a civil or political right. (p 341)

This is perhaps the first explicit identification of the *settler-colonial* nature of Britain's Zionist project. More importantly, it is also an early example of the Arab challenge to the Zionist enthymeme that some Jews' presence in Palestine long ago entailed political rights there for other Jews, or all Jews, in the 20th century, an embarrassingly fallacious conclusion which would however be enshrined in the 1922 Churchill White Paper [^{>142}] and the Mandate [^{>146}] and which has ever since been repeated as the most fundamental justification for the British-Zionist takeover of Palestine. As we saw, for the King-Crane Commission such an illogical inference could "hardly be seriously considered"⁹³⁸ [^{>59}]; as Henry Cattán would put it while speaking in a lawyerly fashion to the U.N. on 9 May 1947, a "transitory historic association" has no legal or political consequences.⁹³⁹ [^{>457}] For Osman it was "only a sentimental consideration" paling or even disappearing before the real rootedness of his fellow country-owners.

Churchill had claimed that Palestine could support more people than at present, but, Osman instructed him, the indigenous population was growing naturally:

[W]e may remind the Honourable speaker that under a proper administration, such as we expect from the British Government, the present Arab inhabitants of the country are sure to more than double in the course of a few years and it is a MANIFEST right that our posterity should be allowed to live and prosper in the land of their birth and the birth of their fathers and forefathers. [Yet] Mr. Churchill says 'we cannot tolerate expropriation of one set of people by another' [but w]hat does this gigantic and systematic Jewish immigration mean but filling the vacancy which nature and residence have provided for our children? ... The GATHERING OF THE JEWS should not mean OUR SCATTERING. The Jews should not build up their nation on the debris of our own. Our fathers' graves shall not be disturbed by a hostile race. (pp 342-43)

Also, "If the Jews want to stand they should stand on their own feet and not use Great Britain as an instrument for their own ends and purposes. It is a shame on Great Britain to take advantage of our weakness in order to satisfy the wishes of a merciless race". (p 343)

As for the political situation:

⁹³⁸ King & Crane 1919a, p 48.

⁹³⁹ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, search for 'Kattan'.

Mr. Churchill says 'the establishment of a National Home does not mean a Jewish Government to dominate the Arabs'. There is nothing to show that this is so. On the contrary every thing goes to show the contrary. The appointment of a 'devoted Zionist' as High Commissioner is the first step in the direction of a Jewish Government. The appointment of a Jewish wholehearted Zionist as Legal Secretary [Norman Bentwich] is another proof of our argument. [56] The authority given to the Zionist Commission in the Mandate not only creates a Jewish Government in Palestine but makes the British Government an automatic instrument in their hands. [23] (p 344)⁹⁴⁰

Osman added that Churchill said Sir Herbert Samuel is "animated by strong principles of liberal and impartial justice' [but] at the same time he describes him as his friend and DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ZIONISM ... Samuel cannot be a devoted Jew and at the same time impartial to the cause of the Jews." (p 344; also 345) [see also >105; >242; >429; >456]

Further, so the memorandum, when only 1/10 of the population speaks Hebrew, making it an official language is both costly and a sign of intended political domination; moreover, "Every enlightened Arab in the country can, if allowed, point out a case in which justice has been violated in furtherance of the Jewish cause...". For instance Palestinian Government officials were prohibited from political activity while Jewish ones were not, and "Contracts of considerable magnitude have been concluded by private treaties with the Zionist Labour Organization exclusively for the purpose of employing Jewish immigrants at high rates." (pp 344-45)

Ending, "We submit this memorandum under a registered cover to His Lordship the Secretary of State for the Colonies hoping that he will care to read it with some consideration. At the same time we apologize for trespassing upon his valuable time and we trust that he will sympathize with our cause." (p 347) At the Colonial Office in London, Clauson on 26 April wrote to Young and Shuckburgh:

This is a remarkably well-written document considering that it was apparently composed by a Palestinian Arab, and puts the anti-Zionist case as strongly as it can be put. It hardly however seems wise to take any notice of it... (p 338)

⁹⁴⁰ See Samuel 1945, especially pp 156, 176 [429].

In his Memoir published in 1969 Ahmad al-Shukayri, son of the Ottoman Parliamentarian Asad al-Shukayri [p.5], graduate of the British Law College in Jerusalem and first Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO),⁹⁴¹ recalled the immediate post-war period, from 1918 to 1921, when he was a boy in Akka.⁹⁴²

What made people happier was that many youths and men started returning back to their families, as the war had come to an end; soldiers and officers were coming back to their towns and houses which were filled by talk of the war. It was the topic of their conversations for a long time, recalling war affairs in their houses and cafes. Happy news however started to fade away to be replaced by new (sad) news, which made people feel worried, and we started leading a life full of worries, while some newspapers started to emerge. ... I used to sit at the *Diwan* [café] during the late evening listening to my uncle Qasim reading newspapers surrounded by the visiting leading figures of the city. There were clear feelings of worry and surprise when the newspapers would mention Zionism and the Balfour Declaration and Jewish migration to Palestine. Newspapers available at the *Diwan* included *Al-Muqattam* from Egypt, *Al-Karmil* and *Al-Nafeer* from Haifa, and *Falastin* from Jaffa.

There was evidently surprise that Near Eastern, Arab Jews welcomed what other Near Eastern Arabs rejected:

I was horrified to listen to my uncle reading in *Al-Muqattam* the news that the Jews of Egypt were thrilled by the Balfour Declaration. I still remember how the audience at the *Diwan* felt sad and frustrated when my uncle was reading in a sad tone that Jews had held a big festival in Alexandria in which they praised Great Britain for its passion and sympathy towards the Jewish aspirations regarding establishing a Jewish national home, and that after the assembly they walked happily chanting through the streets of Alexandria as part of the festival.

Churchill was once again the link between Britain and Zionism:

This feeling of being saddened became more visible at the *Diwan* when my uncle moved to *Falastin*, reading the news of the visit of Winston Churchill [in March 1921, p.98-101], the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Jerusalem, his meeting with Jewish leaders and his glorification of the Zionist movement and how he, at a big festival, planted a tree in the land upon which the Hebrew University would be built. I still remember how one of the old people from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire bureaucracy screamed to my uncle: 'Did you see what the revolution of Sharif Hussein did to us? This is the betrayal of the English. I wish we had stayed with the Ottoman state.'

Helplessness dominated:

⁹⁴¹ See Palestinian Journeys > 'Ahmad al-Shuqairi'.

⁹⁴² Al-Shukayri 1969 (Arabic); quotations translated by Yousef M. Aljamal.

Days and months passed while the city was still in chaos. People would only talk about those Jews who were permitted by Britain to migrate to our homeland and buy our lands and establish a homeland for them in our country.

Things at the time were vague and unclear. Sheikhs, who were experts in politics, used to come to our *Diwan* in scores and would discuss these issues for a long time. I would listen to their dialogues, with some of them believing the news and others thinking they were untrue. Some of them saw in the Balfour Declaration merely imagination – an impossible thing to do, as we were in our cities, villages and the Jews would not be able to occupy our homeland. Others thought that the English would not give up their friendly relations with Arabs and Muslims, while one of the visitors said Sharif Hussein would never accept this and he would revolt against the English, and that Lawrence would stand by the Arabs; the Jews would not be able to realize their greed, and all we needed to do was wait and see.

Zionism: “an impossible thing to do”. For which Britain would spend money, lives, truth and “friendly relations with Arabs and Moslems”.

1 May 1921 *Outbreak of disturbances in Jaffa in response to Zionist mass immigration. The riots soon spread to other places and leave dozens of people dead and hundreds wounded.*

8 May 1921 *‘Haj Amin al-Husseini appointed mufti (highest Muslim religious dignitary) of Jerusalem.’⁹⁴³*

⁹⁴³ Khalidi 1984, p 89.

103. Jaffa protests, Brunton to Congreve

13 May 1921

A year after the Jerusalem violence of 4-7 April 1920 [>76] came that of 1-6 May 1921 in the Jaffa district. On 8 May General W.N. Congreve, as commanding officer in Egypt responsible for Palestine, sent General Staff Intelligence Officer Captain C.D. Brunton to investigate. Brunton arrived in Jaffa on 8 May and on 13 May sent **his detailed report**⁹⁴⁴ back to Congreve in Cairo, the man who had organised the Middle East Conference about two months earlier [>98], who in turn sent it on to Churchill who submitted it to the Cabinet on 9 June with the comment, "I do not entirely accept all its statements." (p 1) Brunton's report ended with a warning:

It is impossible not to admit the truth of the conclusion that if the present British policy in Palestine is to continue unmodified a much larger garrison than the present one will be required to enforce it. ... We are not faced with a simple outbreak of mob violence, in spite of pillage and other signs of participation of criminals and evil elements of the population. The troubles in Jaffa and other parts of the country are only the expressions of a deep-seated and widely spread popular resentment at the present British policy. If that policy is not modified the outbreaks of to-day may become a revolution to-morrow. (p 4)

Modify how?

The Arab population is so incensed against the Zionists and the British because of their support of the former that we must inevitably give concessions to them. These concessions should be prohibition of Jewish immigration until it can be properly controlled and the present intensive system be definitely abolished, and representative Government for all the people in Palestine. (p 4)

This "representative government", if it meant representation blind to race and religion, was what Churchill manifestly "did not entirely accept".

The details of what triggered the wider riots, about which there is a huge literature and which would be investigated by the Haycraft Commission [>122], were summed up by Brunton as:

On the 5th May some 3,000 Arabs... had assembled to the north of the Jewish colony of Petah Takvah (Mulebbis) about 10 miles north of Jaffa. Another force of Arabs several hundred strong was preparing to attack from the south.

Britain's Indian soldiers repulsed the attacks but with considerable loss of life and limb on all sides. (pp 2-3)

But this was only the trigger. As for explanation:

The following sketch of [the] situation is given from my long and intimate connection with Palestine since 1917. Ever since our occupation of the country the inhabitants have disliked

⁹⁴⁴ CAB 24/125/31, pp 1-4 (= National Archives stamped pagination pp 220-221), all citations; also CO 733/13, pp 599-600, 'Situation in Palestine'.

the policy of founding a national home for the Jews in Palestine. This feeling has gradually developed into nothing short of bitter and widespread hostility, and the Arab population has come to regard the Zionists with hatred and the British with resentment. Mr Churchill's visit put the final touch to the picture. He upheld the Zionist cause and treated the Arab demands like those of negligible opposition to be put off by a few political phrases and treated like bad children. After this the Arabs decided to send a delegation to Europe, and funds have been collected all over Palestine and subscribed with extraordinary enthusiasm by all classes. I personally know of several cases showing how even the poor subscribed with the hope of the delegation being able to change the present British policy. ... In the state of extreme irritation of the whole Moslem and Christian population against the Zionists any kind of disturbance was sufficient to let loose the storm. (pp 1, 4)⁹⁴⁵

The explanation of the Zionists was false:

The Zionists above all would like to prove that the attack was not the outcome of the bitter antagonism which by their own methods they have excited in the hearts of the Arabs. The Zionists, therefore, are trying to substantiate a theory to the effect that the outbreak on the 1st May was premeditated by the Arabs, and that it was arranged by a few notables, encouraged by French intrigue. Nothing could be further from the truth... (p 3)

Brunton's explanation jibed with that of the suppressed Palin Court a year earlier [88] and also with the less honestly expressed assessment of the Haycraft Commission [122] which would soon start investigating these April 1921 events.

More "statements" Churchill probably "did not accept" were contained in Brunton's list of 13 Arab grievances:

The causes of the Moslem and Christian opposition to and hatred of the British Zionist policy may be shortly summed up under some of the main headings: (1.) The special privileges accorded to Jews. (2.) The influence of the Zionist Commission and the openly declared political aims of the Zionist. (3.) The use of Hebrew as an official language. (4.) The immigration of great numbers of low-class Jews. (5.) The behaviour and immorality of the immigrants. (6.) The fall in price of land, trade depression, and the prohibition of cereals⁹⁴⁶ affecting the peasantry. (7.) Arrogance of Jews towards Moslems and Christians. (8.) No representation in the Government of the country or control of expenditure being accorded to the Arabs, who realise that the money taken from them in taxes is spent on employing foreign Jewish labour instead of native, keeping up Jewish immigration offices and such-like matters. (9.) Loss of confidence in the Palestine Administration and in the British Government. (10.) The realisation of the injustice of self-government being given to nomadic savages in Trans-Jordania and refused to Palestine. (11.) Moslem and Christian religious feeling aroused by conduct and aims of the Jews. (12.) The Government attitude towards Moslem and Christian petitions, protests and complaints which are frequently not answered or disregarded while Jews appear to have at all times the ear of the administration. (13.) The use of the Zionist flag. (pp 1-2)

⁹⁴⁵ Also Ingrams 1972, pp 122-23; Kayyali 1978, pp 93-97.

⁹⁴⁶ Brunton meant the prohibition of the export of Palestinian-grown cereals, creating a glut and thus lower income for the growers.

'London' knew all about such grievances, both straight from the affected Palestinians and from for instance the report of the Palin Court of Inquiry [88], and was now hearing again from Brunton that the Balfour policy was the (sole) cause of dissent and protest. Brunton's recommendation, as we saw above, was that if HMG wanted a peaceful solution, it would have to quit allowing mass immigration and set up a "representative Government". This arguably went farther than the recommendation of Military Chief Administrator Louis Bols approximately one year earlier, on 7 June 1920, to "abolish" the Zionist Commission⁹⁴⁷ [84], since any representative government in Palestine would put into policy the will of the great majority to ditch the Jewish national home project altogether, not just the Zionist Commission. Bar that, a greatly strengthened military would be needed.⁹⁴⁸ From these early years on, HMG would again and again decide that it did not want a peaceful solution. It had suppressed the Palin report a year earlier and HMG's man in charge, Churchill, who had spent a few days in Palestine, "disagreed" with Brunton, who had worked in Egypt, Palestine and Transjordan for four years. HMG's only reaction to Brunton's views was to look into the matter once again: To investigate this new instalment of "disturbances", Herbert Samuel on 7 May appointed Palestine Chief Justice Thomas Haycraft to head a commission whose report would be published as a Command Paper in October 1921.⁹⁴⁹ [122]

May 1921 [*Samuel ordered air strikes against the Palestinians, and it was decided to bring hundreds of soldiers of the Royal Irish Constabulary to Palestine. Their leader saw the irony in the fact that the RIC had 'had to leave Ireland because of the principle of self-determination and were sent to Palestine to resist the Arab attempt at self-determination.'*]⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁷ FO 371/5119, p 106.

⁹⁴⁸ Also Kayyali 1978, p 97.

⁹⁴⁹ Haycraft 1921. Cmd. 1540.

⁹⁵⁰ Cronin 2017, pp 21-22.

On 31 May 1921 Colonial Secretary Churchill “secretly” told the Cabinet of “the pronounced suspicions of Zionism among the local inhabitants” but that he

paid a high tribute to the success of the Zionist colonies of long standing, which had created a standard of living far superior to that of the indigenous Arabs.⁹⁵¹ ... [B]y strict control... of the quality and number of the Zionists he hoped to be able to fulfil our undertaking. [However] recent rioting and loss of life at Jaffa proved the need for... the maintenance of a considerable garrison. ... The development of representative institutions in Palestine was at present suspended owing to the fact that any elected body would undoubtedly prohibit further immigration of Jews.⁹⁵²

He was agreeing with Intelligence Officer Brunton that many soldiers would be needed, but in his view it was worth it. He was also saying that “representative institutions” would have to wait because “any elected body” would by “prohibiting” further Jewish immigration prevent the Jewish national home, which required a population. Churchill presented the Cabinet with the choice between a democratic Palestine or a Zionist Palestine.

Churchill’s attitude was apparent in his specific rejection a bit earlier of the mooted Colonial Office idea of “placing Advisory Council on elective basis” at least “until the Mandate has been approved”, saying that the “institution of an elected council is in any case such an important measure that I cannot approve it off-hand.”⁹⁵³ And in a telegram to Samuel on 2 June 1921 he allowed that

The special recognition accorded to Zionist bodies arises out of special conditions attached to the mandate, viz.: establishment of National home for Jews. There appear to be no grounds for giving similar non-official representation to other elements.⁹⁵⁴

I do not know whether the Colonial Secretary referred in person to the non-Jewish Palestinians as “elements”.

In fact, specific issues of proportional representation were at that time being discussed, and

In regard to the allegations that insufficient Arabs had been included in the Palestine Administration, Mr Churchill stated that Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner, had given him a complete reply on every point.⁹⁵⁵

While representativeness of “elected bodies” was rejected on political grounds, Churchill took Samuel’s word for it that it was fulfilled as far as Administration *appointments* were concerned – although Arabs never filled anywhere near 90% of appointed positions.

⁹⁵¹ See also Van Dyke 1908, *passim*.

⁹⁵² CAB 23/25/29, pp 321, 322; also Ingrams 1972, p 124.

⁹⁵³ CO 733/3, pp 180–81, Churchill to Samuel 14 May 1921; see Kayyali 1978, p 98.

⁹⁵⁴ CO 733/3, p 387; Ghandour 2010, p 134, citing CO 733/3.

⁹⁵⁵ CAB 23/25/29, p 322.

The British wanted the Palestine and Mesopotamia mandates without delay. The Cabinet agreed with Churchill that “the suggestion that... the Draft Mandates... should be held up owing to the American opposition should be strongly combated.”⁹⁵⁶ And on 4 June 1921 Churchill would warn the High Commissioners of Mesopotamia and Palestine of the “serious risk” that a majority of the Council of the League of Nations would vote against Britain to indeed postpone the mandates – what were their comments?⁹⁵⁷

Samuel for his part replied on 4 June⁹⁵⁸ that the only advantage to postponement in Geneva of adoption of the mandate would be that its adoption “in its present form without consultation or agreement with Moslem and Christian delegations” would cause “a widespread outbreak here”. Disadvantageous, on the other hand, would be that a postponement would “weaken the authority of the administration” and “prevent provision of capital by loan and execution of public works programme”. Postponement was however better than holding a vote resulting in rejection of the mandates, because this would be “reopening whole question of future of Palestine [>8; >15; >30]”. “It would be the least damaging course if postponement could be attributed to delay in the ratification of the treaty [of Sèvres, >92] owing to Turkish discussion.” Or else the League of Nations should be bypassed altogether, with the French and British to unilaterally “put into effect *de facto* the [*inter alia* pro-Balfour Declaration] provisions of the treaty.”

The Middle East Department of the Colonial Office (set up on or shortly after 14 February 1921 by Colonial Secretary Churchill, with Shuckburgh, Meinertzhagen and Hubert Young in the top 3 positions [see also >59])⁹⁵⁹ in a “note” on 8 June then regretted that the Cairo conference [>98] had not succeeded in reducing the cost of the to-be-mandated territories to the British Treasury; to date “over one hundred million pounds” had been spent and many further millions would be unavoidable; yet even if the expense were deemed worth it, the main problem remained:

In Palestine the mandate as at present drafted commits the mandatory to following a policy which is unpopular with the people of the country... The High Commissioner for Palestine [Samuel] has recommended at the eleventh hour that Article 4 of the Palestine mandate, which provides for the Zionist Organization being recognised as an advisory body to the Administration, should be watered down or sterilised by the insertion of a similar article providing for the recognition of a non-Zionist body. In other words, it is almost universally recognised that the mandates cannot be maintained in their present form. ... [I]t would at the present stage be impossible to obtain the consent of a representative Government in Palestine or of any body fairly representative of the country as a whole to those terms of the Palestine mandate which deal with the National Home for the Jewish people.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁶ CAB 23/25/29, p 322.

⁹⁵⁷ CAB 24/125/41, p 1 (National Archives stamped pagination p 261)

⁹⁵⁸ CAB 24/125/41, p 2, all further quotations.

⁹⁵⁹ Also Tibawi 1977, p 470.

⁹⁶⁰ CAB 24/125/41, p 3.

These officials of the Middle East Department added that even if there were one “undivided Syria and Palestine [including Lebanon and Transjordan]”, thereby making the Jewish home look relatively small and unobjectionable, the Arabs would probably still reject “the Zionist policy in Palestine”.

Next, the Department conceded that the only criterion the League of Nations had to go on for *allocating* the mandated territories to the Mandatories was “the wishes of the communities” laid down in its Covenant, Art. 22 §4 (second sentence) [46]. However (for both Mesopotamia and Palestine, by the way) “the mandates in their present form... would not be accepted as a final settlement by any representative authorities in the countries concerned.” In this bind, the Department

feel... that if it is decided to postpone consideration of the mandates it is equally necessary that the initiative should appear to come from His Majesty’s Government and that it should be explained as being due to a desire to consult the wishes of the inhabitants of Palestine and Mesopotamia.⁹⁶¹

The League of Nations would be told the double-untruth that the British needed time to find out the already-known “wishes of the communities”.

Finally, to “get our position legalised” in spite of its contradicting Article 22 of the Covenant, which would require acceptance by the local population, the Department proposed that HMG make

a reservation in the case of Palestine to the effect that their prior declaration on the subject of the Jewish National Home carries as much weight with them [HMG] as the provision referred to in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.⁹⁶²

In the end, though, the Cabinet deemed it unwise to thus ignore or circumvent the League of Nations.

As would always be the case during the whole period covered by this chronology, a political compromise simply did not exist:

Whereas the purpose of other mandates was preparing the natives for self-government, the Palestine Administration was committed to a policy of ‘immobilism’ since self-government for the Arab majority in Palestine was inconsistent with the Jewish National Home policy.⁹⁶³

Against this background the British could only stick with their violent, non-verbal methods.

29 May – 4 June 1921 *At the 4th Palestinian National Congress, convening in Jerusalem, Musa Qassem Al-Husseini is elected chairman and Aref Ad-Dajani as vice-chairman. The conferees decide to send a Palestinian delegation led by Al-Husseini to London to explain the Palestinian case against the Balfour Declaration.*

⁹⁶¹ CAB 24/125/41, pp 4, 5.

⁹⁶² CAB 24/125/41, p 5.

⁹⁶³ Kayyali 1978, p 95; also Khalidi 2006, pp 38-46.

105.* Samuel's King's-birthday speech, etc.

3 June 1921

High Commissioner Herbert Samuel must have seen that Colonial Secretary Churchill had come too close to telling the truth about denying democracy in favour of the Jewish national home [>100-104], and for a few weeks in May and June 1921 he conceded to a reduction of Jewish immigration. As the new ruler he himself when on a tour of Palestine in April 1921 had been confronted with Arabs holding banners reading "Palestine is our country" and "Down with Zionism".⁹⁶⁴ Therefore, as he had done during the uproar accompanying his appointment in June 1920, he unpacked conciliatory language for **his King's-birthday speech** on 3 June 1921 in Jerusalem.⁹⁶⁵

First he lauded his plans for many more schools, Government agricultural loans, and improved roads, railways, communications and ports as well as breeds of horses, cattle and donkeys; he repeated his statement of 7 July 1920 [>89] that Jewish immigration's "extent must be proportional to the employment available in the country". The Jaffa disturbances were only two months previous, so Samuel asserted that "Immigration has been suspended pending a review of the situation" – only to immediately say that it had not been suspended, only somewhat reduced to a level below "mass immigration".⁹⁶⁶ Arab unemployment, though, does not figure as a factor in the speech. He proposed "to take immediate steps with a view of ensuring closer consultation on administrative matters of importance..." and promised an "instrument" or "constitution" protecting the "non-Jewish population". The focus remained fixed on material and administrative issues.

He closed in placatory mode:

I hear it said in many quarters, that the Arab people will not agree to their country, their Holy Places, their lands being taken from them and given to strangers; that they will never agree to a Jewish Government being set up to rule the Moslem and Christian majority. People say that they cannot understand how it is that the British Government, which is famous throughout the world for its justice, could ever have consented to such a policy. I answer that the British Government, which does indeed care for justice above all things, has never consented and never will consent to such a policy. That is not the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. It may be that the translation of the English words into Arabic does not convey their real sense. They mean that the Jews, a people who are scattered throughout the world, but whose hearts are always turned to Palestine, should be enabled to found there their home, and that some among them, within the limits which are fixed by the numbers and interests of the present population, should come to Palestine in order to help by their resources and efforts to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants.

Samuel was shifting some blame to the technical problem of translation.

⁹⁶⁴ Ingrams 1972, p 120; Tibawi 1977, p 494; both citing FO 371/6375.

⁹⁶⁵ FO 371/6375, pp 160-61, all citations; Wasserstein 1978, p 110; Tibawi 1977, pp 433-34; Huneidi 2001, pp 131, 136; Smith 1996, p 72.

⁹⁶⁶ Also CAB 24/127/13, p 3.

While the “British Government” might at a stretch be exonerated from intending Jewish-Zionist political domination of the indigenous, Samuel himself, as shown by his January 1915 tract [>8], and as will be conclusively shown in the second half of this entry, indeed aimed at exactly that, as did Churchill [>327]. He was pulling the wool over his listeners eyes. More specifically, as Samuel’s next four years as High Commissioner would prove, his promise that immigration would be “within the limits which are fixed by the numbers and interests of the present population” – however vague this phrase was – was dishonest, as the clearly expressed “interests” of the indigenous population was that there should be no such immigration. And actions speak louder than words, even on the King’s birthday: Under a revised ordinance on the same day as this speech Samuel re-allowed Jewish immigration at a rate of up to 16,500 per year. 5,514 European Jews had immigrated during the last four months of 1920 after the previous temporary ‘suspension’ after the riots of early May, 1920.⁹⁶⁷

Sly as well as cheeky was Samuel’s claim that the famous British Government would never ever allow a (“Jewish”) minority to rule a (“Moslem and Christian”) majority. Literally, this was true: Jewish rule was envisioned only once the Jews had gradually become a majority.⁹⁶⁸ His bottom line, though, was that Jews’ “hearts” trumped the concerns, not to say the emotional and economic *interests*, of the local population.

Next, what did the Palestinians make of the following statement in the speech?

For the British Government, the trustee under the Mandate for the happiness of the people of Palestine, would never impose upon them a policy which that people had reason to think was contrary to their religious, their political, and their economic interests.

Unravelling this: Since the people obviously did think British policy “was contrary to... their interests”, rhetorical refuge could only be found in the inserted phrase “that people had reason to think”. Samuel could say, that is, as did countless British politicians during the Mandate, that the Palestinians had no (good) reason to think as they did. They had only irrational fears; Zionism was for their own good. Although it is tedious to say it, the Palestinians’ “political... interests” were *by definition* those they choose for themselves, not something inside the brain of a foreign High Commissioner.

Of this passage Tibawi asks,

For whom was this hypocritical nonsense intended? Ignoring the introduction of the religious element before anything else, no doubt as a tactical diversion, did Samuel really believe his own words? Was not Churchill the last member of the British government who had just sanctioned the use of force to impose the Zionist policy that deprived the Arabs of Palestine of their fundamental political rights and put their economic rights in jeopardy? What was the policy Samuel himself was imposing in the name of the British government other than denial of self-government to the Arab majority?⁹⁶⁹ [see also >126]

⁹⁶⁷ See <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Books/Story835.html>

⁹⁶⁸ See the five numbered points just below (in this entry) as well as the Theme Index for the 78 entries containing this principle that democracy must wait for the demographic shift.

⁹⁶⁹ Tibawi 1977, p 497.

Nobody with Samuel's intellectual wherewithal could have believed the British were not acting contrary to the political interests of the locals. Samuel's problems – his deficits – were ethical and psychological.

Also contradicting this claim (of doing no harm) and the speech's gentlemanly tone was the speech's introduction for the first time of the seemingly non-political criterion for limits on Jewish immigration, namely Palestine's "economic absorptive capacity" – rather than its socio-political or ethical absorptive capacity.⁹⁷⁰ For on two levels immigration did do harm: in terms of land and employment and in political terms, for if the Palestinians' consistent call for independence meant anything, it meant they wanted to decide immigration policy, like all other policies, for themselves.

This is the best place to give some more indication of Samuel's hypocritical, mendacious stances during the 1915-1925 decade. In full contradiction to this placatory speech of 3 June 1921 are not only the text of Samuel's 'The Future of Palestine' [>8], but five further statements of his true aims:

1. In November 1918 Samuel had chaired a Special Committee of the Zionist Organization in preparation for the Peace Conference in Versailles beginning in early 1919. [>35] That Committee recommended "as essential, that in any nominated body appointed to take part in the government of the country, a proportion of the members, adequate for the purpose of giving effect to the policy of the [Balfour] Declaration, should be representatives of the Jewish Population, and of the Jewish Council hereinafter mentioned. ... The establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine is understood to mean, that the country of Palestine should be placed under such political, economic and moral conditions, as will favour the increase of the Jewish population, so that in accordance with the principles of democracy it may ultimately develop into a Jewish Commonwealth."⁹⁷¹ "Commonwealth", as not only Curzon had perceived [>15; >20; >34; >38; >59; >72], was another disguise for 'state'. Furthermore, mathematically the only "proportion of the members" of "any nominated body" that would be "adequate" for the implementation of Zionism would be a proportion in excess of 50%. Imagine if Samuel had read this Committee resolution out loud as part of his King's Birthday Speech.
2. At Samuel's house in London on 10 May 1919 was held the 'Fifth Meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Palestine Office' with the "Right Hon Herbert Samuel in the Chair."⁹⁷² I do not yet know the status of this 'Palestine Office', i.e. whether it was an organ of the British Government or the Zionist Organisation, but it met in connection with the post-war Paris negotiations and its membership overlapped with that of the Zionist Commission [>23]. In addition to seven Zionist figures such as James de Rothschild and Drs. Weizmann and Jacobson, Samuel and other British officials were in attendance, including: Arnold Toynbee, William Ormsby-Gore (MP and later Colonial Secretary), current Chief Administrator in Palestine Arthur Money, a Lieut. Col. Gribbon, and Commander D.G. Hogarth [>21; >25; >28; >36]. Ormsby-Gore said the point of this Committee was to prepare for some "body representing the Zionist Organisation" to receive land and concessions for economic development and the "redemption of Palestine". (pp 86-88) [*see* >146] When Hogarth asked how it could be possible for "the Mandatory power to

⁹⁷⁰ Again, FO 371/6375, pp 160-61.

⁹⁷¹ FO 371/3385, pp 207-09; Ingrams 1972, p 53; *see also* Jeffries 1939, p 92.

⁹⁷² Friedman 1987, pp 77-96, reproducing C.Z.A. Z4/16045, *also further citations*.

impose its will on the Moslem majority of the country”, Samuel replied merely that it would happen, adding that “on a level with the establishment ultimately of the Jewish Palestine... all Arabic economic interests” had to be protected and that “we will not take any going back on the [Balfour] Declaration”. (pp 91-92, 96) Weizmann, with Samuel’s concurrence, said that even President Wilson was against applying “the principles of self determination... to backward populations...”. (p 95)

3. Celebrating the second anniversary of the Balfour Declaration at the London Opera House on 2 November 1919 [see also >17] Samuel “said that while the Zionist movement did not intend to turn Palestine into a ‘purely Jewish state’ *immediately*, its aim was to create as soon as possible ‘a purely self-governing Commonwealth under the auspices of an established Jewish majority’.”⁹⁷³ He told the crowd, “The immediate establishment of a complete and purely Jewish State in Palestine [which he called an “impracticable proposal”] would mean placing a majority under the rule of a minority; it would therefore be contrary to the first principles of democracy, and would undoubtedly be disapproved by the public opinion of the world.”⁹⁷⁴ The Jewish state couldn’t happen “immediately”, and democracy would have to wait for a “Jewish majority”; but these thoughts were not uttered on 3 June. [also >327]
4. In July 1920 one of the Assistant Administrators at Military Headquarters, the Acting Governor of Jerusalem Colonel E. L. Popham, asked Samuel what he would be getting into if he stayed on in Samuel’s civil administration, specifically seeking reassurance that the term ‘national home’ “excluded any idea of Jewish governmental control at any time over Palestine” – to which Samuel answered, “I regret that I cannot reassure you about this. The policy of His Majesty’s Government, which I have come out to execute, is to encourage the immigration of Jews until a point shall be reached – it may be fifty or even a hundred years hence – at which their interests shall be sufficiently predominant to warrant the establishment of a Jewish government in Palestine.”⁹⁷⁵ Popham resigned.
5. In a letter to his niece in late 1920, about five months before the ominous riots and seven months before his King’s-Birthday speech, he said immigration would be “accelerated” so that in about “fifty years ... there may be that which might properly be called a Jewish country with a Jewish State. It is that prospect which rightly evokes such fine enthusiasm, and it is the hope of realizing that future which makes me ready to sacrifice much in the present.”⁹⁷⁶ His main reason for coming to Palestine, that is, was to do what he told his audience on 3 June he was not going to do.

First comes the correct racial/religious group, then comes democracy, a principle later practiced by the National Socialists in Germany. This philosophy is the key to understanding what the British said to the Palestinians for 30 years.

More concretely, and aside from this question of which group was in the majority, Mazin Qumsiyeh’s terse indictment of Samuel includes: under-representation of Arabs in government posts (Jews, with about 10% of the population, filled 60% of the posts); his nur-

⁹⁷³ Khalidi 1997, p 166, *emphasis added*.

⁹⁷⁴ Wasserstein 1978, p 76. See also this same democracy-later view of Claude Montefiore quoted in entry >16.

⁹⁷⁵ Jeffries 1939, p 389, *citing* E.L. Popham, personal communication.

⁹⁷⁶ Wasserstein 1978, p 88, *emphasis added*; Huneidi 2001, p 96.

turing of the Haganah; his refusal to recognise the Palestine Arab Congress as dialogue partner; a liberal immigration policy; and a set of land-ownership and -sale regulations which effected increased Zionist ownership with accompanying Arab dispossession and landlessness.⁹⁷⁷

In addition, Samuel's heads of the Immigration (Albert Hyamson), Lands (Albert Abramson), Customs (Harari) and Legal (Norman Bentwich) Departments were all pro-Zionist British Jews, and the head of the Secretariat was the "passionate Gentile Zionist, Wyndham Deedes",⁹⁷⁸ who would however soon have severe second thoughts [p.126]. Speaking of his personnel, in a letter to Weizmann in August 1921 Samuel moreover bluntly revealed why he needed such Zionist allies at the top:

It is quite true that a great many, I might say almost all, of the British officials in Palestine are not sympathetic to a Zionist policy which would be detrimental to the Arabs, and are not prepared to carry out with any goodwill a policy which is likely to result in a regime of coercion. But if the whole of the present staff were changed and replaced by others chosen by yourself, in six months the newcomers would hold precisely the same view.⁹⁷⁹

In Samuel's view, that is, British officials who were not Jewish would end up opposing Zionism, evidently because they would realise that any "Zionist policy" was in fact "detrimental to the Arabs". At any rate, a "regime of coercion" there would be.

When a year later Weizmann denounced Samuel's conciliatory King's-Birthday speech at a private meeting with Churchill, Balfour and Lloyd George, the latter two calmed him down, re-assuring him that "they always meant an eventual Jewish State" and that whatever Samuel might say, they rejected "representative government" in Palestine.⁹⁸⁰ Four months later, on 5 October 1921 at the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, Young wrote accurately to Shuckburgh that "the non-Jewish population of Palestine does not, and will not, believe that His Majesty's Government really intend to confine their interpretation of the Balfour Declaration to that enunciated by the High Commissioner on the 3rd of June."⁹⁸¹

⁹⁷⁷ Qumsiyeh 2011, pp 55-57, 60.

⁹⁷⁸ Furlonge 1969, pp 89-90.

⁹⁷⁹ Wasserstein 1978, p 142, citing CZA Z4/16151.

⁹⁸⁰ Huneidi 2001, p 59.

⁹⁸¹ CO 733/17B, p 689.

106. Churchill to Parliament

14 June 1921

Defending the policy of bringing in European immigrants, **Churchill in the House of Commons** on 14 June 1921⁹⁸² first praised his country for having militarily liberated the Arabs from Turkish rule; but it couldn't just therefore do whatever it wanted, for at the same time it was bound by "pledges... solemnly accepted", made to the whole world, including Arabs and Jews, HMG being "sincere" in its "resolute effort to redeem our obligations". (cc266-67)

Early in his speech he addressed the so-called obligation to the Jews:

We are at this moment in possession of these countries [Mesopotamia and Palestine]. ... We cannot, after what we have said and done, leave the Jews in Palestine to be maltreated by the Arabs who have been inflamed against them,... I defy anybody, after seeing work of this kind [the Zionist colonies], achieved by so much labour, effort and skill, to say that the British Government, having taken up the position it has, could cast it all aside and leave it to be rudely and brutally overturned by the incursion of a fanatical attack by the Arab population from outside. It would be disgraceful if we allowed anything of the kind to take place. (cc266-67, 286)

Who had "inflamed" the "brutal" and "fanatical" Arabs against "the Jews in Palestine"?

The speech was mainly intended to justify to Parliament the great, mostly military, expenditures incurred by taking over Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine; coercing the Palestinians to accept the Jewish national home, in particular, would cause expenditures:

The cause of unrest in Palestine, and the only cause, arises from the Zionist movement, and from our promises and pledges in regard to it. But for these promises, and this movement, there is no doubt that the garrison maintained at the British expense in Palestine could be sensibly reduced. (c283)

Churchill thus shared the conclusion of the Palin Court [>88], the Palestinians [>99], Intelligence officer Brunton [>103] and the currently active Haycraft Commission [>122] as to the causes of "disturbances" in Palestine and their cost to Britain: Britain's political plans.

He continued with utter candour:

The difficulty about this promise of a national home for the Jew in Palestine is that it conflicts with our regular policy of consulting the wishes of the people in the mandated territories and of giving them representative institutions as soon as they are fit for them, which institution, in this case they would use to veto any further Jewish immigration. (c284)

Did he think no Arabs were listening?

In the event, political support in Parliament for this position came from Labour Party spokesman Josiah Wedgwood. Behind Labour's pro-Zionism were Sidney Webb [later Lord Passfield, see >116] and Ramsay MacDonald, Colonial Secretary and Prime Minister, respec-

⁹⁸² Hansard 1921, cc265-88, all quotations; CO 733/13, pp 628-29; Ingrams 1972, pp 130-31.

tively, during the turbulent and deciding years for Palestine, 1929-31. MacDonald, author of the 'Black Letter' of 13 February 1931 [246], would however soon realise that to support Zionism, since the Arabs were the overwhelming majority, it was necessary

to explain why Jewish self-determination should have priority over Arab self-determination. ... Ramsay MacDonald, writing in the wake of his 1922 visit to Palestine, cited two... considerations to argue that the Arab claim to self-determination was deprived of 'complete validity': the first was that 'Palestine and the Jews could never be separated'; and the second 'that the Arab population do not and cannot use or develop the resources of Palestine.'⁹⁸³ [see also 242]

These two arguments were ubiquitous, both for Churchill and for his domestic, Labourite political opponents: 1) the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine and 2) the primacy of economic development rather than political independence, on the assumption that the Palestinians left to themselves would leave Palestine derelict, i.e. not 'develop' it in the way the British wanted. The very military presence of Britain meant that the Palestinians were denied the right to choose their own mixture of purported dereliction and purported development.

Concerning the immigration necessary for the Jewish national home, Churchill continued:

It is not so much the number of the immigrants which has created the alarm, but the continuous and ardent declarations of the Zionist organisations throughout the world – which they have a perfect right to make – of their hope and aim of making Palestine a predominantly Jewish country, peopled by Jews from all over the world, and also the fear that these Jews will come principally from Central Europe, and particularly from Russia. The Arabs believe that in the next few years they are going to be swamped by scores of thousands of immigrants from Central Europe, who will push them off the land, eat up the scanty substance of the country and eventually gain absolute control of its institutions and destinies. As a matter of fact these fears are illusory. (c285)⁹⁸⁴

Another of his delusional ideas about the future concerned HMG's High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, whom he seemed to believe could take the force out of the "continuous and ardent declarations" and thus quell Arab fears:

However, we have there Sir Herbert Samuel, who is so well known to many Members of this House; a skilful, practised, experienced liberal politician – qualities of which it is very necessary to have an ample supply in the government of so widespread and various an empire as ours. He is also a most ardent Zionist. (c285)

This was followed by quotation of an emotional passage from Samuel's 3 June 1921 'King's-birthday' speech in Jerusalem. [105]

He also adopted from that speech by Samuel the immigration criterion defined as limited by the 'economic [not political or ethical] absorptive capacity' of the country: "No Jew

⁹⁸³ Kelemen 1996, p 73, citing inter alia MacDonald, *A Socialist in Palestine*, p 18.

⁹⁸⁴ Also Haycraft 1921, pp 52-57 [122] and CAB 24/215/1, §7, 14 [230].

will be brought in beyond the number who can be provided for by the expanding wealth and development of the resources of the country.” Thus, “There really is nothing for the Arabs to be frightened about.” (c286)

Churchill furthermore named a reason for sticking loud, clear and often with the Balfour Declaration, namely that in abandoning it Britain would lose face; establishing the Jewish national home,

at any rate, is the task upon which we have embarked, and which I think we are bound to pursue. We cannot possibly agree to allow the Jewish colonies to be wrecked, or all future immigration to be stopped, without definitely accepting the position that the word of Britain no longer counts throughout the East and the Middle East. (c287)

This argument for continuation of an admittedly politically and financially costly, anti-democratic policy – namely that reputation counts for more in the end, and depends on not changing one’s mind – would likewise be regarded as decisive two summers later by the Cavendish Cabinet Committee on Palestine which was re-examining HMG’s Zionist policies: even in the face of much evidence of the folly of the National Home policy, not least from Britain’s point of view, that Committee and the whole Cabinet, which included George Curzon, would decide that, cost what it may, Britain’s word had to be its word. [>159; >165; >167]

The Colonial Secretary, who two decades later as Prime Minister would overturn the pro-democratic, anti-Zionist (Malcolm) MacDonald White Paper [>410; >415; >418; >424], also reassured the House of Commons that sharp British bayonets were in readiness for cases where policy does not enjoy the consent of the governed:

Our task, using a phrase of the late Lord Salisbury, will be to persuade one side to concede and the other to forbear, but keeping a reasonable margin of force available in order to ensure the acceptance of the position of both parties. (c287)⁹⁸⁵ [see also >327]

A “reasonable margin of force.” Although the recent Jaffa disturbances [>103; >122] had cost about 400 lives, Churchill insisted that “I do not think it is an unmanageable situation...” (c287)

In this debate Earl Winterton, although an anti-Zionist, also thought the situation (barely) manageable (cc292-99), while Esmond Harmsworth (son of press magnate Lord Rothermere, J.M.N. Jeffries’ employer) urged HMG not to take the Mesopotamia and Palestine mandates for financial reasons; the \$27,000,000 Churchill was asking for in this debate, for instance, was simply unaffordable for post-War Britain (cc330-32)⁹⁸⁶.

⁹⁸⁵ See also Jeffries 1939, p 538.

⁹⁸⁶ See also CAB 24/127/13, p 39; >117.

Just one illustration of how the Administration was administering on the ground is the record of the mixed indigenous/Jewish-Zionist **Advisory Council's ninth meeting** (second session) on 14 & 15 June 1921, with "His Excellency" High Commissioner Herbert Samuel and Attorney General Norman Bentwich speaking for the Palestine Government. Also attending were Col. Bromley, Mr. Symes, Wyndham Deedes, Major General P.G. Grant, R.A. Harari, C.D. Harvey, G. Heron, Ismail Bey El-Husseini, H.M. Kalvarisky, Abdul El Khatib, Freih Abu Middin, Habib Salem, H.W. Smallwood, Ronald Storrs, Suleiman Abdul Razak Toukan, Suleiman Nassif, D. Yellin, and H.E. Bowman, the Arabic-speaking Mandate director of Arabs' education who was well-integrated into Jerusalem society⁹⁸⁷. The minutes of this meeting are a good example of the relatively trivial remit of this (unelected) Council: a new Companies Law, road transport fees, regulation of Notaries Public, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Ordinance, etc.⁹⁸⁸

At this second session, however, the discussion over a possible Ordinance for municipal elections revealed more general problems of representative government which got to the gist of one of the Palestinians' main problems with the British. While the Government proposed registers of voters according to their religion, and mooted "for example" dividing up seats on the non-proportional ratio of 50% Moslems, 25% Christians and 25% Jews,

The members [of the Advisory Council] considered that in each town the number of Moslems, Christians and Jews to be members of the Municipal Council should be mixed with regard to the numbers of each community in the town.⁹⁸⁹

Likewise in accordance with democratic principles, Samuel's draft of a "Municipal Franchise Ordinance" sent to Churchill in mid-July foresaw that

the Governor of the District shall, prior to any election, determine the number of Moslems, Christians and Jews to be elected to the Municipal Council; which shall be as far as possible proportionate to the number of Moslems, Christians and Jews who are on the list of electors.⁹⁹⁰

How "far" was "possible" was however not specified, and one wonders what the reason was for this qualifier. Later, at the tenth Advisory Council meeting on 19 July, Samuel similarly proposed that "the communities must have a fixed proportion" but did not commit to the principle that these 'proportions' would be proportional to population.⁹⁹¹

In any event, theoretical *national*, rather than municipal, elections would not follow the proportionality principle, as this would contradict the Balfour Declaration: as Churchill

⁹⁸⁷ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 182.

⁹⁸⁸ CO 733/4, pp 102-18.

⁹⁸⁹ CO 733/4, pp 124-25.

⁹⁹⁰ CO 733/4, p 434.

⁹⁹¹ CO 733/4, p 585.

on 11 August would write secretly to the Cabinet on the topic of such possible country-wide representative councils: "In the interests of the Zionist policy, all elective institutions have so far been refused to the Arabs, and they naturally contrast their treatment with that of their fellows in Mesopotamia."⁹⁹²

⁹⁹² CO 733/14, p 53 and CAB 24/127/13, p 39; Kayyali 1978, pp 101-02.

Writing to the Colonial Office on 22 June 1921,⁹⁹³ Samuel wanted to create special armed Jewish defence forces, but not out in the open like one of the recently de-mobilised Jewish battalions from World War I, but rather as auxiliary reserve forces; the reason was that “violent controversy would probably result from their being embodied [in regular battalions] for training.” Churchill had at that time agreed that a 500-strong “[Jewish] gendarmerie section of civil police should receive as efficient a training as possible”, and that that number was sufficient for now, but “If at any time you [Samuel] should so desire I should be prepared to consider proposals for their increase.” Interestingly it was the relatively pro-Zionist Shuckburgh who in commenting on Samuel’s message reminded all concerned that the best protection of the Jews from armed Arabs was not Jewish armed groups but

political reform in Palestine. When the Arabs realise that we are in earnest about this, and that our assurances that they are not to be swamped by Jewish immigrants are something more than mere words, it may be hoped that they will settle down contentedly under the new regime...

Logically, the only thing Shuckburgh could have been suggesting was a version of the unrelinquishable Jewish national home with significantly reduced immigration, but he does not mention the further, deeper reason for Arabs’ not “settling down” – their lack of the independence to determine their own immigration policy. [*also >123*]

On 23 June 1921 Samuel additionally wrote to headquarters in London: “I wish to say [to the Arab Delegation preparing to leave for London] from the first that it has always been the intention of the Government to proceed with the formation of self-governing institutions”, to which Churchill replied by paraphrasing what he had said to the House of Commons on 14 June⁹⁹⁴ [*>106*], namely that the wishes of the people could not, contrary to regular British policy, be consulted, because this would stymie Jewish immigration.

⁹⁹³ CO 733/4, pp 59-64, *all citations*.

⁹⁹⁴ Hansard 1921, c284; Ghandour 2010, p 135.

VII. “There was nothing to say.”

109.* 4th Palestine Arab Congress

late May-late June 1921

The 4th Palestine Arab Congress was held in Jerusalem off and on from 29 May til late June 1921. It elected Musa Kazem al-Husseini as Chairman and Aref ad-Dajani as Vice-Chairman and was attended by a PAC quorum, namely 80-100 delegates from Jerusalem, Yaffa, Haifa, Safad, Tiberias, Jenin, Nablus, Gaza, Lydda and Ramleh.⁹⁹⁵ On the agenda were practical matters like finances and the publication, in Arabic and English, of a weekly newspaper as the Congress organ – as well as the manufacture of “Buttons to be embossed with ‘Union of Palestine’”, the slogan later being changed by majority vote to “Free and Independent Palestine”. (p 606) It also discussed the proposed (Haycraft) Commission of Enquiry into the most recent Jaffa disturbances of May 1921 [>103; >122] and voted to send a six-man delegation, with two secretaries, to London.

In the English rendering by a British official who was either present at the sessions or had inside information, Musa Kazem’s opening speech included:

The purpose of this Fourth Arab Congress and its sittings is not only to discuss the recent Jaffa events, which are a result of the enemy immigration into Palestine, and the declarations made by Churchill during his stay in Palestine [>100]. We have to resist everything which others will want to make of our country in the future. (p 607)

Nevertheless contact with the British “others” was unavoidable, and a separate delegation was also selected to visit the High Commissioner, as covered in the next entry [>110].

The membership of the Delegation to London largely overlapped with the one which paid High Commissioner Samuel a visit. Because “well-known agitator” Khalil Sakakini ran a school in Cairo, a metropolis offering better communication between the Near East and London than anywhere in Palestine, he was chosen as liaison member between the Congress and the Delegation to London. Facing no travel ban by Samuel, yet lacking a formal government invitation, the 1st Palestine Arab Delegation would arrive in the British capital on 8 or 9 August 1921. [>117]

⁹⁹⁵ CO 733/13, pp 606-613, ‘Report on the Fourth Arab Congress’, *all quotations*; Ayyad 1999, pp 92-93.

The delegation selected by the 4th PAC to visit High Commissioner Samuel consisted of Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husseini, Hajj Tawfiq Hammad, Muein El-Madi, and Ibrahim Shamas; according to British minutes of the meeting this “MCA [Moslem-Christian Association]/Haifa-Congress Delegation” **were met at Government House** by Samuel, Chief Civil Secretary Wyndham Deedes, Ernest T. Richmond and the Governor of Jerusalem on 23 June 1921, two days before the high point of the 4th Palestine Arab Congress [>109].⁹⁹⁶ They were requesting the needed permission to go to London as a Moslem-Christian Delegation to appeal to Samuel’s superiors to recognise them as dialogue partner. According to Musa Kazem Samuel had “six months ago... entirely refused to recognise the Body they were acting for, and in going to London they hoped they might come to some agreement with the present Government there on various points.” (p 154) Both Deedes and Richmond, by the way, a short while later turned against Zionism.

I will quote extensively from **this exchange** because it is typical of many others. Samuel’s opener:

I can well understand that there are many people in this country who have doubts whether the Government of this country will really carry into effect those safeguards [promised in the Balfour Declaration and in his 3 June speech (>105)]. They have been accustomed to Governments which say one thing and do another. That is not the way of the British Government. If it gives guarantees those guarantees will be put into force... As I have mentioned to you on more than one occasion, and as has been publicly stated both by myself here and by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons [>106], the British Government is not prepared to abandon the principle embodied in the Balfour Declaration. That Declaration is embodied in the Treaty of Sèvres [>92] and in the decisions of the San Remo Conference [>78]. Nor is it possible to exclude all immigration from Palestine. Immigration will be regulated on the principles embodied in the statement.

The phrase “the principle” co-opted for the Zionists the entire Balfour Declaration, since it implied there was only one principle. As usual, there was the need to rely on the purported authority of the other ‘Powers’ convening in San Remo or Sèvres, and it was declared “impossible” to make immigration dependent on Palestinian permission. That is, a corollary of Samuel’s words would be: ‘We promised you we would deny you your self-determination, and we are keeping the promise.’ Samuel added that “At the same time I feel convinced that a policy can be adopted on the lines of my Declaration of June 3rd [>105] which is not injurious to the interests of the Moslem and Christian population of this country.” He and HMG behind him knew what was best.

Samuel then simply dodged Musa Kazem’s question whether Britain regarded the Palestine Arab Congress as accurately representing the views of Palestine’s Palestinians. Con-

⁹⁹⁶ CO 733/4, pp 152-57, all quotations. Also Ingrams 1972, pp 138-39.

cerning self-governing institutions, Samuel had in his introductory remarks repeated utterances from his King's-Birthday speech [>105] to the effect that the British Government will honestly respect non-Jews' rights, and he now announced:

I have now received authorization ... to establish an *elective basis* for the Advisory Council, so that the people may feel that they have representatives chosen by themselves... [I]t has always been the intention of the Government to proceed with the formation of self-governing institutions. ... [B]ut it is difficult to proceed in these matters quite suddenly. We must feel our way.

In this pure example of underesteeming the intelligence of the Palestinians, Samuel's concern was that the people may "feel" they were self-governing, not that they were actually to govern themselves. More important, since no time limit specified the meaning of "quite suddenly", and since "feeling one's way" is time-consuming, the postponement of "self-governing institutions" would last a while. In fact, a Jewish majority had to first be achieved. [see *inter alia* >105] This thought would be written by Samuel himself (together with Churchill and Shuckburgh) into the Churchill White Paper of a year later:

It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to foster the establishment of a full measure of self-government in Palestine. But they are of the opinion that, in the special circumstances of that country, this should be accomplished by gradual stages and not suddenly.⁹⁹⁷
(p 20)

When Muein El-Madi then asked, "Is this Council going to have legislative power?" Samuel asked back, "I do not quite appreciate what you mean by legislative power." Perhaps puzzled by a Liberal British former Member of Parliament who did not know what 'legislative power' was, El-Madi explained it to him:

Are they going to draw up new laws for the whole of the Government Departments? Are they going to be a legislative body, and is this body to be elected by the public in general? This body which is to be elected by the public in general, will it have the power to make up the budget of the Government? And will it have the power to draw up laws for the governing of Palestine as a whole?

His Excellency responded: "These are matters that will have to be considered very closely, before it is decided what its powers shall be."

On the question of permission to travel to London, Samuel in ending the interview eventually said, "If you make a formal application for Permits, they will be granted. The decision rests entirely with yourselves." [>117] He however made it clear, apparently speaking for his superiors in London, that in London they would be wasting their time, as they would not be received as an "official" delegation. By this he meant, in answer to Tawfiq Hammad's request for clarification, that "for a Delegation to be formally received it must be an Official Delegation, that is to say representing some Government." This early Catch-22 ruled the Palestinians out by definition, seeing as they were being prevented by the British of forming a "Government".

⁹⁹⁷ Cmd. 1700, p 20. [>142]

The emotional reactions of the four Palestinians are not known, but Tawfiq Hammad replied:

Our representation is not Government representation at all, our representation is only for the people of Palestine. If Your Excellency is content that we represent the people of Palestine that would be quite enough for us, if you can only give us this title.

Samuel's reply spelled out the Catch-22 even more clearly:

I think that the Government at home knows exactly the form that your Congress has taken, and it must draw its own conclusions just as I draw my own conclusions. You can only secure an official representation of the people through an election in which the whole population takes part.

Aside from not respecting the way in which the 80-100 members of the 4th PAC had been chosen, and/or their way of choosing who would go to London, HMG had no intention of permitting, much less holding, such a country-wide election, because as Churchill had just said to the House of Commons,⁹⁹⁸ [*>106*] the body thus elected would prove "officially" that the Zionist project was undemocratic⁹⁹⁹. The Palestinians had in fact been demanding such elections for some time [*>52; >69; >95; >99*], and Muein El-Madi had just moments before demanded it again, but just like France had done in Northern Syria about a year earlier [*>91*], Britain would continue to refuse [*e.g. >142*]. Therefore Samuel was saying to the four: 'Only if something happened which we will prevent from happening will your voices carry any weight.'

Samuel then repeated the bottom line, that the Jewish national home with Jewish-European immigration was non-negotiable and therefore

discussions on the basis of the repeal of the Balfour Declaration are not likely to be fruitful. [HMG] attaches great importance to the Balfour Declaration, and your movement, so long as it aims at repudiating it altogether, places rather a difficulty in the way of our close co-operation. ... I should like to make it quite clear again that this Constitution which we are making for Palestine [*>132ff; >150*] must proceed on the lines of the Balfour Declaration.

Imagine the delicious phrase "rather a difficulty in the way of our close co-operation" emerging from this upper-classman's lips. But the real outrage was that unless they agreed to their vassalage, they weren't even part of the discussion.

Samuel's boss Colonial Secretary Churchill wrote him a few weeks later, on 14 July 1921: "I desire to express to you my cordial approval of the manner in which you conducted this interview."¹⁰⁰⁰ Cordial or not, Musa Kazem had at the end of the interview said he had hoped simply that "In our going to England we might perhaps come into agreement with the Government concerning this." It is I believe accurate to describe this exchange as heart-breaking.

⁹⁹⁸ Hansard 1921, c284; [*>106*].

⁹⁹⁹ See Al-Hout 1979, p 86.

¹⁰⁰⁰ CO 733/4, p 158.

Kayyali implausibly reads this exchange as a hint by the four Palestinians to the Britons that they would accept the Balfour Declaration, yet contradictorily he himself footnotes that “The Delegation however maintained that they rejected any institution that should imply the acceptance of the Declaration.”¹⁰⁰¹ (Indeed, the Delegation’s Manifesto of 29 July noted that the proposed “Constitution... was to be founded upon the Balfour Declaration [but that] the population of Palestine is decidedly antagonistic to the principle of the Balfour Declaration”.)¹⁰⁰² Many other Palestinian historians have wanted to beat up on the notables who were trying in their way to get Palestine’s independence, apparently because they were largely elite landowners. Are these historians then agreeing with Samuel and Churchill that they didn’t represent the Palestinian people? All the evidence says that accepting the Balfour Declaration would have been out of tune with the position of any known Palestinian. On this most fundamental issue and its corollary issues like immigration and land sales, there is no evidence at all that the PACs did not represent the views of the people perfectly.

¹⁰⁰¹ Kayyali 1978, p 101, *correctly citing* CO 733/16, pp 300–01, ‘A Manifesto from the Arab Delegation’, 29 July 1921 and CO 733/13.

¹⁰⁰² CO 733/16, p 300.

111. 'Situation in Palestine'

mid-July 1921

During the summer of 1921 Military Intelligence reports to London and to Samuel in Jerusalem included these remarks of a junior officer:

The Army is definitely pro-Arab in its sympathies... The latest hostility and bitter feeling between Arabs and Jews consequent on the recent disturbances [>103] is too obvious to need much comment. ... The Arabs feel that they are the victims of Zionist coercion of the Government, which they most thoroughly distrust. ... To sum up – it is evident that nothing short of a modification of the Jewish policy and the establishment of some form of proportional representation will ease the situation. ... Beyond all it would re-establish some immediate measure of confidence if it could be generally known that the Government's policy in Palestine is capable of modification, i.e. that they are not bound hand and foot to the Zionists, as is popularly supposed to be the case.¹⁰⁰³

One "modification" could have been what Louis Bols had urged, abolishment of the Zionist Commission. [>23; >84] And what could "some form of proportional representation" be except an all-Palestinian body which, it goes without saying, had more than just 'advisory' functions? It was undoubtedly this revolutionary proposal that prompted Clauson, in London, to mutter: "It is most objectionable that junior military officers should be allowed to dabble in high politics in this way..."¹⁰⁰⁴ At any rate, even "junior military officers" could see truths not perceptible to the likes of Clauson, Shuckburgh and Churchill.

The Middle East Department of the Colonial Office devoted **many written pages**, dated 23 July 1921, **to the hot 'Situation in Palestine'**. Middle Eastern and thus Palestinian affairs had been taken away from Curzon's Foreign Office on 14 February 1921 and were now run by the Colonial Office under Churchill, who put John Shuckburgh, Hubert Young and fanatical Zionist Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen in charge.¹⁰⁰⁵ A 'Memo by Shuckburgh' dated 23 July¹⁰⁰⁶ concerning 'The [coming] Moslem-Christian Delegation from Palestine' [>109] first recalled that on 6 June High Commissioner Samuel had wired Churchill that some Palestinians wanted to go to England to get a "friendly settlement" [>110], and the Delegation would in fact sail on 18 July, arriving in Trieste on 26 July and then on the way overland to London stop in Geneva (where they would try in vain to speak with Balfour); the trip was "for the purpose of placing their case before HMG", but Balfour let them know that if they wished to speak about the League of Nations' position on Palestine they should go speak with Weizmann¹⁰⁰⁷. (pp 621, 620)

They had seen Samuel on 22 or 23 June in Jerusalem, and in Shuckburgh's view:

¹⁰⁰³ CO 733/13, pp 159, 162, 163.

¹⁰⁰⁴ CO 733/13, p 155.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Huneidi 1998, pp 24-25.

¹⁰⁰⁶ CO 733/13, pp 620-24, *all further quotations*; Ingrams 1972, p 139.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Also Tannous 1988, pp 121-22.

In the first place we should bring to their notice and, if necessary, read over to them word by word the whole series of public pronouncements defining British policy in Palestine. Viz., the Balfour Declaration [>16], Article 95 of the Treaty of Sèvres [>92], the preamble and Article 2 of the draft mandate for Palestine [>146], and the relevant extracts from Sir Herbert Samuel's speech of the 3rd June [>105], and from the Secretary of State's speech in Parliament of the 14th June [>106]... (p 623)

It seems that Shuckburgh mistakenly thought the Palestinians did not yet *understand* what was going on. Out of his ignorance he recommended emphasising to them, in London, that they

must accept as the basis of all discussions that it is our fixed intention to fulfil our pledges in the matter of the establishment of a National Home for the Jews. ... [However, we] have made it clear that we have no intention whatever of swamping the non-Jewish elements by the mass immigration of Jews. (p 623)

Those “non-Jewish elements” would have to accept British conditions if they wanted to “place their case”, and on 21 June Churchill had written back to Samuel suggesting he tell the Delegation that he, Samuel, was “now working out a scheme of popular representation” and that concerning this “instrument” they should pay attention to his, Samuel's, speech of 3 June [>105]. However, so Churchill,

it must be clearly understood that administrative reform can only proceed on basis of acceptance of the policy of creation of National Home for the Jews, which remains a cardinal article of British policy... No representative bodies that may be established will be permitted to interfere with measures (e.g. immigration etc.) designed to give effect to principle of a National Home or to challenge this principle.

As we have seen, the Palestinians noticed the lack of a “cardinal article of British policy” in *their* favour, and wanted political, not “administrative”, reform. Churchill went on to say that if they still insisted on coming to London the Colonial Office will “place them in communication with Zionist Organization...”

In his interview in Jerusalem with several members of the eventual Delegation, a day after receiving this advice from Churchill [>110], Samuel had actually gone farther than proposing “communication with Zionist Organization” in London, saying they can talk “with representatives of the Colonial Office” – but, not being an “official” Delegation, they could not be “formally received”.¹⁰⁰⁸ The Delegation, now described as consisting of “six Mohammedans and three Christians” as well as “in an unofficial capacity by an English lady from Haifa, Miss [Frances] Newton” [see also >358], left on 18 July. When they got to England, so the recommendation of Shuckburgh, “In the first place” his people at the Middle East Department should stress the Balfour Declaration [>16], the San Remo conference [>78], the Treaty of Sèvres [>92] and the ripening Mandate-text drafts.

This time it was Shuckburgh, in addition to Samuel and Churchill, who knew better than the non-Jews what was good for them: “[T]here is nothing in the [National Home] policy ... which need cause any alarm to the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine. ... What is it

¹⁰⁰⁸ CO 733/4, p 155.

that they are afraid of, and what more do they suggest that we should say or do in order to relieve their apprehension?" Reading this long Report, the phrase 'talking at cross-purposes' comes to mind, and Shuckburgh's perhaps genuine puzzlement makes it seem that the views of those at the desks in London were not informed by experience on the ground in Palestine.

Dajani, 'President, Executive Committee. Palestine Arab Congress' sent a telegram in mid-July to the 'Secretary of State Colonies' protesting the speech in Parliament of Mr Churchill on 14 June [^{>106}] saying a "strong British garrison" would be necessary "to force inhabitants accept present Zionist policy"; this was "pulling down British prestige [and] incurring expenditure [of] vast amounts causing trouble [through] unjust political declarations".¹⁰⁰⁹ Clauson at the Colonial Office minuted, "I hope this does not mean that the Delegation is going to remain in Palestine & continue a long-range bombardment!"¹⁰¹⁰

For most months in the 1920s the Palestine Government submitted to the High Commissioner (and London) a 'Report on the Political Situation in Palestine' – in addition to less political 'Administrative Reports'. Written by High Commissioner Samuel, that for June 1921¹⁰¹¹ reports first that "the country has been distinctly more tranquil" than during the Jaffa disturbances [^{>103ff}] and that the

pronouncements made by the High Commissioner [i.e., he himself] at an Assembly held on the occasion of His Majesty's Birthday on June 3rd [^{>105}], have contributed to this result. Reports from the villages indicate that politics are no longer the subject of general discussion.

His speech was

regarded as an indication that the British Administration is more ready to give attention to the wishes of the non-Jewish population than they had been disposed to think. ... At the same time, the causes of the unrest remain...

It was to express these "causes of unrest" personally that the eight "representatives of the Moslem and Christian Societies" were headed for London, and "it may be expected that the country will remain quiet so long as they are in England..."

While the same speech had upset "the Jews" for a while, the "speech of the Secretary of State in the House of Commons [^{>106}]... had a reassuring effect" as had policy on the ground:

Jewish Colonies have been provided with Arms (under conditions strictly limiting their use to self-defence); Jewish immigration into Palestine has been resumed, though on a small scale; a number of sentences have been [passed] upon the persons convicted of offences at Jaffa...

Regarding the on-the-ground component of British-Palestinian relations at this moment, in Jaffa "the Colonel-Commandant, who is administering Martial Law in the District", had put down disruptive behaviour of "boatmen at the Port... in connection with

¹⁰⁰⁹ CO 733/16, pp 240ff.

¹⁰¹⁰ CO 733/16, p 239.

¹⁰¹¹ CO 733/4, pp 456-59, all further citations.

the landing of Jewish travellers...” Also, while awaiting the report of the (Haycraft) “Commission of Enquiry... [^{>122}], Censorship on the Press has been maintained”, yet trouble could be expected from the “Sheikhs of the Beersheba District”. (Mustafa Kabha lists almost all the instances where Britain censored or closed down Palestinian newspapers.)¹⁰¹²

¹⁰¹² Kabha 2007, *e.g.* pp 125, 180-86, 231-36.

112. Richmond to his brother

mid-1921

Ernest T. Richmond [*also* >110; >112; >126] began service in Jerusalem as Political Officer, at High Commissioner Herbert Samuel's invitation, in November 1920. A friend of Jerusalem Military Governor Ronald Storrs, he was an Arabic-speaking architect who already before the War had helped restore many mosques and other buildings of the Islamic period in Egypt and Palestine. He was an insider. According to his son John,¹⁰¹³ in mid-1921 he wrote in a letter from Palestine to his brother:

[W]e were welcomed by an exceptionally friendly people, because of ancient good relations between the Arab world and England. But we adopted a Zionist policy, and allowed immigration of Jews on a scale for which labour conditions offered no justification. ... We put many Jews and Zionists into high places. The Immigration Department is a Jewish department. The Legal Secretary is a Jew and a Zionist. The High Commissioner is both. The people begin to regard the Government as Jewish camouflaged as English. They will not accept Jewish rule. We denied them all the representative institutions which they enjoyed under the Turks. We allowed them no authoritative voice in their own affairs. Hence we turned friendliness into distrust. Unless the delegation in England [>109-11; >117] succeeds in gaining sympathy at home and representative institutions for Palestine, there will be another more serious outbreak or a refusal to cooperate with Government and a decision to cease paying taxes. ... By giving representative government to Palestine and returning as far as possible to the very reasonable form of it that the country had under the Turks we could satisfy Arabs and moderate Jews. Such a policy leaves no place for a Zionist Commission [>23; >84]. (p 191)¹⁰¹⁴

His son noted that the Mandate text was at that time still being written and that "Hopes that its draft terms could still be altered to provide scope for the political aspirations of the overwhelming Arab majority were still not unrealistic"; he added that Musa Kazem al-Husseini was dismissed as Mayor of Jerusalem because he refused to use Hebrew as well as Arabic in official correspondence and that his father's own "complete emancipation from... illusions [about British protection of Arab rights] took some three and a half years." (pp 191-92)

In the event, in September 1921 Richmond, as Political Officer whose profession of architecture was one requiring precision in word and deed and respect for facts, wrote to Samuel:

The [planned] Constitution [>133ff] will show how far... Zionism is compatible with the maintenance of the political, civil and religious rights of the existing population, and how far these rights must, in the supposed interests of Zionism, be curtailed or infringed upon. ... It may further be taken as axiomatic that, if the Arab population is antagonized, either the Constitution will have to be altered or force will have to be used against the population. ... The people of this country ask for their Political as well as their Civil and Religious rights. If

¹⁰¹³ Richmond 1977, pp 189-96, *all further quotations.*

¹⁰¹⁴ Also Huneidi 2001, p 107.

the Constitution does not grant them these in a measure accepted as reasonable, they will assume that any restrictions that may have been made, are made in the interests of Zionism. ... The people of Palestine, with the example before them of what has been done in Syria and Mesopotamia, will merely regard [this] as... an intention to delay the granting of full political rights to the people of Palestine until that people are for the most part composed of Jews. (p 191)

The last sentence captures democratic Britain's relationship to democracy in Palestine, which had to wait for a Jewish majority, as Churchill had admitted to Parliament on 14 June 1921 [^{>106}], as Samuel himself admitted privately [^{>105}; ^{>108}], and as Churchill would secretly say to the Peel Commission in 1937 [^{>327}].

Son John Richmond continued:

After another four or five pages of argumentation against 'a Constitution which implies distrust and denies real political power to the population', ETR [Ernest T. Richmond] sets out his own ideas for a Legislative Assembly which would be elected on a proportional basis, by elections conducted under the still legal Turkish system, and would contain no official and no nominated members. All laws passed by it would require approval by a two thirds majority of a High Council, composed of 12 Moslems, 2 Christians and 2 Jews (according to their respective ratio of the total population), half nominated and half elected. The High Commissioner would preside over the Council and would have the power of veto. (p 193)

With all respect for Richmond's pro-democratic, pro-Palestinian proposal, would not the underlying "power of veto" make the Council a paper tiger?¹⁰¹⁵ Still, working closely in Palestine with George Antonius, Richmond expressed in a document which eventually reached High Commissioner Samuel the insight that Britain had to choose between fairness and military violence.¹⁰¹⁶

The Political Office under Richmond's direction recognised the justice of Arab grievances, for example "the under-representation of the Muslims in the [proposed] Legislative Assembly [and] the belief that the Administration was not giving due consideration to the rights of Arab cultivators of land included in the area covered by the concession to the Jewish Colonization Association in the Athlit-Caesarea district"; his Political Office also *opposed* other anti-indigenous Administration policies, namely:

(1) that the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress should be treated without enquiry as an illegal body and that the Administration should force a rupture with this Executive;...

(3) that Arab Nationalism is not as legitimate a political creed as Jewish Nationalism and that adherents of the former should be treated by the Police and by the Administration as potential criminals while adherents of the latter should be regarded as law-abiding citizens;

(4) that the Arab people of this ancient country should have meted out to them the treatment of violence and unreason supposed by some to be proper for a 'backward' race;...

¹⁰¹⁵ See Boyle 2001, pp 108-11.

¹⁰¹⁶ Boyle 2001, p 109, citing a copy received during an interview from Sir John Richmond.

(6) that the 'National Muslim Society', composed of paid agents of the Zionists, should receive countenance and encouragement from the Government on the grounds that it was loyal to the policy of the Government;

(7) that Jews who possess fire-arms illegally should be negotiated with while Arabs should be arrested and prosecuted for the same offence;

(8) that the press should be subsidized with a view to manufacturing a sham statement of public opinion;

(9) that officers of the Administration should take part in politics and play the part of Zionist propaganda agents;... (pp 194-95)

Richmond's road to rejection of his country's Palestine policy resembled that of many other British administrators, soldiers and investigators.¹⁰¹⁷

In the letter to his brother, "ETR" wrote that after putting out this report, in Jerusalem a silence, so thick that it could be felt, descended and lasted for more than ten days. Then Samuel spoke to me, rather hesitatingly, about it. He said that it was not quite what was wanted [and] the Colonial Office would be very surprised to read it. What they needed was no more than a colourless statement, not of my work but of the chief political events of the year. (p 195)

"Colourless" is a good word for what was required of many British documents covered in this chronology to avoid calling a spade a spade.

As the third High Commissioner John Chancellor would testify before the Peel Commission on 12 February 1937, "Richmond is ardently pro-Arab and he sometimes caused inconvenience for that reason."¹⁰¹⁸ And Administration official Wyndham Deedes, who would soon voluntarily leave Palestine, and who in Richmond's opinion was then still a dedicated Zionist, wrote:

ETR's views were such as to preclude his remaining in the Administration once all hope of changing or moderating the Zionist policy had been lost. The Colonial Office was torn between its desire to get rid of him as an irritant, and its exaggerated belief that his presence in the Administration helped to keep the Arab population less militant than would have been the case without him. (p 195)

Evidence that Deedes in July 1921 was still generally pro-Zionist, by the way, is contained in a personal letter he wrote to Hubert Young.¹⁰¹⁹

In late July 1923 Richmond himself wrote,

¹⁰¹⁷ Also Wasserstein 1978, pp 144-45, 216; Richmond 1977; Balfour Project current, <http://www.balfourproject.org/profit-of-doom-e-t-richmond-friba-palestine-1920-1924/>.

¹⁰¹⁸ FO 492/20, p 467.

¹⁰¹⁹ CO 537/848, pp 3-14.

My future is a little uncertain. ... I know from a conversation Ronald Storrs had at the Colonial Office about me that they want to get rid of me. They call me an '*imperium in imperio*'. They don't like such '*imperia*', though as Ronald Storrs pointed out to them, they already have one in the Zionist Commission. (p 196)

I do not know if his political reports were censored before reaching the London Colonial Office, but despite Samuel's begging him to stay, Richmond eventually resigned and, in his son's telling,

left the Secretariat and the country in April 1924. In 1927, when Lord Plumer was High Commissioner, he was invited and accepted to return to Palestine as Director of Antiquities, a strictly non-political appointment. From the Palestine Antiquities Museum he was able, for the next ten years, to witness at close quarters the unfolding of the tragedy he had prophesied and striven to avert from the people of Palestine. (p 196)

More valuable research could be done into what political effect, if any, Richmond had after he returned in 1927. At any rate, this entry shows that the dominant, pro-Zionist British position, which was the main message reaching the eyes and ears of the Palestinians, did have to defend itself internally against such as Richmond (and for instance Samuel's predecessor as top official in Palestine, Louis Bols) [^{>77;}>84] – something of which the Palestinians were certainly aware.

113. Municipal Franchise Ordinance

16 July 1921

In amendment of the “Ottoman Law of Municipalities of 5 October 1877”, High Commissioner Samuel enacted, “after consultation with the Advisory Council”, the ‘**Municipal Franchise Ordinance**’ of 16 July 1921.¹⁰²⁰ Enfranchised would be all who were so previously under the Ottoman regulation plus rate-payers in the municipality concerned.

[T]he Governor of the District in which the town is situated shall constitute an electoral college for the town by appointment as members thereof two qualified electors for each quarter of the town. ... In any town where the inhabitants belong to different religious communities, after the list of electors has been drawn up by the electoral college and approved, the Governor of the District shall, prior to any election, determine the number of Moslems, Christians and Jews to be elected to the Municipal Council; which shall be as far as possible proportionate to the number of Moslems, Christians and Jews who are on the list of electors.

To qualify, a religious community had to comprise at least 10% of the population of electors. This Ordinance shows that the British did grasp the basics of democracy, and presumably the reasons why such “proportionate” representation was seen as proper in municipal elections were the reasons why the Palestinians saw it as proper in national elections.

¹⁰²⁰ CO 733/4, pp 432-35.

Richard Meinertzhagen, recently installed under John Shuckburgh at the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, recorded his “**notes of a conversation**”¹⁰²¹ at a meeting at Balfour’s house in London attended by himself, “Mr Lloyd George, Mr A.J. Balfour, Mr Winston Churchill, Sir Maurice Hankey, Mr Edward Russell, [and] Dr Weizmann”. When Weizmann complained of Samuel’s speech of 3 June [^{>105}], Churchill asked why. Then, as Meinertzhagen noted down:

[Weizmann:] ‘The [Balfour] Declaration meant an ultimate Jewish majority – and this speech would never permit such a majority to eventuate.’ [Lloyd George and Balfour] both said that by the Declaration they always meant an eventual Jewish State. [Weizmann:] ‘We are gun-running [i.e. illegally] and I can’t allow it.’ [Churchill:] ‘We won’t mind it, but don’t speak of it.’ [Weizmann:] ‘I would like it sanctioned [legalised]. Is it agreed?’ They all agreed.

Dr W spoke of ‘representative Government Project’. [Churchill] quoted Mesopotamia and Transjordan, to which Dr W replied ‘If you do the same thing with Palestine it means giving up Palestine – and that is what I want to know.’ L.G. to W.C.: ‘You mustn’t give representative Government to Palestine.’ W.C.: ‘I might have to bring it before the Cabinet.’¹⁰²²

If Meinertzhagen’s notes are accurate, this informal dialogue between the Prime Minister, the Colonial Secretary and the chief Zionist settled the questions of Zionist weapons importation, blocking nation-wide democracy and the priority of the Zionist aspirations supported by the Balfour Declaration. Meinertzhagen indeed added, paraphrasing the tenor of the “conversation”: “Of course questions affecting the Jewish National Home would be eliminated from the purview of the representative Government.”

There followed some discussion with Weizmann about immigration and the Rutenberg hydropower concession on the Jordan River, the others wanting to know what his demands were. Then,

A.J.B. accompanied L.G. to his car talking over affairs and on his return said [to Dr W], ‘It was a very satisfactory conversation and action will follow. You must write out your desiderata.’ Dr W.: ‘You have the document’, to which A.J.B. said he had read it and it seemed all could be accepted and some had already been agreed upon. Then he added ‘It is all right, the P.M is very keen on the affair, has a high regard for you, and understands your difficult position.’

The “document” evidently consisted of a list of things the international Zionists wanted HMG to do.

¹⁰²¹ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 103-06, *all quotations*.

¹⁰²² Also al-Wahid 2011.

Within his **'Interim Report on Civil Administration'**, dated 30 July 1921 and addressed to Colonial Secretary Churchill, High Commissioner Samuel gave his opinion of the 'Condition of Palestine after the War' and the 'Policy of the Administration', a 7-page, fleshed-out version of his 1915 'The Future of Palestine' [>8].¹⁰²³ "Comparable in size to Belgium or Wales", Palestine was "exhausted by war" and "undeveloped"; its population was "depleted" to "hardly 700,000 people and was indeed "under-populated"; its agriculture was "primitive", cultivable land was "left untilled", yet the "rainfall of Jerusalem equals that of London" and "the area of land now cultivated could yield a far greater product"; there were practically "no forests", "no harbours", tourism was neglected, and the water-power of the Jordan remained "unused"; under the British victors over the Turks, "For nearly two years... the Military Administration... laboured, with great devotion" to set up an "administrative system, as efficient as the conditions allowed..."; in fact, "The country is under-populated because of this lack of development". (pp 3-4)

This is a good place to mention the devastation visited upon Palestine – and all other Ottoman territories – during the First World War, in terms of death, hunger, de-population, and the neglect of farms and herds. The country's Moslems had been conscripted and many did not come back. The topic is obviously beyond my scope, and I cite only a single source¹⁰²⁴, but one point is relevant to this chronology: Any Britons touring the country in the years 1917-1921 would have been able to see a landscape that to the naked eye would indeed over wide stretches appear desolate or derelict. This fact was convenient for Samuel's argument for Zionist 'development' of Palestine. But it was inaccurate to interpret this present state of affairs as the usual or permanent state of Palestine, and that therefore an influx of Jewish capital, industry and agriculture was necessary for the development they, the British, wished for. Others, and not only Palestinians, were capable of grasping that the Palestinians themselves could develop it – at a speed and in a style suitable to them.

As for solving this problem of under-population, so Samuel further, natural increase of the local population – aided by better health care – was according to the Britons' logic for the purposes of "development" not an option, despite the fact that that local people's "well-being" was, according to the Covenant's Article 22 [>46], the prime purpose of the Mandatory powers. But developers had been found:

After the persecutions in Russia forty years ago, the movement of the Jews to Palestine assumed larger proportions. Jewish agricultural colonies were founded [and whoever] visits them is impressed by the contrast between these pleasant villages, with the beautiful stretches of prosperous cultivation about them and the primitive conditions of life and work by which they are surrounded. (pp 4-5)

¹⁰²³ CO 733/4, pp 624-27, *all citations*; cited are the **printed** (not stamped) page numbers 3-9; also pp 638-77.

¹⁰²⁴ Salt 2019, pp 190-213.

This success was pulling towards Palestine more and more Jews, whose religion had already “dwelt, with constant emphasis, upon the connection of their race with Palestine”;

Among a great proportion, at least, of the fourteen millions of Jews, who are dispersed in all the countries of the globe, the Zionist idea took hold. They found in it that larger and higher interest, outside and beyond the cares and concerns of everyday life, which every man, who is not wholly materialist, must seek somewhere. (p 5)

Perhaps Samuel regarded the local people as “wholly materialist”, because this non-materialist need for a “somewhere” would arguably apply as well to the 700,000 indigenous people who, “although they speak Arabic and are termed Arabs, are largely of mixed race” (p 4), but this aspect is not mentioned by Samuel.

Although concerning the Zionist cause Churchill did not need any more convincing, Samuel related with pride how Hebrew had been revived, and

large sums of money were collected in Europe and America, and spent in Palestine, for forwarding the movement. Many looked forward to a steady process of Jewish immigration, of Jewish land colonization and industrial development, until at last the Jews throughout the world would be able to see one country in which their race had a political and spiritual home, in which, perhaps, the Jewish genius might repeat the services it had rendered to mankind from the same soil long ago. ... The aspirations of these fourteen millions of people also have a right to be considered. They ask for the opportunity to establish a ‘home’ in the land which was the political, and has always been the religious, centre of their race. (pp 5, 8)

We have here again a message that Samuel did not include in his King’s Birthday Speech to the Palestinians two months earlier [105]: the emphasis on race, the relative invisibility of the “larger and higher interests” of the actually-present non-Jews, an image of the “genius” and “services” of Samuel’s own race, the elevation of Jewish “political... aspirations”, and the edging towards a claim that “the Jews” were the rightful owners of Palestine. These comprised an ideology shared by the other two principal British Zionists, Chaim Weizmann and Winston Churchill, and the language in the quotation just above would make its way into the Churchill White Paper of 3 June 1922, written by Churchill, Samuel and John Shuckburgh of the Colonial Office.

To Churchill Samuel kept on:

The British Government was impressed by the reality, the strength, and the idealism of this movement. ... [The Balfour Declaration] was received with the warmest gratitude and enthusiasm by the mass of the Jewish people throughout the world. After the occupation of Palestine, a Zionist Commission [23] was sent there, with the approval of the Government, to concert measures for carrying into effect the policy of the Declaration. (pp 5-6)

The terms ‘colonization’ and ‘occupation’ did not yet have their negative connotations, nor, evidently, was the idea particularly disreputable of delegating, or privatising, the implementation of a ‘policy’ of a Government.

I believe the documents reviewed til now justify remarking that Samuel could have known, and probably did know, better than to make the claim that it was only “a section of native opinion” which was “becoming disturbed as to the meaning of British policy”.

(p 6) It was the entirety of native opinion, and they were disturbed because, three-and-a-half years after Balfour's letter, they had a very clear, and increasingly clear, notion of what the British plan was.

Samuel then listed a half-dozen pro-Zionist developments which the natives feared – all of which, incidentally, have occurred between 1917 and 1967. Yet the organisation founded by the natives “to combat the application of Zionism” is brought by Samuel into proximity with “individuals or groups... who had some interest in causing embarrassment to the Administration”;

among a section of the Arabs, who had all previously lived on excellent terms with the Jewish population, a bitter feeling was evoked against the Jews. It was fostered and developed until it culminated in a serious outbreak in the streets of Jerusalem in April, 1920, when a number of Jews were killed and wounded and Jewish shops were looted. [^{>76; >88}] ... On May 1st [1921] there was a riot at Jaffa. ... Attacks were made from Arab villages upon the Jewish colonies of Petah Tikva and Chederah. (pp 6, 9) [^{>103; >122}]

Unlike the authors of all the reports of British Commissions of Enquiry [^{>88; >122; >220; >233; >336}], which held that the cause-and-effect relation was from Zionism to violent protest, Samuel stuck to the view that “agitators” had “evoked feelings”. The fears of (some of) the Arabs, after all, “were illusory”, and there were a small number of Arabs who “realised that Jewish co-operation was the best means, perhaps the only means, of promoting the prosperity of Palestine...” (pp 6-7) Either Samuel had really not grasped that “prosperity”, as defined by himself, was not the Palestinians’ bottom line, or such emphasis on development was merely for the Colonial Office’s ears. Most likely the latter, for Samuel had surely done his reading and visiting [^{e.g. >73; >84; >89}], had spoken with Bols [^{>77}], was undoubtedly speaking with Richmond [^{>112}], and Palestinians had appealed to him in person [^{e.g. >100; >110}]. Anybody could see that the Palestinians’ grievance was political, not economic. It concerned the *ownership* of Palestine.

This entry is formally different from almost all others in that it covers **what one man wrote anytime between 1905 and 1948.**¹⁰²⁵ That man is Sir Richard Meinertzhagen, a well-connected pro-Zionist aristocrat and Lord Passfield's nephew by marriage, who was employed by HMG to work on Palestine from 1917 until 31 March 1924, first in Cairo then in London as one of the top three in the Colonial Office's Middle East Department. [*also* >58; >61; >65; >74; >165; >204; 429; >438;] Not only was he one of the most important architects and enablers of the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, but he wrote very frankly about his racist and pro-'progress' motives, showing what the Palestinians were up against.

Meinertzhagen listed in his diary for 2 August 1921 his proposed steps to strengthen Zionism on Palestinian soil:

- (a) The removal of all British Officials in Palestine who are out of sympathy with Zionism.
- (b) The removal of the military command in Palestine from that of Egypt and removing the harmful influence now exercised by G.H.Q. over Sir Herbert Samuel.
- (c) The resumption of Zionist immigration in proportion to work available.
- (d) The granting of concessions to the Zionists to be encouraged, and their position in Palestine to be that of the Most Favoured Nation.
- (e) A closer liaison between the Zionist Commission and the Colonial Office on the one hand, and the High Commissioner on the other hand. Having drafted a document on these lines, we took it to Winston [Churchill] who agreed. He too now realizes that we have played a wavering game in Palestine. Tomorrow I shall have the proposal printed as a Cabinet Paper and Winston has promised to lay it before the Cabinet at an early date. (p 107)

Industrial concessions were indeed to be granted at Samuel's discretion even before the official begin of the Mandate,¹⁰²⁶ and all of the above steps made it into reality.

Meinertzhagen, the hinge between "Winston" and the Palestine Administration, expressed in his 1959 *Memoirs* a pro-Zionism which was even less suited for Palestinian consumption than the above. Arguing in 1905, for example (from his post in Kenya), that Palestine was a better place to put the Jews than East Africa, he urged that "the Jews with their brains and dynamic force would be a tremendous asset to Turkey" – as if the Ottoman Empire did not already encompass a large number of Jews – and he continued:

In 1910 I visited Odessa where I witnessed a pogrom which had a lasting effect on me, binding me more closely than ever to a National Home for the Jews in Palestine. What I saw in Odessa on my thirty-second birthday still remains for me one of the most terrible scenes I have witnessed. ... I was also much influenced by the Divine Promise that the Holy Land will forever remain Israel's inheritance. Also that the Holy Land is inseparably intertwined in the Jewish Faith and the Jewish people. (p 2)

¹⁰²⁵ Meinertzhagen 1959, all citations.

¹⁰²⁶ Tibawi 1977, p 475.

This was an early British example of believing it was right to solve the *European* 'Jewish problem' in *Palestine*. It also epitomises the 'Christian Zionist' beliefs that Zionism came straight from God's mouth and that the Jews were mystically "intertwined" with the soil of the Palestinians.

Further,

In 1917 I was transferred to Egypt to take charge of General Allenby's Intelligence Section [arriving 24 May in Cairo]. ... I was in charge of Field Intelligence, the late Sir Wyndham Deedes was in charge of Political Intelligence. Now, for the first time in my life, I found myself in close working association with Jews and soon recognized their intelligence and valour. I employed some fifteen, all refugees from Palestine, all of splendid physique and to my astonishment fair-haired and blue-eyed. ... [The Jews] are a quick-witted and intelligent people, who have made for themselves a great future in Palestine and they intend to follow their destinies out here to their ultimate goal, namely a thriving and well-governed Palestine for the Jews. (pp 5, 6)

Also from the man who was among the dozen most influential Britons forming the Mandate:

Such then are two of the elements which face the Political Officer in this new territory. The Jew, however small his voice, however mild his manner, will in the end be heard and he will succeed. The Arab will trumpet and bluster, others in Europe and America will sing his praises if the local orchestra breaks down, but he will remain where he is and has for ever been, an inhabitant of the east, nurturing stagnant ideas and seeing no further than the narrow doctrines of Mohammed. (p 7)

Quoting from his diary entry of 7 February 1918:

Lunched with Lady Crewe; both Asquith and Balfour were there, also Walter Rothschild who showed me a copy of the Balfour Declaration, this latter document monopolizing the conversation. It is an ambiguous document and can be interpreted in many ways; it does not deny sovereignty to the Jews but I cannot see how a Jewish State can ever be established which would not prejudice the civil and religious rights of the Arabs. The document gives with one hand and denies with the other and to me is disappointing. I put a straight question to Balfour. 'Is this a reward or bribe to the Jews for past services and given in the hope of full support during the war?' Both he, Walter Rothschild and Lady Crewe were indignant. Balfour at once said, 'Certainly not; both the Prime Minister and myself have been influenced by the desire to give the Jews their rightful place in the world; a great nation without a home is not right.' I said I was glad to hear that. I then asked, 'At the back of your mind do you regard this declaration as a charter for ultimate Jewish sovereignty in Palestine or are you trying to graft a Jewish population on to an Arab Palestine?' Balfour waited some time before he replied, choosing his words carefully 'My personal hope is that the Jews will make good in Palestine and eventually found a Jewish State. It is up to them now; we have given them their great opportunity.' (pp 8-9)

Even assuming it was “not right” for the great “nation” of world Jewry to be “without a home”, it does not follow that it is right that that home be *in Palestine*, or for that matter be built at the expense of any indigenous population anywhere. Meinertzhagen’s memoir continued:

I personally am prepared to back Jew against the Arab every time. The Jew means progress and perhaps the upsetting of modern governments, the Arab is stagnation and stands for immorality, rotten Government, corrupt and dishonest society. ... [The Arab embodied] intrigue and intellectual dishonesty. (pp 12, 86)

Concerning the crucial ‘argument from history’, purported to favour Zionism, at a dinner with Weizmann in Paris on 30 January 1919 the latter expressed agreement with Meinertzhagen’s perception of the need for “recognition of the League of Nations to the historic title of the Jewish People to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home.”¹⁰²⁷ (p 13) This all-important political claim of a currently consequential *historical connection* was asserted in the Churchill White Paper of 1922 [>104] and the Preamble of the Mandate [>146]. The claim of such a “historic title” had been well refuted already in late March 1919 by the Moslem-Christian Society of Jerusalem. [>45]

A few days later he wrote in his diary,

[that] a great people like the Jews should not have a home of their own is a monstrous injustice. ... The Balfour Declaration, which Weizmann regards as a great document, a charter of freedom, is in fact a paradox, meaning nothing at all, like so many other things emanating from A.J. B. [Balfour] ... I had a long talk with Weizmann today and advised him to go all out for Jewish Sovereignty in Palestine. He might get it now, whereas in a year’s time it will be impossible. I told him I would help him all I knew. I have good reason to believe that Lloyd George and [Henry] Wilson [as well as South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts and Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos] will support him. (pp 14, 15)

It was in June 1919 in Paris that he realised that “the Palestine Administration must be purged of those elements hostile to Zionism” and was encouraged by Foreign Minister Balfour’s words at a luncheon:

He defined the policy of H.M.G. as follows: All development, industrial schemes of all kinds, and financial assistance must be based on the principle that Zionists are the Most-favoured Nation in Palestine. All preparatory work done before the final destiny of Palestine is settled must be similarly based on the same principle. (pp 22, 25)

Regarding the progress of public works in Palestine, he wrote to Allenby in April 1920 that “It only needs the hand of man, capital, intelligence and energy. All factors which are foreign to the Arab race.” (p 77)

Working in Palestine in the last months of the Civil Administration in early summer 1920, in his diary he first bemoaned his battles “alone out here among the gentiles, in upholding Zionism” against Allenby, Bols, Storrs and the rest; but success arrived: In April 1920

¹⁰²⁷ Also Tibawi 1977, p 346.

he had hoped “the Foreign Office will now insist on the Military Administration being replaced by a High Commissioner. I have sent a private cable to Curzon strongly recommending Samuel; also to Lloyd George with a similar recommendation.” By 2 June, at which time the transition from military to civilian rule was set for 1 July, he could write that he had

exposed the lamentable state of affairs to the Foreign Office, succeeded in removing the heads of the Administration and transferring responsibility from the War Office to the Foreign Office, thereby bringing into Palestine a civil Government under Herbert Samuel. My work [as *military* Political Officer] automatically ceased and my appointment [in the *civil* administration] became impossible. Allenby clamoured for my removal and I [went], but meanwhile I have done what I set out to do, namely I have set Zionism up in Palestine against a solid block of local opposition. (pp 66-67, 80-81, 84, also 86-87)

Where he went was back to London to work, as of early 1921, under Middle East Department head John Shuckburgh.

A year-and-a-half into his stint in that post, in late July 1922, his wrote in his diary,

I favoured Zionism on account of the appalling state of the Jews throughout the world and because they had expressed a desire to re-form their nationality in their old home. I was also influenced by the stagnating effect of Arab influence which should not be allowed to control a country like Palestine. ... To-day is a great day for the Zionists. The Palestine Mandate was passed by the League of Nations sitting in St James's Palace. [>78; >146; >158] Weizmann and his wife asked Annie and me to celebrate the event by dining with them at the Carlton. M. Rappard, the Swiss Secretary to the League, was also there. ... Giving the Jews the opportunity to build their national home in Palestine was the wisest and most constructive act of statesmanship resulting from the First World War; it was also a first-class example of the principle of self-determination and democratic government;... (pp 108, 119, 120)

“Re-forming their nation” would make sense, as would, in a pinch, Balfour’s “reconstituting their national home” which made its way into the Mandate text, [>16; >146], but “re-forming their nationality” should give political scientists something to puzzle over. Also, the last sentence makes sense only if the ‘self’ of ‘self-determination’ includes – in Palestine, *nota bene* – all Jews worldwide, overwhelmingly non-residents of the territory whose political future was being other-determined. Rappard, incidentally, would support the Zionist Mandate as a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission during its entire eighteen years in operation.

Meinertzhagen left the Colonial Office on 31 March 1924 and from a new post in far-away Kashmir wrote on 1 June 1925:

To-day is the time fixed for the opening of the Jewish University in Jerusalem by Lord Balfour. I offered up a silent prayer that the University might sow the seeds of a political and national Zionism which would eventually dominate the Middle East from Sinai to Syria and east to Iraq or even further, constituting a strong healthy state and a cornerstone in the British Commonwealth. ... [T]he success of political and national Zionism... will give nationhood and peace to a sore-afflicted race whose position in the world for the last 2,000 years has been a disgrace to civilization. (pp 136-37)

In retrospect, the prediction of peace for the Jewish “race” was foolhardy, the more so as for years practically every other official, politician and observer realised that the opposite was the case, namely that their forced introduction would cause tenacious, partly violent local resistance.

Two years later, back in London, his summary echoed Samuel’s “The Future of Palestine” [8] in claiming that “By establishing Zionism, Great Britain has paid a debt which the world owes to Jewry for its culture, its abilities and its influence in the world”, and on 11 November 1927 he, Balfour and Ormsby-Gore were three of the “twenty or thirty Gentiles” invited by the Anglo-Palestinian Club to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, along with “590 Jews” including Weizmann, Lord Reading, Samuel and “Jimmy Rothschild in the chair.” (pp 137-39)

When his uncle Sidney Webb, as Lord Passfield, took over the Colonial Office in 1929 Meinertzhagen diaried that “he [Passfield] is sympathetic to Zionism”, a statement supported by Webb’s authorship, in August 1917, of the Labour Party’s ‘War Aims Memorandum’ which supported

a ‘Free State’ to which the Jewish people ‘may return’ to work out ‘their own salvation free from interference’...¹⁰²⁸

The assumption was evidently that this ‘State’ had something to do with Palestine.

He accordingly wrote to “Uncle Sidney” emphasising once again that British pro-Zionism meant that “the Jews are placed in the position of ‘most-favoured-nation’ in Palestine” and warning him not to succumb to pro-Arabism:

British sympathy is with the Arab and not with the Jew, largely because Zionism, its objects and possibilities, are misunderstood, and because the Arab is surrounded by a halo of picturesque romance. The Arab, his wild, savage nature, his lack of intelligence, his backward state and his connection with the romantic desert will always appeal to the British character in preference to the hard-headed, hard-thinking, practical Jew, bristling with troublesome problems and determined to get that to which he has a right by treaty and covenant. (pp 140, 141)

In a later, similar formulation: “The Arab with his picturesque clothes and romantic surroundings, has always appealed to Englishmen; his simple mind, often a cloak for stupidity, and his dignity, usually a cloak for lack of humour, has always appealed to those who administer him.” (p 362) As Edward Said describes such Orientalist mindsets,

In his resistance to foreign colonialists the Palestinian was either a stupid savage, or a negligible quantity, morally and even existentially.¹⁰²⁹

Talking with Passfield in November 1930 Meinertzhagen reiterated:

Zionism has come to stay. To attempt to interfere with Jewry is to interfere with history. His Majesty’s Government and enemies of Zionism can delay the ultimate destiny of Palestine, but they cannot prevent its ultimate fulfilment. (p 145)

¹⁰²⁸ Kelemen 1996, pp 71-72.

¹⁰²⁹ Said 1978, p 306.

He spelled out more clearly what that “ultimate destiny” of Palestine was when recording his thoughts at a dinner with Samuel, Weizmann, and Palestine High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope in October 1932, a year-and-a-half after almost all Palestinians had given up hope of convincing Britain of their case [246; 247]:

Weizmann dare not yet voice his true conception of militant Zionism and his dream of a Jewish Palestine. I am convinced that a Jewish State is the ultimate state of Zionism and that is what Weizmann works for. I am convinced that Zionism will never reach its adult stage until that dream is realized and it cannot occur without an armed clash with the Arabs. ... The Palestine problem can only be decided by blood. (pp 147, 230)

The “armed clash” would begin in earnest in April 1936. Bloodshed would be both necessary and worth it, to Meinertzhagen, who would, as he bragged in his *Memoirs*, himself on 23 April 1948 shoot dead several Arabs in Haifa.¹⁰³⁰

At a dinner with Wauchope, Storrs, Lord Melchett and others in October 1934 he had listened to the “humbug, hypocrisy... and eye wash” of the publicly responsible Zionists talking about the “raising up of the Arab to Jewish level, equality, employment of Jews by Arabs, equal political status, and so on and so forth.”

The Jew knows better than I do that the Palestine Arab will never reach the Jewish standard of ability in any sense. The Jew will always be on top and he means to be there. He looks forward to a Jewish State in Palestine with sovereign rights, a real National Home and not a sham Jewish-Arab confederation. The Jews know perfectly well that the Mandate was given him to enable him to establish himself nationally in Palestine, not with the Arab but over him. (p 161)

Seldom have Western supporters of the Jewish state in Palestine expressed themselves so honestly.

In April 1944 he diaried:

The only solution is the gift of Palestine to Jewry. It should have been done in 1919 and was in fact done, but in such a manner that it was negated by the subsequent action of British officials in Palestine and by Downing Street. It must be done now and a settlement secured once and for all. If Jewish Sovereignty had been granted in 1919 the Arabs would have accepted it. ... The Arabs who dislike the solution can be compensated and moved elsewhere. (p 191)

And after reading approvingly the Anglo-American Report [438] in May 1946 he wrote:

The Arabs can never, owing to their backward state and low standards, their inherent laziness and dishonesty, their disunity and their lack of desire to improve, give us anything approaching prosperous [anti-Bolshevik] stability in the Middle East. The Arabs definitely do not want prosperity if it means progress. King Ibn Saud told the commission he was against development schemes. The Arabs preferred the age-old method of drawing water from wells to turning on a tap from a pipe. (pp 208-09)

And so on.

¹⁰³⁰ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 222-23.

Meinertzhagen found room in his memoirs as well to opine that Lord Moyne's murder by Zionists on 6 November 1944 in Cairo was "understandable" and that the Zionist bombing of Jerusalem's King David Hotel (on 22 July 1946) could be "excused". (pp 193, 213) And, "If I were a Jew I should be a terrorist, a violent one, and I would aim at Whitehall." (p 219) In July and September 1948 he would write that

[United Nations Special Representative ('Mediator')] Bernadotte runs a grave risk of assassination. ... He tried to give Jerusalem to the Arabs. ... To give it to the Arabs stamps Bernadotte at once as a partisan and completely out of touch with the meaning of Zionism. In formulating this horrible proposal he has signed his own death warrant. ... As it is, the Jews will get him. (pp 232, 235)

And on the day of Bernadotte's assassination, 17 September 1948, Meinertzhagen would write that Bernadotte had asked for it, and that "the real culprits and responsible instigators of the crime [committed by LEHI under Yitzhak Shamir] are generally the United Nations and in particular the British Government" (p 235) – presumably because after World War II it had become less pro-Zionist.

He spoke for many British Zionists in November 1948:

The only constructive element which emerged from the wreckage of 1914-18 was the conceded principle of a Home for the Jews in Palestine; and the only worthwhile dividend of 1939-45 is Israel. (p 241)

It seems bizarre to devote so much space to this man, but it is not. That he was in the Mandate's formative years almost at the very top of political intelligence in the Near East and the Colonial Office's Middle East Department is not the main reason. It is that he 'said the quiet part out loud' and that up against this quiet part the Palestinians could not expect any real dialogue, much less a mutually respectful one.

Although it happened a few years after Meinertzhagen left Palestine, I cannot resist mention of an action considered by High Commissioner John Chancellor in early 1930. Writing to Colonial Secretary Passfield:

My Lord, I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that I have under consideration the question of devising procedure for the removal of foreign lunatics from Palestine. ... It is desirable that foreign lunatics should be sent back to their homes, in the care of an attendant. ... While not unwilling to issue travel documents for the lunatic's journey to his home, if his nationality is free from doubt, the consul usually declines to assume financial responsibility. ... [In such cases] the only means of removing him from Palestine... would appear to be deportation at a charge to public funds.¹⁰³¹

One also irresistably thinks of Aref Abdul Razzak's question to Britain in August or September 1938: "Why are you in Palestine?"¹⁰³² [>370]

¹⁰³¹ CO 733/184/9, 'Removal of Foreign Lunatics from Palestine, 6 January – 3 February' (1930)

¹⁰³² CO 733/372/4, pp 23-26.

This 8-page entry relates the first encounter in London between the two parties, during which the fundamental conflict was honestly expressed by both sides.

Led by Musa Kazem, the other members of this **1st Palestine Arab Delegation** were Ibrahim Shammass, Tawfiq Hammad, Amin al-Tamimi, Shibly Al-Jamal and Muein El-Madi.¹⁰³³ Three others sometimes mentioned in connection with the 4th Congress and the 1st Delegation to London also made the trip, namely Ruhi Bey Abdul Hadi of Nablus, Fuad Bey Saad, and Jamal al-Husseini. In addition to getting in touch with supporters such as General Louis Bols [>77; >84], the Delegation intended to provide “the various foreign powers” with copies of the 3rd Congress’s Manifesto of early 1921, ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ [>99].

The Colonial Office’s “Biographical Notes” on the Delegation members and secretaries describe all except Muein el-Madi as “agitators” and/or “strongly anti-Jewish”.¹⁰³⁴ Separately, dated 2 July 1921, Samuel described them to Churchill in his ‘Notes on the Moslem-Christian Delegation who are proceeding to England’:

Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husseini... is anti-Zionist [and] was elected President of the Palestinian Congress and of the Delegation on account of his social position, age, influence and character. ... **Fuad Bey Saad**. Greek Catholic of Haifa. A wealthy landowner [and] now President of the Christian Societies. He is the leading spirit of the anti-Zionist movement in Haifa. ... **Haj Tawfiq Hammad**. A Moslem of Nablus and large landowner. ... **Muein Bey el-Madi**. He belongs to a wealthy Moslem family of Haifa. ... He was one of Emir Faisal’s entourage. On the downfall of the Emir Faisal he returned to Palestine. [He] has figured prominently in almost every movement and has been the right hand man of Musa Kazem... He is a well educated young man. ... **Jamal al Husseini**... is a well educated young man and has a fair knowledge of English, having been educated at St George’s School. He is Secretary of the Arab Club in Jerusalem.

Samuel continued by describing **Amin al Tamimi**, **Ibrahim Shammass**, **Ruhi Bey Abdul Hadi** and **Shibly Jamal** as to their religion and education, and he noted that some Delegation members had formerly worked for the Ottoman government.¹⁰³⁵ By the time of this document it had become normal to speak of Palestinians who were for their independence by using the negative adjectives *anti-Zionist* or even *anti-Jewish* (moreover as synonyms) – a small but damaging part of the narrative still today.

In return for not banning the trip, Samuel had proposed a compromise wherein 1) the locals wouldn’t challenge the Balfour Declaration and 2) the British would set up some kind of representative assembly. [>110] In London neither thing happened. The Palestinians argued from first principles: They should not be in their vassal status in the first place,

¹⁰³³ El-Taher, current.

¹⁰³⁴ CO 733/13, p 613.

¹⁰³⁵ CO 733/4, pp 249-50.

and more specifically, the Balfour Declaration made their situation intolerable. The representative assembly mooted by the British, moreover, which would be allowed to have some legislative powers only if its “official” members (i.e. those nominated by the Government) had 50% of the seats, turned out to be no different than the non-representative and toothless Advisory Council.¹⁰³⁶

On 10 August the Archbishop of Canterbury received the delegation, consisting of the three Moslems and three Christians and Miss Frances Newton. One of the Christians was Shibly Jamal, “who spoke English with great fluency and interpreted admirably”. Their complaints and demands were the usual ones, rejecting both parts of the Balfour Declaration, welcoming Jews as citizens in a free state, and appealing to McMahon’s promises to the Arabs [>10]; a British Memorandum of the interview sent to Churchill stated that “it did not come to much of a useful sort” but the author also noted: “I think I ought to tell you that I have received from a good many quarters requests that I should remonstrate against what is thought to be the undue development of a Zionist policy in Palestine...”¹⁰³⁷

To the Colonial Office

In London on 11 August the same delegation had a three-hour meeting with Colonial Office officials R.V. Vernon and Hubert Young. They again expressed their non-negotiable rejection of the Balfour Declaration and any Mandate incorporating it. The colonial Power’s retention of that policy was however likewise non-negotiable: “The Mohammedans and Christians must accept it as the basis of all discussion...”¹⁰³⁸ At a different interview, this time with John Shuckburgh and Eric Mills, the Palestinian Arabs asked these men to “explain” the Balfour Declaration’s contradictory clauses: “until they knew exactly what the Declaration meant they could not discuss anything at all.”¹⁰³⁹

They also met with Colonial Secretary Churchill. In Kayyali’s record:

Churchill stressed that he was receiving them as an unofficial body and that as long as they insisted that the Balfour Declaration should be repudiated there was nothing to say. The Declaration, he argued, had to be carried out, and the Arabs must accept the fact. ... When the Delegation entered into a discussion of ways and means of protecting Arab rights and interests, Churchill made it quite evident that any representative elective assembly or council would have no power over the control of immigration or any other matter that was vital to the implementation of the Jewish National Home policy. Thereupon, the Delegation declared that the two parts of the Balfour Declaration were irreconcilable as Zionism was incompatible with Arab rights.¹⁰⁴⁰

Concerning the phrase “unofficial body”, according to Bayan Al-Hout, the British throughout the Mandate made it illegal for the Palestinians to organise and hold coun-

¹⁰³⁶ CO 733/14, pp 134 & 240; Wasserstein 1978, pp 114-15; Lesch 1979, pp 158-64.

¹⁰³⁷ CO 733/14, pp 88-93.

¹⁰³⁸ CO 733/13, p 623.

¹⁰³⁹ CO 537/855, pp 2-3, Meeting of Shuckburgh and Mills with Zionists and Arabs to Secretary of State; Ingrams 1972, p 149.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 101-02.

try-wide elections which could elect such an 'official' body.¹⁰⁴¹ In my opinion more research on exactly this issue, done by an Arabic-speaker but published also in English, would be salutary.

British citizen Weizmann, heading the Jewish-Zionist body regarded as 'official' by HMG, was often meeting with the colonial rulers from the Prime Minister on down, in Parliament, Whitehall, Great Smith Street, and their private homes. It therefore shines some light on these interchanges to read a comment of long-serving colonial officer Mills, who reported that during one of the few face-to-face meetings between Arabs and Zionists, when talking to the Arabs, Weizmann's

attitude was of the nature of a conqueror handing to beaten foes the terms of peace. Also I think he despises the members of the delegation as not worthy protagonists – that it is a little derogatory to him to expect him to meet them on the same ground.¹⁰⁴²

Churchill must have felt the same way, as he did not welcome this Delegation of non-Jews, as the British officially called them, and held a full meeting with them only once.

In the 11 August meeting Vernon and Young even passed the buck, offering "if they desired it, to put them in touch with the Zionist Organization", to which the Delegation replied that "they would prefer to be re-assured by the Government which had adopted the policy rather than by the people whose demands had been met by it."¹⁰⁴³ Vernon and Young also passed responsibility to all of the countries who had signed the Treaty of Sèvres and its Article 95 which incorporated the Balfour Declaration [92], saying to the Delegation that these countries would certainly insist that the British carry out the Jewish National Home policy; in addition, it would not be "reasonable to expect us to set up a body which should have the power to abrogate the avowed purpose for which the mandate had been granted to us."¹⁰⁴⁴

While the Palestinians "said that... the Balfour Declaration was self-contradictory", Vernon and Young stuck to their formula which theoretically squared the circle, saying that

our intention was to give the people of Palestine the largest possible measure of self-Government which was compatible with the putting into effect of Mr Balfour's Declaration [and] made it quite clear to them that there was no question of official negotiations between them and His Majesty's Government...¹⁰⁴⁵

Since Balfour's letter was logically incompatible with anything but some municipal- or village-level participation in government, the British were opposing "self-Government" in the sense of the term accepted in both common language and political science. In

¹⁰⁴¹ Al-Hout 1979, p 86.

¹⁰⁴² CO 537/855, p 5; CO 733/14, p 81; Ingrams 1972, pp 149-50.

¹⁰⁴³ CO 733/14, p 82; Ingrams 1972, p 145.

¹⁰⁴⁴ CO 733/14, p 83.

¹⁰⁴⁵ CO 733/14, pp 81-83.

closing, Vernon and Young did however mistakenly surmise that by giving the proposed Representative Assembly a slight bit more power the Arabs “could be induced to co-operate with us.”¹⁰⁴⁶

The single official meeting between Churchill and the Delegation was on 12 August.¹⁰⁴⁷ The Delegation wished to know whether the proposed “Assembly” would be a democratic one, whereupon Churchill “said that the discussions were still continuing. If they returned to Palestine they could take part in them” and that “no one knew what form it would take.” (pp 242, 245) They replied that they “could get nothing” out of Samuel’s Administration, which was the reason they had “come to see the British Government”, whereupon Churchill passed the buck back to Samuel, saying that “the British Government spoke through the administration of Palestine.” (p 242) The Palestinian team reiterated that they “had come... to ask the British Government to consider what was the root of the matter – the Balfour Declaration”, whereupon Churchill replied that “the British Government meant to carry out the Balfour Declaration. ... What they had to do was to see to the carrying out of the clauses that protected the Arabs.” (p 243) They replied that “their political rights were being carried away”, whereupon Churchill replied that “since the war no one in Palestine had had political rights.” (p 243) They feared the proposed “Assembly Board” would have no power, and “asked for true representation of the people’s will and wishes”, whereupon Churchill replied that “His Majesty’s Government could not allow that.” (p 244) They “only asked to have their rights safeguarded”, to which Churchill replied that “all they [HMG] asked for was the impossibility of repudiating the Balfour Declaration”, that “it was not one of their rights to stop Jews from coming into the country” (pp 245, 247) and that indeed, “so long as they [the Delegation] persisted that the Balfour Declaration should be repudiated there was nothing to say.” (p 246) This is why this encounter is a good proxy for the mandatory-indigenous relationship: **“There was nothing to say.”**

There was as well the usual skirmish as to whether the Delegation’s views coincided with those of the people of Palestine, after which Churchill went on to insist, in effect, on political parity between the 10% and the 90%:

He [Churchill] was going to propose representative institutions, not a government like the government in this country [Britain], where everybody had a vote, and according as the majority demands, so matters stand. This could not be done. His Majesty’s Government were trustees not only for the interests of the Arabs, but also for the interests of the Jews... (pp 248-49)

This representative of the official bodies called Parliament and HMG – bodies of a democratic country – was denying democracy to others, hinting again at the one sense in which policy could conceivably be called ‘democratic’, namely by including all the millions of Jews worldwide in the Palestinian polity.

When the Delegation asked, “Why were they being treated differently from the Arabs in Syria and Mesopotamia?” Churchill replied that “the mandatory had discretionary power

¹⁰⁴⁶ CO 733/14, pp 82, 83.

¹⁰⁴⁷ CO 733/14, pp 238-52, all citations.

[and] must fulfil their pledges to everyone”; that “one side must concede and the other forebear”; and that “it is not fair when one side means to take everything and give nothing.” (p 250) That “one side” was apparently the Palestinians.

In closing, Churchill defended Zionism in a long speech, admitted to have “spoken at great length”, and said without irony that “it would be very painful if Palestine were to come within the hideous area of force”; he also asked the Palestinians, “Did they want to come to England and just eat some dinners and luncheons and not come to any agreement? Did they want to go back to their people in Palestine and say they had done nothing?” (pp 252, 250) In fact, since “there was nothing to say”, they had might as well eat.

This Palestine London Delegation **submitted in writing** to Churchill on 12 August 1921 their ‘**Brief Statement of the Demands of the Arab People of Palestine (Moslems and Christians)**’.¹⁰⁴⁸ It followed closely the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress’s ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ [*>99*] given to him the previous March personally in Jerusalem [*also >100*]. Again signed by Musa Kazem al-Husseini, it claimed concretely that

The aptitude of the people of Palestine for self-government is not less than that of other people whom Great Britain has, in the past and present, helped to attain self rule. In this connection we may mention Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Poland and Mesopotamia as examples. Quite 45% of our people are able to read and write, while over a thousand men have completed courses of higher education in Medicine, Law, Engineering and the Arts in general. (p 97)

In thus implicitly accepting that self rule was conditional on something other than merely being the indigenous inhabitants, namely “aptitude” and education levels, they were trying to argue on the Britons’ own terms, but they came quickly to the basic point:

We ask for the abolition of the principle of the creation of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine” [because] the various statements and public utterances of [Zionism’s] responsible leaders... cannot be interpreted to mean anything less than the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine... in spite of the fact that some wise Zionists endeavour to hide the real motives behind their policy. (pp 98-99)

The Statement also objected that “the Executive and Legal authorities in the country have been placed in the hands of two staunch Zionists [Samuel and Bentwich]”, and it offered a detailed comparison of the historical claims to Palestine of the Jews and the Palestinians: The Jews may have

occupied the country for a short period, over two thousand years back, during which they were constantly at war with their neighbouring tribes [and they] have left no monuments or traces worth mentioning when compared to the monuments of the Arabs who occupied the land during a much longer period. The Arabs, furthermore, inherited Palestine from generation to generation... (p 99)¹⁰⁴⁹

On several criteria, that is, the Arab claim was much stronger.

¹⁰⁴⁸ CO 733/14, pp 95-104, all citations.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Also Whitelam 1996.

Izzat Tannous, who wrote in detail about the Delegation's visit and spoke with Shibly Jamal when he returned to Palestine¹⁰⁵⁰, would later look at the logic of the assumption that the historical-political claim is valid for *all Jews*:

However, we, the Arabs of Palestine, never denied the fact that Palestine was and still is the *religious home* of Judaism, Christianity and Islam – the land of the Prophets, the Cradle of Christianity and the Third Mecca of Islam. Jews, Christians and Moslems enjoy equal religious rights in Palestine, and if we give the 16 or 20 million Jews of the world political and territorial rights in Palestine, we are obliged, in fairness, to give the 800 million Christians and the 600 million Moslems the same political and territorial rights as were given to the Jews! Jews as Jews, Christians as Christians and Moslems as Moslems have no political or territorial rights in Palestine.¹⁰⁵¹

This insight exposes a weakness at the core of arguments for ethno-religiously defined *collective* rights to Palestine. In that it cuts the ties between ethnicities and polities – rejecting so-called 'nationalism' – it in fact had and still has the power to cut the Gordian knot in Palestine.

When discussing this written statement with the Delegation, Shuckburgh, head of Churchill's Middle Eastern Department, did address the issue of the sheer numbers of Jewish immigrants and foresaw "the contingency of Jewish political ascendancy in Palestine" – whereupon Musa Kazem returned to the basics and "stated that the Arab Delegation had already forwarded the idea of a proper solution to the problem of Palestine."¹⁰⁵² [*also* >123] That is, *independence* as demanded in their Statement, with no need to discuss immigration, which would be regulated by the independent country itself.

To the League of Nations

On 2 September 1921 **this Delegation wrote a letter**¹⁰⁵³ to the President of the League of Nations which was forwarded by League Secretary-General Eric Drummond to the League Council and all members as "the final court for the realisation of [the League's] noble aims", its content similar to that of the Delegation's "brief statement"¹⁰⁵⁴ submitted to Churchill on 12 August, as related just above. The Delegation represented "93% of the population [and] 98% of the general wealth of the country" and had been elected by the 4th Palestine Arab Congress [>109] to "submit to your honourable Assembly and to the whole civilized world the case of our people":

We understand that there has been submitted to your honourable Assembly draft conditions for a Mandate for Palestine [>146]; but since, up to the present moment, no plebiscite has been taken in that country regarding a Mandate, we request that this matter be postponed until the will of the people has been declared in a free manner.

What a radical idea – a plebiscite.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Tannous 1988, pp 120–26.

¹⁰⁵¹ Tannous 1988, p 225.

¹⁰⁵² CO 537/855, pp 8–9; Ingrams 1972, p 148.

¹⁰⁵³ League of Nations 1921, pp 2–4, *all quotations*; Regan 2017, pp 111–12.

¹⁰⁵⁴ CO 733/14, pp 95–104.

Furthermore,

The present provisional Administration in Palestine... has no right to enact laws before the future status of the country has been defined [and] should govern according to the laws of the past régime...

They were referring to the Hague Convention prohibiting powers from changing the laws in territories they militarily occupied.¹⁰⁵⁵ Yet that Administration was violating that rule of international law, for instance

by admitting thousands of [Jews] into the country [and] accept[ing] Hebrew as a third official language of the Government, whereas the number of Jews in Palestine does not exceed 60,000, and the large majority of these speak only Arabic, Hebrew being known by less than 10% of this small minority.

These complaints had already been communicated to the League of Nations “on January 18th, 1920, February 3rd, 1921, May 5th, 1921, and July 11th, 1921”. Their basic “request” was “a National Government responsible to a Parliament elected by those Palestinians who lived in the country before the war – Moslems, Christians and Jews”.

That Palestine was a community described in Art. 22 of the Covenant [[>]46] as having reached “a stage of development where their existence as [an] independent nation... can be provisionally recognised” was, so the Delegation, proven by the fact that

It is not below Syria and Mesopotamia in development since 45% of its people can read and write, while hundreds of its young men are graduates of Turkish Colleges and Western Universities as architects, engineers, doctors, lawyers and schoolmasters. Many of them, too, fill important administrative posts in America, Egypt and the Sudan, where they have proved a great factor in the development of those countries.

And there had been so many promises by the Powers: the Anglo-French declaration on 9 November 1918 [[>]28], Allenby’s declaration on 14 November 1919, French Premier Briand’s declaration on 3 November 1915, Foreign Secretary Grey’s statement on 23 October 1916, “the Allies’ reply to President Wilson’s Note” on 10 October 1917, M. Ribot’s statement on 22 May 1917, the Chambre des Députés on 4 June 1917, the French Senate on 6 June 1917, Lloyd George’s statement on 29 June 1917, and Wilson’s many declarations.

Drafts of the Mandate text were well-known, and “the terms of the Mandate... deprive us of the right of self-determination”. Arguing perceptively and originally, if legalistically,

The independence of our country having been recognized, it is superfluous... to speak of encouraging and developing self-government; for the same consideration control over the Executive should not be given to the Mandatory, since the office of this is simply one of advice and assistance; neither is it right... to grant the Mandatory the power to frame laws of nationality, as in Art. 7, since this legislative capacity lies within the sphere of the National Government as set up by the people. For the same consideration no army should exist in the land, as in Art. 17 and the last two paragraphs of Art. 18, but that created by the National

¹⁰⁵⁵ Hague Convention (IV) Regulations 1907, §42, 43, 49, 55.

Government. Finally, we cannot see how Palestine can be independent when, according to Art. 11 of the terms of the Mandate, the Mandatory has full possession and control over the natural resources of the country and over all Public Works and Services.

The anti-colonialist case was here stated exceptionally clearly.

The Delegation then compared the “imaginary historic claims of Jews” to political rights in Palestine which are “incompatible” with those of the Palestinians:

The present population of Palestine is the rightful owner of the land, and has been such even before Jews entered it [i.e. several centuries BCE]. The short period in history during which Jews occupied a small portion of Palestine, and all through which they were at war with the neighbouring tribes, is short indeed when compared with the period during which Palestinians of the present day and their ancestors before them occupied it. Besides, Jewish monuments compare very poorly with Arab remains and buildings. By what right, then, are these people, who lived in Palestine for a short period some two thousand years ago, allowed to come in and compete with the inhabitants who have lived here during many centuries? Further, how can such a thing be imposed on them against their expressed will?

The “incompatibility” between self-determination and the imposition of the Jewish national home is further evidenced by “the riots and disturbances... in Jerusalem on April 4th, 1919,... at Haifa in March, 1921, and... at Jaffa and its vicinity last May”.

In addition to these arguments the Palestinians demonstrated the pro-Zionist bias built into the proposed (and eventual) text of the Mandate:

In the third paragraph in the preface to the terms of the Mandate, wherein the question of a National Home for the Jews is discussed, the safeguarding of our civil and religious rights are mentioned, but there is not a word about our political rights; while in Art. 2 of this same document the political rights of the Jews are plainly noted. This leads us to conclude that the words ‘development in self-government’ which occur therein are meant to apply to the Jews alone.

Finally, a letter of solidarity with the Palestinians was sent to the League on 10 September, in French, by the ‘Congrès Syrio-Palestinien’ meeting in ‘Août-Septembre 1921’, emphasising the right of the indigenous inhabitants, bestowed on them by the League Covenant, Art. 22 [§4, second sentence], to have their voice heard as to the choice of any foreseen Mandatory Power, to themselves say yes or no to the establishment of “un Foyer national pour les Juifs”, and in general to realise their “aspirations nationales”.¹⁰⁵⁶[>120]

In Palestine during these months, in light of the known failure of the Delegation to get anywhere in London or Geneva, many local associations were formed which debated the pros and cons of violent, as opposed to diplomatic, forms of fighting for political rights.¹⁰⁵⁷ Meetings were held “in Tulkarem, Hebron, Ramallah and Lubyá” which connected the rural with the urban resistance but which were aware that if violence were to be used, it could not confront the vastly stronger British military front-on.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵⁶ League of Nations 1921, p 5.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Kayyali 1978, p 105; Quigley 2010, p 36.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ayyad 1999, p 94.

118. Churchill to Samuel

16 August 1921

Concerning the “majority Assembly” which the 1st Palestine Arab Delegation had been promised, and whose creation was under discussion [>117], **Colonial Secretary Churchill telegraphed High Commissioner Samuel** on 16 August 1921:

The alternatives would appear to be advisory body with no power which could be fully representative and legislative body having wide powers and [but] so composed that risk of its having to be over-ruled [by Samuel] would almost disappear. ... Do you recommend that we should consult Arab Delegation and Zionists?¹⁰⁵⁹

The Balfour Declaration’s having put a monkey wrench into the development of a normal democracy, an inverse relation had to be posited between the power of such an “advisory body” and its democratic legitimacy. Churchill and Samuel, the two men who were here developing the two ways an anti-indigenous “assembly” could be constructed, would together write the decisive Statement of Policy of 3 June 1922 [>142], better known as the ‘Churchill’ White Paper which would stay officially in effect until the ‘MacDonald’ White Paper of 17 May 1939 [>410], thus governing Palestine for the seventeen most important years of the Mandate. (The Passfield White Paper of 21 October 1930 [>234], anyway little different from the Churchill/Samuel effort of 1922, was never approved by Parliament. [>242])

A problem for this plan, so the Colonial Secretary further, was that since most Palestine Government officials tended to anti-Zionism, it might be hard to “compose” the “legislative body” in a pro-Zionist enough way to circumvent frequent vetoes by the High Commissioner. According to Susan Boyle, partly for this reason “Churchill circulated a memorandum to the Cabinet in London that sought ‘the removal of all anti-Zionist civil officials, however highly placed.’”¹⁰⁶⁰ That memo called for the removal of any military or civil employees who disagreed with the Zionist policy:

Recommendations are expected from the High Commissioner in the course of the next few weeks as to the civil officials who shall be placed permanently upon a pensionable establishment in Palestine. This will afford an opportunity of releasing any members of the Administration who do not feel that they can conscientiously carry out what some of them regard as an unfair and unpopular measure.¹⁰⁶¹

At any rate, the Cabinet on 18 August rejected the demands of the Palestinian Delegation.¹⁰⁶² [>119]

¹⁰⁵⁹ CO 733/14, p 134.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Boyle 2001, p 136.

¹⁰⁶¹ CAB 24/127/13, p 40.

¹⁰⁶² CO 733/14/19.

119. Cabinet seeks an answer

18 August 1921

The Delegation was in London when Churchill on 11 August 1921 “secretly” told the Cabinet:

The situation in Palestine causes me perplexity and anxiety. The Zionist policy is profoundly unpopular with all except the Zionists. ... *In the interests of the Zionist policy, all elective institutions have so far been refused to the Arabs, and they naturally contrast their treatment with that of their fellows in Mesopotamia.* ... The War Office estimates for [the] garrison ... of about 8,000 men ... for the coming financial year 1922-23 are £3,319,000... It cannot be doubted that this expense is almost wholly due to our Zionist policy. [T]he whole situation should be reviewed by the Cabinet. I have done and am doing my best to give effect to the pledge given to the Zionists by Mr. Balfour on behalf of the War Cabinet. ... I am prepared to continue in this course, if it is the settled resolve of the Cabinet.¹⁰⁶³ (*emphasis added; [also >106; >142]*)

Accompanying this one-page note from Churchill to the Cabinet was a three-page memo also dated 11 August, also to the Cabinet, written with Churchill's approval by “the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office” (Vernon, Young, Shuckburgh, Meinertzhagen, Mills) who had met with the Arab Delegation. One statement in this SECRET message got to the point:

The problem which we have to work out now is one of tactics, not strategy, the general strategic idea, as I conceive it, being the gradual immigration of Jews into Palestine to the extent to which they can be absorbed into the economic life of the country without detriment to the rights and privileges of the non-Jewish majority.¹⁰⁶⁴

What non-Jewish “privileges” existed was not stated. Concerning the disturbances of spring 1921 the memo also wrote that “The High Commissioner appears to have been taken somewhat by surprise by these events...” At the same time as this message for the Cabinet was another one from the Colonial Office saying that the gradual immigration should continue “until that country becomes a predominantly Jewish State. There is no half-way house between this conception and total abandonment of the Zionist programme”.¹⁰⁶⁵

However, Weizmann needn't worry

that representative institutions in some form should be established forthwith [and] in order to ensure that every effort is made to bring the Zionist experiment to a successful issue, any officials, whether civil or military, who are publicly and confessedly opposed to the declared policy of His Majesty's Government should be replaced.¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁶³ CAB 24/127/13, p 39, SECRET, 11 August 1921, Memo from CO Secretary Churchill; also CO 733/14, p 53; Ingrams 1972, p 143; Quigley 2011, p 264.

¹⁰⁶⁴ CAB 24/127/13, p 40.

¹⁰⁶⁵ CO 733/14, p 54.

¹⁰⁶⁶ CAB 24/127/13, p 40; CO 733/14, p 54.

These positions jibed with those of Shuckburgh's second- or third-in-command Colonel Meinertzhagen [>116], who indeed minuted this memo:

Any form of Elected Advisory Council can only constitute a further obstruction.... If it is suggested that we are morally obliged to give to anti-Zionists some form of official representation, we lay ourselves open to brotherhood with the Pharisee... I regard the proposal as placing a further weapon into the hands of the anti-Zionists. It would be dangerous alike to the administration and to our Policy. I agree that a Cabinet decision must be sought on these questions: and even then we must be prepared for strong local [i.e. British-administration] opposition in Palestine as such masculine construction of the Zionist policy is completely foreign to our officials.¹⁰⁶⁷

These high officials at Colonial Office headquarters were with great frankness declaring their disregard for democracy in Palestine and their immunity not only to Palestinian appeals, but to the opinion of the great majority of HMG's own officials working at the scene. Official Meinertzhagen was evidently expressing his "masculinity".

According to the memo Arabs should moreover be disarmed, while colonists be allowed to arm themselves within the existing police corps, and "strong measures must be taken to punish the villages responsible for the recent attacks" [under investigation by the Haycraft Commission [>122] whose findings were eagerly awaited by the Palestinian Delegation] – i.e. collective punishment; furthermore,

early steps should be taken for the granting to Jewish enterprise of economic concessions for works of public utility [probably involving] expropriation clauses in the event of owners of land refusing to part with their property at reasonable rates. This cannot be regarded as conflicting in any way with the second clause of the Balfour Declaration, which was clearly not intended to protect individuals who are determined to thwart the execution of the main policy.¹⁰⁶⁸

Compulsory purchase, that is, was said not to violate the thwarters' "civil" rights which the subsidiary clause of the Balfour Declaration [>16] vowed to protect.

Finally, in the opinion of Vernon, Young, Shuckburgh, Mills and/or Meinertzhagen, the Administration should avoid "the setting up of a really representative body" [also >119] but instead create an elected Advisory Council which would not be allowed to discuss Zionism but could express itself on "the economic development of the country."¹⁰⁶⁹ Incidentally, the authors also mobilised the high cost to Britain of the Zionist Mandate to argue for the pro-Zionist proposal of separating the Palestine military command from the one in Egypt, noting that "It has been repeatedly pointed out by the War Office that Palestine is of no military value from an Imperial point of view."¹⁰⁷⁰

In a separate internal note commenting on his discussions with the Delegation Young grasped that the Palestinians wanted "the immediate establishment of a responsible

¹⁰⁶⁷ CO 733/14, p 54; Ingrams 1972, pp 140, 142.

¹⁰⁶⁸ CAB 24/127/13, pp 40-41 (printed pages 4-5).

¹⁰⁶⁹ CAB 24/127/13, p 41.

¹⁰⁷⁰ CAB 24/127/13, p 40.

Government in Palestine on an elective basis [and] the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration”, and that they in particular opposed “the specially favoured position of the Zionist Organization in the mandate [and] the appointments of Sir Herbert Samuel and Mr Bentwich to the chief executive and legislative posts in the administration [as well as] the recognition of Hebrew as an official language... [but it] did not take long to convince them of the absurdity of some of these proposals...”¹⁰⁷¹ Young then recorded his somewhat tautological remark to the Delegation that “So long as the policy of His Majesty’s Government was a Zionist policy they must expect administrative measures to be more flavoured with Zionism than they would have been if no such policy existed.”¹⁰⁷² The bottom line was the untouchability of the scheme for a Jewish national home.

The memo to the Cabinet closed by saying that legitimate, “representative” political bodies were incompatible with Zionism:

The arguments of non-elected bodies [such as those being mooted by Churchill and Samuel, >118] cannot be indefinitely ignored on the ground that they are not representative, while at the same time objection is taken to the setting up of a really representative body. It should not be impossible to work out a scheme by which the Advisory Council shall be precluded from obstructing the policy of His Majesty’s Government, while they remain free to express their legitimate views on all proposals for the economic development of the country.¹⁰⁷³

Churchill and his direct employees were once again frankly acknowledging that a “really representative body” was anathema to the Balfour Declaration “policy”. One trick was to declare that only their views on “economic development”, but not on political issues, were “legitimate”.

With the analysis of Churchill and his Colonial Office before it, on 18 August 1921 **the Cabinet considered its options**.¹⁰⁷⁴

Arabs and Jews were armed, or were arming, and a conflict might shortly ensue, particularly if the Moslem Christian Delegation, now in London, returned without having secured the withdrawal of Mr Balfour’s pledge to the Zionists. The latter were naturally anxious as to their position, and wished to be reassured as to the Government’s support. Two courses were open to the Cabinet. They could withdraw from their Declaration, refer the Mandate back to the League of Nations, set up an Arab National Government, and slow down or stop the immigration of Jews: or they could carry out the present policy with greater vigour and encourage the arming of the Jews with a view later on of reducing the numbers of the British garrison and cutting down expenses. A draft pronouncement prepared by Mr Weizmann was read, for which he desired official approval, but objection was taken to its terms, and, in particular, to placing the control of immigration in the hands of the Jews and limiting it [only] by the funds available.

It was apparently not forbidden to at least weigh the prospect of ditching the Declaration and quitting their job with the League of Nations.

¹⁰⁷¹ CO 733/14, p 81.

¹⁰⁷² CO 733/14, p 82.

¹⁰⁷³ CAB 24/127/13, p 41.

¹⁰⁷⁴ CAB 23/26/25, pp 311-12.

Weighing the pros and cons:

(i) The honour of the Government was involved in the Declaration made by Mr Balfour, and to go back on our pledge would seriously reduce the prestige of this country in the eyes of Jews throughout the world: ... (iv) On the other hand, it was urged that peace was impossible on the lines of the Balfour Declaration, which involved setting up a National Home for the Jews and respecting the rights of the Arab population. The result of this inconsistency must be to estrange both Arabs and Jews, while involving us in futile military expenditure. Against this position it was argued that the Arabs had no prescriptive right to a country which they had failed to develop to the best advantage.

On the Zionist side were Cabinet members Churchill and Alfred Mond, while it was probably Curzon and Edwin Samuel Montagu who leaned away from “Mr Balfour’s Declaration”. In the end “The Cabinet agreed – in view of the absence of Mr Balfour, to adjourn the discussion.” Ten months on, with the release of His Majesty’s Statement of Policy known as the Churchill White Paper [142], the Cabinet would come down on the side of placing priority on its “prestige... in the eyes of Jews throughout the world” rather than on either “peace” or an “Arab National Government”. The following Government’s Cabinet would do the same thing in July 1923 under Colonial Secretary Cavendish, namely let the supposed preservation of British prestige and “honour” cost what it may in money and lives.¹⁰⁷⁵ [167]

This short Cabinet minute makes visible quite a number of themes:

- 1) that the Palestinians’ demand was fundamental rather than concerned merely with *how* Britain was administering them;
- 2) that an “Arab National Government” was in British eyes possible, but not desired;
- 3) that the Balfour policy was costly to the British taxpayer;
- 4) that Weizmann had easy access to the Cabinet;
- 5) that immigration was the touchiest bone of contention between Britain and the international Zionists;
- 6) that British Zionist policy held an internal “inconsistency”;
- 7) that that policy meant war, not peace;
- 8) that British “honour” and “prestige” were measured neither in the eyes of the indigenous people nor by ethical or political principle; and
- 9) that British-style *economic* development was a precondition for political, “prescriptive”, rights.

¹⁰⁷⁵ CAB 24/161/51, p 3.

120. Syrian-Palestinian Congress

Aug/Sept 1921

This **Syrian-Palestinian Congress** was held in Geneva starting 25 August 1921 and was attended by the Syrians and/or Palestinians Wahba El-Issa, Riad El-Solh, Salah Ezzeddine, Shibly El-Jamal, Ehsan El-Jabri, George Youssef Salem, Hajj Tawfiq Hammad (Vice President), Michel Lotfallah (President), Rashid Rida (Vice President) [*also >4*], Emir Shakib Arslan (Secretary General) [*>4; >278*], Tawfiq El-Yazigi (Assistant Secretary General), Taan Al-Imad, Amin Bey Al-Tamimi, Najib Choucair, Tawfiq Fayed, and Suleiman Kanaan; attendees Shukri al-Quwatli and Abdulrahman Shabbandar were also members.¹⁰⁷⁶

The Congress evidently sent memorials to both the League of Nations and U.S. President Warren Harding. According to the *New York Times* of 31 August 1921,¹⁰⁷⁷ all members of this Congress were “notabilities” from ancient, settled families in [Greater] Syria, most of them living in exile; many living in Syria had been banned by the French from attending.

[They] today submitted to the League of Nations an expression of the desire of the Syrian and Palestinian populations for complete independence of any outside power. They object to France having a mandate over Syria and to Palestine becoming a national home for the Jews. ... [O]ne delegate, Youssef Salem, claims to represent 250,000 Syrians in the United States, who, he says, all want Syria to be entirely independent. ... Many Syrians and Palestinians in the United States, the memorial [sent to U.S. President Warren Harding] continues, would be ready to return to their country provided the latter were entirely free...

This basic message might well indeed have been news to Harding, seeing as the U.S. Government was still suppressing the King-Crane Report containing empirical support for it.

They told Harding

that Syria and Palestine should form one country because they are mostly inhabited by the same Arab race, Christians and Mohammedan. They assert that the Jewish population is only about 7 per cent. of that of Syria and Palestine. They complain that France has divided Syria into six provinces, although that region is absolutely homogeneous, and that the Allies have separated Syria from Palestine.

The Congress furthermore predicted unending unrest and noted that despite the presence of 75,000 French soldiers “the country is more disturbed than under Turkish rule.”

The Sykes-Picot lines were evidently still absurd in the minds of many Syrians and Palestinians. As Izzat Tannous recalled, “All during the mandate period, it was impossible to cross the artificial borders of these newly formed states without procuring British or French visas which were not always easy to procure.”¹⁰⁷⁸ Finally, as related in our entry about the 1st Palestinian Delegation [*>117*], the Congress on 10 September sent a letter to

¹⁰⁷⁶ Wikipedia, <http://www.wikizeroo.com/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvU3lyaWFu4oCTUGFsZXN0aW5pYW5fQ29uZ3Jlc3M>

¹⁰⁷⁷ All quotations from the Mohamed Ali El-Taher Archives, again with thanks to Hassan Eltaher.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Tannous 1988, p 87.

the League in solidarity with the Palestinian Delegation, demanding a Palestinian voice in choosing the Mandatory and the inhabitants' right to develop their national aspirations in general and in particular to decide themselves whether a Jewish national home should be erected in their country.¹⁰⁷⁹

September 1921 *'Meetings of between 30 and 50 people in Hebron, Ramleh, Loubie/Tiberias and Tulkarem, supported by the "Palestine Committee in Egypt", knew the Delegation would get nowhere in London and that British military might was too great, so decided to attack Jews in order to discourage immigration and influence the League of Nations not to adopt the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration.'*¹⁰⁸⁰

September 1921 *'The Palestinian delegation left London in September 1921 with no concessions whatever and went to Geneva where they met the same negative response from League of Nations officials.'*¹⁰⁸¹

¹⁰⁷⁹ League of Nations 1921, p 5.

¹⁰⁸⁰ CO 733/17B, pp 656-69, Weizmann to Shuckburgh 11 December 1921: Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tiberias and Haifa reports; Kayyali 1978, pp 104-07; also Eltaher, current http://www.eltaher.org/biography/english/biography_p06_en.html.

¹⁰⁸¹ Quigley 2011, pp 267-68.

Samuel's speech of placation of 3 June 1921 [^{>105}], heard in light of the firm pro-Zionism of HMG when talking with the Palestine Delegation during its sojourn in London during 1921-22 [^{>117; >123; >127; >132; >135; >137; >143}], did not work. On a visit to Palestine, Middle East Department official **Hubert Young wrote back** to Department head John Shuckburgh on 3 October 1921¹⁰⁸² that the "non-Jewish population" didn't believe Samuel's speech. He went on to advise HMG to choose between the nice, publicly-visible interpretation Samuel and official Britain were giving to the Jewish-home policy, and the muscular interpretation given it by the "extreme Zionists" themselves. Also addressed to Shuckburgh, Meinertzhagen minuted Young's letter: "I am distressed to see that Major Young has seceded from the views he held on Zionism before he left England. He has obviously been influenced by the local atmosphere and the Arab bogey." [*also >126*]

However that may have been, Young shared the fear of the Colonial Office that if the Zionist Organization were forced to sing nicer in public, it would split, thereby destroying the entire national-home undertaking. He was moreover aware that statements known to the Arabs made by Weizmann in Carlsbad and by Eder before the Haycraft Commission, which had just finished investigating the May 1921 violence [^{>122}], would "render the prospect of the people co-operating in constitutional reform indefinitely remote." The statements referred to envisioned Jewish takeover of Palestine plus the granting of the electricity concession to Rutenberg rather than Mavrommatis and a number of other applicants who held Ottoman government concessions and who, beginning in 1918, sought those concessions' recognition and renewal by the British administration in Palestine.¹⁰⁸³ [^{>105; >147; >114; >121; >189; >195; >235}]

¹⁰⁸² CO 733/17B, pp 683-93, *all quotations*; Ingrams 1972, pp 151-53.

¹⁰⁸³ On the Mavrommatis-Rutenberg competition for Mandate electricity-generation concessions, *see* CO 733/4, pp 372-411; CO 733/17B/11, /15, /36, /38, /45; CO 733/142/13; Hansard 1922c; *also* Jeffries 1939, pp 612-26; Smith 1993, pp 117-26; Norris 2013, pp 122, 187.

VIII. Sons of the soil

The **report of the Haycraft Commission**¹⁰⁸⁴ first related its remit: The team appointed by High Commissioner Herbert Samuel on 7 May 1921 was “to inquire into and report upon the recent disturbances in the town and neighbourhood of Jaffa...”, the team’s being empowered by Article 2 of the 1921 Commission of Enquires Ordinance. (p 3) The main ‘Report into the Jaffa Riots’ began by naming the Commission members as

Sir Thomas Haycraft, Chief Justice of Palestine (Chairman) [*see also* >422, §8], Mr. H.C. Luke, Assistant Governor of Jerusalem, and Mr. J.N. Stubbs, Assistant Controller of Land Registries. The Commissioners were assisted by three assessors representing the Moslems, Christians and Jews, Aref Pasha Dejjani, Elias Effendi Mushabbek, and Dr. M. Eliash, gentlemen well acquainted with the conditions and sentiments of their respective communities. ... [T]he Commission sat without interruption from the 12th May to the 26th July, 1921, and heard 291 witnesses. (p 17)

Shortly after the hearings’ completion, on 16 August, Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill received and favourably evaluated the reports – in the plural since the main Report was accompanied by one written in police-report style concerning Khedera only, delivered on 1 July to Samuel, and also one consisting of Samuel’s comments.

Arabs and Jews had clashed in certain named localities starting on 1 May, leading to a several-day investigation by Cairo-based Intelligence Officer C.D. Brunton. [*>103*] (pp 5-16) Brunton’s report was thus presumably available to Haycraft et al. as background, as could have been the Palin Court’s report of 1 July 1920 [*>88*] on very similar “disturbances” one year earlier. However, while the Haycraft Reports several times referred to Major-General Philip Palin in his role as commander of the British troops in Palestine, it makes no mention at all of that (suppressed) Palin Report, although the remits were almost identical. The Palin and Haycraft Reports resembled each other as well in their analyses of the Arab grievances behind the riots and the fundamental issue of the Jewish national home in hitherto Arab Palestine. In contrast to the 1920 Palin Report, Churchill did not suppress the Haycraft Commission’s work. (p 64)

First, the conclusion of the main report:

The fundamental cause of the Jaffa riots and the subsequent acts of violence was a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economic causes, and connected with Jewish immigration, and with their conception of Zionist policy as derived from Jewish exponents. (p 59)

The wording indicates that the Commission saw the conflict more as one between Arabs and Jews than between Arabs and Britain – somewhat in contrast to the Palin Court Report – although it identified the locals’ problem as one with “Zionist policy”; it also explicitly stated that the causes were “political and economic”, not racial.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Haycraft 1921, *all citations*.

After listing many of these political and economic problems, including examples of Zionists' openly-stated intentions of taking over Palestine, the Commission's general view was that

But for the considerations set forth above we feel convinced that there would be no animosity towards the Jews as such; that there is no inherent anti-Semitism in the country, racial or religious. We are credibly assured by educated Arabs that they would welcome the arrival of well-to-do and able Jews who could help to develop the country to the advantage of all sections of the community. (p 54)

It also attested that "No hostility had existed in the past, between Tulkarem and its neighbourhood and Khedera." (p 7) This overall view notwithstanding, the Commission also wrote:

But we have no doubt that the Arabs were the first to turn this quarrel into a race conflict, and, when once this issue was joined, they behaved with a savagery which cannot be condoned. (p 44)

Many Arabs, so the report, felt that "immigrant Jews offend by their arrogance and by their contempt of Arab social prejudices" (p 51) and there was "anti-Jewish irritation" at the "young men and women, in free and easy attire,... singing songs [and] holding up traffic and generally conducting themselves in a manner at variance with Arab ideas of decorum" (p 53). The Arab witnesses and the Commission also identified the Bolshevism of some of the immigrants as repugnant to the locals. (pp 19, 24, 43) Thus, cultural causes of the disturbances joined the "political and economic" ones. And it was "immigrant" Jews, not Jews as such, who "irritated".

Much space was given to the international utterances, known to the Arabs, of leading Zionists expressing the intent to take control of Palestine. A "leading article" in the London *Jewish Chronicle* of 20 May 1921 had been widely read, for example, which stated:

Hence the real key to the Palestine situation is to be found in giving to Jews as such, those rights and privileges in Palestine which shall enable Jews to make it as Jewish as England is English, or Canada is Canadian. That is the only reasonable or, indeed, feasible meaning of a Jewish National Home, and it is impossible for Jews to construct it without being accorded a National status for Jews. (p 56)

Here we once again see the importance of the fact that the War Cabinet, in the Balfour Declaration, wrote that the Jewish home should be a "national" one. [16] 'National' still implied *ethnic* statehood.

The basic Arab attitude

can be summed up in the fear that through extensive Jewish immigration Palestine will become a Jewish dominion. This fear is not lessened when they read in Zionist literature such passages as the following, taken from the 'Keren Ha-Yesod Book', which will be referred to again later, 'The object of the modern Jewish pioneer in Palestine is to prepare room and work for the thousands and millions that wait outside.' (p 52)

Most significantly,

Until the Commission came to examine Dr. Eder, Acting Chairman of the Zionist Commission, they were unaware to what extent such expressions of opinion as those we have quoted above were authorised by responsible Zionists. ... [W]hen questioned on certain vital matters he was perfectly frank in expressing his view of the Zionist ideal. He gave no quarter to the view of the National Home as put forward by the Secretary of State [Churchill] and the High Commissioner [Samuel]. In his opinion there can be only one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish predominance as soon as the numbers of that race are sufficiently increased. (p 57)

In contrast to Churchill and Samuel Eder, either spontaneously or with the support of the Zionist Commission and perhaps other, higher-ranking Zionist organisations, saw no need to lie. Nevertheless, Churchill did not suppress this report.

The Arab objection to the Jewish-Zionist plan, of course, implied objection to Britain's support of it. Arab

discontent with the Government has appeared during this inquiry [and it] culminates in a suspicion that the Government is under Zionist influence, and is therefore led to favour a minority to the prejudice of the vast majority of the population. ... It was only when it came to be believed by the Arabs that the Jews were exercising a preponderating influence over the Government that a state of feeling arose which required but a minor provocation on the part of a small number of undesirable Jews [Bolsheviks] to ignite an explosion of popular anger against Jews in general. (pp 44, 50)

The first two of the Arabs' seven "grievances" were:

(a) That Great Britain, when she took over the administration of Palestine, was led by the Zionists to adopt a policy mainly directed towards the establishment of a National Home for the Jews, and not to the equal benefit of all Palestinians. (b) That in pursuance of this policy the Government of Palestine has, as its official advisory body, a Zionist Commission, bound by its ideals and its conception of its role to regard Jewish interests before all others, and constituted by its singular prerogatives into an *imperium in imperio*. (p 51)

The Peel Commission later confirmed this latter grievance, writing that the Zionist Commission's successor, the 'Jewish Agency for Palestine', ever since the early 1920s

exercises... a considerable influence on the conduct of the Government. ... This powerful and efficient organization amounts, in fact, to a Government existing side by side with the Mandatory Government.¹⁰⁸⁵ [→23]

At the practical level, another grievance was (c), "That there is an undue proportion of Jews in the Government service." (p 51) The next two grievances concerned the "flooding" of Palestine with immigrants as well as those immigrants' "greater commercial and

¹⁰⁸⁵ Peel 1937, VI §78-79.

organising ability” and – again pointing the finger at Britain – “they are favoured in [economic] competition”. (p 51) *Compare* the similar, more detailed list of 13 grievances listed by Intelligence Officer Brunton in mid-May.¹⁰⁸⁶ [*>103*]

Like all British reports from the field, in refutation of the armchair politicians’ claim that Arab discontent was not genuine but rather stirred up by either the Arab elite or foreign powers, the Report said it found a high level of political awareness even in remote villages rather than manipulated, illiterate masses:

[T]he general belief that the aims of the Zionists and Jewish immigration are a danger to the national and material interests of Arabs in Palestine is well nigh universal amongst the Arabs and is not confined to any particular class. ... [T]he people participate with the leaders, because they feel that their political and material interests are identical. ... [The] main objection to immigration has, however, been political, and this objection, although originating with the more educated Arabs, has filtered through the khans and coffee-shops into the streets and villages. ... In a small Moslem centre of this sort the people are more politically minded than in a small English country town, and the discussion of politics is their chief, if not their only, intellectual occupation. ... The educated people are sons of the soil, and they talk politics. (pp 52, 12, 13; also pp 43, 45)

It was in the end out of fear for their “national and material interests” both that the Arabs had rioted. (p 45) The Shaw Commission in 1930 would similarly refute the fiction that the broad populace was uninterested in or incapable of grasping the politics of denial of self-determination.¹⁰⁸⁷ [*>220*]

Finally, as an aside, in discussing the large “question of Jewish immigration”, the investigators noted that the locals did not buy the Zionist argument for historical entitlement to Palestine:

It would be useless to argue with the Arab that they [Jews] are not aliens because they are returning to their ancient home, since this is to him the aspect of the Zionist question with which he will have nothing to do. He tells you that they are Russians and Poles, and sometimes adds that they are Bolsheviks. (p 52)

Returning to the main thrust, the Colonial Office, having received Haycraft’s report in mid-August, wrote in a memo:

The report concludes with a statement that the evidence and the probabilities are against the allegations advanced by the colonists that the attack was premeditated and pre-arranged. At the same time it cannot be doubted that there is a wide-spread feeling of apprehension among the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine at the prospect of being placed against their will under Jewish rule.¹⁰⁸⁸

In order to stick to its limited remit, this was as far as the Commissioners went into the ethics, politics or political science of the conflict; in contrast to the enquiries of Palin

¹⁰⁸⁶ CAB 24/125/31, pp 1-2.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Shaw 1930, pp 129-30.

¹⁰⁸⁸ CAB 24/127/13, p 40.

[>88], Shaw [>220] and Peel [>336] they avoided discussion of how to balance the 'dual obligations'¹⁰⁸⁹ of the Balfour Declaration, of Britain's perceived responsibility to world Jewry or of the justice or injustice of 'parity' between two 'nationalisms' in devising any solution.¹⁰⁹⁰

Early 1920s *'In Palestine, in the early 1920s, the British had formalised the principle of collective punishment in the Collective Responsibility and Punishment Ordinances, regulations that built on the idea that Palestinian village life revolved around a "social system based on mutual protection rather than justice"...*¹⁰⁹¹

¹⁰⁸⁹ See also Huneidi 2001, pp 101-03.

¹⁰⁹⁰ On parity see also Boyle 2001, pp 11-14, 17, 158, 175-76271; McMahon 2010, e.g. p 61; Abu Sitta 2016, p 40; Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, pp 43, 114-15.

¹⁰⁹¹ Tibawi 1977, p 144.

123. Arab Delegation to Churchill

24 October 1921

The 1st Palestinian Delegation, back in London again after visiting Geneva, and still consisting of Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Hajj Tawfiq Hammad, Shibly Jamal, Muein Bey el-Madi, Amin Bey el-Tamimi, and Ibrahim Effendi Shammas, **wrote to Churchill from Hotel Cecil** on 24 October 1921:¹⁰⁹²

[T]he case we put forward is supported by 93% of the People of Palestine ... [T]he present policy of the British Government is directed towards evicting [those People] from their country in order to make it a national state for immigrant Jews. It is no answer to urge that this is not the intention of the British Government, and that the Zionist policy will be checked before it destroys our people, for the fact is that an administration is installed which is, as regards very many of its important officials, Zionist... The Balfour Declaration was made without our being consulted... [It] should be superseded by an Agreement which would safeguard the rights, interests and liberties of the people of Palestine, and at the same time make provision for reasonable Jewish *religious* aspirations, but precluding any exclusive political advantages to them which must necessarily interfere with Arab rights... A Constitution... should provide for... Representative Government [and] complete religious freedom and religious equality, safeguarded by some means so that this should be unalterable by the Palestine Parliament or any other authority.

The distinction between religious and political aspirations was crucial, as was the acknowledgment that the human right of religious freedom should be protected from the tyranny of the majority as expressed through a "Palestine Parliament". Nothing was left for them, apparently, except to repeat again and again their vision of a representative democracy.

In closing, they wrote:

We have outlined above a plan which, it seems to us, is fair both to the Palestinian people and the Jews. This plan will leave the control of immigration in the hands of the People of Palestine. ... The Palestine people will never admit the right of any outside organisation to dispossess them of their country, and to threaten their very existence as a people economically and politically. ... We ask you, Sir, to put our views as herein set out before the Cabinet, to which we have sent a copy of this proposal.

They had been consulted only by the King-Crane Commission [59] which had nothing to do with Britain.

2 November 1921 *On the 4th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration anti-Zionist riots break out in Jerusalem.*

¹⁰⁹² CO 733/16, pp 508-12, The Palestine Arab Delegation to The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, M.P., Colonial Secretary, 24 October 1921; Huneidi 2001, pp 313-15 (Appendix E); see also Lesch 1973, p 16; Lesch 1979, pp 79-80; Kayyali 1978, p 103.

The ‘British Committee of the Palestine Arab Delegation’ [p.117] published in London **an 8-page pamphlet**, dated 7 November 1921, entitled ‘The British Cabinet and Zionism.’¹⁰⁹³ It was very similar to the letter to Churchill from the Palestinian Delegation just above. British policy was the “building up of a new Jewish Palestine over the heads of the people of the country, who are eventually to be displaced,”¹⁰⁹⁴ and Samuel and Churchill were lying when they painted the Jewish National Home as something harmless to the 93% of the people who were not Jewish. Article 20 of the League of Nations Covenant [p.46; also p.182] “provides that Signatories are ‘called upon to take immediate steps to procure their release from obligations [such as the Balfour Declaration] inconsistent with their duties as Mandatories’, namely the duty to grant self-determination in line with Article 22 of the Covenant. The Zionists had achieved the removal of “the first three Administrators of Palestine” (Arthur Money, H.D. Watson, and Louis Bols [as well as Colonel Vivian Gabriel]), for opposing the Zionist Commission.¹⁰⁹⁵ Britain moreover “repress[es] the Palestine people by military force at the expense of some millions to the British taxpayer. Mr. Churchill has admitted that this expenditure is entirely due to the Zionist policy...”¹⁰⁹⁶ [also p.119]

The Mandate

gives privileges and power, not, be it noted, to the existing population, but to a population yet to be introduced, against the wish of the inhabitants of the Mandated Territory. ... One may well enquire how it came about that representatives of a people not yet resident in Palestine were allowed the privilege, under Cabinet rule, of criticising and drafting secret documents involving Great Britain’s integrity as a Mandatory Power.

The pamphlet also quoted from an article in the influential London *Jewish Chronicle*:

‘[T]o superimpose [Jewish] culture upon the Arab ... would certainly produce the best results... [Because] the civilisation of the Jews is so much higher than that of the Arabs... the two cultures may be too far apart to be brought into touch at all; just as a British Colony in Australia has for its effect upon the native Australians, not their transformation, but their gradual disappearance. The intellectual Jew, however, may some day find it useful to have workmen of another race.’¹⁰⁹⁷

¹⁰⁹³ CO 733/15/16, pp 217-20, all quotations; also FO 141/742/3, pp ???. The original title was perhaps ‘The Holy Land: The Moslem-Christian Case against Zionism’. (Andersen 2017, p 164)

¹⁰⁹⁴ See also CAB 24/215/1, §7,14 [p.230].

¹⁰⁹⁵ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 330-31.

¹⁰⁹⁶ E.g. Hansard 1921, c283; CAB 24/127/13, p 39.

¹⁰⁹⁷ The *Jewish Chronicle* is still a Zionist newspaper in London.

This expression of Jewish racial superiority bears comparison with Herbert Samuel's 'The Future of Palestine'. [8] As an early endorsement of population replacement – “disappearance” through death or transfer, unless needed for menial work¹⁰⁹⁸ – it bears comparison with the racist thoughts of Richard Meinertzhagen [61; 74; 116].

¹⁰⁹⁸ See Masalha 1992 and >30; >44; >68, >230; >242; >275; >336, >376, >425; >437; >453.

The indigenous Palestinians spoke on the street in the form of riots on the fourth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, prompting London to consider tightening the screw. Chief Political Officer Meinertzhagen told his superior in London, Shuckburgh:

The trouble of which the Palestine administration was warned has materialised, and will do untold harm in increasing the sense of insecurity,... and in driving away capital and the more encouraging Jewish element from the country. ... The remedy is to remove all doubts about our intentions. I think we should strike while the iron is hot and give a clear definition of our policy with the full authority of the Cabinet. Such policy must be based on the draft mandate, ... the only legitimate definition of the Balfour Declaration and other questions affecting the Zionist policy. ... [A]ction on our part, if of a strong nature, will not fail to appeal to a race who are by nature cowards, and who have from time immemorial been accustomed to strength and dictation. In any case a *final flare up in Palestine, the results of which can only end in one direction*, is preferable to these chronic pin-pricks. ... If the mandate is a live charter let us act on it. Else let us tear it up.¹⁰⁹⁹ (*emphasis added*)

As head of the Colonial Office's Middle East Department Shuckburgh must however have known that any fresh "definition of our policy" that was "based on the draft mandate" could be recited by rote by the Palestinians; it would not be news. Meinertzhagen in this missive revealed his belief that implementing the Balfour Declaration was worth a lot of bloodshed. He was itching for a once-and-for-all death battle. Whereas in reality, peace with the indigenous Arabs was there for the having.

Shuckburgh was aware that the wishes of the Palestinians and the British were irreconcilable and apparently decided therefore that neither a new definition of policy nor further negotiations with the Arabs were necessary. He therefore urged action in language which was only apparently surprising, coming from a well-educated British aristocrat:

Experience has shown that they [the Arab Delegation] are a hopeless body to deal with [and] hardly any of their number can speak English... It is submitted [by Meinertzhagen] that the time has come to leave off arguing and announce plainly and authoritatively what we propose to do. Being Orientals they will understand an order, and if once they realise that we mean business, may be expected to acquiesce. [But] there is little advantage in further round table discussions with the Arab Delegation, or in further attempts to induce them by methods of persuasion to leave high politics alone...

That is, it was not that the British did not *want* to dialogue with their involuntary subjects, but rather that it was *not possible*: One cannot talk with people who cannot speak proper English and who moreover understand only orders. (They could not grasp "high politics" anyway – which, if true, could also be seen as a badge of honour.) Shuckburgh

¹⁰⁹⁹ CO 733/7, p 147; Ingrams 1972, pp 153-54.

went on to conclude: “Assuming that we do not intend to change our policy, we can have no new pronouncement to make.”¹¹⁰⁰ As Churchill had said to the Delegation in August “There was nothing to say.”¹¹⁰¹

Shuckburgh then nevertheless called on Churchill to issue a statement affirming support for the Jewish National Home and for a Legislative Assembly whose details were yet to be determined. Having seen no proposals for a proportionally representative assembly with power greater than that of the High Commissioner and Palestine Government officials, the Palestinians continued to reject both of these edicts. For tactical reasons Churchill did not at that time issue such a statement, instead waiting until the first half of 1922 to pass around drafts of a Palestine constitution [133ff] and to write, with Shuckburgh and Herbert Samuel, the all-determining ‘Churchill’ White Paper [142]. The Palestine Government under Samuel on the ground, though, carried out Shuckburgh’s vision.

¹¹⁰⁰ CO 733/15, pp 275-76; Wasserstein 1978, pp 116-17.

¹¹⁰¹ CO 733/14, p 246.

During 1921 several high officials in Palestine and Egypt expressed their disagreement with the developing Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, **one major such expression** coming on 22 November 1921 from Chief Secretary to the Palestine Government Wyndham Deedes, who attested the extreme unpopularity amongst the Arabs of both Zionism and, increasingly, Britain. In a supposedly private letter to John Shuckburgh of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, though,¹¹⁰² Deedes thought he saw a way out of HMG's dilemma: keep the Balfour Declaration and the draft mandate but

the anomalous position assigned to the Zionist Organization in the Mandate should be abolished... It seemed to everyone absurd that a Body like the Zionist Organization, officially recognized by His Majesty's Government for certain purposes should continue to express views diametrically opposed to those of the Government that had accorded it recognition.

Deedes believed HMG was really dedicated to a balanced policy such as that flogged to the Arabs by Samuel on 3 June last. [>105]

Further,

I do not exaggerate when I say that nearly all we now say and do is regarded with suspicion by [the Arab] section of the Population. There is no need to emphasize the seriousness of this. ... [E]very administrative measure is believed by the Arabs to be inspired by the Zionists. The Policy which we are trying to carry out is, we have always known, an unpopular one to the Arabs. But up to within nine months or a year ago most of the unpopularity fell upon the Zionists, the other interested party. ... All this comes out clearly in the Haycraft Report [>122]. ... [The Arabs deduced from this] that H.M.G. was bound hand and foot to the Zionists, that the statement of the 3rd June [>105] was mere dust thrown in their eyes, and that all Legislation here was and would continue to be inspired by Zionist interests. ... The above description of the situation [, to be sure,] sounds exaggerated [to] those sitting in London...

Colonial Officer Clauson, privy to Deedes' letter to Shuckburgh, promptly and correctly disabused Deedes of the idea that the Arabs would be satisfied with a mere tweaking of Article 4 of the mandate draft giving the Zionist Commission powers.

And in another comment on Deedes' letter, CO higher-up Richard Meinertzhagen misinterpreted Deedes to be calling for binning the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration altogether, which would be "giving way to the Arab Bogey", and damned the "wobbling weakness" that would be shown by adopting Deedes' "retrogressive and destructive proposals".¹¹⁰³

Already in May 1921 Deedes had sent his concerns to Young, Clauson and Shuckburgh in London, saying that in his list of Britain's problems

¹¹⁰² CO 537/852, pp 14-21; also Huneidi 2001, p 136.

¹¹⁰³ CO 537/852, pp 6-7; Ingrams 1972, pp 154-57.

I cite [our allowing] immigration because immigration is to the Arab 'the tangible, visible evidence of Zionism' [and] this is one of the ways therefore in which I say that by our actions we have unconsciously given the lie to our words. ... The [Arab] political opposition is due to the popular dislike and fear of the Policy of the National Home for the Jews – the Balfour Declaration. The constitutional opposition is based on the fact that the Administration is autocratic and bureaucratic and lacks any representative and popular character. To the political opposition there is no immediate reply; indeed there is no reply at all. ... [As for the constitutional opposition] it is particularly difficult for a British Administration to deny popular government to those whom it governs; it is almost impossible to deny it in the times in which we live. If the level of civilization which they have attained be the criterion, the people of Palestine are fully entitled to the advantages of this nature already conferred on other people on a lower level of progress and civilization than themselves. However, the question as to whether the country is or is not ripe for it appears to be one of comparatively little importance. The country thinks it is ripe for it – and it is believed that that is and must be sufficient reason for according it...¹¹⁰⁴

That is, Britain's judgment of political ripeness, or whatever, was beside the point: ripe or unripe, it was the Palestinians' business.

However, Deedes and his assistant E.T. Richmond, the most anti-Zionist of all Government officials [>112], lost the battle to weaken the colonial power's commitment to a Jewish state rather than to a relatively a-political Jewish home. Having been one of Samuel's first appointments in 1920, upper-classman Deedes retired in 1923 at age 40, with the rank of Brigadier General, to do social work in London. [also >119; >266]

Another disaffected high official was General W.N. Congreve, 'General Officer Commanding, Troops, Palestine', stationed in Egypt, who on 29 October 1921, a few weeks before Deedes' letter to Shuckburgh (just above), wrote a similar anti-Zionist report.¹¹⁰⁵ It stated, *inter alia*, that the British troops' "sympathies are rather obviously with the Arabs" and therefore should be told that "The British Government would never give any support to the more grasping policy of the Zionist Extremists which aims at the establishment of a Jewish Palestine in which Arabs would be merely tolerated". That "grasping" policy which only "tolerated" the natives was in reality supported by Britain, and was the corollary of the doctrine, as would be expressed in the Churchill White Paper of 3 June 1922, that the Jewish immigrants were "in Palestine of right and not on sufferance" [>142]. According to Tom Segev, it was Churchill who thereupon saw to it that military control in Palestine was taken away from Congreve,¹¹⁰⁶ the same General for whom he had expressed highest praise and gratitude for his role as host of the Cairo Middle East Conference just seven months earlier [>98]¹¹⁰⁷. Military control was switched from Cairo to his

¹¹⁰⁴ CO 733/17B, pp 317, 320-21.

¹¹⁰⁵ CO 733/2, pp 253-54, Circular Letter dated 29 October 1921 on the 'Policy of H.M. Govt in Palestine'; Ingrams 1972, p 158; Wasserstein 1978, pp 106-07.

¹¹⁰⁶ Segev 1999, p 195.

¹¹⁰⁷ CAB 24/126/23, p 119.

own Colonial Office, where the Zionists' safest hands were at work; one highly consequential result of this was that by early 1922 "the secret Jewish army – Haganah – began to manifest itself more openly".¹¹⁰⁸

Even earlier, on 16 June 1921, Congreve had written to Hubert Young, one of the highest civil servants in Churchill's Colonial Office, a letter opposing Zionism. His military task being to keep the peace and "to protect all the Jewish villages", he correctly saw the depth of Arab opposition to Zionism and warned that "up to date Sir H. Samuel has seen and heard only what he wanted to see and hear [and] even resented being told such intelligence" as Congreve gave him, namely intelligence concerning the Palestinian "majority which means to fight and continue to fight and has right on its side. ... [A]s long as we persist in our Zionist policy we have got to maintain all our present forces in Palestine to enforce a policy hateful to the great majority." He signed the letter "My love to Mr. Churchill, Yours sincerely".¹¹⁰⁹

Again according to Segev, Congreve also expressed the absurdity of Zionism's historical claims to the territory by writing, "We might as well declare that England belongs to Italy because it was once occupied by the Romans." He "expressed the hope that the Balfour Declaration would be revoked" and believed that "Had the Jews acted wisely, quietly, and slowly,... everything might have worked out; but the Jew is 'aggressive, contentious, and unbridled.'"¹¹¹⁰

Congreve attached to his dispatch of 26 or 29 October a letter containing "Intelligence which I think is true", written by Air Marshal Sir Geoffrey Salmond:

Governments cannot be based on force alone. ... A successful popular government must be based on justice backed by force. ... In Palestine we are attempting to reconcile two ideals, extreme Zionism and extreme pan-Arabism, both equally undesirable... To persist in the present policy... is simply drifting towards catastrophe. ... By giving representative government to Palestine, and returning as far as possible to the very suitable form of administration employed by the Turks before the War, we could satisfy both the Arabs and moderate Jews. ... [This] suggestion ... has obviously not been adopted because it leaves room neither for Zionist Commissions nor for representatives of the Sherifian family! What it does afford, however, is local proportional representation for all communities under the British mandate.¹¹¹¹

The phrase "giving representative government" indicates that by "proportional representation" Salmond meant there should be an independent legislature whose word would be final.

Young, Meinertzhagen and Shuckburgh were quick to warn both Congreve and Salmond not to meddle in politics, and Shuckburgh wrote that their opinions were

¹¹⁰⁸ CO 733/33, pp 175-80; Ingrams 1972, pp 160-62; Regan 2017, pp 156-57.

¹¹⁰⁹ CO 733/17B, pp 232-33.

¹¹¹⁰ Segev 1999, p 92, citing Congreve to Wilson, 18 May 1920, IWM [Imperial War Museum] HHW 2/52B/17.

¹¹¹¹ CO 733/17B, pp 234-35.

the old argument against the futility of the Zionist policy. I decline to be influenced by it. ... These sort of documents are but a sample of what Sir Herbert Samuel has to read every day, and I regard them as most harmful, their aim being to influence the cabinet to abandon the policy which is distasteful to nearly all the officials in Palestine. ... General Congreve's letter re-states the case, from the local point of view, against our Zionist policy in Palestine. The real answer is that we are committed to this policy and have got to make the best of it.¹¹¹²

The costs in terms of troops, and implicitly in terms of lost lives, mentioned by the two letter-writers, were here not taken into consideration by those in charge.

On 28 March 1919 one V. Gabriel [?], describing himself as a "humble lieutenant colonel serving in Palestine" wrote a private letter to a Mr. Waterfield, saying that

At the moment Palestine is in a turmoil owing to the Zionist menace. All elements of the population, Christian and Musalman alike, are organising themselves together to resist what they regard as the greatest injustice ever known under British rule, namely the discrimination in favour of the hated Jewish minority that is involved in Mr Balfour's declaration regarding Zionism, and the overruling of the vaunted 'rights of small nations'. We shall have difficulty in keeping the peace.¹¹¹³

He then shrank himself to fit within his lowly remit, writing that due to sparse winter rains, he feared revenue would be down; he then officially enclosed detailed rules for officers and soldiers to claim expenses.

23 November 1921 *'In an article entitled "Aqidaatuna As-Siyasiyyah Fil-Qadiyya"... in Filistin... the author (probably Issa Al-Issa) pointed out that the Palestinians, as everybody knew, were not in favor of the British Mandate. ... Another article [exemplified] the growth of Palestinian awareness of the British alliance with Zionism.'*¹¹¹⁴

¹¹¹² CO 733/17B, pp 230-31; see also Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 47-48 on Congreve's being forced to allow Weizmann to enter Palestine in September 1919.

¹¹¹³ T 1/12312, file 16987 dated 15 April 1919 [National Archives]; Cronin 2017, pp 13-14.

¹¹¹⁴ Ayyad 1999, p 96.

On 29 November 1921 all three vertices of the Palestine triangle were in one room at the Colonial Office: Colonial Officers Shuckburgh (chairing), Meinertzhagen, Clauson and Eric Mills; Palestinians Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Shibli Jamal, Ibrahim Shammas “and three other members”; Zionist Organisation representatives Weizmann, Feiwel, Halpern, Stein and Shertok.¹¹¹⁵ A day later Mills reported on **this previous day’s discussion between Arabs and Jews:**

It seems to me that it is quite hopeless to expect Arabs and Zionists to meet on common ground when that ground is already occupied by H.B.M. Government on the Balfour Declaration, no matter what be the interpretation of that Declaration and no matter in what form its substance is embodied. ... I am inclined to think that there are only two modes of action:- (a). Allow dilatory measures with the [Arab] Delegation [in London; >117] to continue until either their funds are exhausted or until people in Palestine express a desire that the Delegation should no longer profess to represent them. (N.B. The Delegation are now said to be feeding at Slater’s Restaurant, although it is probable that funds may be expected from Syrians in America). (b) Summon both parties before the Secretary of State and tell them firmly that we are going to govern the country and that we shall tolerate no more provocation by the Zionist publicists and no more activity from a small band of not disinterested Arabs.¹¹¹⁶

Should, in Mills’ mind, the Palestinians have been politically “disinterested”? “Dilatory measures” meant running down the clock, and Mills added that contact with the Delegation (“feeding” at Slater’s Restaurant) should be “diluted”; it was also in this dispatch that Mills added his impression of Weizmann’s behaviour when he was in contact with the Arabs, namely one “of the nature of a conqueror handing to beaten foes the terms of peace. Also I think he despises the members of the Delegation as not worthy protagonists – that it is a little derogatory to him to expect him to meet them on the same ground.”¹¹¹⁷

[also >117; >128]

¹¹¹⁵ Caplan 1983, pp 168-87, citing CO 537/855.

¹¹¹⁶ CO 733/14, p 81; Ingrams 1972, pp 144-45; Wasserstein 1978, p 114.

¹¹¹⁷ Also CO 537/855, p 5.

128. Shuckburgh and Palestine Delegation

2 December 1921

On 2 December 1921 a report¹¹¹⁸ was sent to Colonial Office Permanent Under-Secretary of State J. Masterton Smith on **a meeting between the Arab Delegation** and Chaim Weizmann, as recorded by CO Middle East head Sir John Shuckburgh:

Dr Weizmann offered to enter into direct discussion with the Arabs on the two main points raised by me, viz: (1). Limitation of Jewish immigration. (2). Constitutional safeguards against Jewish political ascendancy. The Arabs did not accept his offer, although I appealed to them to do so. They pressed for a further explanation of the Balfour Declaration, and maintained that until they knew exactly what the Declaration meant they could not discuss anything at all. I urged that we had already explained what it meant, and that further explanations would be superfluous. ... [S]afeguards for the former [the immigration problem] were already provided by the enunciation of the principle that immigration should depend upon the ability of the country to support the immigrants.

In the Delegation's opinion, as we have seen, more immigration would be allowed only if decided by an independent representative government. [→123]¹¹¹⁹

If the question as to the meaning of the Balfour Declaration boiled down to what the meaning of "national home" was, and whether Palestine should be made into a Jewish-majority Jewish state, then it was not true that HMG "had already explained it" truthfully. A 'state' was definitely incompatible with what the Arab Delegation "had already" wished:

Mussa Kazim Pasha el Husseini stated that the Arab Delegation had already forwarded their idea of a proper solution to the problem of Palestine [e.g.→117]. Mr. Shuckburgh pointed out that the solution in question could not be the basis of discussion because His Britannic Majesty's Government insisted on adherence to the Balfour Declaration. (p 8)

The voice of logic would have had to ask at this point, 'Yes, we've heard that, but we repeat our question, what does that Declaration mean?'

Shuckburgh then related to the Palestinians what Weizmann had told him, namely that the Jewish Zionists, if not the British Zionists, were already, sixteen years before the Peel Commission Report, considering a two-state solution:

He [Weizmann] might, if he had chosen, have concentrated upon measures which would have resulted in Palestine being divided into two [the crossed-out original text, corrected by pen and ink, reads: 'After all he could have insisted upon a scheme whereby Palestine was divided into two...'] – one half purely Jewish and the other purely Arab.

Whereupon the Palestinians could seemingly only repeat their requests:

Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husseini replied that the Delegation had already informed His Britannic Majesty's Government that the Draft Mandate was unacceptable, and had also protested to the League of Nations against its terms. They did not understand the meaning of the Bal-

¹¹¹⁸ CO 537/855, pp 3-4, 7-10.

¹¹¹⁹ E.g. CO 733/16, p 511.

four Declaration. Why could not H.B.M.G. give a clear interpretation so that Arabs might know where they were? In the present circumstances they were unable to discuss anything at all since they knew not what to discuss. Mr. Shuckburgh informed the Delegation that the Draft Mandate [containing the Balfour Declaration] must stand but it might be possible to offer a new formula in regard to the substance of the Balfour Declaration [>16] and its legal corollary the Draft Mandate [>146]. ... At one time they [the Arabs] had demanded the complete rescission of the Declaration: now it appeared that they would be willing to negotiate upon an interpretation of that Declaration other than those already advanced. The Delegation replied that they would welcome another interpretation: it might form the basis of discussion but the Government were to remember that the Draft Mandate was quite repugnant.

Such was the intellectual- and paper-work and time needed due to that stroke of genius, namely inventing the term (Jewish) “national home”.

Perhaps the last part of the above quotation indicates that the Palestinians were ready to compromise, as Kayyali believes,¹¹²⁰ but the ‘compromise’ would have been an acceptable one only if ‘national home’ would entail no political end-games, no Zionist Commission and very little further immigration. Or it could just signal a desire to keep the talks going even if, due to British equivocation, at present “they were unable to discuss anything at all...”. Introspection suffices to attest that the Palestinian Delegation at this point must have been at wits’ end and desperate for any clod of common ground with Shuckburgh.

While these formulations of the content of the discussions are beginning to sound like a broken record, this episode shows the deeper, unarticulated setting of the stage – with anti-Arab racism backstage. There was for instance the fact that it was in Samuel’s power to prevent an Arab Delegation’s going to London at all. There was British feigning of inability to see why anyone could think the Jewish national home and the rights of the indigenous could possibly stand in conflict. There was the Colonial Office’s attempt to fob the Arabs off on the Jewish Zionists. There was mistrust-fomenting mendacity in the CO’s declaration of utmost respect for Arab rights while Lloyd George was simultaneously reassuring Weizmann that by ‘national home’ HMG means ‘state’, as already quoted¹¹²¹ [>114]. There was the fact that HMG, like the Palestinians, had non-negotiable conditions – but infinitely more power. Within the Palestinian ‘home’, a triangle constructed by the indigenous Palestinians, the British colonial administration, and the growing number of European Jewish immigrants, more and more literal and political room was being and would be occupied by the latter. The only interlude was the period 1936-1939 which included the (Palestine) Arab Revolt, the Peel Commission [>336], the Woodhead Commission [>376] and the St James talks under Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald in 1939 [>386ff], which all led to an abandonment of both the two-state solution and the Zionist Jewish-state programme in favour of the truly Palestinian government promised by the MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939 [>410]. The War and

¹¹²⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 101.

¹¹²¹ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 103-06.

post-War Governments of Churchill and Attlee brought this interlude to an end under reversion to two-state and undefinable 'federal' solutions, with Britain abdicating in 1947 by literally abstaining on all U.N. votes.

23 December 1921 *Saad Zaghloul's second deportation from Egypt by the British sparks violent clashes throughout the country.*

December 1921 *'[A] wooden crate burst open accidentally on Haifa dock, leading to the seizure of 300 pistols and 17,000 rounds of ammunition which the Haganah had been trying to smuggle into Palestine from Vienna.'*¹¹²²

¹¹²² Wasserstein 1978, p 138.

This entry relies on J.M.N. Jeffries' reporting because I have not yet been able to consult the corresponding Foreign Office documents.

While visiting the U.S. in November 1921-January 1922 Balfour, evidently acting as emissary for Foreign Secretary Curzon, negotiated with the U.S. State Department about **the Mandate being drafted**. The U.S. showed itself therein against privileging Jews, or any particular community, in the granting of concessions to exploit natural resources. (Rutenberg's pending applications were a hot issue, being negotiated even before the Mandate existed. [*e.g.* >114; >147]) Balfour then produced for his hosts a Foreign Office memo quoting the draft Mandate and commented:

Article 11 of the Mandate expressly provides that the Administration may arrange with the Jewish Agency [*'Agency' here capitalized*], mentioned in Article 4 [*in lower case*], to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration. ... The reason for this is that, in order that the policy of establishing in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people should be successfully carried out, it is impracticable to guarantee that equal facilities for developing the resources of the country should be granted to persons or bodies who may be actuated by other motives.¹¹²³

Whatever else 'Jewish national home' might mean, that is, it included Jewish-Zionist control over the use of natural resources. As for the "other motives" (independence) of other "persons or bodies" (Palestinians), "impracticability" was shoved forward to camouflage simple political intent.

¹¹²³ Jeffries 1939, pp 471-72, citing Eyre Crowe to U.S. Ambassador in London, 29 December 1921.

130. Palestinians against immigration

30 December 1921

The **'Report on the Political Situation in Palestine'** for December 1921, written by Wyndham Deedes [126], stated:

The Governors of both the Jaffa and Phoenicia Districts have complained of the number of unemployed Immigrants in the towns of Jaffa and Haifa. They state that the presence of such a large number of these people is much resented by the townspeople, and is regarded by the population generally as evidence that the Government is in point of fact not bringing in immigrants in proportion to the economic needs of the country, as it was promised would be done, on June 3rd [105].¹¹²⁴

The British kept close track of political feeling amongst the Palestinians, feelings running high concerning immigration against a background of high feeling against prolonged colonisation under the pretext of tutelage.

¹¹²⁴ CO 733/8, p 616.

By December 1921, according to Wasserstein, many in British politics and press felt HMG was behaving somewhat too favourably towards the “Jewish agency” in Palestine, an entity which had been written into various drafts of Article 4 of the future Mandate as a quasi-government organisation. [^{>146}] This apparently led to proposals to delete that Article, but this was vetoed by Churchill on 29 December 1921.¹¹²⁵ The British however did on the face of it strengthen Arab organisation by creating between late December 1921 and 9 January 1922 the Supreme Moslem Council (SMC) with Hajj Amin al-Husseini appointed by Samuel as its President – although he had come in only fourth in a four-way election to the post.¹¹²⁶ The appointment is paradoxical seeing as Amin “had only a year previously been sentenced *in absentia* to ten years’ imprisonment for having made a speech denouncing the British Government’s policy and had taken refuge in Transjordan...”.¹¹²⁷

Moreover, while at least giving the Moslems, if not all non-Jewish Palestinians, something as a counterbalance to the “Jewish agency”, and perhaps thereby placating many Palestinians and temporarily dulling some of their messages to HMG, Rashid Khalidi is correct in attributing young Amin’s appointment to the British plan to divide the SMC from the AEC (Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress), since 1920 headed by the older Musa Kazem al-Husseini, thus at the same time dividing the al-Husseini family itself; the SMC would profit from Government largesse at the price of relative political silence, while the officially non-recognised AEC was left with the overt political work.¹¹²⁸ With its Jewish subjects in Palestine, HMG did not do the equivalent by for instance setting up two distinct dialogue partners.

9 February 1922 *After consultation with Zionist representatives, the British civil administration issues the [draft] Palestine constitution (Basic Law).*

early 1922 *‘Jewish immigration and Jewish smuggling of arms brought forth a general protest from the Moslem-Christian Societies... An additional cause for Arab protest... was the loan [the Administration] extended for the construction of the Richon-Rehoboth Road. The exclusive employment on the road of Jewish immigrants – at higher wages than corresponding Arab labour – [was] coupled with the fact that the road would mainly benefit Jewish colonies...’*¹¹²⁹

¹¹²⁵ Wasserstein 1978, p 136.

¹¹²⁶ Khalidi 2006, pp 56-57; Wasserstein 1978, pp 132-33; also Ghandour 2010, p 144; Robson 2011, pp 59-65.

¹¹²⁷ Furlonge 1969, p 92.

¹¹²⁸ Khalidi 2006, p 59; also Robson 2011, p 63.

¹¹²⁹ Kayyali 1978, pp 108-09.

132. CO vs. Arab Delegation

4/8 February 1922

The chief of the Colonial Office's Middle East Department, John Shuckburgh, complained to Colonial Secretary Churchill on 8 February 1922 that five days earlier the 1st Palestine Arab Delegation, still in London, had been given the "draft Ordinances regarding the Palestine Constitution" on condition of confidentiality, but that

a copy of the drafts has been handed to the Editor of the 'Morning Post'. It can only have reached him through the Delegation. He is about the last person in the world that the Zionists [who had also been given a copy] would be likely to communicate with. ... It appears to me that the Arab Delegation has been guilty of an act of treachery such as renders it impossible for us to treat them any longer with the consideration that we have shown them in the past. I think we should tell them plainly that, unless they can give us some satisfactory explanation, we will have no further dealings with them.

Whether "the Zionists" also leaked a copy to anyone in their wide network is not recorded. Churchill apparently softened the British stance a bit, for the CO and Shuckburgh would have further intensive dealings with them, communicating through Shuckburgh to Shibly Jamal merely that "he can only regard [the leak] as a direct breach of faith."¹¹³⁰

For it was Shibly Jamal who on 4 February had signed, at the Hotel Cecil, a 4-page letter to Churchill (in English and Arabic) wherein the British "draft Formula" was picked apart.¹¹³¹ For one thing, the "civil rights" admittedly granted to "the Palestinians" surely included "the power to protect [themselves] against being swamped by alien immigration carried on against its will"; "the Palestinians, who are the rightful owners of their own country [should] have possessed a legislative and executive power" over immigration. Next, "the Administration is in the hands of Zionists heads, the people of Palestine having no influence in it". Concerning that main pillar of Zionist argumentation,

The Delegation note that 'His Majesty's Government recognize the historic and religious associations that connect the Jewish people with Palestine.' The Delegation is unable to believe that His Majesty's Government does not also recognize the far stronger 'historic and religious associations' which connect the Mohammedan and Christian worlds in general, with Palestine and particularly the People of Palestine with their own country. It cannot be alleged that a Russian Jew, for instance, has closer associations with Palestine than those of any Mohammedans or Christians in the world; nor can there be any comparison between the associations of a foreign Jew and those of the Palestinians who have lived in Palestine for a great many centuries. The Delegation, therefore, claim that alien Jews have no right to the 'special facilities' which the Formula holds out to them.

¹¹³⁰ CO 733/33, pp 458-60.

¹¹³¹ CO 733/36, pp 7-13.

Finally, “We have shown in our communication of 12th August, 1921, [-117] the capability of the Palestinians for self-government [and the] Delegation is naturally anxious to know when the Legislative Assembly will be ‘constituted to a large extent on an elective basis’, and what will be the power given to it.”

A draft Constitution for Palestine was written by Churchill's Colonial Office and its final draft would be 'ordered' (declared operative) by King George V on 10 August 1922 [^{>150}]. On 9 February 1922 a draft was circulated for comment to, among others, the Arab Delegation in London. [^{>132}] The Delegation's comments comprise entries >135 and >137, and those of the Colonial Office (i.e., Middle East Department chief Shuckburgh) comprise entries >136 and >139. I have not seen a full copy of this draft, but the parts of it of most interest to the Palestinian-Britain relationship are quoted or referred to in detail in the comments just mentioned, all contained in Cmd. 1700.¹¹³² But the definitive text of the 10 August 'Palestine Order in Council, 1922'¹¹³³ did not differ significantly from this draft.

The British Government was **announcing a new Palestine Constitution** which would promote and protect its Jewish national home policy. Here are paraphrases of some of these protections or privileges as they later appeared in the definitive version – presented here so that the above-mentioned double exchange between the Palestinians and the Colonial Office is intelligible:

- the Balfour Declaration will be part of the Constitution (Preamble §2);
- the Executive, i.e. the High Commissioner, with a purely advisory Executive Council alongside it, would have broad general power and specific power over “all rights in or in relation to any public lands”, viz., over any “concession” or “grants or leases of any such public lands or mines or minerals” (II §12, 13);
- a 23-member Legislative Council (LC) would replace the existing Advisory Council (III §19, 17) and would have little power (III §22, 24–26, 28), as detailed just below;
- a Judiciary would consist of courts set up by the High Commissioner (V § 39, 40, 42, 45, 49);
- a process was foreseen for removal and deportation of anyone “endeavouring to excite enmity between the people of Palestine and the Mandatory” (VI §69);
- official languages were to be “English, Arabic and Hebrew” (VIII §82);
- decisions concerning immigration made by a Legislative Council subcommittee which were opposed by the High Commissioner would be referred to the Colonial Secretary for the final word (VIII §84);
- “His Majesty,... with the advice of his... Privy Council” would have overall power (VIII §89).

The Constitution thus included the key Zionist principles contained in the Palestine Mandate text [^{>146}] which was simultaneously being drawn up, plus more detail on the actual mechanisms and power hierarchy of the government.

What limitations would the Constitution place on the Legislative Council (LC)? Aside from the nullity of any Ordinances violating freedom of religion or discriminating on the basis of “race, religion or language”, the first-named limitation would be: “No Ordinance shall be passed which shall be in any way repugnant to or inconsistent with the provisions of the Mandate” (which included the Balfour Declaration, >146). (III §18) This limitation would be repeated in Section XVI of a separate Order, issued by the King on 14 Au-

¹¹³² Cmd. 1700 (= CO 733/24, pp 7–20); also FO 141/742/3.

¹¹³³ Palestine Order in Council 1922, CO 733/24, pp 7–20, all citations.

gust 1922, containing “Instructions” to the High Commissioner prescribing that such Ordinances could not even be “submitted to the Legislative Council”, much less passed by it. Thus, the Jewish national home policy was to be literally unspeakable.

The other three limitations on the LC were:

1. “The High Commissioner may at any time by Proclamation prorogue or dissolve the Council” (III §22)
2. The High Commissioner held a veto over any legislation. (III §24-26)
3. “No vote, resolution, or Ordinance for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or for the imposition of any tax or impost shall be *proposed* except by the High Commissioner, or by his direction.” (III §28, emphasis added)

As the first of the several Legislative Councils that would be offered by the British [>133; >135; >158; >196; >225; >231; >250; >251; >258; >261; >283; >289], it is worth showing the maths of how this one would violate the principles of majority rule and proportional representation. Its 23 members would consist of:

- the High Commissioner (III §19);
- 10 “official members” of the Government administration including the Chief Secretary, Attorney General and Treasurer (III §20);
- 12 “unofficial members” elected by the populace (III §21).

The election rules and process were defined in a separate decree by His Majesty, also dated 10 August 1922, called the ‘Palestine Legislative Council Election Order, 1922’.¹¹³⁴

The elections

shall be conducted by primary and secondary elections. Primary election shall consist of the election by the voters as hereinafter defined of secondary electors and secondary election shall consist of the election of members by colleges of secondary electors... on the basis that every 200 primary electors shall elect one secondary elector. (§3, 5)

Elections were to be organised within the existing administrative Districts inherited from the Ottomans. (§5, 8) “Members” meant the 12 “unofficial” ones, and they were thus not elected directly by the populace but by the (elected) “secondary electors” who in turn would belong to one of 12 “electoral colleges”, each of which would elect one “member”. Here was where occurred the violation of the principle of representation of ethno-religious groups according to their actual percentages of the overall population:

The secondary electors shall be formed into twelve electoral colleges according to the religious community to which they belong; that is to say, there shall be separate electoral colleges for Moslems, Christians and Jews. Secondary electors who do not belong to the Moslem, Christians or Jewish community shall opt for any electoral college in their area. The number of colleges to be allotted to each religious community shall be determined by the High Commissioner having regard to the numbers of secondary electors belonging to the several communities, provided that there shall not be less than two Christian and two Jewish colleges. (§12)

¹¹³⁴ Palestine Legislative Council Election Order, 1922.

Thus at least two of the twelve “unofficial members” – i.e. at least 16.6% – would have to be Jews, who then formed 11% of the population [[>]Appendices 7 & 8]. Integrating into the maths the eleven “official members”, the long and the short of it was that Arab Christians and Moslems, forming about 89% of the population and primary electors, would thus have at most 44% of the 23 seats, seeing as none of the eleven “official” members would be Palestinians. I say ‘at most’ 44% because, at the High Commissioner’s discretion, there could be more than (but “not less than”) two Jewish “colleges”. (The Colonial Office had even originally proposed an additional three *appointed* non-official members, which would almost certainly have worsened indigenous underrepresentation.¹¹³⁵)

Furthermore, a problem for any candidate for election to the Legislative Council who did not accept the legitimacy of the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration was presented by the stipulation that every member must “take and subscribe the following oath before the President: ‘I, A.B., do swear that I will be faithful and loyal to the Government of Palestine. So help me God.’” (III §31) In the event, for this reason and because of their underrepresentation and the LC’s powerlessness, the Palestinians would nearly unanimously boycott the elections to the LC which were finally held in February 1923. [[>]151; [>]118]

Ann Mosely Lesch identifies the four problems, for the Arabs, of 1) the basic illegitimacy of British rule, 2) underrepresentation, 3) an eventual Jewish majority through immigration, and 4) the anyway limited powers of the proposed LCs, writing namely:

In some colonies, such an offer [this LC in 1922] could be a first step toward independence, even if the proffered legislative council contained a majority of official members. In settler colonies, however, a council could be a step toward submergence and a further consolidation of the European settlers’ power. Acceptance by the indigenous nationalist movement would tacitly legitimize the presence of these settlers and the colonial power’s policy of encouraging European settlement. As the Europeans’ numbers grew, so would their role in the council. Furthermore, when the council had only an advisory role, the members could not alter government policies, even those directly inimical to their interests.¹¹³⁶

¹¹³⁵ Cmd. 1700, p 20.

¹¹³⁶ Lesch 1979, p 179.

134. Joynson-Hicks to Churchill

15 February 1922

Not only the British-Arab dialogue, but also some British-British exchanges, were imperfect things. On 15 February 1922 in the House of Commons, for instance, William **Joynson-Hicks** asked Colonial Secretary Churchill some questions which went to the heart of the matter:¹¹³⁷

(1) if, and in what manner, the consent of the people of Palestine has been accorded agreeing to Great Britain being the mandatory power, in accordance with paragraph 4, Article 22, of the Covenant of the League of Nations [^{>46}];

(2) if he will state what were the reasons which induced His Majesty's Government to make the Balfour Declaration, and to promise the Jewish people a national home in a country which is already the national home of the Arabs;

(3) if he will state why Palestine has not been treated in the same way as Iraq and an autonomous Government set up which enjoys the confidence and approval of the inhabitants; if the Arabs were promised recognition of their independence as soon as the late War ceased if they took up arms with us against the Turks; and whether, and, if so, how, His Majesty's Government have fulfilled the pledges given by them to the Arabs through Sir Henry McMahon in 1915, and confirmed by the Prime Minister in September, 1919, and by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in June, 1921?

Churchill replied:

The hon. Baronet's questions raise points of high policy which could be dealt with more suitably in debate than by question and answer. I shall make a full statement on policy in Palestine when I present the Middle Eastern Estimates to the House.

That was the end of that.

¹¹³⁷ Hansard 1922, c1040W [^W = Written Answer].

The 1st Palestine Delegation's purpose in London since August 1921 [^{>117}] had been to torpedo the Mandate before it made it through the British Parliament and the Council of the League of Nations, on the grounds of the legitimate indigenous claim to ownership of and independence in Palestine. Its task now, six months later, was to reply at length to the circulated draft Constitution, whose provisions, in the event, would make their way intact into the final Constitution of August 1922 [^{>133}; ^{>150}]. As we saw, amongst the members of the Delegation were the same people who had attended the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress [^{>95}] and submitted the *Report on the State of Palestine* [^{>99}]. Balfour had for weeks refused to receive the Delegation, his office telling the Arabs that "if it is anything concerning Palestine, Mr. Balfour has already seen Dr. Weizmann."¹¹³⁸ But now they were invited to submit their comments.

First a word about the documents dealt with in this and several subsequent entries [^{>136}; ^{>137}; ^{>139}; ^{>142}; ^{>143}].

The document Cmd. 1700 bears the title 'Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization.'¹¹³⁹ It is dated "June 1922", which is a bit confusing because it contains nine separate documents, all dated February, March or April 1922. **The first four Documents** are dated, respectively, 21 February 1922 (Arab Delegation to Colonial Office), 1 March (CO to Arab Delegation), 16 March (Arab Delegation to CO), and 11 April (CO to Arab Delegation). **The fifth Document**, given the title of a "Memorandum", is dated 3 June (Colonial Office to the Zionist Organization) and "enclosed" within it, after a one-paragraph introduction by Shuckburgh, was simply **the Churchill White Paper** [^{>142}]. I do not know why this momentous document was not also, like Documents 2 & 4, addressed to the Palestine Arab Delegation. However that may be, **the last four Documents** are: Arab Delegation to CO dated 17 June, Zionist Organization to CO dated 18 June, CO to Arab Delegation dated 23 June, and finally, dated 29 June, Colonial Secretary to the "Officer Administering the Government of Palestine", announcing that a "White Paper... covering" all this correspondence will be "laid on Saturday the 1st July" and summarising the content of the Enclosure to Document No. 5, i.e. the Churchill White Paper.)

In this and subsequent entries dealing with Cmd. 1700 my citations give the printed page numbers (1-31), not the stamped ones (243-73).

¹¹³⁸ Abcarius 1946, p 78.

¹¹³⁹ Cmd. 1700, *all citations*.

The first Document, the **statement to ‘the Secretary of State for the Colonies’** dealt with in this entry and signed 21 February 1922 by Musa Kazem al-Husseini, leader of the Arab Delegation, and by Shibly Jamal,¹¹⁴⁰ opened by rejecting the British occupier, its paternalism and its rejection of the principle of the consent of the governed:

Whilst the position in Palestine is, as it stands to-day, with the British Government holding authority by an occupying force, and using that authority to impose upon the people against their wishes a great immigration of alien Jews, many of them of a Bolshevik revolutionary type, no constitution which would fall short of giving the People of Palestine full control of their own affairs could be acceptable. If the British Government would revise their present policy in Palestine, end the Zionist *con-dominium*, put a stop to all alien immigration and grant the People of Palestine – who by Right and Experience are the best judges of what is good and bad to their country – Executive and Legislative powers, the terms of a constitution could be discussed in a different atmosphere. If to-day the people of Palestine assented to any constitution which fell short of giving them full control of their own affairs they would be in the position of agreeing to an instrument of Government which might, and probably would, be used to smother their national life under a flood of alien immigration.

Not much would be left of His Majesty’s draft Constitution if the “occupying force” would “revise their present policy”, for “the proposed constitution is wholly unsatisfactory.” (p 2) Not mentioned was the option of letting the Palestinians write their own constitution, pure and simple.

Accordingly the “national home for the Jewish people” – “in Palestine” – was rejected, as well as umbrage taken at “the manner of appointment of the High Commissioner and his powers” which meant that “Palestine is considered as a colony of the lowest order”. In addition it was wrong that “the Executive is in no way responsible to the Legislative Council”, and it was “unsatisfactory” that “Of the 12 elected members [of the proposed Legislative Council] there will probably be 10 or 11 that would represent the Arab majority” out of a total Council membership of 25 or even 27 men. (This differs slightly from the 23-member version set down in the definitive Order in Council of 10 August 1922 [see >133; >150].) That is, the 89% majority would have at best 44% of the seats, at worst 37%.

Regarding the Zionism of Herbert Samuel, already “illegally” in office:

It is thus apparent that too much power is given to a High Commissioner whom we will suppose is impartial. But when, as is the case with the present High Commissioner, he is a Zionist, i.e. a member of the organisation which is prompting the flood of alien Jew immigration to Palestine, whose officials as well as those appointed by him [up to 14 of the 25 or 27 foreseen members] must, naturally, carry out his policy, and when one or two of the elected members will most probably be Zionists, then the Zionist policy of the Government will be carried out under a constitutional guise, whereas at present it is illegal, against the rights and wishes of the people, and maintained by force of arms alone. (p 3)

¹¹⁴⁰ Cmd. 1700, pp 2-4 (Document No. 1, ‘The Palestine Arab Delegation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies’); also CO 733/178/1, pp 31-46; also Shaw 1930, pp 15-16.

The Legislative Council as proposed, with its majority of pro-Zionists, would in other words give democratic legitimacy to the “Zionist policy”. Moreover it was not right that the High Commissioner is simultaneously “Head of the Executive [and] head of the Legislative” and can “prorogue or dissolve the Council [and] veto any measure passed by the Council”. (p 3)

Further,

The recognition of Hebrew as an official language of the State... is another proof of the desire to foster Zionist nationalism in Palestine, when only about 10 per cent of the present Jewish inhabitants of the country speak that language. (p 4)

In addition, “The High Commissioner... is given the power to obstruct any appeal to the League of Nations.” In sum, and probably sarcastically employing Colonial Office lingo, “For these reasons we find that no useful purpose would be served by discussing in detail the draft of “The Palestine Order in Council, 1922.” (p 4)¹¹⁴¹

In closing,

The Delegation requests that the constitution for Palestine should— ... (1) Safeguard the civil, political and economic interests of the People. (2) Provide for the creation of a national independent Government in accordance with the spirit of paragraph 4, Article 22, of the Covenant of the League of Nations. (3) Safeguard the legal rights of foreigners. (4) Guarantee religious equality to all peoples. (5) Guarantee the rights of minorities. ... (p 4)¹¹⁴²

Speaking of the League of Nations Covenant, if it was a legal document in spite of its merely stating some decisions of some victorious and powerful politicians, §4 Article 22 was the main legal principle to which the Palestinians appealed up until their full political independence in 1948 – this document of the Palestine Arab Delegation being an early instance (pp 2-3). But as this and many other documents show, the Palestinians’ ever-recurring rejection of the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration *per se* was not merely on international-law grounds: they had a *natural* right to their own country.

¹¹⁴¹ Jeffries 1939, p 485.

¹¹⁴² Also Ingrams 1972, pp 166-67, citing CO 733/6; Huneidi 2001, p 125.

Colonial Office Undersecretary John Shuckburgh's **6-page reply on behalf of Churchill** on 1 March 1922¹¹⁴³ is a masterpiece of polite prolix firmness. It first challenged the Delegation's claim to be "representatives of the Arab People of Palestine":

[W]hile the Secretary of State is anxious to discuss his present proposals informally with recognised representatives, such as yourselves, of any important section of the community, he is not in a position to negotiate officially with you or with any other body which claims to represent the whole or part of the people of Palestine, since no official machinery for representation has as yet been constituted. It is with the object of providing the people of Palestine with a constitutional channel for the expression of their opinions and wishes that the draft constitution has been framed. (p 5/§2)

Had Churchill, Shuckburgh, Meinertzhagen, Young and the rest of the top people at the Middle East Department really not grasped the truth of the Delegation's claim to represent the vast majority of the Moslem and Christian Palestinians? After all, somewhat in contradiction to the above quotation, Shuckburgh in this same Reply also wrote that

your Delegation really represents the present attitude of the majority of the Arab population of Palestine, and Mr. Churchill has no grounds for suggesting that this is not the case... (p 6/§4)

Despite the qualifier "present attitude" and the negative, agnostic phrasing "not the case", this is one of the only times HMG let it slip that they knew of the basic alignment between the views of the elite and the people, namely that virtually no non-Jew agreed with HMG's policy. Another instance had just been the realisation in the Haycraft Report of October 1921 that

[T]he general belief that the aims of the Zionists and Jewish immigration are a danger to the national and material interests of Arabs in Palestine is well nigh universal amongst the Arabs and is not confined to any particular class.¹¹⁴⁴

At any rate, Shuckburgh did acknowledged the Arab Delegation's claim that as it stood, this "constitutional channel", when enacted, would be rigged against the overwhelming majority of the populace. [135] But he apparently did not grasp the point that if HMG wanted to establish a "body... which... represent[ed] the whole... of the people Palestine" all it had to do was what the Palestinians were demanding: set up a proportional-representative legislative council. That is, HMG could at any time have found out what the locals wanted by setting up standard the "official machinery" of an elected parliament, as in Britain itself. Only second-best would be such a "body" representing only the non-Jews.

¹¹⁴³ Cmd. 1700, pp 5-11 (Document No. 2, 'The Colonial Office to the Palestine Arab Delegation'), all citations.

¹¹⁴⁴ Haycraft 1921, p 52.

Continuing, the CO's recognition was that "If... your Delegation really represents" the views of the majority, the mathematics of the demography of the citizenry made it

quite clear that the creation at this stage of a national Government would preclude the fulfilment of the pledge made by the British Government to the Jewish people. (p 6/§4)

I.e., democracy would completely nix HMG's policy. Black on white, Shuckburgh was saying HMG's "pledge" overrode the wishes of 90% of the ruled people, while the Arabs were in effect saying, 'So much the worse, then, for that "pledge"'. Interestingly, the concept here of a "national Government" was not defined in ethno-religious terms, but rather in territorial terms and as a Government of its citizens.

A bit later in the Reply, and a bit more circuitously:

Mr. Churchill has already explained in paragraph 4 of this letter why His Majesty's Government are not prepared at the present stage to provide for the creation of a national independent Government in Palestine, and why they consider it necessary to adopt the constitutional procedure which experience in all parts of the British Empire has shown to be the most practicable and convenient method of combining a large measure of popular representation with the necessary degree of control to ensure that the policy of the Government is not thereby stultified. (p 8/§11c)

This paragraph is delicious. At which "stage" would HMG be prepared to apply democracy in Palestine? British control was (unfortunately) "necessary". Who would dare argue with HMG's vast "experience"? The "measure of popular representation" was throughout the "British Empire" irreproachably "large". The "policy" of the coloniser is the bottom line, and who would dare "stultify" it? Did Shuckburgh blush? At any rate, this was again denial of democracy in plain English.

Shuckburgh went on to reject the Arab Delegation's comparison of Palestine with Syria and Iraq, who were recognised by the Powers to be on the bumpy road to independence. He said that unlike them, Palestine was subject to the Jewish national home; HMG had a "solemn undertaking [and] responsibility to the Principal Allied Powers [to implement the Balfour Declaration]". (pp 5-6/§4, 5) That particular argument was of course circular, because it had been Britain who got the Powers to go for idea of the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration in the first place, a point made extensively and gleefully by Jeffries.¹¹⁴⁵ For a quasi-legal argument why Palestine was not treated like Syria and Iraq, Shuckburgh and Churchill then cited Articles 94-97 of the Treaty of Sèvres [^{>92}] (p 5/§4), to which the Palestinians in their next letter [^{>137}] would object that that Treaty was not yet in effect. (It never went into effect.)

Walking the usual tightrope, the Arabs' "civil and religious rights" would of course be respected (p 5/§4) even if the High Commissioner would of course have full control over immigration (p 7/§9). After referring to the mellifluous words of Samuel's King's Birthday speech of 3 June [^{>105}] (which had been followed by Churchill's far more honest words in the House of Commons on 14 June [^{>106}]), Shuckburgh and Churchill revealed that they could explain the Arabs' tenacious opposition only by supposing "that your Dele-

¹¹⁴⁵ Jeffries 1939, pp 567-68, *passim*.

gation, and the community which they represent, imperfectly apprehend the interpretation placed by His Majesty's Government on the policy of the National Home for the Jewish people". The locals just didn't understand things.

Put slightly differently,

Mr. Churchill is reluctant to believe that your Delegation, or the people whom they represent, can entertain any objection in principle to the policy as thus interpreted. (p 7/§6)

If they *were* capable of "apprehending" the policy correctly, that is, and still objected, it would defy belief. Thus at a loss to explain Arab objection, they looked in one final place:

Mr. Churchill has derived the impression from his interviews with your Delegation that it is not so much the policy itself... that arouses misgiving, as the unfounded apprehension that the policy will not in practice follow the lines indicated. (p 7/§7)

However, given that the Palestinians had stated in so many words that it was "the policy itself" they rejected, and that their apprehension was precisely that the policy *would* "follow the lines indicated", the question is allowed as to which party lacked comprehension.

It was then frankly acknowledged that the Zionist Organization, according to Article 4 of the draft Mandate, or the new Constitution, would be a recognised "public body" that will be "advising and co-operating with the administration", but that

In case your Delegation are under the impression that this advice and co-operation will be offered or accepted in such a manner as to infringe the provisions of the proposed Constitution, Mr. Churchill takes this opportunity of explaining to you that no administrative action will be taken in Palestine, whether on the advice of the Zionist Organization or otherwise, except through the constitutional channels ultimately prescribed by the Constitution in its final form. (p 7/§8)

But those very "constitutional channels" would explicitly grant the Zionist Organization special powers, so this answer formally begs the question. Hadn't it been stated by the Delegation that the "provisions" and "channels" and Constitution were themselves the problem?

Regarding immigration policy the two sides were not even on the same page:

[A]ll questions of immigration policy should be reserved from discussion by the Legislative Council and decided by the High Commissioner in Council [the all-British 'Executive Council', an organ of the Palestine Government], after reference to His Majesty's Government. Immigration is of such vital concern to all sections of the population that there are strong grounds for dealing specially with it and for setting up some regular machinery by which the interests of the existing population of Palestine should be represented, without the infusion of any official [Administration] element. One method that occurs to him [Churchill] to assure this result would be the formation of an immigration board, which would be representative of Palestinians of all classes. The business of this board would be to advise the High Commissioner on all questions from the point of view of the inhabitants of the country. The point of view of the Zionist Organization would be placed before the High Commissioner

by the representatives of the Organisation in Palestine. In the event of irreconcilable differences of opinion arising, the points at issue would be referred to His Majesty's Government for decision. (pp 7-8/§9)

Any future legislative body, however it was constituted, would have no competence in this area, and the special immigration board would be merely advisory, but the "differences of opinion" between the British and the Palestinians were not over any issues that might arise concerning the number and qualification of immigrants, but over *such immigration itself*.

Shuckburgh anticipated that the Palestinians would accuse Samuel of pro-Zionist bias, but any bias at all "would be foreign to all the traditions of British administration." (p 9/§11d) On this dubious point Ronald Storrs, acquainted first-hand with such traditions from even before his time in Jerusalem as Military Governor (1920-26), would later disagree, writing in 1937 that during the early Mandate years "The staff complained rightly that they were not doing straight administration but the political work of establishing Zionism."¹¹⁴⁶

Shuckburgh and Churchill countered the Delegation's objection to Hebrew by noting that "recognition of Hebrew as an official language is provided for in Article 22 of the draft Mandate for Palestine, in pursuance of the policy of the establishment in that country of a National Home for the Jewish People." (p 10/§11f) The circularity is shameless: 'We have to say X in this document because we've said X in that other document.'

Replying to the objection that the High Commissioner could obstruct appeals to the League of Nations, the Colonial Office team consoled the Delegation, perhaps with tongue in cheek, with the information that "in the event of the High Commissioner deciding that the memorandum shall not be forwarded, the petitioners will have the remedy of publicity..." (p 10/§11g) Finally, "The Secretary of State trusts that this letter will show your Delegation that sympathetic consideration is being given to your point of view, which is fully appreciated by His Majesty's Government." (p 10/§12)

The duplicity of these 1922 Churchillian words became undeniable through Churchill's secret testimony to the Palestine Royal ('Peel') Commission on 12 March 1937. [>327]

¹¹⁴⁶ Storrs 1937, p 367.

The Palestine Delegation again replied to the Colonial Office on 16 March 1922.¹¹⁴⁷ It first tried to end the skirmish over whether the Delegation represented the will of Palestinians, saying they indeed represented “the whole Moslem and Christian population of Palestine”, and noted as an aside:

While we have never pretended to represent the Jews, still we would point out that a large section of the Jews in Palestine and the majority of the Jews of the world are not in favour of the Zionist Movement. (p 11/§1)

It also re-insisted that Palestine was within the area promised self-government by McMahon [^{>10}]. (p 11/§2a) and found support in the League of Nations Covenant:

The object aimed at by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations is ‘the well-being and development of the people’ of the land. Alien Jews not in Palestine do not come within the scope of this aim, neither is their association with Palestine more close than that of Christians and Moslems all over the world. Consequently the Jewish National Home policy is contrary to the spirit of the Covenant. (p 11/§2b)

The Covenant’s “the people”, they were saying, referred only to inhabitants actually present, living on and in the land, so no Mandatory had any business, as Mandatory, to look after people not inhabiting the mandated territory. As discussed in entry >46, though, since Article 22§1 actually designated *in the plural* the “peoples” inhabiting the to-be-mandated territories as those who were to be developed and ‘well-beinged’, the Zionists could argue that the Jews as such, since some of them inhabited Palestine, were one of those “peoples”.¹¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Article 22§1 said the “peoples” referred to were those who were “not yet able to stand by themselves” politically, and this concept makes sense only within the defined geographical boundaries of a “territory” or country, thus arguably ruling out any worldwide ethno-religious group of whatever provenance. However that may be, the corollary of HMG’s regarding Palestine as a home for all 14 million Jews worldwide – as Mandate eyewitness Izzat Tannous would write in 1988¹¹⁴⁹ – would be that the Moslem and Christian “peoples”, numbering over 800 million souls, would also have the right to a say in Palestinian affairs.

To the British claim that its hands were tied by the [1917] Balfour Declaration they made a further legalistic rebuttal:

Article XX of the [1919] Covenant reads: ‘The Members of this League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof.... In case any Member of the League shall, before

¹¹⁴⁷ Cmd. 1700, pp 11-15 (Document No. 3), *all citations*.

¹¹⁴⁸ League of Nations 1919, Article 22 §1.

¹¹⁴⁹ Tannous 1988, p 225. [^{>117}]

becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such Member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.' (p 12/§2c) [^{>46}]

1917 was, and still is today, universally regarded to have been before 1919, 1921 and 1922.

The Palestinians then expressed satisfaction at the British admission that they were indeed treating them differently from the people of Syria and Iraq (due to the Jewish-home policy) (p 12/§3), before catching them out on a matter of wording on page 8 of Document No. 2 of Cmd. 1700:

The Secretary of State declares, in Article 11, paragraph (b), that 'the majority of the Colonies are in the same position that Palestine would enjoy under the draft Constitution,' implying that Palestine is a British Colony. We are surprised that [he] should include Palestine in this category... while the Allies so often declare that they had not entered the war for self-aggrandisement and colonisation. (p 13/§7)

Further, the merely "consultative" nature of the proposed immigration board and the fact that on immigration questions the "point of view" of the Zionist Organization "must be considered" meant that on this point the British "cannot dispel the apprehensions of the Arabs". (p 13/§6) As to Samuel's bias, the Delegation reminded the Colonial Secretary that he himself on 14 June 1921 in the House of Commons had described Samuel as an "ardent Zionist". (p 14/§8)¹¹⁵⁰ [^{>106}] After pointing out that Zionists had smuggled many weapons into the country and were competing keenly economically (p 13/§4), the AEC then argued, contrary to the British proposal, for a Legislative Council with elected members only (p 14/§7). Again, this called-for elected council with power to legislate was of top importance; when Malcolm MacDonald was Colonial Secretary in 1939, for instance, he would express his opinion that had any such Council been created, Palestine would by then be close to self-government.¹¹⁵¹

Tying things together:

A National Government is the only authority that is competent to decide what is good and what is bad for these people. ... Jews dwelling in Palestine will have their share of representation in proportion to their numbers. ... [R]epresentative government is not foreign to the People of Palestine. ... [T]he recognition of the Zionist Organization is... 'totally illegal'. (pp 13-14/§4, 5, 7)

"Representative government" was here defined as it always was by the Palestinians throughout the Mandate, namely in terms of numerical proportionality between percentages a group had in the population and percentages they were entitled to in governmental bodies: The Jews' "share", for instance, would be 11% if they made up 11% of the population. What this formula is not, though, is political *parity* between the indigenous and Jewish collectives. I have found no evidence in documents dealing with the proposed Legislative Councils, or with the more general idea of the proper "national government", to support the view that at this time

¹¹⁵⁰ Hansard 1921, c285.

¹¹⁵¹ FO 371/23224, pp 178-79.

The Palestinian leadership, though troubled by internal dissent, was willing to compromise; it wanted to enter into a genuine dialogue on the British proposal to create a state with a legislative council granting equal representation to Jews and Palestinians and making joint resolutions on immigration and land purchases.¹¹⁵²

To digress on this issue of parity: It was to my knowledge only ever some Zionists who pushed for it, rejecting any legislative body not giving them at least half the votes.¹¹⁵³ [also >138; >438; >442; >463] The view of Susan Hattis could at the same time be true that there were occasionally individual Palestinians willing to reluctantly accept some version of an ethnically-based bi-nationalism in a state made up of the indigenous and the immigrant groups.¹¹⁵⁴ But the Palestinian leadership never endorsed such a solution. As Jamal al-Husseini would put it in a 1932 article [>262], all such formulas for councils wherein the Arabs were anything but a clear majority, reflecting their clear majority in the populace, were “cooked and canned in London and dispatched to Palestine for consumption.”¹¹⁵⁵

Further indicating what kind of “National Government” they envisioned, they argued that power should lie with the Legislative Council rather than the High Commissioner. (p 14/§11) Aside from all this,

the attempt at carrying out the Zionist policy is in direct contravention of Article 3 [sic.] of the Hague Convention¹¹⁵⁶, which clearly states that a Power occupying a country should, as far as possible, carry out the laws and regulations of the preceding Government and should effect no vital change until the final status of that country had been regularized.¹¹⁵⁷ (p 14/§13) [also >19; >60; >88; >115; >147; >155; >178]

Lastly,

The Delegation would beg the Secretary of State to look with sympathy and consideration at the bad conditions to which Palestine has arrived owing to this [pro-Zionist] policy. The Delegation are further fully convinced that the traditional sense of justice of His Majesty's Government must finally lead it to redress the injustice to the People of Palestine of such a policy.

Nothing less than “the salvation of our small country” was at stake. (pp 15/§13, 14) This was also an appeal to determine policy at least in part empirically: Weren't perceivable “bad conditions” amongst the populace as a whole, as opposed to only the yishuv, a reason to consider changing course? It was perhaps on this basis that Churchill's successor, Cavendish, would a year later re-examine the Zionist Mandate. [>153; >156; >159; >165; >167; >171]

¹¹⁵² Pappe 2002/2010, p 226.

¹¹⁵³ Hattis 1970, pp 105-06.

¹¹⁵⁴ Hattis 1970, pp 57, 137, 196, 204, 215, 220, 223-24, 272, 278, 313; also Pappe 2010/2002, pp 215-16, citing P.H. Kisch, *A Palestine Diary*, Jerusalem 1939, vol. I, pp 40-42.

¹¹⁵⁵ al-Husseini 1932, p 24.

¹¹⁵⁶ Hague Convention (IV) Regulations 1907, §42, 43, 49, 55.

¹¹⁵⁷ War Office 1914, Ch. XIV.VIII.ii & iii, §353-81 (pp 288-92), especially §353-55, 363-64; Jeffries 1939, pp 379-84.

138. Cairo Meetings

18 & 19 March, 2 & 4 April 1922

In this period before the Mandates' formal endorsement, or purported 'legal' implementation, by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Turkey and the League of Nations, an 'Arab Executive Committee' from other Near East countries met four times with Zionist leaders in Cairo. As no British or Palestinians were present, these expressions by Palestine's Arab neighbours are strictly speaking outside this book's scope. It is nevertheless worth mentioning them as an early example of the tradition of Palestine's neighbours' denial of Palestinian self-determination. These particular 'Committee' members recognised a Jewish collective right in Palestine and wished to work with these Zionists to set up a Jewish-Arab "confederation" on the basis of neither the Balfour Declaration nor the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, but rather on the parity model still alive today in bi-national visions. Foreseen was

[c]omplete independence of the Arab countries, with Palestine as the Jewish National Home, where the Jews and the Arabs shall constitute a Palestinian national unit with equality of rights and duties.

The Arab delegation, led by Rashid Rida, declined the Zionists' suggestion that some Palestinians be invited to serve on the planned Arab-Jewish joint committee, offering only "to put the Jews in touch with such Palestinian personalities as they may desire to confer with."¹¹⁵⁸

¹¹⁵⁸ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 46-48.

139. Shuckburgh's Reply

11 April 1922

Shuckburgh's 11 April **short reply to the Palestinians' positions** [^{>132; >135; >137}]¹¹⁵⁹ contained nothing new:

As you are aware, the object of [Mr Churchill's] proposals is to confer upon the People of Palestine a large measure of control over their own affairs, while securing the due fulfilment of the pledges [to the Zionist Organisation] from which, as you have repeatedly been informed, His Majesty's Government have no intention of receding. No useful purpose would be served by further discussion of the policy underlying these pledges. (pp 15-16/§2)

Shuckburgh then misquoted the Balfour Declaration, claiming that it swears the preservation of the "rights and interests" of the non-Jewish population (rather than their "civil and religious rights") [^{>16}], and then related that

Mr. Churchill has at all times been careful to explain that there can be no question of rescinding the Balfour Declaration. ... He cannot but express his disappointment that the Delegation should decline to co-operate with him in seeking a practical solution of this important question. He fails to see what advantage [the Delegation], or those who advise them, expect to derive from the purely negative attitude that they have seen fit to adopt. ... While regretting the attitude of the Delegation, His Majesty's Government will not be diverted thereby from the line of action which they conceive to be in the best interests of the people of Palestine as a whole. (p 16/§3)

The powerful party, it seems, felt authorised to attribute "negativity" to the powerless, whereas objectively, both sides were "negative" in sticking to their bottom line, entailing a 'No' to the other's bottom line. The British were here negatively "declining to co-operate" with 90% of its Palestinian subjects – showing that they did not know what was in their own "best interests".

No answer was given to the Arabs' specific objections to the proposed Legislative Council or the merely advisory immigration board, and Shuckburgh's parting words were:

[Mr. Churchill] believes that the Delegation would share the regret that he himself would feel if they were to leave England without accomplishing any constructive work or making any contribution towards the foundations of a prosperous and content Palestine. (p 16/§4)

The Palestinians were being told to work "constructively" on their destruction.

¹¹⁵⁹ Cmd. 1700, pp 15-17 (Document No. 4).

140. U.S. Congress Joint Resolution

3 May 1922

The United States was officially on the side of British pro-Zionist policy:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled that the United States of America favours the establishment in Palestine of the [sic.] National Home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine...¹¹⁶⁰

Although the US was not a member of the League of Nations, the U.S. Congress lent its weight to Britain by unanimously passing this Resolution showing, in the words of one speaker, the United States' "moral interest in and favourable attitude toward" the Balfour Declaration/Mandate "which has been endorsed by France, Italy, Japan and other nations". The motion's short text contained the usual Preamble attesting Jewish historical roots in and emotional and religious ties to Palestine, the country's desolation after almost 2,000 years of Jewish absence and the agricultural, economic and educational achievements to date of the Zionist immigrants, followed by the above-quoted resolution similar to the Balfour Declaration.¹¹⁶¹ Several speeches in the US House of Representatives, by the way, surpassed in their pro-Zionism anything said in the British Parliament.

¹¹⁶⁰ CAB 24/159/6, p 4 (Cavendish to Cabinet, *see* >159).

¹¹⁶¹ U.S. Congress 1922.

About 2 months after Shuckburgh's second and last reply, on 11 April 1922, to the Palestine Arab Delegation's criticisms of the draft Palestine Constitution, the short Document No. 5 of Cmd. 1700, dated 3 June 1922, bore the title 'The Colonial Office to the Zionist Organization'.¹¹⁶² Therein Shuckburgh informed the ZO that he was *enclosing* a "statement" of policy proposals "discussing in some detail the means by which it is intended to carry into effect the establishment of a Jewish National Home in the country."

Under Article IV of the draft Mandate submitted to the Council of the League of Nations, a special position is assigned to your Organisation as an agency authorised to co-operate with His Majesty's Government in this respect. In these circumstances it appears to Mr. Churchill essential, not only that the declared aims and intentions of your Organisation should be consistent with the policy of His Majesty's Government, but that this identity of aim should be made patent both to the people of Palestine and of this country, and indeed to the world at large.

But no "special position" was given to any indigenous organisation. Incidentally, or legalistically, note once again that justifying the "special position" of the ZO with reference to the "draft Mandate" is circular, because the draft and the Mandate were established by none other than HMG. Also, to my knowledge there was no lack of "identity of aim" to get worried about.

The "statement" which Shuckburgh was enclosing was actually the all-important Churchill White Paper [^{>142}], the first official declaration by HMG since the Balfour Declaration four-and-a-half years earlier that Zionism was its policy. As demonstrated by its place as a mere Enclosure in the document 'The Colonial Office to the Zionist Organisation', *it was not addressed to the Palestinians* but rather to the Zionists. It was the Britain-International Zionist side of the 'Palestine triangle' that counted, even if "the world at large" was an addressee as well.

For its part, the ZO studied the "statement", aka the Churchill White Paper, and on 18 June Weizmann would reply to the CO swearing to act "in conformity with the policy therein set forth", adding an expression of joy that 1) the Balfour Declaration is explicitly re-affirmed, 2) "the Jewish people... is in Palestine as of right", and 3) "as a corollary of this right" Jewish immigration would be encouraged, limited not by political considerations but only "by the economic capacity of the country... to absorb new arrivals."¹¹⁶³

¹¹⁶² Cmd. 1700, p 17.

¹¹⁶³ Cmd. 1700, p 29.

IX. “as of right and not on sufferance”

This 11-page entry covers Britain's attempt to justify its colonisation policy by what it alleged were the Jews' "ancient historic connection" to Palestine and their derivative right to immigrate there – "as of right and not on sufferance".

As already noted [>135], the Whitehall bureaucracy placed this 'White Paper' – a nickname for many Statements of Policy at the stage before they might become bills before Parliament – *within* a larger series of Documents entitled "Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization" and filed as **Command Paper (Cmd.) 1700**. It is a 'command' paper by virtue of being "Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty [George V]." We have just scrutinized the first four Documents in Cmd. 1700 [>135-38], and the previous entry dealt with Document No. 5, the letter dated 3 June 1922 inviting the Zionist Organization to comment on HMG's policy proposals contained in the Enclosure within Document No. 5 entitled 'British Policy in Palestine', aka the Churchill White Paper. The ZO, a "public body" with no analogous organisation on the Arab side, was being officially invited to suggest changes in a coming White Paper.¹¹⁶⁴

The next significant 'Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom' was Cmd. 3692, the '**Passfield** White Paper' named after its issuing Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb) and 'Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty [George VI], October 1930' [>234]. This was followed by another major policy statement, namely Cmd. 5479, the 'Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies [William Ormsby-Gore] to Parliament by Command of His Majesty [still George VI], July 1937' – universally known as the '**Peel** Commission Report' after its Chair Lord [William Robert Wellesley] Peel. [>336] The Peel Report itself is not referred to as a 'White Paper', that term being reserved for the short 'Statement of Policy' issued by the Cabinet at the same time, Cmd. 5513, which endorsed the Peel Report. [>335] The '**Woodhead** Commission ('Palestine Partition Commission') Report, Cmd. 5854, followed in 1938 [>376]. 1939 then saw the potentially decisive, pro-Palestinian '**MacDonald** White Paper' [>410], Cmd. 6019, 'Palestine Statement of Policy Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies [Malcolm MacDonald MP] by Command of His Majesty [still George VI], May 1939'. Only those of Churchill and MacDonald were ever approved by a House of Commons vote.

This ('Churchill') White Paper was the ideological base of the very similar Mandate text [>146] which would be voted down in the House of Lords on 21 June with 60 Naes to 29 Ayes but indirectly approved by the House of Commons on 4 July with 292 Ayes to 35 Naes. I give it the date 3 June 1922, the date it was sent for comment to the Zionist Organization, and cite it as 'Cmd. 1700' using the printed page numbers in that multi-document file. (pp 17-21).

¹¹⁶⁴ Churchill 1922; = Cmd. 1700, pp 17-21, 'Enclosure within Document 5', all quotations; see any number of online reproductions, e.g. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1922.asp

During June 1922 the document made the rounds. Soon after 3 June it would be sent informally “through Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir John Shuckburgh” (but not their boss, Winston Churchill) to the 1st Palestine Arab Delegation which had been in London since 10 August 1921 [>117] and which on 17 June would send a seven-page reply to Churchill [>143] the content of which was very similar to its earlier comments on the ‘draft Constitution’ [>135; >137].¹¹⁶⁵ A day later, on 18 June, a letter expressing full agreement with the White Paper would be sent to the CO from Weizmann in the name of the Zionist Organization.¹¹⁶⁶ Shortly thereafter the CO would telegraph High Commissioner Samuel in Palestine that “A White Paper will be laid [officially issued] on Saturday 1st July covering [the] correspondence”, a telegraphed nine-point summary of which would be allowed to be published on 3 July.¹¹⁶⁷

The White Paper was written by Herbert Samuel, John Shuckburgh, and Winston Churchill.¹¹⁶⁸ I will nevertheless treat Churchill as its author. Its second sentence read, “After consultation with the High Commissioner for Palestine [Samuel] the following statement has been drawn up.” (p 18) It consisted largely of implicit attempts to rebut the objections to the British Mandate and/or its policies made by the indigenous Palestinians, not least in the previous few months [>135; >137], but also for instance in the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress’s ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ of the winter of 1921 [>99] and many other communications from Palestinians to HMG covered in several previous entries. In content it echoed Samuel’s seminal, even prescriptive, ‘Future of Palestine’ [>8] of eight years earlier.

Its introduction announced that

It summarises the essential parts of the correspondence that has already taken place between the Secretary of State and a Delegation from the Moslem-Christian Society of Palestine, which has been for some time in England,... (p 18)

While the Delegation’s reply on 17 June would clarify that they were “representing the Moslems and Christians of Palestine”, not “the Moslem-Christian Society”, the defensive language of the Paper does reflect a struggle with the arguments of the Arab Delegation.

The document early on made an untruthful assertion:

It is also necessary to point out that the Zionist Commission in Palestine, now termed the Palestine Zionist Executive, has not desired to possess, and does not possess, any share in the general administration of the country. (p 18)

The phrase “general administration” was chosen for its ambiguity. Of course, narrowly defined, the members of the Zionist Commission did not share offices with the “administration”, but they were routinely and officially consulted on important matters and the personnel overlap consisted at least of Herbert Samuel himself, Norman Bentwich and

¹¹⁶⁵ Cmd. 1700, pp 21-28 (Document No. 6).

¹¹⁶⁶ Cmd. 1700, pp 28-29 (Document No. 7).

¹¹⁶⁷ Cmd. 1700, pp 30-31 (Document No. 8).

¹¹⁶⁸ Shaw 1930, p 15; Huneidi 2001, p 159; Mattar at <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/churchill-white-paper-1922>

Herbert's son Edwin, appointed officially by HMG as "liaison" between the Palestine Administration and the Zionist Commission. On its first trip to Palestine it was officially accompanied by declared Zionists William Ormsby-Gore and James de Rothschild. [see >23; >31; >37; >59; >77; >88; >101; >112; >115; >122; >126; >143] As shown in several previous entries, not only all Palestinians, but Britons such as Louis Bols, E.T. Richmond, Wyndham Deedes, Arnold Toynbee and W.N. Congreve judged the Zionist Commission to be a government within a government, and the Palin and Haycraft Enquiries [>88; >122] duly reported this particular grievance.

Protesting somewhat too much, Churchill continued: Not only did the Zionist Commission not co-administer the country, but

Nor does the special position assigned to the Zionist Organisation in Article IV of the Draft Mandate for Palestine [>146, also San Remo >78] imply any such functions. That special position relates to the measures to be taken in Palestine affecting the Jewish population, and contemplates that the Organisation may assist in the general development of the country, but does not entitle it to share in any degree in its Government. (p 18)

Whatever the degree to which the "position" of the Zionist Organisation "affected" the entire population, rather than just "the Jewish population", draft Article 4 did rather neutrally prescribed that "An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body... The Zionist organization... shall be recognised as such an agency".¹¹⁶⁹ It was inferable in Churchill's text that its purpose was to help in the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people, but it was not clear what this "Zionist organization", identified as the "public body", was. It was at first glance not the Zionist Commission, whose name, the White Paper noted, had recently been changed to the "Palestine Zionist Executive", nor was it the 'Jewish Agency for Palestine' which did not come into existence until 1929. Its relation to the indigenous, Arab Jews was not close, based as it was in Europe and North America.

That is, most likely Churchill meant the World Zionist Organization, the group which held the bi-annual international Congresses. And indeed Colonial Secretary Cavendish, who would shortly replace Churchill, reaffirmed on 17 February 1923 in a memo to the Cabinet that for purposes of the Jewish national home,

The Zionist Organization is an international Jewish body with headquarters in London, under the Presidency of Dr. Weizmann. It has established an Agency at Jerusalem for the purpose of carrying out the functions allotted to it under the Mandate. The local body is known as the 'Zionist Executive.' The Organisation was selected by His Majesty's Government for the purpose as the best representative of the Jewish movement as a whole.¹¹⁷⁰

Cavendish's last sentence was a bit different from what Churchill had written, quoted just above, namely that the "special position" of the Organisation – whatever it was – was

¹¹⁶⁹ Mandate Text, Article 4.

¹¹⁷⁰ CAB 24/159/6, p 42 (§6); also encyclopedia.com, current.

merely “related to the measures to be taken in Palestine affecting the Jewish population”. (The implausible implication here, by the way, was that these “measures” would not affect the Christian and Moslem citizens of Palestine.)

The official remit of the *Zionist Commission*, sent to Palestine in March 1918, had been stated by Balfour on 18 February 1918 in the House of Commons in even more restricted, a-political terms:

The functions of the Commission are to investigate the present condition of Jewish colonies in Palestine, to organise relief work, and supervise reparation of damage done to Zionist colonies during the War in as far as circumstances will permit.¹¹⁷¹ [>23]

There were enough different Zionist bodies to sow confusion, but it seems that if the “Zionist Executive” was the transmogrified “Palestine Zionist Executive” mentioned in the White Paper, it was a merger of the quasi-official U.K. Zionist Commission which had worked in Palestine already for four years [>23] and the international umbrella organisation. And Balfour and Churchill were busy denying the ethno-political function of these various Jewish-Zionist organisations.

The White Paper’s next claim was:

It is the intention of His Majesty’s Government to foster the establishment of a full measure of self-government in Palestine. But they are of the opinion that, in the special circumstances of that country, this should be accomplished by gradual stages and not suddenly. (p 20)

The only argument offered for this “opinion” that self-government should be later rather than sooner was that “during” the waiting period

the institutions of the country will have become well established; its financial credit will be based on firm foundations, and the Palestinian officials will have been enabled to gain experience of sound methods of government. (p 21)

It was the British, of course, who knew what “sound” methods of government were, and as we have seen the ambiguities of the Covenant’s Article 22 [>46] allowed Britain, without using any objective or named criteria, to say when the waiting period was over. But was it plausible that establishing institutions “well”, firming up credit-worthiness and giving tutelage to individual Palestinians in governance – even taking into account what HMG perceived to be their backwardness and racial inferiority – could take longer than, say, five years? No. Time was simply needed for immigration-induced demographic change.

That is, as the Palestinian Delegation in London soon attested¹¹⁷² and as many other documents in this chronology show¹¹⁷³, the real reason why “gradual stages” were necessary in establishing “self-government” was that there was not yet a Jewish majority, and the present majority would rescind the whole Zionist project. Put differently, if the ‘self’ in

¹¹⁷¹ Hansard 1918, c436.

¹¹⁷² Cmd. 1700, pp 26-27.

¹¹⁷³ See Theme Index & e.g. >9; >16; >90; >104; >106; >108; >114; >117; >118; >122; >136; >143; >145; >149; >178; >190; >192; >200; >213; >217; >218; >220; >228; >234; >278; >327; >336; >342; >383; >419; >425; >434; >437; >438; >439; >443; >450; >456.

the phrase “self-government in Palestine” meant the entire populace with its majority of non-Jews, then Great Britain never intended any such thing as self-government, neither gradually nor “suddenly”.

The White Paper was emphatic in its adherence to the Balfour Declaration but was aware that a definition of the Balfour Declaration’s “national home” must be offered:

[HMG] would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the Declaration... 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*. (p 18) ... When it is asked what is meant by the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, it may be answered that it is not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take, on grounds of religion and race, an interest and a pride. (p 19)

The idea of imposing Jewish *nationality* on non-Jews was a straw man.

As for the rest of this key paragraph, Churchill, Samuel and Shuckburgh were correct that the Balfour Declaration taken literally did “not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home”, but as we have seen in earlier discussions over the terms ‘Jewish state’, ‘Jewish commonwealth’, and the ‘reconstitution’ of either Palestine or the ‘national home’ itself [¹⁶; ¹⁴⁶], this formulation was a compromise between what was actually “contemplated” and what could be revealed to the public. Taken literally, such a home “in” Palestine could be anything from a beachhead at Tel Aviv to half or more of the country – or even all of it, as the concept ‘in’ in this context does not actually rule out the home’s extent being geographically congruent with the entire to-be-mandated territory.

The White Paper was in any case trying to calm the waters by stating that Palestine and the Jewish national home were not identical. Recall that various British (and U.S.) politicians had availed themselves of the ambiguity in the Balfour Declaration text in order to revert to the vision of Palestine’s becoming in its entirety the Jewish national home: For instance, Balfour and Brandeis on 24 June 1919 had reverted to agreeing that “Palestine should *be*” the national home¹¹⁷⁴ [⁵⁰] and Curzon at San Remo on 24 April 1920 had falsely told the representatives of France and Italy that the Balfour Declaration had said that “Palestine in future was to *be* the National Home of the Jews throughout the world”¹¹⁷⁵ [⁷⁸]. (*emphasis added*)

Churchill also along the way fell back on the other Powers it had in its corner:

[T]hat [Balfour] Declaration, re-affirmed by the Conference of the Principle Allied Powers at San Remo [⁷⁸] and again in the Treaty of Sevres [⁹²], is not susceptible of change. (p 19)

Whatever its ambiguities and contradictions, it was the law.

The authors doubled down on their denial of doing harm. They had zero intention

¹¹⁷⁴ FO 800/217, p 188.

¹¹⁷⁵ San Remo minutes 1920, p 918.

to create a wholly Jewish Palestine [or for] Palestine to become 'as Jewish as England is English' [or to effect] the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language or culture in Palestine. His Majesty's Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view. (p 18)

Jewish rule, *nota bene*, would be "impracticable" rather than in violation of any ethical or political principles. In these passages the authors did, though, in explaining what the Home was *not*, successfully avoid denying that the plan was for a Jewish state.

Concerning the dwellers in the Jewish national home, the authors had it both ways: On the one hand, developing "the *existing* Jewish community" implied that the British-foisted "development" was restricted to those Jews currently present in Palestine. In this picture, other Jews in the rest of the world merely "assist" those in Palestine but otherwise look on only with "interest and... pride", nothing more. On the other hand, the Balfour Declaration said that the Home was for "the Jewish people", i.e. not only the "existing Jewish community" in Palestine, but for those outside. [^{>16}] To solve this contradiction they found a bridge – immigration – by immediately after the above passage adding that

[f]or the fulfilment of this policy it is necessary that the Jewish community in Palestine should be able to increase its numbers by immigration. (p 19)

But this statement that the Home's "establishment" required immigration was merely asserted without argument, with no explanation why the present size of the home was not enough. In Jerusalem on 29 March 1921 Churchill had similarly and personally told the Executive Committee of the Arab Palestinian Congress that

the establishment of a National Home for Jews in Palestine... inevitably involves the immigration of Jews into the country.¹¹⁷⁶ [^{>100}]

In the intervening fourteen months he, Samuel and Shuckburgh had needed to work out a more convincing wording to connect the "home" with increased "immigration". They needed to show that the "home" had to grow, although logically, it could have remained comprised only of the Jews then present. This point would be made on 17 June by the 1st Palestinian Delegation in its critique of the White Paper.¹¹⁷⁷ [^{>143}]

Thus, to justify mass immigration some other argument was needed, and it was found in two subsequent claims (*quoting*):

1. But in order that this community [the "existing" one] should have the best prospect of free development and provide full opportunity for the Jewish people to display its capacities, it is essential that it should know that it is in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance.
2. That is the reason why it is necessary that the existence of a Jewish National Home in Palestine should be internationally guaranteed, and that it should be formally recognised to rest upon ancient historic connection. (p 19)

Jews outside of Palestine, if they had an "ancient historic connection" with Palestine and if they would *be* there "as of right and not on sufferance", then surely they could go there

¹¹⁷⁶ CAB 24/126/23, p 150.

¹¹⁷⁷ Cmd. 1700, p 24.

“as of right” – i.e., immigrate. There was some sleight of hand here, though, because literally, the first sentence above says that it was the *existing* Jewish community in Palestine which was deemed to be there “as of right and not on sufferance” – not Jews in general.

Alas, this text requires careful reading. The Peel Commission would fifteen years later read this paragraph of the 1922 White Paper and feel it incumbent upon themselves to try to untangle being in Palestine from going to Palestine:

The Jewish people are recognized as being in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance, but it does not necessarily follow that any Jew at any time has a right to enter the country.¹¹⁷⁸

The distinction was certainly important, but who knows whether Peel was right? Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald would in 1939 agree with Peel, telling the Cabinet he intended to base future British policy on the premise that there was no right of all Jews to enter or be in Palestine.¹¹⁷⁹ [383; 410] (See just below.) Churchill, Samuel and Shuckburgh, though, were certainly arguing for the opposite conclusion, since they insisted on immigration time after time.

Further, Churchill wrote that “it” must “know that it is in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance”¹¹⁸⁰, but what was this “it”? It was identified only as “this community”. But which one? The Jewish one *in Palestine*, or the “Jewish people as a whole”, i.e. the “Jewish people” wherever they were, some of whom in Palestine would “display its capacities”? Grammatically, “this community” strictly refers back to “the Jewish community” “existing” in Palestine, not to “the Jewish people as a whole”. This community in Palestine, not the whole world, is that which should “become a centre” for the Jewish community in the whole world.

The White Paper defined only one characteristic which this “centre” should have: it should in the eyes of the world Jewish community be something that ethno-religious group could be proud of. It did specify that for these feelings to arise, the Jewish community in Palestine should be able to “display its capacities”, but these “capacities” remained unspecified. There are no specifications as to what characteristics should accrue which would cause or justify the aimed-for feelings of “interest and pride” – no stated size, either in absolute numbers or as a percentage of Palestine’s whole population, nor judged by some level of wealth or other achievement, nor in terms of political sovereignty.

The authors seem to have gotten themselves into trouble by even mentioning “the *existing* Jewish community”, and had cleverly got out of it, at least rhetorically: A close enough association between the Jews in Palestine and those not in Palestine had been established that for decades a right to immigrate was far and wide deduced from this White Paper: one could leap from a right to be there to a right to immigrate there. For instance, in the House of Commons on 23 May 1939 Churchill, without explicitly claiming his White Paper had been clear about the matter, would maintain that HMG’s pledges were to all Jews:

¹¹⁷⁸ Peel 1937, X §91.

¹¹⁷⁹ CAB 24/282/4, p 35.

¹¹⁸⁰ The online text of the Avalon Project falsely inserts the word ‘the’ before ‘sufferance’.

To whom was the pledge of the Balfour Declaration made? It was not made to the Jews of Palestine, it was not made to those who were actually living in Palestine. It was made to world Jewry and in particular to the Zionist associations. ... They were the people outside, not the people in.¹¹⁸¹

Yet the pledge, literally, was to help establish something in which the Jews on the “outside” “may take, on grounds of religion and race, an interest and a pride” – nothing more, not a state, not mass immigration, not an army. The Palestinians’ criticism of the White Paper, dated 17 June 1922, would in some detail go into this argument for immigration allegedly following from an ancient historical connection of Jews to Palestine.¹¹⁸² [>143; also >45]

In firming up the “right” of all Jews to come to and reside in Palestine Churchill, Samuel and Shuckburgh changed one word in the Balfour Declaration. It had pledged the “the *establishment* in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”, but the White Paper now shifted to the “the *development* of the Jewish National Home in Palestine”. ‘Development’, on any definition, could plausibly be interpreted to require an increase in numbers – in this case necessarily by immigration – even in the case that the Home had already been ‘established’. But ‘development’ was not what was written in the Balfour Declaration, which was the document that had been said to have been approved by the Powers at San Remo [>78] or Sèvres [>92].

In the end the White Paper’s task had been to placate the indigenous people while justifying the particular “Jewish Zionist aspiration” of mass immigration (with which, as the Balfour Declaration put it, HMG was expressly in “sympathy” [>16]). As the argument would somewhat colloquially be put on 17 November 1930 in the House of Commons by James de Rothschild – who had officially been part of the Zionist Commission in 1918 [>23] and was president of the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association –, “we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews...”¹¹⁸³

To sum up, the argument’s syllogisms were: 1) All Jews have a *historic connection with Palestine*; whoever has a historic connection with a place has a right to *be in* that place; therefore all Jews have a right to be in Palestine. 2) All Jews have a right to *be in Palestine*; whoever has a right to be somewhere has the right to *go there*, if he or she is not yet there; therefore all Jews have a right to immigrate to Palestine. However weak or undefended these syllogisms may be, they from the start constituted the most powerful of the memes which gave, and still today give, apparent justification to the non-enfranchisement and eventual replacement of the Palestinians in Palestine.

As touched on just above, the wind changed only seventeen years later. The author of the 1939 White Paper, Colonial Secretary at that time Malcolm MacDonald, would write to the Cabinet on 18 January 1939 [>383] that he intended to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and the Churchill White Paper, in part because he rejected the latter’s logic:

¹¹⁸¹ Hansard 1939a, cc2171-72.

¹¹⁸² Cmd. 1700, pp 21-28 (Document No. 6); see also Quigley 2022, Ch. 15.

¹¹⁸³ Hansard 1930a, c179.

We cannot accept the contention that all Jews as such have a right to enter Palestine. Such a principle is not a corollary of recognition of the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine, and it implies no more than that the Jews who have already entered, or might be allowed to enter, Palestine are or would be *in that country as of right*; that is to say, that they are the equals in national status of the indigenous inhabitants.¹¹⁸⁴

His White Paper [>410], therefore, would accept the Churchill White Paper's "existing Jewish community" but declare that the "national home for the Jewish people" had been established; HMG would "permit further expansion of the Jewish National Home by immigration only if the Arabs are prepared to acquiesce in it."¹¹⁸⁵

But in 1922, because the entry into and residence in Palestine were declared to be "of right" (as opposed to "on sufferance"), the rights of this largely European collective were bound to violate the rights of the others who already were in Palestine. As a corollary to the JNH policy Britain *had to* deny the Palestinians self-determination and independence. Indeed, fifteen years later the Peel Commission [>336] would correctly report that, in the sophisticated view of the Palestinians,

The Jews, in fact, are to live in Palestine, to quote the words of the Churchill Statement of Policy, 'as of right and not on sufferance'; while the Arabs, on the other hand, are to live in Palestine as on sufferance and not of right.¹¹⁸⁶

That is enough tiring exegesis for a while.

The White Paper moved on to the standard denial that the Palestinians had been promised independence:

The whole of Palestine west of the Jordan was... excluded from Sir. Henry McMahon's pledge.

Furthermore, as in Samuel's 'King's birthday' speech of exactly a year earlier [>105], British policy in Palestine now formally committed to limiting Jewish immigration to "the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals". (p 19) [*also* >141] This established the crucial criterion of "economic absorptive capacity" which would dominate discussion over the *amount* of immigration up until 1939. Objectively, the criterion ignored what was more important to the Palestinians, namely social, emotional, ethical and political absorptive capacity; yet even on its own terms, it ignored the fact that the indigenous people might themselves want to be absorbed into a modest material affluence.

The White Paper did not accept any of the Arab Delegation's comments in February and March 1920 [>135; >137] regarding either the draft Constitution's "special committee" on immigration (pp 19-20) or on the powerlessness and unrepresentativeness of its floated Legislative Council (p 20), except that for the LC Churchill was "prepared to omit" the draft's provision that in addition to the core 23 members 3 "non-official persons" should

¹¹⁸⁴ CAB 24/282/4, p 35 §14. [>383]

¹¹⁸⁵ MacDonald 1939, §13.ii, 14.3.

¹¹⁸⁶ Peel 1937, IV §37; *also* Huneidi 2001, p 25.

be “nominated by the High Commissioner”; otherwise, the LC was the same as that of the draft which had earlier in 1922 been sent around for comment [133]: “The Legislative Council would then consist of the High Commissioner as President and twelve elected and ten official members.” (p 20)

Seventeen years later, in the House of Commons on 23 May 1939 before his vote against MacDonald’s White Paper, Churchill joined the ranks of those trying to clarify the meaning of his White Paper [410; 411]:

The main purpose of the dispatch [his 1922 White Paper] was clear. This is what I said in paragraph (1): ‘His Majesty’s Government have no intention of repudiating the obligations into which they have entered towards the Jewish people.’ I then proceeded to say that the Government would refuse to discuss the future of Palestine on any basis other than the basis of the Balfour Declaration. Moreover, the whole tenour of the dispatch was to make it clear that the establishment of self-governing institutions in Palestine was to be subordinated to the paramount pledge and obligation of establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine.¹¹⁸⁷

Among other things this clarifies that it was because this “establishing” would take time – mainly because mass immigration would take time – that the White Paper, as already quoted above, declared that “self-government in Palestine... should be accomplished by gradual stages and not suddenly” (p 20).

This 1939 statement by Churchill was relatively honest, and accurately portrayed the rhetorical import of his White Paper. He was also once again claiming that Britain had been “obligated” to establish the Jewish national home, as if it had to, was forced to. By 1939, though, it was amply clear that in fact, Britain could *at any time* have relinquished the Mandate or petitioned the League of Nations to have its Jewish-national-home clause removed. Jeffries, incidentally, made fun of this by writing of “‘obligations’, conferred by ourselves upon ourselves... .”¹¹⁸⁸

Churchill then doubled down:

In this very dispatch [White Paper] of mine, which represented the views of the entire Government of the day, the greatest pains were taken to make it clear that the paramount duty was the establishment of a National Home. It was said on page 6: ‘The position is that His Majesty’s Government are bound by a pledge which is antecedent to the Covenant of the League of Nations, and they cannot allow a constitutional position to develop in a country for which they have accepted responsibility to the principal Allied Powers which may make it impracticable to carry into effect a solemn undertaking given by themselves and their Allies.’¹¹⁸⁹ [411]

This accurate summary of the White Paper added the pathos of a “solemn” undertaking. By 1939, Churchill had also found a legalistic argument for his 1922 claims: because the Balfour Declaration was temporally “antecedent” to the Covenant [46], it trumped that

¹¹⁸⁷ Hansard 1939a, cc2170-71.

¹¹⁸⁸ Andersen 2017, p 284, quoting ‘The Spectator’ of 24 July 1936.

¹¹⁸⁹ Hansard 1939a, c2171.

Covenant's Article 22 – however vague that Article in fact was, and notwithstanding the fact that the Covenant's Article 20 stipulated that all signatories were obliged to abrogate all antecedent “obligations or understandings inter se which are inconsistent with the terms thereof.”¹¹⁹⁰ [also >182] In any case, the White Paper's policies of furthering immigration and Jewish institutions within Palestine, while leaving the Palestinians only the “civil and religious” rights promised them five years earlier, were carried out religiously for the duration of the Mandate.

¹¹⁹⁰ League of Nations 1919, Article 20.

In February and March the Palestinian Arab Delegation had replied to the draft Constitution ('Order in Council' [^{>135}; ^{>137}] which would come into force on 10 August [^{>150}]) and shared with the 1922 White Paper [^{>142}] the basic colonialism-plus-Zionism ideas. In a letter dated 17 June 1922¹¹⁹¹ the Palestinians dissected HMG's philosophy behind the Balfour Declaration and the proposed Mandate statutes [^{>146}] as elaborated in the White Paper which would be formally issued on 3 July 1922.

They started by saying they had "received through Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir John Shuckburgh your [Churchill's] memorandum entitled 'British Policy in Palestine' [the White Paper]". (p 21) Their reply was a rejection of the White Paper and Constitution for the usual reasons – no immediate independence, the specious Jewish historic connection, the "national" "home", Zionist immigration. In ten separate sections the reply closely reacted to points of the "memorandum", which had incorporated exactly none of the objections or suggestions they had brought during their stay in London.

1. They objected that the Memorandum called them "a Delegation from the Moslem Christian Society of Palestine," neglecting to use the proper expression 'representing the Moslems and Christians of Palestine'" who "form 93 per cent. of the entire population."

2. To Samuel/Churchill/Shuckburgh's efforts to allay Jewish fear of the Moslem-Christian majority the Delegation replied:

We wish to point out here that the Jewish population of Palestine who lived there before the war never had any trouble with their Arab neighbours. They enjoyed the same rights and privileges as their fellow Ottoman citizens, and never agitated for the Declaration of November, 1917. It is the Zionists outside Palestine who worked for the Balfour Declaration, and who, now that the world sees its impracticability, are apprehensive of its abolishment.

As the Palin and Haycraft Commissions [^{>88}; ^{>122}] and even Churchill himself [^{>106}] officially conceded, the problem for the Arabs was not Jews, but Zionism.

3. This lengthy section refuted the assertion that in relating to the British Administration the Zionist Executive (the new name for the Zionist Commission) was the hands-off organisation portrayed in the 3rd paragraph of the White Paper:

[D]eeds speak better than words. ... Those of us... who have had four long years' experience of the activities of this Commission [know that it] has very much interfered with the Administration of Palestine under one pretext or another, all of which were based on solicitude for Jewish interests. ...

As witnesses for their view of the Commission they named the "gentlemen" who had ruled the colony before Samuel "who had to go because they could not and would not govern the country on lines laid down by the Zionist Commission [a group including Al-lenby, Clayton, Money, Watson, Bols, Toynbee, Congreve, Richmond, Deedes, etc.]" as

¹¹⁹¹ Cmd. 1700, pp 21-28 (Document No. 6), all quotations in this entry unless otherwise indicated.

well as the US-American Charles Crane [59], who in a 3 June 1922 statement to *The Times* had said the same thing. And whatever the degree of unity between the Administration and the Zionist Commission:

Why, we ask, should the Jews have an official body so preferentially regarded? Cannot the Administration be trusted with the interests of 7 per cent. of the population when the welfare of the 93 per cent. are entrusted to its hands?

There followed a rare fundamental analysis of the consequences of the Draft Mandate's Article 11 [146]¹¹⁹² codifying arrangements between the Zionist Commission (or Zionist 'Executive' or 'Jewish Agency') and the Administration concerning natural resources and economic development: it meant, for "one example", that

the Rutenberg Concession... was made... without having been put out to public tender. The Zionists, through Mr. Rutenberg, are aiming at getting a stranglehold on the economics of Palestine, and once these are in their hands they become virtual masters of the country.

4. The "memorandum" had listed what it called "national characteristics" of the Jews in Palestine (elected councils, its own schools, its elected Chief Rabbinate, its Hebrew language), but:

We should here remark that all these outward signs of a 'national' existence are also possessed by the other communities in Palestine, and if these are to be considered as a reason why Jews outside Palestine should be allowed into Palestine 'as of right and not on sufferance,' it is the more reason why the Arabs should be confirmed in their national home as against all intruders and immigration placed under their control.

Remember that the Jewish-Zionist "Political Organs" were a mere four or five years old. They then added:

Besides, we have always claimed for this [Jewish] community the same rights and privileges as ourselves since with us they were Ottoman citizens. But to argue as the Memorandum does, that because the present Jewish community is there by 'right,' this right should be extended to all the Jews of the world, is a line of reasoning which no people, let alone Arabs, would accept if applied to itself.

Returning to what the White Paper called the "historic connection" – or, in the Mandate text, "historical connection"¹¹⁹³ – between Jews and Palestine,¹¹⁹⁴ which was the lynchpin of the Zionist argument:

We have shown over and over again that the supposed historic connection of the Jews with Palestine rests upon very slender historic data. The historic rights of the Arabs are far stronger than those of the Jews. Palestine had a native population before the Jews even went there, and this population has persisted all down the ages and never assimilated with the

¹¹⁹² Cmd. 1700 renders 'I' as 'II' – a typographical error.

¹¹⁹³ Mandate Text 1922, Preamble.

¹¹⁹⁴ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

Jewish tribes, who were always a people to themselves. The Arabs, on the other hand, have been settled on the land for more than 1,500 years, and are the present owners of the soil.

[see also >45]

In mentioning the “native population” that had been in Palestine before the period of strong Jewish presence there and had “persisted all down the ages”, the Delegation was providing the basis for the argument that if the British/Zionist argument held water, it was even more water-tight when applied to the *even-earlier* claim of those “natives”, whose direct descendants were also the overwhelming population of Palestine in 1922. Note also that the Palestinians did not say the Jews had no “historic rights”, only that they were far weaker than their own; along with the fact of their numerical minority, the Jews’ historic rights, such as they were, did not suffice for parity and much less for dominance. In the words of Walid Khalidi,

The Palestinians categorically rejected the proposition that Jewish association with Palestine in biblical times gave contemporary European Zionists a political title that overrode the Palestinians’ birthright to their ancestral homeland.¹¹⁹⁵

Further concerning this theme of the Jews’ historical connection, Arnold Toynbee, whose contact with this Palestinian Delegation in 1922 in London turned him against Zionism, wrote in 1961 that there are many groups of people who lived in and even ruled parts of Palestine during the last 8,000 years, and that such claims are not only not exclusively arguable for Jews, but also all such claims are subject to the “statute of limitations”:

I submit that the human rights of the native inhabitants of a country have an absolute priority over all other claims upon that country, and that these overriding rights are not forfeited if the native inhabitants are dispossessed of their homes and property. This is a violation of their rights, not a cancellation of these.¹¹⁹⁶

Unsurprisingly, Jeffries had a field day with the notion that an ‘ancient connection’ entailed current political rights.¹¹⁹⁷ [also >45]

5. The Delegation next made three points against Jewish immigration.

The Memorandum says, further, that in order ‘to fulfil this policy it is necessary that the Jewish Community in Palestine should be able to increase its numbers by immigration.’ We here ask, ‘What policy?’ and why? The Jewish Community in Palestine is doing well, and does not depend for its existence on immigration.

That is, the “policy” that needed immigration was not the stated one, but rather a Jewish-state policy. Second, they claimed that the “economic capacity of the country... to absorb new arrivals”, given by the White Paper as its criterion for determining the quantity of immigrants, had already been exceeded, as the High Commissioner’s Interim Report of August, 1920, purportedly conceded. Third,

¹¹⁹⁵ Khalidi 1984, p 83.

¹¹⁹⁶ Toynbee 1961. See also Jeffries 1939, pp 7-12; Zuaytir 1958, pp 8-16, 50; Friedman 1987, p 24; Nakhleh 1991, pp 1, 33, 953-70; Whitelam 1996; Qumsiyeh 2004, pp 5-17; Quigley 1997, 2010.

¹¹⁹⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 463, 516-17, 567-68, 649, 663.

In this connection it is instructive to mention that telegrams were received by this Delegation on 9th June from Arab railway employees complaining that, under the guise of economy, they are being turned out of their jobs in order to make room for Jewish employees, who lack experience in railway work and cannot speak the language of the country.

6. The “special committee” foreseen in the White Paper to “confer with the Administration upon matters relating to the regulation of immigration” was rejected outright:

Since the immigration of a foreign element into any country affects the native population of that country – politically, economically and socially – it is only right and proper that the people who are so affected should have complete say in the matter. The Committee proposed above does not give the people of Palestine control of immigration.

The basic point: “Nothing will safeguard the interests of the Arabs against the dangers of immigration except a Representative National Government, which shall have complete control of immigration.” [see >136]

7. This section covered the McMahon-Hussein correspondence [>10], exposing the White Paper’s mistaken use of the words “district” and “Vilayet” and giving several arguments why “Palestine is included in the pledges and is entitled to the recognition of her independence.”¹¹⁹⁸

8. The Delegation then noted the White Paper’s resolve that self-government, which Britain claimed it planned to bestow, could only come “by gradual stages and not suddenly” – literally, that before its realisation “it would be wise to let some time to elapse” – and admitted that it was

exercised to understand the reason for this gradual education in self-government. It has been admitted by the Secretary of State that ‘there was no question of treating the people of Palestine as less advanced than their neighbours in Iraq and Syria’ to which immediate self-government is given. ... We can find no reason for this delay but in the eagerness of the Government to allow time to elapse during which Jews will have increased in numbers and the powers of Zionism become more established in the land. ... We therefore here once again repeat that nothing will safeguard Arab interests in Palestine but the immediate creation of a national government which shall be responsible to a Parliament all of whose members are elected by the people of the country – Moslems, Christians and Jews.

The Palestinians probably knew that the British agreed with the stance of the Zionist Organization as stated in its response on 2 March 1922 to the draft Order in Council:

[Even if it is not] desirable to exclude the people of Palestine from participation in the management of their own affairs ... it is of paramount importance that the development of self-governing institutions should not be allowed to obstruct the establishment of the Jewish national home. That qualification is of the essence of the Mandate and is, in particular, implicit in the language of Article 2.¹¹⁹⁹

¹¹⁹⁸ J.M.N. Jeffries, in his 1923 book *The Palestine Deception*, called the Vilayet that Churchill invented (there really were Ottoman Vilayets of Syria and of Beirut) the “Vilayet of Churchill” because it was too far to the south of the clearly excluded areas. (Mathew 2014)

¹¹⁹⁹ CO 733/40, p 241, Weizmann to Shuckburgh, 2 March 1922; Ingrams 1972, p 167.

9. Next, the “Educational Committee” and the “Department of Commerce and Industry”, which were perhaps relatively representative of the existing population, “are totally consultative and where their advice clashes with the Zionist policy of the Administration this advice is unheeded.” Tom Segev’s sarcastic comment regarding education policy: “[A]fter thirty years of ruling Palestine, the British had still not instituted compulsory school attendance... A nationwide system of education would have forged national cohesion. ... Had Britain limited its support for Zionism to nothing other than perpetuating Arab illiteracy, His Majesty’s Government could still claim to have kept the promise enshrined in the Balfour Declaration.”¹²⁰⁰

10. Finally, Britain did not seem to care about majoritarian democracy:

But what do we see as the result of this policy? Discontent of 93 per cent. of the population, dislike of the Zionist policy, a strong feeling against those who enter Palestine through the sheer might of England. ... The fact is that His Majesty’s Government has placed itself in the position of a partisan in Palestine of a certain policy which the Arab cannot accept because it means his extinction sooner or later.

Regarding this “extinction”, according to Edward Said, who explicitly investigated “Zionism from the standpoint of its victims”,¹²⁰¹ the Palestinians reacting to the Churchill White Paper perceived its broad thrust perfectly well, namely

‘the intention to create the Jewish National Home is to cause the disappearance or subordination of the Arabic population, culture and language.’ What generations of Palestinian Arabs watched therefore was an unfolding design...¹²⁰²

Because the text of the White Paper had by mid-June already been decided, the Palestinians were talking to British backs. In light of the intransigence with which the colonial power was holding onto the Jewish national home and rejecting all the Palestinian arguments which any democrat would have to affirm, it seems, in retrospect, to have been a case of “It was too late in the beginning.”¹²⁰³ By means of dialogue, the Palestinians could never have not ‘failed’.

¹²⁰⁰ Segev 1999, p 514.

¹²⁰¹ Said 1979, pp 56-114.

¹²⁰² Said 1979, p 83.

¹²⁰³ Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*; also Khalidi 2020, p 53.

Shortly after the appearance of the Churchill White Paper the draft Mandate text, which shared much content with the White Paper, was being debated in Palestine, in Britain, and at the League of Nations. On 21 June the House of Lords came down *against* the Government's taking up the Mandate-cum-Jewish Home by a vote of 60-29 on **a motion by Lord Islington**.¹²⁰⁴ His motion:

Moved, That the Mandate for Palestine in its present form is unacceptable to this House, because it directly violates the pledges made by His Majesty's Government to the people of Palestine in the Declaration of October, 1915 [p.10], and again in the Declaration of November, 1918 [p.28], and is, as at present framed, opposed to the sentiments and wishes of the great majority of the people of Palestine; that, therefore, its acceptance by the Council of the League of Nations should be postponed until such modifications have therein been effected as will comply with pledges given by His Majesty's Government. (c994)

A simpler statement of the gist of the Palestinian case cannot be imagined – and it didn't even explicitly mention the intended Jewish national home. It was enough for Islington, in his motion's bare text, that the people didn't want anything but the independence that had been pledged to them.

Lord Islington argued *inter alia*:

The Palestinians have asked for an early recognition of self-government in their country and they have been told that it must be very gradual, although, as your Lordships are aware, in Iraq where you have just the same kind of people, self-government has been established, and although you have self-government established in Egypt, where it will be found that many of the officials are similar to those who in Palestine would be forming part of the Administration in Palestine. Why is this delay? One can draw only one conclusion, and that is that before self-government is given to Palestine time must be allowed for that amount of immigration of the Jewish community to take place which will enable the system of self-government to be based upon a Jewish Constitution. ... The Zionist Home must, and does, mean the predominance of political power on the part of the Jewish community in a country where the population is preponderantly non-Jewish. (cc1001, 998)¹²⁰⁵

Islington's pithy "Zionist Home" was not used enough by later Mandate critics. At any rate, so Islington further, the Mandatory system, in principle a "high ideal and conception", was irreconcilable with the principle of the "Zionist Home":

One sets out, by assistance, by education, and by encouragement, to bring people along in their own country to self-government, whilst the other sets forth avowedly to impose from outside a political system upon the vast majority of the people in the country. (c999)

Islington asserted that Churchill knew of this internal contradiction:

¹²⁰⁴ Hansard 1922b, *all citations*.

¹²⁰⁵ Also Cmd. 1700, pp 26-27 [p.143].

On more than one occasion he has been asked by Arab Delegations and Palestinian organisations to remove the Zionist bias and to substitute in its place a national system. His reply [on 14 June 1921, >106] has been..., 'The difficulty about the promises of a National Home for Jews in Palestine was that it conflicted with our regular policy of consulting the wishes of the people in mandated territories and giving them a representative institution as soon as the people were fitted for it.' Then he went on to say: 'The only cause for unrest in Palestine arose from the Zionist Government and our promises in regard to it. But for those promises and that movement the garrison could be sensibly reduced.' (c1000)¹²⁰⁶

Taking the indigenous Jewish Palestinians seriously, in one of the very few comments made about this group during the entire British-Palestinian 'dialogue', Islington observed:

I do not think – I speak subject to correction – that there has ever been a demand from the Jewish Community *in Palestine* for the introduction of a Zionist Home in that country. The whole agitation has come from outside, from Jews in other parts of the world [i.e.] Eastern Europe.... The modification of [the Zionist Home] policy will be no injustice to the Jews in Palestine, because they have never asked for it, while the continuance of it will be a growing injustice to the Arab community who will bitterly resent it. (cc1002, 1004, *emphasis added*)

He criticised the electrification concession given to the Russian Jewish Zionist Pinhas Rutenberg not only because it gave preference to the Jewish immigrants but for the simpler reason that it violated self-determination:

It may be said that commercially a syndicate of this character would be very good for the country. But I ask, would it be good for a country to impose a commercial system of this character on it if 90 per cent. of the non-Jewish population refused to accept it? (c1003)

In sum,

The people of Palestine ask, and I think most reasonably, for a national form of Government representative of the people in their own country.... This Constitution [the Mandate text] is affording a most exceptional and violent contrast from other Constitutions that we are implementing in the regions surrounding Palestine itself. Within the last year we have established a self-governing system in Egypt; we are in process now of establishing a self-governing system to enable the people of India to work out their own destinies in their own way; and we have done the same in Iraq. Why, in Heaven's name, are we not going to do it in Palestine? (c1007)

Responding to Islington in defence of the Zionist Mandate, Lord Balfour first attempted to "traverse" [refute?] several points, some of which Islington (as Lord Buckmaster later in the debate observed) *had not made*. Paraphrasing:

- 1) incorporation of his Declaration into the Mandate did not contradict the positions of the League of Nations and the USA, or at least its President (c1009);
- 2) the authors of the Mandate did know what they were saying (c1010);
- 3) Eastern-European Jewish immigration was not wrong because Palestine was not "over-populated" (Islington's argument was rather that the immigration went against the will of the indigenous citizens, whatever the population density) (c1012);

¹²⁰⁶ For Churchill's remarks: Hansard 1921, cc284, 283 and CO 733/13, pp 628-29.

- 4) in general the “material well-being” of the Palestinians, rather than their dignity and *political* rights, was at stake (c1012);
- 5) with regard to any promises reasonably gleaned from various declarations made to the Arabs it was not true that “we were doing a great injustice to the Arab race as a whole” (c1015); and
- 6) Islington “lay stress” on the fact that in Europe “some members of the [Jewish] race may have given, doubtless did give, occasion for much [of the] tyranny and persecution [and] great crimes against this race” (c1017).

The last point was gratuitous, because Islington’s only words mentioning the Jewish “race” contained no reference at all to Jews’ problems in Europe. In fact, Balfour said he himself could “quite understand that” some Jews had provoked their own persecution, but his main argument was that due to their great achievements in “the intellectual, the artistic, the philosophic and scientific development of the world” they deserved a “Jewish Home” – whatever the rights and wishes of the Palestinians living for millennia in the place chosen by Zionists for that Home. (c2017)

Balfour remarked frankly that he had been defending “this scheme of the Palestine Mandate from the most material economic view” and the “prosperity” of the locals. (c1018) But if we read Islington’s words, he was on the other hand judging Britain’s plans by the contrasting criteria of political and ethical justice. Balfour – standing in for British thinking, or at least argumentation, during the entire Mandate – was ignoring the fact that the latter criteria were what was important in the Palestinians’ eyes. The Peel Report [336] would fifteen years later affirm this, writing that while there had been, in that Commission’s opinion, some overall economic benefit to Arabs of Jewish economic development, “What the Arabs most desire is national independence.”¹²⁰⁷

This is a good time to mention that the *political* nature of the Palestinians’ argument had always been known to the British ruling elite; for instance in the same year as the Peel Report Ronald Storrs wrote:

Zionists high and low in the Press and on the platform still appear bewildered at the continual opposition and ‘obstinacy’ of the Arabs. ‘Arab birth-rates have gone up: Arab death and infant mortality rates have gone down. Out of the quarter of a million Public Health Vote nine-tenths is devoted to Arabs. The Arab standard of life has risen beyond all expectation. Arabs are making money...: Yet still ...! Arab objections ‘therefore cannot be economic: they must be “political”’. Zionists will not yet admit to themselves, certainly not to the world, that the Palestine Arab has for hundreds of years considered Palestine, a country no larger than Wales, as his home; and that he does not consider that there is, within those limits, room for another home, to be stocked ‘as of right’ from a reserve of sixteen million people.¹²⁰⁸

The issue was political ownership of the country, implying the right to economically develop it, or not, as the owners saw fit.

In 1946 Michel Fred Abcarius made the same point: “Of what consequence are economic advantages even if they exist? ‘For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world,

¹²⁰⁷ Peel 1937, V §46.

¹²⁰⁸ Storrs 1937, p 377.

and lose himself, or be cast away?¹²⁰⁹ Or as bi-nationalist Zionist Ernst Simon put it in 1947 testifying before the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) regarding the “Arabs” of Palestine, “We know that a nation does not sell its national birthright for a pot of lentils of economic development.”¹²¹⁰ George Antonius said the same thing in his 1938 book: *The Arabs*

Saw that Zionist colonisation involved the actual wiping out of villages and the eviction of their peasantry; that the money which the Zionists brought and the resulting prosperity – if real prosperity there were – did not make up in Arab eyes for the loss of all that a peasant holds dear and sacred in his village surroundings;...¹²¹¹

During the Lords debate Balfour did engage briefly in the political side of the question, denying Islington’s claim that “some kind of Jewish domination over the Arabs was an essential consequence of the attempt to establish a Jewish Home” and asserting that “The Zionist organisation has no attribution of political powers” (c1011) – arguably in contradiction to the Preamble and Articles 2, 4, 6 and 11 of the Mandate [p146] – only to soon revert back to economics in maintaining that the British will never be guilty of “favouritism” regarding finance, concessions or employment (c1013). Then, swerving back to the political issue, he committed the ethical error of saying that the Mandate-cum-Jewish home provides “a partial solution of the great and abiding Jewish problem” (c1016), that is, to a problem that was a European problem having nothing to do with the population of the territory to be mandated.

Riding this conflation (of Europe and Western Asia, of Christians and Moslems, of perpetrators and the innocent) for what it was worth, as the Peel Report also would do in 1937¹²¹², Balfour then again strayed into the off-topic area of the religious and other achievements of the Jewish race, which left Arab dignity and political rights far behind.¹²¹³ His peroration was a paraphrase of Samuel’s ‘The Future of Palestine’ [p8]:

It may fail. I do not deny that this is an adventure. Are we never to have adventures? Are we never to try new experiments? I hope your Lordships will never sink to that unimaginative depth, and that experiment and adventure will be justified; if there is any case or cause for their justification, surely, it is in order that we may send a message to every land where the Jewish race has been scattered, a message which will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world, and, most of all, to the religion that the majority of your Lordships’ House profess, and that we desire to the best of our ability to give them that opportunity of developing, in peace and quietness under British rule, those great gifts which hitherto they have been compelled from the very nature of the case only to bring to fruition in countries which know not their language, and belong not to their race. That is the ideal which I desire to see

¹²⁰⁹ Abcarius 1946, p 194.

¹²¹⁰ UNSCOP 1947d; also Boyle 2001, p 191.

¹²¹¹ Antonius 1938, pp 397-98.

¹²¹² Peel 1937, e.g. I §17-21, III §91, V §44, X §32, 53, XX §11, XXIII §4.

¹²¹³ See also Jeffries 1939, pp 129, 440-42, 706.

accomplished, that is the aim which lay at the root of the policy I am trying to defend; and, though it be defensible indeed on every ground, that is the ground which chiefly moves me.
(cc1018-19)

The Balfour Declaration, incorporated word for word into the Mandate, was here being described by Balfour himself as an experiment on human animals. And even though in his speech the Palestinians do not make even a shadow of an appearance, the cost of Christians' finally doing right by "the Jewish race" is to be paid by them. The reference, moreover, to "peace and quietness under British rule" establishes beyond doubt Balfour's disconnection from reality.

Continuing the debate, Lord Sydenham [*also* >117] argued that even the *civil* rights of the indigenous were being "trampled upon", in violation of the "Previous Speaker's Declaration of 1917" [>16], and he refuted in detail Balfour's non-detailed claim that there was no favouritism to or domination by Jews. (cc1020-22) The "adventure" and "experiment" of the "noble Earl" [Balfour] was "rendered possible only by British bayonets in Palestine", paid for unjustifiably by British taxpayers, who "have already spent millions of money on Zionism." (c1024) He saw reason to believe that the Rutenberg concession is an example of going against the locals' "wishes, and surely we are bound to consult their wishes." (c1024) Finally, after labelling the Balfour policy one which "conflicts with the pledges of His Majesty's Government, and also with the elementary rights of the Palestinian people", he predicted that "Zionism will fail". (c1025)

Supporting Islington and Sydenham, Lord Lamington complained that "There has been no attempt whatever on the part of our Government to ascertain the wishes of the people dwelling in Palestine" and HMG had untruthfully declared it "could not obtain" the King-Crane report [>59] which had clearly ascertained the indigenous political will. (c1029) According to John & Hadawi, Lamington had already on 20 April 1921 [?] in the House of Lords brought up the same matter of consulting the people and obtaining the King-Crane report.¹²¹⁴ He then took the step of proposing concrete alterations to Articles 4 and 6 of the proposed mandate to bring them closer to the population's wishes and farther from those of Zionism (cc1030-31), but the important story here is that the suppression of the King-Crane report meant that British Parliamentarians had less knowledge than was actually available.

One eyewitness later wrote of the Palestinians' reaction to the House of Lords vote against adopting the Mandate:

The Arabs in Palestine became jubilant at the good news. I remember how we demonstrated our victory in the streets of Jerusalem and, in our simplicity, thought that we had won our case. No doubt that had the British Government then revealed the McMahon/Hussein Correspondence [>10; >400], it would have had to cancel the Balfour Declaration which it was unwilling to do.¹²¹⁵

¹²¹⁴ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 170.

¹²¹⁵ Tannous 1988, p 69.

If this author is correct, it was one of Zionism's several narrow escapes that at the time of the House of Commons vote on the Mandate on 4 July 1922 [147] – in favour of adopting it, contrary to the Lords' verdict – the King-Crane [59] and Palin Reports [88] as well as the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence [10] were all suppressed.

Between 23 and 27 June 1922, just before the House of Commons and the Council of the League of Nations were to decide on the Palestine Mandate for Britain, **the Executive Committee** of the 4th Palestine Arab Congress [>109] met and, according to the report of the British political intelligence officers in Palestine, **passed resolutions** for: 1) further protests to HMG, including “against the entry into Palestine of Mr. Jabotinsky, who is described as a Zionist revolutionary”; 2) stepped-up lobbying of the Council in Geneva; 3) public demonstrations; 4) sending delegations to Mecca and Rome; 5) a general strike on 13-14 July (at which time many shops did close and the people remained peaceful¹²¹⁶); 6) “watching the Government closely and recording all of its actions”; 7) making “preparations for an ‘untoward incident’ and the hoarding of a portion of the collected funds for that purpose”; and 8) preparing for the return of the Delegation from London, where it had been since August 1921. Also at this time British officials at the scene attested a shift in the population and the press from opposition to British Zionist policy to opposition to Britain.¹²¹⁷

23-27 June 1922 *The Executive Committee of the Fourth Congress [>109] decide[s] upon the steps to be taken in the event of the expected ratification of the Mandate. The resolution adopted... included the organisation of peaceful demonstrations and the closing of shops in all Palestine on 13-14 July against the British policy...*

1 July 1922 ‘On the same date as the Churchill White Paper was “laid” before Parliament, HMG somewhat redundantly states its intention to accept the Mandate and rule in accordance with the Statement of Policy (Churchill White Paper) of 3 June 1922.’¹²¹⁸

¹²¹⁶ CO 733/37024, p 64.

¹²¹⁷ CO 733/23, pp 128-31, ‘Monthly Political Report’ from Deedes to Colonial Secretary Churchill, 7 July 1922; Kayyali 1978, pp 111-12.

¹²¹⁸ Kayyali 1978, p 111, citing Cmd. 1708 of 1 July 1922.

This 11-page entry covers a bit of the history and meaning of the Mandate as well as its provisions relevant to the establishment of the Jewish national home – including its Preamble incorporating the Balfour Declaration [^{>16}].

Before being presented as a Command Paper to Parliament on 22 December 1922¹²¹⁹, **the Mandate text** was drafted over a period of years, then rejected by the House of Lords on 21 June 1922 [^{>144}], accepted by the House of Commons on 4 July [^{>147}], and approved on 24 July by the Council of the League of Nations, composed of the UK, France, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Brazil, Greece and Spain, at a meeting at St. James's Palace in London hosted by Lord Balfour. The Council wrote:

In view of the declarations which have just been made, and of the agreement reached by all the Members of the Council, the articles of the mandates for Palestine and Syria are approved. The mandates will enter into force automatically and at the same time, as soon as the Governments of France and Italy have notified the President of the Council of the League of Nations that they have reached an agreement on certain particular points in regard to the latter of these mandates.¹²²⁰

This Council meeting published the “articles of the mandates” it had officially “approved” in its Annex 391 of the League of Nation’s *Official Journal* dated 19 August.¹²²¹ The mandates and their texts could not however become legal under international law until the nation holding internationally-legal sovereignty over the mandated territories agreed.

In the case of the Near East mandates this was Turkey, so whatever rule (belligerent occupation) Britain exercised in Palestine *de facto*, and whatever the League Council “approved” on 24 July 1922 (namely the *terms* of the mandate), a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the Mandate’s *de jure* legitimacy under international law would be Turkey’s renunciation of sovereignty over Palestine – and this did not happen until 1) the Treaty of Peace with Turkey was signed at Lausanne one year later, on 24 July 1923, wherein in Article 16 “Turkey hereby renounces all rights and title” over Palestine and other territories, and 2) that Treaty’s sufficient ratification by the parties on 6 August 1924; in addition, the Council’s approval of the distribution of the mandates to France and Britain, since it occurred before Turkey’s relinquishment of title took legal effect on 6 August 1924 (namely on 29 September 1923) lacked legality, was *ultra vires*.¹²²²

¹²¹⁹ Cmd. 1785 1922, *full text*.

¹²²⁰ League of Nations 1922, p 835.

¹²²¹ League of Nations 1922, pp 1007-12.

¹²²² Quigley 2022, Chs. 10 & 11 & pp 89-91, 149-51, *citing inter alia* League of Nations, *Official Journal*, vol. 3 (no. 8), at 825 (1922), Council, 19th session, 13th meeting, 24 July, 1922, & League of Nations, *Official Journal*, vol. 4 (no. 11), at 1355 (1923), Council, 26th session, 23rd meeting, September 29, 1923, Agenda Item 1092: British Mandate for Palestine, & League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Supplement No. 194, Records of the Twentieth (Conclusion) and Twenty-First Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly, 7th meeting, 18 April 1946, at 58-59.

Beginning on 15 July 1919 the Great Powers had discussed many drafts of a League of Nations Mandate for Palestine which, ideally, would conform to its Covenant [^{>46; >78}].¹²²³ Most of this discussion was within the British bureaucracy. This early on, the Foreign Office told the British delegation in Paris to write a draft together with the Zionist delegation incorporating the goal of the Jewish national home, and

by December 1919 an agreed draft was already containing the historical connection [between the Jews and Palestine], the Balfour declaration, Erez-Israel, self-governing commonwealth and all as in the Zionist draft.¹²²⁴

The quotations of excerpts in this entry can be found either in the text approved by Britain to be presented to the League of Nations Council, dated 30 November 1920¹²²⁵, or at least four other places¹²²⁶. They are almost identical, despite minor changes made during that interval to some articles not relevant to our themes of independence and the Jewish national home.

The Preamble of the final text, after trying to justify itself by reference to Article 22 of the Covenant, contained Zionist clauses:

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might 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 [^{>16}]; and Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country;...

The historical connection was absent in the “declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917”, but was here added on. There is great similarity between this and some passages in the pro-Zionist Churchill White Paper of 2 June 1922 [^{>142}], and it is accurate to refer to the Mandate for Palestine as the ‘Zionist Mandate’, a phrase coined by Ronald Storrs, Military and then Civil Governor of Jerusalem from 1917 to 1926.¹²²⁷

A short history of the drafting of this part of the Preamble was given by Curzon in his SECRET Memorandum of 30 November 1920 to the Cabinet as he submitted for approval the texts of the Palestine and Mesopotamia Mandates:¹²²⁸

¹²²³ For a timeline of the text’s drafting see Wikipedia, >‘Mandate for Palestine’ > Key dates.

¹²²⁴ Tibawi 1977, pp 413-14, *citing* Documents on British Foreign Policy, First Series, Volume IV, pp 317-18, Baker to Forbes, 24 July 1919 *and* pp 428-39; also Quigley 2022, Ch. 15.

¹²²⁵ CAB 24/115/98, pp 438-40 (stamped pagination)/pp 5-9 (printed pagination), 30 November 1920, Curzon to Cabinet.

¹²²⁶ Mandate Text 1922.

¹²²⁷ Storrs 1937, p 470; also Porath 1977, p 23.

¹²²⁸ CAB 24/115/98, p 435 (two-sided), *all further quotations from Curzon*; also Quigley 2022, pp 51, 64-65, 72-78, 105-07, 113-19.

As regards the Palestine Mandate, this Mandate also has passed through several revisions. When it was first shown to the French Government it at once excited their vehement criticisms on the ground of its almost exclusively Zionist complexion and of the manner in which the interests and rights of the Arab majority (amounting to about nine-tenths of the population) were ignored. The Italian Government expressed similar apprehensions.

The basic draft had already been finalised in January and February 1919 at the Peace Conference, its authorship being led by Felix Frankfurter and its later revisions having been co-ordinated by Balfour Declaration-drafter Alfred Milner (who as High Commissioner in South Africa twenty years earlier had cemented the cornerstones of that country's settler-colonial, apartheid regime¹²²⁹ and who had been Colonial Secretary, preceding Churchill, from 10 January 1919 til 21 February 1921). It had been further discussed and revised in connection with the Powers' meeting at San Remo in late April 1920 at which Curzon took the lead. [[>]78]

On 27 June 1923 in the House of Lords Colonial Secretary Cavendish, who had replaced Churchill on 24 October 1922, corroborated this timeline:

A draft Mandate was submitted to the League of Nations in December, 1920, and a revised draft early in the following year. For various reasons the League of Nations did not find it possible to take the draft Mandate into consideration at once, but in October, 1921, the President of the Council of the League wrote on behalf of the League to the British Prime Minister, inviting His Majesty's Government to continue to carry on the administration of the territories committed to their charge in the spirit of the draft Mandate until such time as the position should have been definitely regularised. The next step was taken when a final decision was reached by the Council at their meeting in [on 24] July, 1922.¹²³⁰

The assumption was that the Council, respectively the League of Nations plenary, had the right to dispose of Palestine – a power likewise assumed, falsely, to inhere in the United Nations in the years 1947-48 – 'falsely', because only the people of Palestine could, ethically and likely under international law as well, legitimately say what was to be what in Palestine.¹²³¹

The drafts' contents

Curzon in his secret memorandum continued, telling of the re-writing being undertaken in the months before 30 November 1920:

In the course of [the] discussions strong objection was taken to a statement which had been inserted in the Preamble of the first draft to the following effect:- 'Recognising the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute Palestine as their National Home.' It was pointed out (1) that, while the Powers had unquestionably recognised the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine by their formal acceptance of the Balfour Declaration and their textual incorporation of it in the Turkish Peace Treaty drafted at San Remo [[>]78], this was far from constituting anything

¹²²⁹ Peel 1937, II §29; Jeffries 1939, pp 550-53; Ngcukaitobi 2018, pp 23-26.

¹²³⁰ Hansard 1923a, c673.

¹²³¹ See Quigley 2021, *passim*.

in the nature of a legal claim, and that the use of such words might be, and was, indeed, certain to be, used as the basis of all sorts of political claims by the Zionists for the control of the Palestinian administration in the future, and (2) that, while Mr. Balfour's Declaration had provided for the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, this was not the same thing as the reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish National Home – an extension of the phrase for which there was no justification...

It was correct that the Balfour Declaration did not derive the *political* JNH-in-Palestine from the *historical* connection, such as it was, of the Jews with Palestine. On the material question Antonius, in his 1938 book *The Arab Awakening*, would agree with Curzon that “an historic connexion is not necessarily synonymous with a title to possession”.¹²³²

And was the Mandate really going to be allowed to “reconstitute” Palestine? This issue had already for four or five years been a hot topic, for reconstituting a territory to become the ethno-religious “home” of any group was too close for public consumption to establishing an ethno-religious *state* for that group. Edwin Montagu, for one, had repeatedly weighed in against framing Britain's role as “constituting [Palestine] as a national home for the Jewish people”¹²³³ [>94], while the likes of Balfour, Meinertzhagen and Brandeis had warmly embraced the concept [>16; >50; >78; >94; >116]. The discussion here of the term ‘reconstitute’ is very similar to the one given in entry >16 on the Balfour Declaration, which in the end omitted mention of reconstitution but whose various drafts had included it.

According to Curzon, an acceptable compromise – a formula for public consumption – was found, and approved by HMG, for the definitive text quoted above:

Mr. Balfour... suggested an alternative form of words which I am prepared to recommend,¹²³⁴ ‘and whereas recognition has thereby (by the Treaty of Sèvres [>92]) been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, and to the grounds for reconstituting their National Home in that country.’

That is, what could be “reconstituted” was the “home” (the home of the “Jewish people”), not Palestine. Hair-splitters on the Zionist side could, of course, maintain that Palestine and the (rightful) home of the Jewish people were one and the same (due to the historic and emotional connection, because the current and physical connection was weak); this interpretation would however reduce the task of the Mandatory to the puzzling statement that “that country” should be [re-]constituted as the Jewish national home because it already is the Jewish national home.

It is not exactly true that this phrase penned by Balfour was nonsense, conjured for rhetorical effect only. For if we take into account the time dimension, Balfour's way out was saying their national home *had* existed (in Palestine) thousands of years ago and should *again* be constituted (in Palestine). It however also implied reconstituting Pales-

¹²³² Antonius 1938, p 393.

¹²³³ Tibawi 1977, p 446, citing FO 371/5124, p 149 (paper E14973), Montagu to ‘My dear Curzon’, 26 November 1920.

¹²³⁴ But see for Curzon's criticism of Zionism >15 & >72.

tine, in that that ancient national home had apparently been a state, or states at different times, suggesting that any re-establishment would after all amount to an equivalent state – covering all of Palestine. Thus Balfour’s compromise wording was, like so many other HMG wordings, ambiguous and thus able to serve conflicting purposes and mean different things to different audiences.

Certain was only that the impact of Balfour’s compromise wordsmithing was that rhetorically, the seed concept of “reconstitution” had been planted – well enough that the U.S. Congress, for instance, in December 1945 could pass a resolution “that there shall be full opportunity for colonisation so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth”. [>435] That is, it became for decades easy to be sloppy about what was to be, or was being, reconstituted – a past Jewish state, some ethnicity’s ‘home’, or Palestine.

Curzon’s Foreign Office had earlier, around the time of the decisive 24/25 April meetings at San Remo [>78], made a second change from earlier drafts, replacing the Zionist-proposed phrase “historic title” with the vaguer “historical connection”¹²³⁵ – the phrase which appeared in the definitive Mandate text as well as in the Churchill White Paper of 3 June 1922 [>142]. The watered-down final product still, though, asserted a causal relationship between the alleged “historical connection” and the right to do something political in Palestine in the 20th century; the connection was “the grounds for” that something, even if it was only “reconstituting their national home” there, in Palestine, rather than somewhere else.¹²³⁶ The foot was in the door of the Palestinians’ home.¹²³⁷

The Mandate Text Articles

The Articles relevant to the Jewish national home, respectively to the denial of Palestinians’ rights, are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17 and 22.¹²³⁸ Remember, though, while getting bogged down in the wording and the history of the wording, that the Palestinian position would always be that it didn’t matter what, exactly, the Mandate prescribed, or for that matter what the Covenant of the League of Nations [>46] declared: the whole mandates system was a violation of what they repeatedly called their “natural” right as residents and owners to form their own state and determine its constitution, laws, and political practices. Since they were however forced to dialogue within this so-called international legal framework, students of Palestinian dispossession have to know its content.

Article 1 denied to the mandated people any power to determine its political life:

The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this mandate.¹²³⁹

¹²³⁵ McTague 1980, p 283, also pp 285, 287, 288-89, citing inter alia FO 371/4164/11698, 24-25 August 1920 & FO 371/4164/11112, 6 September 1920 & FO 371/4164/14898, 9 November 1920.

¹²³⁶ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 554-55, 560.

¹²³⁷ Also Meinertzhagen 1959, p 199; Tibawi 1977, p 432; McTague 1980, pp 289-90.

¹²³⁸ See also Shaw 1930, pp 20-22; Zuaytir 1958, pp 47-49.

¹²³⁹ See Abdul Hadi 1932, pp 16, 19-20; Antonius 1932.

The phrase “full powers” supports the interpretation that “Article I, by what it omitted to say, freed the Mandatory from any immediate obligation to consider the wishes of the majority of the population or to act according to them.”¹²⁴⁰ To evaluate this Article 1, which leaves the entirety of the ruled out of consideration¹²⁴¹, compare Article 1 of the Syrian and Lebanon Mandate texts:

The Mandatory shall frame, within a period of three years from the coming into force of this Mandate, an organic law for Syria and the Lebanon. This organic law shall be framed in agreement with the native authorities and shall take into account the rights, interests, and wishes of all the populations inhabiting the said territory.¹²⁴² [see Treaty of Sèvres, >92]

Those two countries were to be treated differently than Southern Syria because the French had not resolved to insert into the northern part of *Bilad al-Sham* any group of Europeans, whether defined by their ethnicity or not.

Already in Article 2 the pledge was made:

The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions,...

The obligation to develop “self-governing institutions” at least gave the Palestinians a side entrance to this alleged instrument of international law, even if the phrase was ambiguous and, as Tibawi points out, could easily have been replaced by the simpler but Zionism-endangering phrase “self-government”¹²⁴³

Also ambiguous, as we have seen often enough [e.g. >15; >16], was the phrase “Jewish national home”¹²⁴⁴, and in any case these two ‘responsibilities’, packed into one and the same Article, were compatible only if the ‘self’ of the “self-governing institutions” *excluded* the Palestinians. For if that ‘self’ included all inhabitants, whatever “institutions” they set up would certainly exclude any ‘Jewish national home’ whose definition went beyond a spiritual homeland to include immigration, political power, prevention of independence, etc. Thus, Article 2 was falsely presupposing that “self-governing institutions” and “the establishment of the Jewish national home” did not contradict each other.

By the way, on any definition of ‘self-government’ accepted by anybody in the year 1922, Britain had by the end of the Mandate [>453; >471] failed to fulfil the second responsibility listed, namely “placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure... the development of self-governing institutions”.

Article 3 said: “The Mandatory shall, as far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy.”

¹²⁴⁰ Barbour 1946, p 105.

¹²⁴¹ Also Sayigh 1997, p 5.

¹²⁴² Barbour 1946, p 105.

¹²⁴³ Tibawi 1977, p 429.

¹²⁴⁴ See also MacDonald 1939, Intro §6.

Article 4 established a “Jewish agency” (‘agency’ lower-case) to advise Britain on the Jewish national home and, like the 1922 White Paper,¹²⁴⁵ named “[t]he Zionist organization” as said Jewish “agency”, which “shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty’s Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.” However vague this “consultative” relationship might be, HMG’s partner was intended to be the international Zionist Organization founded in 1897 which devoted itself to Herzl’s *Judenstaat* and which formulated and propounded the “Jewish Zionist aspirations” supported by the Balfour Declaration [>16]. This Article also put into effect one of the main proposals made in early 1919 by the Special Committee of the League of British Jews, manned by Herbert Samuel, Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow, for a purely Zionist organ to obtain official status in the Palestine government. [>35]

Quite visible is what was not set up, namely an exactly-analogous Arab ‘agency’ or entity of some sort with which the British would have to consult on matters concerning non-Jews. This imbalance, and departure from any imagined ‘dual obligation’, was cemented in “the Zionist cast of the mandate text, in which Arabs figured only as ‘inhabitants’ or ‘other sections of the population’ which should be protected from the JNH – and not, as the Zionists did [actually, “all Jews”], as a people represented by an official body with which the mandatory power was instructed to collaborate”; as Lord Islington had said, the “Zionist Home” was to be built.¹²⁴⁶

Article 6 covered both immigration and land ownership:

The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.

The word “prejudice” from the Balfour Declaration was retained, but for some reason there were two departures from the 1917 text:

- 1) What should not be prejudiced are “rights and position”, rather than “civil and religious rights”; the word “position” was vague, as was the word “civil”, but the vagueness of “position” arguably left room for *political* rights. The French had in fact been overruled by Britain at San Remo on 25 April 1920 [>78] when they said this passage should read “the traditional rights of the inhabitants” or even “the political rights” of all the inhabitants should not be violated (“prejudiced”).¹²⁴⁷ In the Preamble, the “Jews even in *any other country*” were guaranteed “rights and *political status*”! (*emphasis added*)
- 2) The “rights and position” of whom? Now it was the “other sections of the population” rather than the Balfour Declaration’s “existing non-Jewish communities”; Curzon’s Foreign Office, according to John McTague, cited just above, had wanted instead to write simply “the native population”, but was overruled.

¹²⁴⁵ Cmd. 1700, p 18.

¹²⁴⁶ Pedersen 2010, p 46; Hansard 1922b, c998.

¹²⁴⁷ San Remo Minutes, pp 920, 921.

At any rate, no political or national rights were mentioned for the 90%-majority. Moreover, evidently not included in the concept “public purposes” was the need of the naturally growing indigenous population for more land.

Not only terminologically does Article 6 treat the Jewish and non-Jewish communities unequally. Rather, it explicitly names what will be done for the JNH: its positive development through “facilitating” immigration and “encouraging” close settlement. This asymmetry repeats that already shown [¹⁶] to be inherent in the Balfour Declaration which first mentioned the Jewish side and gave it a name (“the Jewish people”), and only then got around to unnamed “non-Jewish communities”. Both here and in the Balfour Declaration, by omission, the locals were semi-erased, seen only negatively, as a group *not* to be violated or prejudiced.

Lack even of parity was thus chiselled into the text, which, as Rashid Khalidi points out, did not even contain the words ‘Arab’ or ‘Palestinian.’¹²⁴⁸ As A.L. Tibawi insists,

There is, of course, only one promise in the Balfour declaration, giving the Jews national and political rights. The Arabs, who are not even named in the declaration, appear grudgingly under the saving clause on civil and religious rights. ... But that gave them nothing they did not possess already. In modern times all countries guarantee equality before the law and religious freedom for all citizens without making a declaration of the fact. Hence the safeguards for the Arabs in the Balfour declaration were superfluous. On the other hand it gave the Jews *political* rights....¹²⁴⁹

It was moreover anomalous, to say the least, that in the Preamble to a Mandate *over Palestine* the “Jews in any other country” were even mentioned.

Immigration, “close settlement by Jews”, and giving them “State lands and waste lands” that actually could be used by the growing local population, and which included land used by indigenous Bedouins or land lying (temporarily) fallow – all these quantifiable aspects of the JNH’s “establishment” raised the questions, as the Mandate marched on, of how many immigrants, how closely settled, on which land, on how much land, would have to result in order for the “establishment” to be properly regarded as done, as accomplished. Upon reaching such a defined point Britain’s “responsibility” laid down in Article 2 would have been fulfilled and the Mandate could end. These empirical and political issues were constantly debated, with Article 6 as the reference point, never more so than eight years later in the investigations by the Shaw Commission [²²⁰] and by John Hope Simpson [²³³] – at which time the 4th Palestine Delegation to London would suggest for the first time that “It cannot be reasonably argued now, that the Jewish national home in Palestine has not been already established...”¹²⁵⁰ [²²²].

¹²⁴⁸ Khalidi 2020, p 34.

¹²⁴⁹ Tibawi 1977, pp 481, 485.

¹²⁵⁰ CO 733/183/2, p 82.

Article 7 required Britain to enact a “nationality law” defining Palestinian citizenship, again specifically mentioning only that the law include “provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine.” [see also >186]

Article 9 referred to the indigenous people militarily taken over by Britain as “natives” and granted them nebulous “rights” in the “judicial system”.

Article 11 §1 began with granting the Mandatory a competency which, if the Mandatory in fact already had the absolute power given it in Article 1, seems self-evident or redundant:

The Administration of Palestine... shall have full power to provide for public ownership or control of any of the natural resources of the country or of the public works, services and utilities established or to be established therein.

Was this clause deemed advisable in order to wrest natural resources away from private or *waqf* ownership? At any rate it provided the ‘legal’ basis for the Mandatory’s power to grant concessions, but to whom? Article 11 §2 continued:

The Administration may arrange with the Jewish agency mentioned in Article 4 [the Zionist Organization] to construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration.¹²⁵¹

Foreseen were thus only two entities for developing works or natural resources: the Administration itself, and the Zionist Organization. Local Arab entities were missing.

Article 11 §1 also issued an order to the Administration concerning land:

It shall introduce a land system appropriate to the needs of the country, having regard, among other things, to the desirability of promoting the close settlement and intensive cultivation of the land.

For some reason the “close settlement” in this Article, in contrast to Article 6, is not prescribed to be “by Jews”, but remained associatively connected to Article 6.

A contradiction *within* the Mandate arguably existed between Article 15, where it was written that “No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Palestine on the ground of race, religion or language” and Articles 2, 4, 6 and 11, which we have just examined and which *do exactly that* – discriminate – in favour of one particular “racial, religious, language” group. I do not know if the Palestinians ever litigated this point, but Article 15 in effect invalidated the Preamble and those Articles which gave privileged status to Jews, i.e. invalidated the text’s entire Zionist content.

Article 17 allows Jewish and Arab militias, while Article 22 gives English, Arabic and Hebrew equal official status: “Any statement or inscription in Arabic on stamps or money in Palestine shall be repeated in Hebrew and any statement or inscription in Hebrew shall be repeated in Arabic.”

¹²⁵¹ See Jeffries 1939, pp 427-41; Norris 2013, p 204.

Some comments

In sum, this text, “done at London the twenty-fourth day of July” and installing Britain in the eyes of ‘international law’ as the colonial power tasked with denying Palestinian self-determination, was an even more valiant attempt than the Churchill White Paper of June 1922 [142] to square the circle. There were two obligations – to the Zionists and the locals – but they were not equal: While Article 2 spoke of “securing” the national home, and Article 6 of “facilitating” Zionist immigration, and Article 7 of “facilitating” the citizenship of Jewish immigrants, the Preamble and Article 2 prescribed merely not “prejudicing” the non-Jews’ “civil and religious rights” and “safeguarding” the “civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine”. The one obligation was strong and positive, the other weak and negative.¹²⁵² As Edward Said writes,

Neither the Balfour Declaration nor the mandate ever specifically conceded that Palestinians had political, as opposed to civil and religious, rights in Palestine. The idea of inequality between Jews and Arabs was therefore built into British, and subsequently Israeli and United States, policy from the start.¹²⁵³

Penny Sinanoglou sums it up well:

What the mandate text... created was an ideological and physical space for Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement, while foreclosing any immediate prospects for Palestinian Arab political development or, more strikingly, for any kind of unitary Palestinian national self-determination.¹²⁵⁴

As she also notes, the Mandate indeed had no conception of any kind of a non-unitary (partitioned) Palestine.¹²⁵⁵

The goals of enabling the Jewish *national* home while simultaneously not harming the indigenous people – perhaps like cutting off table legs inch by inch without lowering the height of the table – were re-affirmed in full cognizance that the planned high, steady immigration necessary for the Jewish nation’s foothold was exactly what the Arabs, making up about 90% of the population, did not want. It tells all that

While the Mandate’s twenty-eight articles included nine on antiquities, not one related to the Palestinian people per se: they were variously and vaguely defined as a ‘section of the population,’ ‘natives,’ or ‘peoples and communities.’ As far as Great Britain and the League of Nations were concerned, they were definitely *not* a people.¹²⁵⁶

We don’t know whether the Palestinians would have been able to modify the final Mandate text in their favour, for concerning the four-year-long drafting of this text,

Yet another interesting aspect is the complete absence of any input from Arab sources, despite the fact that the Jerusalem Riot of 1920 had testified to Palestinian resistance to the

¹²⁵² Also Smith 1993, p 13.

¹²⁵³ Said 1999.

¹²⁵⁴ Sinanoglou 2019, p 7.

¹²⁵⁵ Sinanoglou 2019, p 5.

¹²⁵⁶ Khalidi 2006, p 33.

National Home policy. No effort was made by the government to bring any Arabs into the negotiations. ... Thus, the mandate was drafted and redrafted several times over, without the Palestinian Arabs having had any input as to its contents.¹²⁵⁷

Of course it had been not only the “Riot” which evidenced Palestinian opposition, but five years of eloquent pleading and argument on the part of the Palestinians.

As Curzon had written in spring 1920 of an earlier draft, “It is quite clear that this mandate has been drawn up by someone reeling under the fumes of Zionism.”¹²⁵⁸ [^{>72}] However clear the text’s bias in favour of the Jewish minority, as with almost all British documents, we can with good conscience throw in the towel when it comes to figuring out the exact adjudicable meaning of many of the text’s words. As Colonial Under-Secretary Drummond Shiels said in the 17 November 1930 House of Commons debate over the likewise murky Passfield White Paper:

However excellent the intention of the promoters of the Mandate its draughtsman-ship leaves something to be desired. The vagueness and qualifications of its terms have been a source of difficulty from the beginning. There is to be a Jewish National Home, there is to be safeguarding of the rights and privileges [sic.: position] of the non-Jewish inhabitants and there has to be the development of self-governing institutions. No order of precedence is stated.¹²⁵⁹

That is, while analysis of the text reveals a general thrust denying Palestinians’ “rights and position”, much ambiguity remained – highly likely on purpose given the time and manpower that went into the text’s drafting. This left the Palestinians without clear documents to attack, always needing to clear away the thick underbrush of ambiguity, or shifting the debate to ascertainable facts concerning the Mandate’s execution in practice.

A few months before the House of Commons debate at which Shiels expressed the above opinion, the Cabinet-level ‘Committee on Policy in Palestine’ set up on 30 July 1930 to write the new ‘Passfield’ White Paper [^{>234}] also made a quite heroic journey through the paragraphs of the Mandate trying to prove that its provisions were “in no sense irreconcilable”.¹²⁶⁰ [^{>231}] Later, though, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain would take up Shiels’s point, bemoaning in a Cabinet Committee meeting, on 20 April 1939, when preparing the final draft of the 1939 White Paper [^{>399}; ^{>408}]: Not only was there some difficulty in translating Government English into Arabic but:

Many of our present difficulties in regard to Palestine were due to ambiguous language having been used in the past and he would very much regret if those whose responsibility it would be to deal with the matter in 10 years’ time found themselves in similar difficulties owing to our having used language which was open to misunderstandings.¹²⁶¹

¹²⁵⁷ McTague 1980, p 290.

¹²⁵⁸ FO 371/5199, p 64.

¹²⁵⁹ Hansard 1930a, c92.

¹²⁶⁰ CAB 24/215/1, pp 9-10.

¹²⁶¹ CAB 24/285/11, p 97; also Pedersen 2010, p 64.

(In the event, the 1939 White Paper also held ambiguities. [>410])

Thus from the McMahon letters through the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate and the 1922, 1930 and 1939 White Papers – the only exception being the clear Peel Report – the ungraspability of the documents, the more so as they were not in the Palestinians' native language, multiplied the difficulty and complexity of resistance by perhaps an order of magnitude. James Renton criticises this ambiguity of language in both the Balfour Declaration and Mandate, holding that they did not constitute “a blueprint, or even a sketch, of principles for governance” and comments that the “Declaration was, in short, not fit for the purpose with which it was eventually ascribed”.¹²⁶² They were however well-fit for the purpose of lending Britain a free hand in building up a Jewish proto-state.

Once again, it leaves a bad taste in the mouth to spend so much time analysing a text which was nothing more than words showing no respect for the indigenous people and indeed comprising a manual for their political slavery, stamped with the approval of other nations whose only distinguishing characteristic was that they had power. Still, this is what the Palestinians had to deal with, a text spelling out a Mandatory relationship which, in their eyes, should never have come into existence.

The deepest questions, in fact, concern not the terms of the Mandate, nor their internal consistency nor their compatibility with the Covenant, but rather colonialism, i.e. the lack of any right – either in ethics or international law – of any single outside nation (Britain) or group of nations (the League of Nations) to determine the political future of Palestine – in this case through the Covenant's deceptive mandate system, which in terms of sovereignty in or title to Palestine was merely a set of irrelevant declarations of intent by a belligerent occupant and its military allies. The Palestinians could with perfect justification have simply answered Britain and the League of Nations with ‘So what? Palestine belongs to us. Analysis of the Mandate's terms is superfluous.’

¹²⁶² Renton 2010, pp 16-17, 34, 37.

This 9-page entry shows the many views and attitudes of the British political elite towards those they were 'mandating'.

The vote in the House of Lords on 21 June had been against the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, 60-29. [^{>144}] On 4 July 1922 the House of Commons voted 292-35 in favor.¹²⁶³

The vote was not technically or directly on the Mandate itself, but rather on a motion put by pro-Palestinian MP Sir William **Joynson-Hicks** [*see also* ^{>134}; ^{>167}] to reduce Colonial Secretary Churchill's salary by £100. As Joynson-Hicks explained:

This Motion for reduction is merely a formal one in order to bring about a Debate on another Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper. I wish the Committee [the House] to regard the Motion for the reduction of the salary of the right hon. Gentleman [Churchill] as merely an equivalent to the Motion which reads as follows: 'That, in the opinion of this House, the Mandate for Palestine, the acceptance of which must involve this country in financial and other responsibilities, should be submitted for the approval of Parliament; and further, that the contracts entered into by the High Commissioner for Palestine with Mr. Pinhas Rutenberg should at once be referred to a Select Committee for consideration and report.' (c293; also 329)

On 27 March already, Joynson-Hicks had

asked the Lord Privy Seal whether, since no decision of the House on the question of the Draft Mandate for Palestine has yet been given, he will give half a day, in the event of a Resolution being put down dealing with the Mandate, upon which a Division [a vote] could be taken?¹²⁶⁴

The Lord Privy Seal said No, with the Government not wanting the issue to get a good airing, so Mandate opponents had to provoke debate and a vote in a roundabout way. Since the debate went deeply into the issue of the Rutenberg water, electricity and general industrial concession, and also since it was the last time that the Mandate was debated before it was incorporated into the Treaty ('of Lausanne') of Peace with Turkey on 24 July 1923, a closer look is fruitful.

Joynson-Hicks' rejection of the Zionist Mandate was fundamental:

Before dealing with the question of these Rutenberg contracts, I must set out the Arab as against the Zionist contention. ... If the [Balfour] declaration only means that the Jews are to be at liberty to enter Palestine in consonance with the rights of the existing inhabitants, and to form a home for themselves there, to establish factories, develop agriculture, and so forth, then to that interpretation of the Balfour Declaration, I do not think the Arab nation would have any objection. ... I must say something of the mode in which the declaration has been carried out in Palestine. ... I wrote in 1917 to my constituency strongly supporting the

¹²⁶³ Hansard 1922c, cc292-342, *all citations*; Abdul Hadi 1997, p 51; Gilbert 2007, pp 78-83.

¹²⁶⁴ Hansard 1922a, c946.

views of the Zionists in getting the Jews back to Palestine, but I am bound to say that I was not then cognisant of the pledges which had been given to the Arabs, and I was taking what seemed to be the right interpretation of events then. ... The real trouble is the way in which the Zionists have been permitted by the Government, or with the connivance of the Government, practically to control the whole of the Government of Palestine. (cc294-96)

He had a translation of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence with him (probably obtained from J.M.N. Jeffries) [^{>10}; also ^{>400}], and recalled also the Anglo-French promises of independence for all Arabs without exception made on 7/8 November 1918 [^{>28}], which contradicted the Balfour Declaration.

As for High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel:

Before he was sent to Palestine he was a member of the Zionist organisation in this country. He was at the same time a member of their organisation and a Member of our Cabinet here. He was the go-between of the Zionists and the Cabinet - I do not say wrongly - and was able to press Zionist views on the Cabinet. [^{>8}] When he went out to Palestine [^{>70}; ^{>73}] he went out with the knowledge of all the people in Palestine that the Zionists claimed him as their representative. That is the real difficulty. ... [Weizmann has] said: 'I was mainly responsible for the appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel to Palestine...There is no one who had more to do with, or was more pleased at, the appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel than I.' Listen to this, and conceive its effects on the Arabs: 'Sir Herbert Samuel is our friend and has worked loyally with us from the first moment. At our request, fortified by our moral support, he accepted the difficult position. We put him in that position. He is our Samuel; he is the production of our Jewry.' What can they think? They naturally say, 'This High Commissioner may be an Englishman, but, in addition to being an Englishman, he is a Zionist, and he cannot be expected to hold the scales fairly between us and the Jewish population.' (cc296-97)

Joynson-Hicks then quoted Samuel's political intentions, viz., that

the aspirations of the 14,000,000 Jews throughout the world... 'have a right to be considered. They ask for the opportunity to establish a home in the land which was the political, and has always been the religious, centre of their race. They ask that this home should possess national characteristics in language, in customs, in intellectual interests and in religious and political institutions.' (c297) [^{>143}]

Samuel's and Weizmann's intentions were, so Joynson-Hicks,

far more than the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs know these facts, and they can hardly be expected to sit still when they know that this great organisation is trying to organise Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth. Jewish newspapers from one end of the world to another quote the same thing day by day and week by week. ... What about the Arabs? What are they to do? Would we like the Portuguese here as a nation without the people of this country being consulted? Surely there is such a thing as self-determination. Surely you must ask the inhabitants of the country to let the Jews in as friends and neighbours, but not to lead ultimately to the establishment of a Jewish nation ultimately forming a Jewish commonwealth. (c298)

The logical chain from the “right” of the 14,000,000 Jews in the world to be in Palestine “as a right” [rather than “on sufferance”, as Joynson-Hicks wished] to mass immigration “as a corollary of that right” leading to a Jewish majority one day, meant applying the “self-determination” principle falsely:

The matter is serious already, but if the Zionists are able to import thousands and thousands until they get a majority over the Arabs, the Arabs are entitled, in the first place, to say, ‘We represent 90 per cent. of the population. We are entitled to self-determination and to decide what immigration laws are to be provided in our own country.’ (c298)

Joynson-Hicks also objected that “Zionist political control has been gradually created in the administration of Palestine”, and listed the many declared Zionists in high positions. (cc297, 300-01) Natural-resource concessions such as those given to Pinhas Rutenberg, a leading Zionist who with Ze’ev Jabotinsky had recently set up the *Haganah*, which in turn had grown out of the three battalions of the Jewish Legion which had fought in Palestine in World War I, thanks largely to the efforts of Leo Amery¹²⁶⁵, were one manifestation of political control thwarting the wishes of the 90% of the people: Joynson-Hicks’ accusation was that the Colonial Office and the civil administration in Palestine encouraged the Rutenberg group to put together a plan backed by financial capital, while putting off non-Zionist applicants with the argument that nothing could be even considered until the Mandate was in legal effect. (cc299, 301)

Complaints were made, even in 1919, that Englishmen could not get concessions, and that the Government’s policy then was that the Zionist position was to be utilised as a means of blocking concessions to Englishmen or anyone else. ... I say that the Government policy was to block all applications for concessions or otherwise except from the Zionists. (cc299, 301)

Others did exist who sought the concessions, also for ports and irrigated agriculture; Joynson-Hicks named a few, including a group of Australians, two “very rich” South American Christian Arabs, a Palestinian-British businessman, Arif Beyel Namani, the Yaffa Municipality itself, and a British businessman, Mr. Bicknall. (cc301-04) He did not mention Greek businessman Euripides Mavrommatis, who held valid water and water-power concessions from before the war from the Ottoman government and whose claim over against the Rutenberg concession occupied the courts for years. [>121; >195] Another Palestinian, Mr. Tadros, had been warned by “Mr. Campbell, the Acting Governor of Jaffa... that if you do not agree to Rutenberg’s scheme you will be acting contrary to the British Government’s policy. The Government was determined to enforce it, and those who oppose it will be very sorry and will be liable to deportation.” (c305)

Not the Balfour Declaration, fairly interpreted, but the Mandate, gave the Rutenberg scheme priority:

If I pause for a moment to look at the draft Mandate [>146], I see that the Mandate itself foreshadows something in the nature of the Rutenberg scheme. The Mandate provides for the institution of a Jewish Agency, or Commission, which is to work in close touch with the Gov-

¹²⁶⁵ Rubenstein 1999.

ernment of Palestine, and which is to have, I will not say an official, but a semi-official, position and to be the medium of communication between the Government and the Jews and to work with the Government for the development of the country.

Moreover, so Joynson-Hicks, the Rutenberg contract itself, granted in 1921, was extraordinary because in effect it granted 1) a monopoly, 2) in virtually all of Palestine, 3) for 70 years. In technical and financial respects, as well, several experts had testified that the scheme was deficient. (cc306-07) He could not even obtain from the Colonial Office a copy of the pamphlet put together by Rutenberg laying out his scheme. (c306)

In sum, the tender process was absent or opaque, and

There has been no real opportunity for Englishmen or natives of Palestine to obtain concessions. I submit that this House is the only place to which the inhabitants of Palestine can appeal. We are the tribunal to which they can appeal. They say, 'We have confidence in Great Britain. We are diametrically opposed to the Zionist domination of Palestine. We represent 90 per cent. of the people of Palestine. We do not want the country to be converted into a Zionist dominion, and its development to be handed over to Mr. Rutenberg who is to have a monopoly for the electrical and commercial development of Palestine. We ask that a Committee may be appointed to inquire into the whole matter.' I now put this matter before this Committee [House], and I hope that the request may be granted. (c307)

Such well-known messages from the indigenous inhabitants had to reach HMG and the British public through politicians such as Joynson-Hicks and Lord Islington [¹⁴⁴; ¹⁴⁷] and through journalists such as Jeffries and Lord Northcliffe [¹⁵⁵].

According to Jeffries,¹²⁶⁶ two other applications for electricity production were rejected because Rutenberg had the water or land rights, one by a group of Arabs in Haifa and one by the Township of Tulkarem, the latter being told to go speak with Rutenberg. In addition, an Anglo-Arab group wanted to reclaim malarial marshes near Beisan but was told that "no concessions could be given till the Mandate was ratified" only to discover that soon thereafter Rutenberg got that concession. The buck was passed: the Palestinian Delegation in London [¹⁴³], when it in 1921 had complained to the Colonial Office about the awarding of the Rutenberg concessions, was told it was the responsibility of the Palestine Administration, but the answer to their subsequent telegram to Jerusalem was "the truth, that the concessions were the affair of the Colonial Office". A Foreign Office official was most blunt about the policy:

The reason for this is that, in order that the policy of establishing in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people should be successfully carried out, it is impracticable to guarantee that equal facilities for developing the resources of the country should be granted to persons or bodies who may be actuated by other motives.¹²⁶⁷

As Jeffries commented, "Only Zionists need apply."

As to keeping the Zionist Mandate in the shadows, Joynson-Hicks said:

¹²⁶⁶ Jeffries 1939, pp 465, 469, 472.

¹²⁶⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 471-72.

I can hardly conceive it possible, that in a democratic country such as this, ruled by a democratic Parliament, the Government should undertake the very grave responsibility of taking over the government and management of Palestine, or any other country, under a mandate which is in fact a title deed and a Constitution combined, originated and prepared by the League of Nations, without submitting that mandate to this House. (c293)

All of Joynson-Hicks' claims were of course challenged in the House, first by Eustace **Percy** (who had been Balfour's private secretary yet who in his 1920 book had come out against Zionism if it meant denial of Arabs' rights [^{>50; >63}]), who took the floor to say that loyalty to Britain, and Britain's reputation, were more important:

I have always had grave misgivings as to certain provisions of the mandate, and indeed I have a Motion on the Paper proposing certain Amendments to it. I have never had the slightest doubt about this point, however, which is that, Great Britain having accepted certain responsibilities, and having as she will have in a short space of time accepted the responsibility of working under a definite mandate, there is nothing for the House of Commons or for this country to do but to give its whole-hearted, undivided support to the British administration in Palestine. ... I wish we were not there, but we have undertaken responsibilities from which at this time we cannot possibly relieve ourselves;... (c308)

(Almost exactly a year later the Cabinet Committee re-evaluating the Palestine Mandate came to the same conclusion: Although the moral and economic costs of it outweighed the benefits, Britain must stay the course in the interest of its "honour" and international reputation.¹²⁶⁸ [^{>167}])

At this point in Percy's speech Joynson-Hicks intervened: "Surely he would not urge that we should support a British administration if it were wrong?" (c309) Percy replied, "Of course it does not, but everyone who has any knowledge of the present British administration knows that it is an administration which deserves support." (c312)

Percy granted:

There came to this country almost a year ago an Arab delegation [^{>117}]. They came, when they first arrived in this country, with a perfectly clear case. They were apprehensive of what the effect of the Zionist policy might be. They were justifiably apprehensive, for there was a great deal that needed clearing up. (c310)

However, stirred up by British opponents of the Mandate, they soon did nothing but attack Herbert Samuel. Such "agitation", as well as debate over what McMahon had promised to Hussain [^{>10}]

had a very laudable reason, I agree. It was quite arguable that the Zionist point of view had been put so often before this country that it was well that the Arab point of view should be put also. But this agitation has gone on growing, and its one object has been to overthrow the present personnel of the British administration in Palestine. (c311)

That was patently not true: All Palestinian resistance had been against the Mandate as such, not its "present personnel".

¹²⁶⁸ CAB 24/161/51, p 3.

Upon returning to the debatable Rutenberg concession, Percy's conclusion revealed an aspect of British politicians' attitude which, from the colonised people's point of view, was insurmountable, whatever their position on the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration:

Let us remember that Palestine is in its essence from this point of view a part of the British Empire, in the sense that we have the responsibilities which we have for a part of our Empire, and the British Empire can never continue so long as you weaken British administration by inquiring into it and investigating it at every possible moment. Everything at this moment depends on a strong Government in Palestine, and I will not, even in the case of a concession, do anything at this moment which might in any shape or degree weaken the hands of the administration. (c314)

Percy was against the Mandate, but for it. The Empire's strength was at stake, so no one should question it.

Sir John **Butcher** countered:

The main thesis of the Noble Lord appears to be that, once we have accepted a mandate in Palestine, this House ought to give the strongest support to the British administration there. The Noble Lord appears to forget that one of the complaints made against the administration in Palestine is that it is not British administration we are advancing but Zionist administration. (c314)

Butcher gave many financial details about the Rutenberg concession, including the tax exemptions the concessionaire had been granted (cc315, 318) and pointed to Zionist and British Crown Agent forces behind it:

These are very large powers, and powers which in their comparatively short reign in Palestine the Jews, who invaded that country and treated the inhabitants in a somewhat abrupt manner, have obtained. The duration of the concession is 70 years, with a further power to the High Commissioner, at the end of the 70 years, if, in his absolute discretion he so thinks fit, to grant an indefinite further extension. (c316)

Butcher then raised a point that had been raised [^{>137}] by the Palestinians, namely that Britain was in Palestine only militarily:

What right has His Majesty's Government to tie up the development of Palestine for 70 years or for an indefinite time longer? This is all the more remarkable because the Treaty of Sèvres is not yet ratified. The mandate is not granted. We are there simply, I take it, as a conquering nation. It is the elements of jurisprudence that when one country is in possession of another country by the right of conquest, until some new government is established you can only act according to the previous laws of the country. You cannot introduce new laws into the country. (c319)

This point about the international *illegality* of what HMG was doing in Palestine – even if a mandate for the purposes of tutelage were accepted in principle – was based on the Hague Convention (IV) of 1907 and its Manual of Military Law, paragraphs 353-81, forbid-

ding material changes to the constitutions and laws of occupied countries.¹²⁶⁹ Yet HMG was doing exactly that in Palestine although the Ottoman constitution of 1908 was still in force.

Churchill's subsequent speech, which carried the day, did not address the political concerns expressed by Joynson-Hicks or Butcher, consisting instead of listing all the people and organisations who supported the Balfour policy while lashing out against Joynson-Hicks and Lord Sydenham. (cc329-32) He integrated the purportedly flawless Rutenberg concession into standard economic-prosperity arguments:

I approach the subject of the Rutenberg concession along the only path open to me, namely, that in the administration of that policy, the Colonial Office is to use its best endeavours to secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home. ... If that pledge [to create the Jewish national home without violating the 'civil and religious rights' of the native population] was to be acted upon, it was perfectly clear that the newcomers must bring their own means of livelihood, and that they, by their industry, by their brains, and by their money, must create new sources of wealth on which they could live without detriment to or subtraction from the well-being of the Arab population. It was inevitable that, by creating these new sources of wealth, and bringing this new money into the country, they would not only benefit themselves, but, benefit and enrich the entire country among all classes and races of its population. [Due to Zionism] parts of the desert have been converted into gardens. (c333)

The future Sir Winston envisioned nothing less than a "new-Palestinian world":

What better steps could we take, in order to fulfil our pledge to help them to establish their national home, without breaking our pledge to the Arabs that they would not be disturbed, than to interest Zionists in the creation of this new-Palestinian world which, without injustice to a single individual, without taking away one scrap of what was there before, would endow the whole country with the assurance of a greater prosperity and the means of a higher economic and social life? Was not this a good gift which the Zionists could bring with them, the consequences of which spreading as years went by in general easement and amelioration – was not this a good gift which would impress more than anything else on the Arab population that the Zionists were their friends and helpers, not their expellers and expropriators, and that the earth was a generous mother, that Palestine had before it a bright future, and that there was enough for all? (cc334-35)

Winston C. submerged the fact that whoever wanted to benefit Palestinians economically could do no better than to directly grant them concessions. Worse, the people living in the old-Palestinian, and now-Palestinian, world would only "not be disturbed"; giving them any voice or power was apparently literally inconceivable.

Paraphrasing: in defence of giving economic-development concessions (only) to Zionists, and of helping the Jews to establish their national home (in Palestine), he was saying that it would bring a higher material standard of living. The Colonial Secretary was thus dodging and begging several questions in addition to the basic political one of freedom and

¹²⁶⁹ War Office 1914, Ch. XIV/VIII/ii & iii (§353-81); Peel 1937, VI §12; Jeffries 1939, pp 405-12; see >60; >85; >88; >137; >147.

self-determination: nobody was quarrelling with economic development as such, only with who would decide and design it, how it would be done, and who would benefit. Yes, whoever immigrated should “bring their own means of livelihood”, but the political dispute was over that immigration as such, both politically and economically.

His only mention of what the Arabs had told him and his Colonial Office staff many times about what they saw to be good and not good for themselves, was to say:

I am told that the Arabs would have done it [economic development] themselves. Who is going to believe that? Left to themselves, the Arabs of Palestine would not in a thousand years have taken effective steps towards the irrigation and electrification of Palestine. They would have been quite content to dwell – a handful of philosophic people – in the wasted sun-scorched plains, letting the waters of the Jordan continue to flow unbridled and unhar-
nessed into the Dead Sea. (c335)¹²⁷⁰

This was racist rule by disdain, with which the House would soon agree by a vote of 292-35.

Given the pathetic nature of the natives, so Churchill,

I am bound to ask the Committee [House] to take the vote which is about to be given as a vote of confidence, because we cannot carry out our pledges to the Zionists, with which the House is fully familiar, unless we are permitted to use Jews, and use Jews freely, within what limits are proper, to develop new sources of wealth in Palestine. (c340)

Joynton-Hicks had already named several Arabs who were eager and able to develop hydropower and irrigation,¹²⁷¹ and John **Marriott** intervened with the question, “Is there no Englishman who would have done it for them?” But the concept of Palestinians doing something, or not, for themselves, was beyond Churchill’s grasp.

Churchill in fact frankly confirmed the Arab contention that schemes such as Rutenberg’s had mainly a political, not a commercial, purpose:

[Rutenberg] is a Zionist. His application was supported by the influence of Zionist organisations. He presented letters from Mr. Edmond Rothschild, the founder of the Zionist colonies, whose whole life has been spent in building up these wonderful colonies in Palestine. These letters offered to place at his disposal from £100,000 to £200,000, on absolutely *non-commercial terms*, for long periods, for the development of these irrigation and electrical schemes. He produced plans, diagrams, estimates – all worked out in the utmost detail. He asserted, and his assertion has been justified, that he had behind him all the principal Zionist societies in Europe and America, who would support his plans on a *non-commercial basis*. ... I have no doubt whatever... that profit-making, in the ordinary sense, has played no part at all in the driving force on which we must rely to carry through this irrigation scheme in Palestine. I do not believe it has been so with Mr. Rutenberg, nor do I believe that this concession would secure the necessary funds were it not supported by sentimental and quasi-religious emotions. (c338, *emphasis added*)¹²⁷²

¹²⁷⁰ Also Jeffries 1939, p 442.

¹²⁷¹ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 427-42; Norris 2013.

¹²⁷² Also Gilbert 2007, p 82.

Similarly, two US-Americans, Louis Brandeis and another judge, Julian Mack, although clearly not businessmen, had arranged funding for a Zionist-controlled concession for Dead Sea chemical deposits.¹²⁷³ A side effect of the policy of granting concessions to Zionists was that increasing by means of electricity works the industrial, as opposed to agricultural, productivity of the country, would increase the “economic absorptive capacity” of the country, which had been identified in the Churchill White Paper a month earlier [p.142] as the precondition for issuing thousands of immigration permits (thus strengthening the *yishuv* politically).¹²⁷⁴

Eyewitness J.M.N. Jeffries, in Palestine at the time as a journalist, seventeen years later gave a thorough account of the Rutenberg controversy, pointing out the political goals of the concession and seeing the gist of the debate as the conflict between the “Western State [which] had no business whatsoever to try and force upon [the Arabs] the Western style of existence...” and the organically evolved lifestyle and economics of Palestine’s “people, with a reasonable modicum of development.”

The fact that the Rutenberg Concessions were progressive was only a plea in their favour: it was far from being a sufficient cause for their being granted. If the people of Palestine wanted to advance in the Rutenberg manner, well and good: but if they did not, then away with Rutenberg.¹²⁷⁵

As the two Parliamentary debates showed [p.144; p.147], the Palestinians had support within the British elite as well as amongst many who had held high positions in Palestine since 1918. According to Mark Sykes’ son Christopher, however,

Publication [of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence by Jeffries in the *Daily Mail* in January and February 1923] came too late for Northcliffe’s purpose [of preventing the Mandate]. If the letters had been made accessible to politicians and the public in the early part of 1922 they would quite certainly have altered the outcome of the Churchill White Paper, probably in an anti-Zionist sense...¹²⁷⁶

British anti-Zionism’s self-inflicted tardiness was one of Zionism’s narrow escapes. One historian observes that “the Jewish national home policy that [the Balfour Declaration] promised could have been modified up to the moment in July 1922 when Britain submitted the final draft of its Palestine Mandate to the League of Nations for approval.”¹²⁷⁷ But once the Jewish National Home, which precluded indigenous self-determination, was through Parliament and approved by the League of Nations Council, the hurdle constituted by §4 of the Covenant’s Article 22 had been left behind and the die was cast.

¹²⁷³ Regan 2017, p 161.

¹²⁷⁴ Jeffries 1939, p 459.

¹²⁷⁵ Jeffries 1939, pp 460-62, also pp 446-74.

¹²⁷⁶ Sykes 1965, p 94.

¹²⁷⁷ Mathew 2011, p 32.

Just after the Commons vote approving Britain's taking over Palestine as 'Mandatory' [147] the Arab Delegation visiting London again announced their rejection of the mandate on principle and in practice, and prepared to go back to Palestine.¹²⁷⁸ Eric Mills thought Churchill should invite them for "coffee, etc." before they left, but Churchill refused, which Sir John Shuckburgh found "a pity" because "We do not want riots when they get back." Sharing Mills' and Shuckburgh's concern, and alluding to the fact that Palestine had been quiescent for a year to avoid endangering the Delegation's success, Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen added in a note to Shuckburgh that with the return of the Delegation to Palestine the "feeling in Palestine" would have no more "safety valve in the United Kingdom":

The Arab Delegation... will return to Palestine with failure thrown in their faces and will assuredly not allow the matter to rest there. Arab mentality, probably listening to the counsels of its more fanatical advisers, will absorb the lessons of Ireland and Egypt. The extraneous toxin which has hitherto characterised Arab agitation against Zionism will continue to work on the Arab mind. ... [Necessary is] crushing at its outset any attempt by the Arabs to reproduce in Palestine the conditions that have forced the hands of H.M.G. in Ireland and Egypt.

In the event, Shuckburgh reacted to Meinertzhagen's note by saying "I have hopes that the Palestinians will accept the *fait accompli* with a reasonable good grace"; other members of the Colonial Office team commented by supporting the proposal to "crush" any uprising with "strong action when and if necessary."

¹²⁷⁸ CO 733/36, pp 250-53; Ingrams 1972, p 171.

A 3-page **rejection of the ‘Statement of Policy’**¹²⁷⁹ (the Churchill White Paper)¹²⁸⁰ was sent to Samuel through the Governor of Samaria by the Moslem-Christian Society of Nablus signed by Hafez, about which Samuel himself noted, “This review reflects fairly accurately how instructed Arab opinion in general regards that document.”¹²⁸¹

The declaration of 1917 which provides for the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home is illegal and is based on no right whatever as it contradicts both the promises given in 1915 by the British Government to His Majesty the King of Hijaz and the desires of the Arabs who form the great majority of the population. These desires have since the Armistice been submitted to the International bodies. ... The Jews have no right whatever in Palestine, as it is not their original country. The Arabs are the owners of the country in beginning and end, the Jews being only a small minority. ... The society although noting that the British Government does not aim at making Palestine Jewish nor at causing the disappearance of both the Arab population and culture, it nevertheless believes that this will be an inevitable and natural result of the void policy of the Jewish National Home.

The root issue was “ownership” of Palestine.

They saw through some of the equivocations:

[W]e do not see in the Government’s communiqué anything new that might call to rest and quietness. ... In the para re the intention of the Government to foster self-government in Palestine the Society do not see anything to raise hopes that right will be attained, as this para lacks any guarantee that the establishment of self-government would not be postponed until such time when the Jews become the majority in the country. ... The establishment of a Legislative Council falls within the same lines [as the possession by Zionists of most high administrative posts], because this Council will not have any power in the Administration and Government of the country. Moreover the Arabs who are the great majority will be represented by a minority in the Council, a minority which will not be able to protect the interests of the population against the Zionist policy.¹²⁸²

Further, the “special position of the Zionist Executive” was rejected because of its great influence with the Palestine Government, and Britain was lying about Jewish immigration: “The Government is continuously giving such assurances [that immigration will be moderate and slow] but nevertheless Jews are continuously coming also, many of whom are... competitors to native labour.” Finally:

¹²⁷⁹ CO 733/24, pp 69-71, ‘Political Report of 4 August for July 1922’; also Huneidi 2001, pp 67-68 & Appendix C.

¹²⁸⁰ The MCA (Moslem-Christian Association) of Nablus calls it a ‘communiqué’, apparently a version of the White Paper revealed in Palestine only on 6 July.

¹²⁸¹ CO 733/24, p 64.

¹²⁸² See also Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 144.

The terms of the Mandate [were] drawn up by the Government without the concurrence and consent of the population. The Mandate contains the terms that will naturally make the Arab Nationality disappear and be replaced by the Jewish nationality and Jewish Sovereignty. ... The Society throws off on the British Government, which still insists on carrying out the baseless and despotic policy, all blame and responsibility for any danger that might in future ensue from the friction and collision between the two nationalities.

13/14 July 1922 'A general strike... brought commerce across the country to a standstill.'¹²⁸³

19, 22, & 24 July 1922 'League of Nations Council approves incorporation of Jewish national-home policy in Palestine Mandate as decided at San Remo in April 1920.'¹²⁸⁴

¹²⁸³ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 62; Kayyali 1978, p 107.

¹²⁸⁴ Pedersen 2010, p 42 note 5.

150. Palestine Order in Council (Constitution)

10 August 1922

Following the Commons' *de facto* approval of the policy laid out in the White Paper and Mandate [^{>142; >146; >147}] the King and Privy Council could take the next step in 'legalising' its reign¹²⁸⁵ and changing it after the fact from a military to a civilian administration, accordingly issuing the 'Palestine Order in Council, 1922', in substance **a constitution for Mandatory Palestine**.¹²⁸⁶ By this means Britain was

setting up a Government in Palestine under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act. Part 3 of the Order in Council directed the establishment of a Legislative Council to be composed of the High Commissioner as President, with ten other official members, and 12 elected non-official members.¹²⁸⁷

This Order was almost identical to the draft Palestine Order in Council that had been circulated for comment on 9 February [^{>133-137; >139}]. It proposed the Legislative Council contained in that draft and in the Churchill White Paper of 3 June, with the council's having only consultative powers and foreseeing a body of twelve "electoral colleges", of which at least two would be Jewish and two Christian, resulting in at most eight Moslem members out of the 23 total in a country with an 80% Moslem majority.¹²⁸⁸

I concur with Porath's extraordinarily comprehensive analysis:

[The Palestinian Delegation] hastened to explain that they could not accept a policy which treated the Arab natives of Palestine and the Jews who were not indigenous to the country as two groups with equal political rights, and that the matter of immigration must be transferred to the hands of a national government which would know better than any other group to what extent the country could bear the burden of immigration. ... [The Delegation's] response to this proposal was negative. Its stand was primarily a product of its opposition to recognizing the special tie existing between the Jews and Palestine, and their right to immigrate there, even were this right to be regulated by economic criteria.¹²⁸⁹

Native rejection of the proposed 'Legislative Council' stemmed, that is, not only from its non-representative composition, but from their denial of group "equality" (parity) and their denial that the historical ties of some Jews to Palestine were either strong or politically relevant.¹²⁹⁰

¹²⁸⁵ Jeffries (1939/2017, pp 388-94 & 460-61) was not the only one to point to the illegality of British rule in international law.

¹²⁸⁶ CO 733/24, pp 7-20 (= Palestine Order in Council 1922).

¹²⁸⁷ Palestine Order in Council 1922, §19-§21; also Cmd. 3692 (Passfield White Paper) 1930, §11.

¹²⁸⁸ CO 733/24, p 20.

¹²⁸⁹ Porath 1974, pp 143-44, citing CO 733/36, 'Arab Executive Bureau, "The 24th Newsletter", 6.1.22' and 'Palestine Delegation to Churchill, 4.2.22' [=CO 733/36, pp 7-13, in English and Arabic].

¹²⁹⁰ See also Jeffries 1939, p 460; Barbour 1946, p 109; Ingrams 1972, p 166; Smith 1996, p 73; Huneidi 2001, p 234; Ghandour 2010, p 50.

The existing 21-member *Advisory Council* (not *Legislative Council*) which the Palestine Government had set up and which first met on 6 October 1920, consisted of the High Commissioner and 20 others appointed by him: 10 Palestine Government officials plus 7 Arabs (4 Moslems, 3 Christians) and 3 Jews. At that time Jewish anti-Zionist Cabinet member Edwin Montagu had already exposed the unrepresentative, undemocratic nature of such proposed formulas. [⁹⁴] And on 10 October 1920 Chief Civil Secretary Deedes had duly noted that

There is a feeling amongst a section (notably Moslem) of the population that members of the Council should be elected and not nominated; this feeling is a natural one and to be expected.¹²⁹¹

They had time and again insisted, in conformity with normal, normative democratic theory, on a close relation between their numbers in the populace and their numbers in any advisory or legislative bodies. The British were adamant, however, that “a central elective body is out of the question.”¹²⁹² The Palestinians for this reason decided virtually unanimously to boycott elections to any non-democratic body. [¹¹⁸]

In the face of Palestinian objection to Britain’s rule as such, the more so since it was pro-Zionist, the final text of the Order in Council doubled down on the Constitution’s general adherence to the Balfour Declaration (Preamble §2) and its prohibiting the Legislative Council from passing anything at variance with the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration (Section III, §18): a separate, dry and technical set of “Instructions” from the King to the High Commissioner stipulated once again that “No Ordinance which shall be in any way repugnant to, or inconsistent with, the provisions of the Mandate shall be submitted to the Legislative Council.” (Section XVI)

Zeina Ghandour connects the dots: “Article 6 of the Palestine Mandate of July 1922 placed an obligation on the Mandatory to facilitate and encourage ‘close settlement by Jews on the land, including State [public] lands...’ ... Article 12 (1) of the Palestine Order in Council of August 1922... granted complete sovereignty to the government over ‘public’ lands, stating ‘[a]ll rights in relation to any public lands shall vest in and may be exercised by the High Commissioner for the time being in trust for the government of Palestine.’ Article 13... allowed the HC to make grants and leases of Public lands [whatever the fate of more complicated *musha* lands] for the purpose of implementing the provisions and obligations of the Mandate.”¹²⁹³ Political privilege and control of land (and immigration) went hand in hand.

¹²⁹¹ FO 371/5124, p 2.

¹²⁹² FO 371/5124, pp 5, 6.

¹²⁹³ Ghandour 2010, p 50; see also El-Eini 2006, pp 289-302.

151. 5th Palestine Arab Congress

22-25 August 1922

Attended by over 100 delegates, including the returning members of the 1921-22 1st Delegation to London [>117], **the main business of this Congress** in Nablus, which passed eighteen resolutions, was to reject the Palestine Constitution of 10 August 1922 [>150]¹²⁹⁴ and to call for the boycott of the elections of early 1923 (a call which would be successful)¹²⁹⁵. In addition, the Congress vowed to set up a “Palestine Arab Bureau” in London, to “boycott Jewish goods and the Rutenberg (electricity) Scheme” in Palestine, and adopted an oath for a ‘Palestine Covenant’:

We, the representatives of the Palestine Arab Nation in the Fifth Palestine Arab Congress held at Nablus, pledge ourselves to God, History and the Nation that we shall continue our endeavours for the independence of our country, and for achieving Arab unity by all legal methods, and that we shall not accept the establishing of a Jewish National Home nor Jewish immigration.¹²⁹⁶

According to Wasserstein, pressure in favour of the Palestinians was in the meantime being applied in Britain by the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail* [see >155], moving the Duke of Devonshire (Victor Cavendish, Churchill’s successor as Colonial Secretary) to say that Britain would not “yield” to Arab pressure; and the Palestine Arab Executive itself raised the pressure by proclaiming of itself:

The East from one extremity to the other will take pride today in you and will boast of your unity and defence. ... The fact that you have united to boycott the elections to the Legislative Assembly... is a true sign that you are suited and fit for the freedom you demand. ... Today the limbs of our enemies will tremble with sadness and vexation. ... Today the holy land clothes itself with garments of glory. ... Long live free Palestine that it may stand independent! Long live the firm unity of Muslims and Christians.¹²⁹⁷

According to the British Report of the 5th Congress, it made the same Palestinian demands as previous Congresses, amounting to a principled rejection of Churchill’s proposed Constitution [>150].¹²⁹⁸ It moreover established links with many other Moslem countries, raising awareness of the Palestinian struggle.¹²⁹⁹

29 August 1922 *The Council of the League of Nations adopts the Churchill White Paper [i.e. the Mandate text].*

¹²⁹⁴ CO 733/265/1, pp 61-68.

¹²⁹⁵ See Cmd. 1889 (‘Papers Relating to the Elections for the Palestine Legislative Council 1923’); also Wasserstein 1978, pp 123-24.

¹²⁹⁶ CO 733/25, p 186, Monthly Political Report August 1922 Samuel to Churchill; Kayyali 1978, p 114, citing also his *Documents of the Palestinian Arab Resistance against British Occupation and Zionism* (in Arabic), Beirut 1968, p 53.

¹²⁹⁷ Wasserstein 1978, p 124, citing CZA Z4/1424 II dated 15 March 1923.

¹²⁹⁸ CO 733/25, pp 184-92.

¹²⁹⁹ Ayyad 1999, pp 98-99.

152. Syro-Palestine Delegation

7 & 8 September 1922

At meetings in Palestine between a “Syro-Palestine” delegation and leading local Zionist A. Saphir on 7 and 8 September 1922, **an agreement was reached amongst the discussants**: the Jewish side would eschew arguments that depended on the Balfour Declaration pledge, and the Syro-Palestinian side would not argue from the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence. There resulted a vision of a democratic, secular Palestine:

Arabs and Jews shall devise the modus of a declaration to be made concerning the particular links of the Jews with Palestine. Such declaration shall be drawn up in a form which, while making clear the attachments of the Jews to Palestine, shall equally establish the rights of the Arab inhabitants of the country and shall be based on the complete equality of all the inhabitants without any distinction of race and religion. ... The Jews, for their part, shall help the Arabs of the said countries [those covered by the Sykes-Picot Agreement], economically and politically... to obtain by legal and constitutional means the realization of the final aspirations of these countries.¹³⁰⁰

It was further agreed that immigration should be limited and that “anti-Jewish agitation in Palestine” should cease. The idea seems to have been that a mutually beneficial alliance of Zionism and indigenous Arabs could circumvent European colonial powers and set up a state or states in which, in contrast to the Jewish national home vision, no group would have privileges or be discriminated against. Those involved in these conversations agreed to keep the contents secret. I do not know what influence, if any, A. Saphir wielded amongst Palestine Jews.

16 September 1922 *At the request of the British Government the League of Nations approves a separate administration for Transjordan. The Council also decides to establish the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem.*¹³⁰¹

21 September 1922 *[The U.S. Congress passes Resolution 42 Stat. 1012 whose wording is practically identical to the Balfour Declaration.]*

10 October 1922 *[Treaty between Iraq and Great Britain signed – Cmd. 2370]*

19 October 1922 *‘In the summer of 1922, Lloyd George was involved in a scandal involving the selling of knighthoods and peerages. In October, the Conservatives withdrew from the coalition over their opposition to Britain’s foreign policy in Turkey. Lloyd George resigned as prime minister.’*¹³⁰²

23 October 1922 *First British census of Palestine puts total population at 757,048, with Jews only numbering 84,000 (11%).*

¹³⁰⁰ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 55-56.

¹³⁰¹ Also Sinanoglou 2019, pp 4-5.

¹³⁰² BBC History http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/george_david_lloyd.shtml

23 October 1922 [British forces brutally put down protests in Nablus against the census or against Britain in general.]¹³⁰³

¹³⁰³ Cronin 2017, pp 23-24, citing Duff, Douglas, 1953. *Bailing with a Teaspoon* (John Long, London), pp 44-46.

With the new government in London Churchill was succeeded as Colonial Secretary by Victor Cavendish ('Devonshire') on 24 October 1922. Regarding Zionism Churchill was a known quantity, but Cavendish was not, and knew little about Palestine. Therefore, dated 8 December 1922, High Commissioner Samuel sent him a to my knowledge unsolicited **"survey of the present economic and political condition of Palestine."**¹³⁰⁴

In number [the Jews] somewhat exceed the Christians. ... Both the urban and rural populations are increasing. ... There are some, indeed, among these Jews who are ... animated by the ideal of a Jewish State, but little is heard now of that distant goal... They are encouraged by the knowledge that they are watched and supported by the Jewish people all over the world. There is no Jewish community from Shanghai to California, and from Amsterdam to Cape Town, but knows what is being done by the Jews in Palestine. ... The local Jewish community feels itself an integral part of a far larger body, and is conscious that it is so regarded by the larger body itself. Any wound inflicted upon it is a wound to the whole organism. ... There remains, however, a widespread disappointment among the Jews with respect to immigration. (p 4)¹³⁰⁵

As we see time and again, to prop up the Zionist case *all Jews anywhere* had to be enlisted as stakeholders who in number outweighed the present and residing Palestinians. And the rhetorical question is, were these the words of a neutral, even-handed administrator two-and-a-half years into his term?

Samuel went on to assure Cavendish that

Two or three years are not enough to enable much headway to be made in the redemption of a derelict land such as was Palestine;... There is much industrial and agricultural development proceeding by means of Jewish capital and labour. ... The country is lamentably empty and undeveloped. ... What is needed is capital, enterprise and additional supplies of labour. It is the Jews, and the Jews alone, who are able and willing to supply all three. ... Nor has the policy been pursued of establishing the simulacrum of a native Government, while retaining real power in our own hands. (pp 2, 5, 6)

This second prop was that the country was "derelict" and "empty", a fib that probably took hold in Cavendish's uneducated mind. Moreover, although as Samuel reported "both the urban and rural populations are increasing", the local people could not provide the "enterprise and additional supplies of labour" needed for "development" according to Britain's definition. What astounds was Samuel's plea for Cavendish's participation in deceit: he should press on with providing a "*simulacrum*", in plain English a *fake* native government.

Attempting to balance his clever, one-sided propaganda, Samuel did concede that

¹³⁰⁴ CAB 24/140/79, pp 1-8, *all quotations.*

¹³⁰⁵ Also Ingrams 1972, pp 175-76.

The large majority of the population of Palestine are Moslem Arabs [78%, >Appendices 7 & 8], and among them a majority, possibly equally large, favour the general views of what may be termed the opposition to the present Administration. ... [T]here is the Arab national movement, which desires to see the establishment of a great Arab Empire, of which Palestine should form a part;... Second, there is the anti-Zionist movement, which came into existence after the occupation, which is inspired by a dread of submergence under a flood of Jewish immigration and of political subordination, sooner or later, to a Jewish Government. (pp 3, 4)

By leaving the Christians out of the calculation, and saying that only about 78% of the entire population was anti-Zionist, he was giving Cavendish a low estimate of the strength of anti-Zionism. He also painted the group working for a free Palestine – as opposed to “a great Arab Empire” – in the negative terms of “anti-Zionism”.

However, *pace* Samuel, there were Moslems who supported Britain:

In Palestine, as elsewhere in the Arab world, there is much dissension between families and constant quarrelling between individuals. ... There is also among the Moslems a certain section who take a different view from that of the Opposition. Their number is small, but it contains some of the leading men in the country. ... [T]hey recognise that Palestine cannot at present govern itself; they welcome the British Mandate and believe in the sincerity of our declarations that we will help the country to ultimate self-government. They realise that the accusations that the land of the Arabs is to be taken from them and given to the Jews, and that a Zionist Government is to be established to dominate the majority, are false. ... Many regard the question of the Balfour Declaration as a *chose jugée*, and do not propose to waste time, energy, and physical comfort on beating their heads against a brick wall. (p 3)

Aside from the mild racism of this portrayal of “the Arab world”, Samuel was eliding, for Cavendish’s eyes, the difference between thinking Palestine was not quite ripe for self-government and “welcoming the British Mandate”, which included the principles and provisions of the Jewish national home. Refreshingly honest, on the other hand, is his self-portrayal as a “brick wall”. Most Palestinians would see in this text an example of what Hussein Fakhri Khalidi, founder of the *Islah* (Reform) political party, wrote of, namely “the ways the evil imperialist divided us and increased feelings of unease amongst us.”¹³⁰⁶

A further observation of Samuel’s is of importance to this book’s theme of the extent and nature of communication between Britain and the Palestinian majority:

The course of British politics is followed closely in Palestine. Every debate, or question and answer, in either House of Parliament [*e.g.* >144; >147], and every declaration by any political leader relating to Palestine is reported in the Arabic, the Hebrew, and the English newspapers. ... It was not known whether the new Government would follow precisely the same course as the old. (p 7)

So the people’s need of political tutelage was not dire after all.

¹³⁰⁶ Ghandour 2010, p 130; also Robson 2011, pp 62-64.

In urging the new Colonial Secretary not to change course, Samuel was revealing that there was opposition to Zionism and that there had been riots and thus, concerning “future prospects”:

If it appears that there is a prospect of change, the Opposition will be stimulated. ... If, on the other hand, a definite and unqualified statement is made that the policy expressed in the White Paper of last July [^{>142}] – which amply protects all legitimate Arab and other non-Jewish interests – will be maintained, then there is some prospect that a rapprochement may be effected between the opposing parties. (p 8)

From a wrong philosophical take on “Arabs” he elaborated on this wrong prediction:

There is in the East a great respect for the accomplished fact. Arabs, especially, are naturally inclined to accept a definite decision by a ruling Power. If the present [Palestinian Arab] Delegation returns to Palestine having effected nothing in Lausanne, and London having issued a re-affirmation of the previous policy, the Moderate Party will be greatly encouraged, the non-co-operation movement will be discredited, and the efforts which I should then make to promote a general participation in the elections would be more likely to meet with success. (p 8)

In the event the “Arabs” turned out to be normal human beings *not* “inclined” to bow before the *faits accomplis* of foreign Powers. The Delegation did return empty-handed, and the new Government kept on the pro-Zionist course, as Cavendish re-affirmed on 23 January 1923 [^{>156}], but even in the short-to-medium run there was no shift amongst the Palestinians towards “rapprochement” or “moderation” when it came to Zionism, and Samuel failed to avert the successful boycott of the elections which were set for February 1923 [^{>118}].

154. Syrian Palestine Congress to British and French late 1922

The 'Syrian Palestine Congress', meeting in Lausanne and Geneva, passed **resolutions translated and summarised** in a Colonial Office Political Report of late 1922:

(a) The Syrian Nation has had the chance of laying the foundation of its form of Govt in the year 1920. [^{>69;} ^{>91}] Later on a congress representative of all parties including the Palestine inhabitants in the person of their Wafd [delegation] was held in Geneva and a policy was definitely set. (b) the delegation in Lausanne/Geneva is 'amalgamated': Syrian and Palestinian (c) Any other views at variance with this declaration are taken to represent partisan or individual opinion but not that of the whole nation. The policy based on the confederation of the three provinces [covering Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan] under one representative Govt has been adopted by the Syrian Unionist Party of Egypt, the Syrian Independence and Federation Party of Chile, the Syrian Emancipation Party of New York, the Syrian Corporation Party of Boston, the Syrian National Party of Brazil, the Arab National Party of Argentine, the Lebanon Syrian Party, etc. These differ as to the monarchical or republican form of Govt but all concur in the necessity that the choice of form of Govt rests solely with the nation. (d) All one-sided arrangements made by the Mandatory Powers are stated to be null and void in the light of International Law.¹³⁰⁷

By "one-sided arrangements" was probably meant separate deals between either France and England and any of the parties or provinces, but perhaps also with organisations such as the Zionist Organization.

¹³⁰⁷ CO 733/43/8, pp 150-51.

The Colonial Office made a file consisting of the newspaper clippings of **22 articles by J.M.N. Jeffries** printed in the *Daily Mail* between 8 January and 8 February 1923 under the heading 'The Palestine Deception. "National Home for the Jews". Insincerity and Illusion. An Exhaustive Exposé'.¹³⁰⁸ The file contains two articles as well by *Daily Express* owner Lord Beaverbrook dated 14 March, but the Colonial Office decided not to cut out and paste into the file Jeffries' two articles on the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, viz., 'Broken Faith with the Arabs. McMahon Letters Disclosure' and 'Inventing a Province. Vilayet of Churchill'.¹³⁰⁹

The reader is referred to Jeffries' history of British involvement in Palestine 1915-1923, treated chronologically, recorded in a 2014 book collecting the articles¹³¹⁰ and also to Jeffries' book *Palestine: The Reality*, published in 1939 and reprinted in 2017¹³¹¹. I have scattered Jeffries' observations throughout this chronology rather than devote a further separate entry to him. At any rate, his articles in such a widely-read paper, owned by pro-Palestinian Lord Northcliffe, who on his 1922 visit to Palestine engaged in real dialogue with the locals, were known to Palestinians and all interested Britons.¹³¹²

In this entry I mention only Jeffries' article of 17 January covering 'Sir Louis Bols's Despatches', because it demonstrates HMG's will to replace any anti-Zionist officials with such as Samuel and others who lined up behind the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist Commission. As already quoted, just before being relieved of his duties on 1 July 1920 Bols had attested that under his rule

every department of my Administration is claimed or impinged upon by the Zionist Commission [which] in reality will be satisfied with nothing less than a Jewish State and all that it politically implies. I recommend, therefore, in the interests of peace, of development, of the Zionists themselves, that the Zionist Commission in Palestine be abolished.¹³¹³ [also >23; >84]

McTague adds that Bols advised dissolving the Zionist Commission also because it represented a change in the *status quo*, which the Military Administration was bound by international rules of occupation not to change.¹³¹⁴

The *Daily Mail's* own sober editorial of 9 February 1923 supported Jeffries' opinion that the League of Nations had "no right" to "hand over" to Britain any part of the Near East and recommended that Britain get out of the Near East, including Palestine:

¹³⁰⁸ CO 733/54, pp 41-67, 179-81.

¹³⁰⁹ Also Andersen 2017, p 162.

¹³¹⁰ Jeffries 1922/23.

¹³¹¹ Jeffries 1939.

¹³¹² Andersen 2017, pp 155-57.

¹³¹³ CO 733/54, p 50.

¹³¹⁴ McTague 1978, p 69, citing FO 371/85/3158 of 12 April 1920 & FO 371/85/5237 of 21 April 1920; Hague Convention (IV) Regulations 1907; War Office 1914.

We ought, that is to say, to fulfil our first and earliest promise to the Arabs, who are seven-eighths of the population of Palestine, and give them independence, instead of trying to force on them with our aircraft and bayonets the rule of a mere fraction of Zionists. ... The British Empire has waxed great by 'governing men as they wish to be governed.' It is not doing this to-day in Palestine or Mesopotamia. In Palestine it is trying to foist on the Arabs the Zionist régime.¹³¹⁵

But the pro-self-determination 'lobby' in the U.K., including Jeffries, Northcliffe, many other members of the House of Lords [*e.g.* >85; >144], and some MPs [*e.g.* >134; >147], would fail.

¹³¹⁵ CO 733/54, p 67.

156. Cavendish to Sydenham to Arabs

11 January 1923

David Lloyd George's six-year reign at the top of HMG, when it ended on 19 October 1922, had put into place the policy of disregarding, as well as not consulting, the wishes of the approximately 90% majority of the population it had taken over. Cavendish's relieving Churchill of his Colonial-Secretary duties on 24 October 1922 in the end did not give that local population any more say, even if during the year 1923 some second thoughts would need some attention by the secret 'Cavendish Committee' on Palestine [>159; >165-67].

Cavendish (also called 'Devonshire' as the 9th Duke of Devonshire, Eton- and Trinity College Cambridge-educated, whose parents were first cousins) had received a letter dated 31 December 1922 from Lord Sydenham, a prominent supporter of the Palestinian cause who kept in close touch with Palestinians in Britain [>85; >144]. On 11 January 1923 Cavendish received the 2nd Palestine Arab Delegation [>157] in person¹³¹⁶ and also **replied to Sydenham:**

I can hold out no hope that there will be any departures from the main lines of that [1922 White Paper, >142] policy. I am informing the Arab Delegation accordingly. ... [The Government] can hold out no hope that there will be any departure from the policy of the late Government, as clearly stated in the White Paper itself and approved by a very large majority in the late House of Commons [>147]. ... [The Delegation should not continue to] think it worth while to spend more time and money in England [and the Government should not] allow ourselves to be drawn into further prolonged discussions with the Delegation.¹³¹⁷

The Delegation were then indeed "spending time and money in England" setting up the London Bureau, which the 5th Palestine Arab Congress in August had resolved to do [>151], but this was a considerate way of telling them to go home.

early 1923 *'Almost all Arab Palestinians follow the 5th Congress's call to boycott the elections to the Legislative Council as contained in the Order-in-Council (Constitution) [>133; >150; >151; >158].'*¹³¹⁸

¹³¹⁶ CAB 24/159/6, §24.

¹³¹⁷ CO 733/54, pp 73, 75, 78, 32 & 33.

¹³¹⁸ Kayyali 1978, p 117.

157. 2nd Palestine Delegation & Cavendish

11 & 12 January 1923

This 2nd Palestinian Delegation, with Musa Kazem as President and Shibly Jamal, “an English-speaking Christian”, as Secretary, had arrived in London in late December 1922, the 1st Delegation having returned to Palestine in August 1922 [¹¹⁷; ¹²³; ¹²⁷; ¹³⁵; ¹³⁷; ¹⁴³; ¹⁵¹], and on 29 December it asked “His Grace, The Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies”, for “an interview”, to which Devonshire minuted, “I suppose I should receive the Delegation”.¹³¹⁹ For Devonshire’s information, Shuckburgh summarised the “two main demands” of the previous Delegation:

(1) the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration in favour of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine; and (2) for the grant of full self-government for Palestine. On the first point the late Government consistently refused to make any concession of principle. ... Sir H. Samuel considers (and in this the [Middle East] Department agree) that, within the limits of the existing policy, there is no room for further concessions to the Arabs without whittling the Balfour Declaration out of existence. ... The President [Musa Kazem] (also in England again) and at least one of his Mohammedan colleagues took up an uncompromising position throughout. ... If there is not to be a change of policy, it is very undesirable that the Delegation should be encouraged to indulge in false hopes.¹³²⁰

Shuckburgh as well as the ubiquitous William Ormsby-Gore warned Devonshire (Cavendish) that the Delegation had allies in England, for example the ‘Morning Post’, Sir William Joynson-Hicks and Lord Sydenham.¹³²¹ On 12 January Devonshire did receive the Palestinians and told them

that the whole question of Palestine was being considered by His Majesty’s Government without bias, but that he could hold out no hope that there would be any departure from the policy of the late Government as set out in the White Paper of June, 1922.¹³²²

It is hard to see how a re-consideration of the policy of the British Government could be “without bias” while its main conclusions were already foregone, and at any rate the Delegation was back in Palestine by early March. [¹¹⁹]¹³²³

¹³¹⁹ CO 733/54, p 69; also PREM 1/24..

¹³²⁰ CO 733/54, pp 70-72.

¹³²¹ CO 733/54, pp 72, 76.

¹³²² CO 733/54, p 81.

¹³²³ Also Lesch 1979, pp 165-66.

The Secret Political Report of February 1923 paraphrased **Palestinian decisions to boycott the elections** to the Legislative Council:¹³²⁴

On the 5th of February a meeting, attended by a number of notables and leading merchants, took place in Jerusalem. Sheikh Abdul Kader al Muzzafar addressed the meeting on the boycott of elections. He said their object was to form labour and other federations as well as a Committee of heads of families who would visit leading persons and advise them against the election which he compared to a means of National suicide. The Jaffa Branch of the Moslem-Christian Society held a meeting in Jaffa on the 10th February. The question of the elections was discussed. The attendance was estimated at 1500 persons. Sheikh Ragheb al Dajani analysed the constitution of the proposed Legislative Council. He said that the Government would always be in a majority; that the Arabs might as well not be present; that the High Commissioner is empowered to dismiss the Council at any time. All members should, he said, be elected as in other civilised countries, and none nominated. He added that the Mandate had not yet been ratified and that, even if it had been ratified, the Arabs would adhere to their position. Sheikh Abdul Kader al Muzzafar... said that the High Commissioner had summoned the members of the Arab Executive Committee [AEC], that he had tried to come to an agreement with them, but they had refused, preferring prison and exile to participation in the elections. The powers, he said, enjoyed by the High Commissioner far exceeded those of His Majesty the King.¹³²⁵ [also >170]

The meetings further adumbrated the position that taking part in any elections would mean mortgaging their future by violating their principle of rejection of the entire Mandate set-up.¹³²⁶

(The Mandate had been *approved* by the League of Nations Council on 24 July 1922, but it would not be 'ratified', or 'in effect', in the sense of becoming 'international law', until the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne ('of Peace with Turkey', signed on 24 July 1923) was completed on 6 August 1924, and therefore the Palestinians felt they still had some time to act.)

The Political Report then included the 'Proclamation of the Executive Committee to the Nation on the Boycott of the Legislative Council' issued sometime in late 1922 or early 1923, spelling it out in February 1923 as this translation:

The nation has proclaimed its decision on the boycott of the elections of the Legislative Council because it is based on a constitution in which the nation has had no opinion, rather it is contrary to its aspirations and its rights and is a confirmation of its subjugation and slavery in the midst of its house by the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in this country which has been sanctuated by God who has selected this nation to be the safe

¹³²⁴ CO 733/43/8, pp 134-63; also CO 733/43, pp 134-35, 146-53, 161-63.

¹³²⁵ CO 733/43/8, pp 138-39 & 146; also Lesch 1979, p 180.

¹³²⁶ CO 733/43/8, pp 133-41 & 146-73.

guardian of its Holy Places. The nation has proclaimed its decision because this Legislative Council has been but a means by which the nation will itself execute death sentence – if it accepts and participates in the election of its members. By accepting it there will be clear proof of its acceptance of the Mandate and of the present Zionist policy.¹³²⁷

The two arguments here for boycott were that the Palestinians had not been consulted during the process of drafting the legislation for the Legislative Council, and that to participate would be suicidal, i.e. amounting to giving up the demand for simple independence.

The Palestinians were similarly not consulted during the revision then taking place of the Immigration Regulations, undertaken by the four Colonial Officers Shuckburgh, Young, Moody and Sidebotham and two representatives of the Zionist Organization, Weizmann and Stein. Their detailed codification, revealing the nuts and bolts of the numerical growth of the National Home as well as the terms in which the British approached Jewish immigration, is to be found at the National Archives.¹³²⁸

Ghandour relates furthermore that the Political Report for January 1923 had already contained in an appendix the speeches given by Sheikh Muzzafar, who was regarded by the British as a wild and verbally dangerous man, and that

the political report for February notes that the Sheikh, in breach of directives forbidding political speeches to be made at the Haram mosque, spoke against the planned elections. A month later, another report read: ‘The die-hards are touring the villages. The egregious Muzzafar works and weeps in mosque after mosque.’ His hold over the common people was worrying: ‘The effect of all this on the minds of the free and unenlightened electors is supremely perplexing and most of the villagers ... are withdrawing from a game the purposes and rules of which are incomprehensible to them.’¹³²⁹

Perhaps similar to Churchill’s “hold over the common people” before the Commons vote of 4 July 1922 [p.147], a single talented speaker is said to be able to sway an “unenlightened” populace faced with an “incomprehensible” game, namely simple elections. But the boycott showed that they comprehended paternalism.

At these meetings during February 1923, the AEC repeated the further argument already made in the 1st London Arab Delegation’s letters to the Colonial Office earlier in 1922 [p.135; p.137; p.143] namely that the Council as proposed had no democratic power anyway since

the majority of this Council is made up of the English and Zionist Heads of Departments who are compelled to follow the Zionist policy. For this the Palestinian Arab nation on the whole stands today the standing of one man [sic.] rejecting that constitution and this Council and

¹³²⁷ CO 733/43/8, pp 146-47.

¹³²⁸ CO 733/54, pp 84-153.

¹³²⁹ CO 733/42, pp 325-28; Ghandour 2010, pp 147-48, also citing CO 733/44, Report of the Northern District Governor, in Political Report for March 1923.

adhering to its natural rights of independence. ... To co-operation, self-respect, complete independence, rejection of elections, we call the sons of this country. [signed] For the President of the Executive Committee [Musa Kazem]. Jamal Husseini, Secretary¹³³⁰

Also signed by Jamal was a report proving support for the boycott from Tulkarem, Hebron, Haifa, Beisan, Ramleh, Nablus, Samakh, Gaza, Jenin and Yaffa. The Executive Committee wired all districts as follows based on the information it had received:

The Government has been completely disappointed in election in the Districts in which it has attempted candidateship. Boycott is guaranteed. No opposer has appeared in the nation. Long Live complete unity.¹³³¹

The call for the boycott had mobilized for instance 4,000 people on Friday 16 February in the Haram es-Sherif,¹³³² and in the end practically no Moslem and Christian Palestinians voted. Citing the successful boycott as proof that the Palestine Constitution was not “in accord with the sentiments of the native population”, Lord Islington would in the House of Lords on 27 March 1923 move for a significant modification of the Constitution.¹³³³ [>16]

During this period, according to Ghandour,

The antithetical positions of the cooperative Mufti and the obstructionist Sheikh [Abdul Kader Muzzafar] began to crystallize. Whilst Husseini talked and talked, hosted and argued, negotiated and compromised, Muzzafar refused to make eye contact with the colonialist. ... [O]n the sixth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the AE [Arab Executive Committee, elected by the Palestine Arab Congress] issued an open invitation to both Muslims and Christians to attend the Haram mosque, where they were to be addressed, once again, by Muzzafar. The government was uncomfortable with the united front Muslims and Christians presented via the AE.¹³³⁴

On the pretext that Christian presence in the Haram was somehow not allowed, the British and the Mufti then conspired to prevent both such presence and further speeches by Muzzafar in the Haram.¹³³⁵ According to Ilan Pappé, by the way, in December 1915 this same Muzzafar had partaken in meetings between members of the al-Husseini family and Jews such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, David Yellin, Albert Antebi, Yaacov Thon and David Ben-Gurion, at which all celebrated “dreams of a joint homeland under the Pax Otomana”.¹³³⁶

¹³³⁰ CO 733/43/8, pp 146-47.

¹³³¹ CO 733/43/8, pp 152-53.

¹³³² CO 733/43/8, p 138.

¹³³³ Hansard 1923, c439.

¹³³⁴ Ghandour 2010, p 148, citing CO 733/43.

¹³³⁵ Ghandour 2010, p 148.

¹³³⁶ Pappé 2010/2002, pp 153-55.

On 11 January 1923 Colonial Secretary Victor Cavendish ('Devonshire') had announced to the Palestine Arab Delegation and their supporter, Lord Sydenham, that he and the new Government would almost certainly not change the Palestine policy they'd inherited from Churchill and Lloyd George. [¹⁵⁶] But Cavendish apparently had second thoughts, and the Colonial Office's Middle East Department, still led by Shuckburgh and Meinertzhagen, prepared for the Cabinet a **14-page 'Memorandum'**.¹³³⁷ It gave a good, if British Zionist-imbued, history of the McMahon-Hussein exchanges, events on the ground, and talks with the Palestinians, concluding that the Palestine Mandate was almost a done deal, lacking only the ratification of the Treaty with Turkey of which the Mandates were a part.

In addition to this historical account, however, the Memorandum, dated 16 February 1923 and sent to the Cabinet the following day, radically questioned the underlying decision to take over Palestine and install the Jewish national home. The Colonial Office asked 3 questions:

1. Is there anything in the British Government's pledges to the Arabs that precludes effect being given to the Balfour Declaration in favour of setting up a National Home for the Jews in Palestine? [¹⁰; ¹⁴; ¹⁶; ¹⁸; ²¹; ²²; ²⁵; ²⁸]
2. If the answer is in the negative, are we to continue the policy of the late Government in giving effect to the Balfour Declaration on the lines laid down in the White Paper of June 1922? [¹⁴²]
3. If not [if there was indeed something "precluding" the JNH], what alternative policy are we to adopt? (p 41)

At the end of the memo these question were dealt with by sketching "**four alternative courses**", the first being the case where the various promises to the Arabs trumped all else:

1. We have examined our predecessors' commitments and find that they gave contradictory promises to the Arabs and to the Jews. As the Arab promise was earlier,¹³³⁸ we feel bound to maintain it, and consequently declare the Jewish pledge to be null and void.
2. We are not satisfied that any pledges were given to the Arabs regarding Palestine. The language used was inconclusive. On the other hand, the pledge to the Jews was clear and unequivocal. But the Jewish pledge provided not only for a National Home for the Jews, but also for the maintenance of the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. Experience has shown that the two parts of the pledge are wholly incompatible. We do not propose to proceed any further with the experiment.

¹³³⁷ CAB 24/159/6, pp 41-48 (stamped pagination)/1-15 (printed pagination) or simply §§ 1-31, all citations in this entry. Also Huneidi 1998, pp 32-33.

¹³³⁸ Actually only McMahon's [¹⁰] were earlier, the others followed in 1918 after the storm of 2 November 1917.

3. Whatever pledges may or may not have been given either to Jew or to Arab, we find that the commitments incurred by our predecessors are more than we are able to discharge. It is not a case of argument, but of sheer necessity. We have no alternative but to abandon the task.
4. [Or the new Government] might take the same ground as the late Government, viz., that looking at the pledges as a whole, [we] find that there is nothing in what was said to the Arabs to preclude the due fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration; that they regard the policy of the White Paper as adequately safeguarding both parts of that Declaration and see no reason for making any departure from it. (§30)

The second “alternative course” conceded that in gaining Arab support during World War I HMG’s words had been “inconclusive”; they had equivocated. The first “alternative course” amounted to a ‘Yes’ answer to question #1 asked at the beginning, and the Middle East Department concluded,

Alternatives (1), (2) and (3) all involve the definite repudiation of the Balfour Declaration. If that course is adopted, it is submitted that we have no alternative but to return the Mandate into the hands of the League of Nations and evacuate Palestine forthwith. (§31)

It took another 24 years for that to happen. [>453]

The authors thought further:

We should be placed in an intolerable position if, after breaking a promise made to the Jews in the face of the whole world, we were to retain any connection with Palestine from which we derived, or could be held [seen] to derive, any conceivable benefit. We should, indeed, stand convicted of an act of perfidy, from which it is hardly too much to say that our good name would never recover. The real alternative, therefore, seems to lie between complete evacuation, on the one hand, and, on the other, the continuance of the policy of the late Government as laid down in the White Paper. (§31)

Earlier in the Memorandum the authors had warned that “The Jews would naturally regard... going back on [the Balfour Declaration] promise... as an act of baseness...” (§2)

Alternative courses (1), (2) and (3) were thus rolled into a path of “complete evacuation”. An imaginable fifth course, of remaining to help the Palestinian “communit[y] formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire” to “stand alone”¹³³⁹ *without* deriving any benefit for the U.K. was apparently not conceivable. And “breaking a promise made to the” *Arabs*, yet not evacuating, was a perfectly “tolerable”, non-perfidious, name-saving course. The “face of the whole world”, evidently, did not include the Arab world. Thus the Colonial Office recommended course (4) without neglecting to emphasise to the already reassured “Jews” that

Within the limits of the Balfour Declaration, if that is to be maintained, there is little room for further concessions to the Arabs beyond what has already been made. (§31)

After the Cabinet-level ‘Cavendish Committee’ had deliberated for exactly one month the following summer, this recommendation would be officially adopted by HMG on 27 and 31 July and would likewise give primacy to saving face before the Western and Jewish

¹³³⁹ League of Nations 1919, Article 22 §4. [>46]

“world” and would stay Churchill’s course, whatever the costs and benefits of running the country and however clear the violation of the “promises to the Arabs”. [¹⁶⁵⁻⁶⁷; also ¹⁰⁰; ¹⁵⁶; ²⁴²; ³²⁷]

I believe this Memorandum is central to the story because it shows British doubts, and thus a flicker of hope for the Palestinians,¹³⁴⁰ and because the policy it recommended, after much soul-searching, remained in force on the ground until the British finally did their “complete evacuation” in mid-May 1948. (The MacDonald White Paper which officially replaced the Passfield and Churchill White Papers [²³⁴; ¹⁴²] did alter course as of 17-23 May 1939 [⁴¹⁰; ⁴¹¹] but was never applied on the ground.)

Let us look at the Memorandum in the order in which it dealt with the issues: The argument that trumped all doubts – the one not-uncertain thing – was that breaking the War Cabinet’s promise [¹⁶] was to lose Britain’s “good name”, and that was unthinkable: “We are, in fact, committed to the Zionist policy before the whole world in the clearest and most unequivocal fashion.” (§1-4) Further, correctly, “The terms of the Mandate take us a step further than the original [Balfour] Declaration” by spelling out steps for the realisation of the Jewish national home merely envisioned in the earlier, and very short, Declaration. (§5) Next, “The [Zionist] Organisation was selected by His Majesty’s Government for the purpose as the best representative of the Jewish movement [sic.] as a whole.” (§6)

The Memorandum then dealt with the first hitch in this process of establishing the Jewish national home, namely that “It is constantly argued by critics of the Zionist policy that, whatever may have been the pledges given to the Jews, they are rendered null and void by prior promises made to the Arabs”. (§7) But “The facts are as follows:”... I will not go into these “facts”, noting only that in the three lengthy following pages only British witness such as McMahon and Churchill were quoted. (§8-11)

To refute the November 1918 Anglo-French Declaration to the Arabs [²⁸] the Memo first admitted that the promise was “to promote self-government in the territories to which it referred” – “self-government” wherein the ‘self’ was the indigenous, local one, not complicated by the prospect of the forced immigration of thousands of new citizens. But those “territories” were “Syria and Mesopotamia only”; in contrast to local, Ottoman, and even international usage, for the Colonial Office ‘Syria’ in 1918 had not, on this reading in 1923, included Southern Syria.¹³⁴¹ The Middle East Department’s interpretation was false. The Memorandum then ingeniously added that this Declaration came *after* the Balfour Declaration and thus could not “override” it. (§12)

Finally, the Palestinians were dissolved in the concept of “the Arabs”: “What we promised was to promote Arab independence in a wide area. That promise we have substantially fulfilled.” (§13) Aside from the debatability of the actual promotion of independence anywhere but in the Hejaz, the Colonial Office was saying that several hundred thousand individual Palestinians did not have to be listened to as Palestinians.

¹³⁴⁰ See Mathew 2013.

¹³⁴¹ Later Zionists would claim that Palestine at that time didn’t exist, while at that time Colonial Office Zionists were freely and daily treating it as if it *did* exist.

The question of the Jewish national home's true nature as a state was also tackled. Again indulging a preference for referring to other people's opinions rather than expression the Colonial Office's own views, after quoting War Cabinet member Curzon's late October 1917 concept of an essentially non-political "home" [>15; >16], Cavendish's team led by Shuckburgh wrote,

It is not clear whether the [War] Cabinet as a whole took a similar view of the limitations of its policy. It is believed that the late¹³⁴² Prime Minister once informed Dr. Weizmann that what the Cabinet had meant was the establishment of a 'Jewish State'.¹³⁴³ Whatever may have been the view of the Cabinet, it is quite certain that this is what the Jews themselves meant. They imagined, or chose to imagine, that there was to be a Jewish Kingdom of Palestine which would take its place among the nations of the world like any other national entity. (§15)

The function in the argument of "what the [Zionist] Jews themselves meant" is not clear. Was it simply information, or was the implication that the British, devoted to "Jewish Zionist aspirations" [>16], therefore also intended a "Jewish State"?

In relating the development of the basic concepts used by HMG up through the Mandate text [>146], the Memorandum did accurately re-state the demands of the Palestinians (as already related). [>157; also >99]¹³⁴⁴ Yet the Palestinian visitors in London were at once adamant and impressionable:

Every effort was made [by the CO] to induce the Delegation to abandon their demand for a formal reversal of policy and to discuss practical details as to the best method of safeguarding Arab interests under the Balfour Declaration. There were moments when the Delegation seemed to be wavering in their attitude, and it is believed that some at least of them would have been glad to come to terms with the British Government. Unfortunately, however, any impression produced by the arguments of the Colonial Office was nullified by the activities of the [Arabs'] English friends and by the encouragement given them by certain sections of the press. (§18)

These "efforts" and "impressions" had often been made and achieved by Shuckburgh himself¹³⁴⁵, and J.M.N. Jeffries and the Daily Mail were one of the "sections of the press" whose analysis "nullified" the CO's arguments¹³⁴⁶.

The Memorandum then cited Herbert Samuel's briefing sent to Cavendish on 8 December 1922 [>153] wherein Samuel had played up the purported economic benefits of the pro-Zionist policy (§21) and down-played the amount of immigration that would occur (§22). It also reported on Palestinian hopes after the change of Government: "Given Oriental mentality, it is not surprising that the Palestine Arabs should entertain strong hopes of

¹³⁴² He meant PM of the late *Government*; Lloyd George didn't die until 1945.

¹³⁴³ See also John & Hadawi, 1970a, p 113, citing Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, Vol. II, pp 744-46.

¹³⁴⁴ CO 733/54, pp 70-72.

¹³⁴⁵ E.g. >108; >111; >117; >125; >132; >136; >138.

¹³⁴⁶ Jeffries 1939; Jeffries 1922/23.

a reversal by the present Cabinet...". (§23) Why the "Oriental mentality" would be especially prone to "hope" that things would go their way is not revealed, but in any case, these hopes had been dashed by Cavendish himself in January 1923. (§24) [¹⁵⁶] However, because "In dealing with the East nothing is so fatal as uncertainty [if] there is to be a change in policy, the sooner it is announced the better." (§25) [¹²⁵] Finally, the cost of the Palestine colony to the taxpayer was said to be not all that much (§26) and there were "Imperial considerations that favour the retention of Palestine by Great Britain" (§29).¹³⁴⁷

Historian William Mathew is correct that "the Duke of Devonshire... gave the decisive advice against any abandonment of Lloyd George's pro-Zionist policy"¹³⁴⁸; even if the Cabinet would further deliberate until 27 July 1923 [¹⁶⁵⁻⁶⁷], this memorandum's advice would carry the day.

¹³⁴⁷ See Mathew 2013, pp 238-50.

¹³⁴⁸ Mathew 2013, p 236, also pp 232, 234.

X. Cavendish caves in

160. Arab Executive Committee Proclamation

12 March 1923

According to Abdul Wahhab Kayyali,

On 12 March 1923 [the Arab Executive Committee] **issued a proclamation** advising stoppage of work and closing of shops on 14 March in honour of the attitude [for boycott] adopted by the 'Arab Nation' at the elections [>158]. It was also decided to extend a popular welcome for the returning Arab Delegation [>157]. During the processions the police came in contact with the crowds when attempting to arrest a number of marchers who were shouting provocative slogans.¹³⁴⁹

Leaders such as Omar al-Bitar, Jamal al-Husseini, Sheikh Abdel Kader el-Muzzafar, and Khalil al-Sakakini had organised and monitored the successful election boycott,¹³⁵⁰ while Lord Beaverbook (owner of the pro-Palestinian London *Daily Express*)¹³⁵¹ was feted at a reception in Bethlehem (Beytulahm) at which

Abdul Kadir Muzzafar [also >158] denounced the British for their hostility towards the Arabs, regardless of the fact that the Arabs were the sons of the country. ... He declared that the Arab Executive Committee on behalf of the Moslem and Christian population demand the nullification of the Zionist policy. Failing this they would not hesitate to boycott the Government which is headed by a Zionist. ... Lord Beaverbrook in reply is reported to have said that... [Arab] rights to the country and their sacrifices during the war could not be denied. ... He expressed confidence that success would attend the Arab cause.¹³⁵²

Speaking for the Executive Committee established by the 5th Palestine Arab Congress in Nablus [>151], Jamal al-Husseini on 30 March asked Samuel rhetorically how a nation that had boycotted elections for a non-representative Legislative Council constrained by the Balfour Declaration could be expected to play along with the newly proposed, even weaker Advisory Council.¹³⁵³ According to Abdelaziz Ayyad, in March and April 1923 Jamal explained to Wyndham Deedes [>126] that the Palestinian resistance was at a fork in the road, with many advocating "revolution", including "tax evasion", rather than the "constitutional means" of petitioning the British government; the coming 6th PAC [>164] would debate these points.¹³⁵⁴ [also >117]

¹³⁴⁹ Kayyali 1978, pp 117-18; see CO 733/44, pp 60-62, 67-70, 78-79, Monthly Political Report of 13 April for March 1923, Samuel to Devonshire.

¹³⁵⁰ CO 733/44, pp 73-85.

¹³⁵¹ Beaverbrook published the reports of journalist J.M.N. Jeffries. (see also Jeffries 1939)

¹³⁵² CO 733/44, p 61.

¹³⁵³ CO 733/46, pp 363-66; also Wasserstein 1978, pp 126-29.

¹³⁵⁴ Ayyad 1999, p 100.

Lord Islington, who had led the successful fight in the House of Lords against the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration on 21 June 1922 [^{>144}], came back on 27 March 1923 with a **Lords motion** which urged the House

to ask His Majesty's Government whether in the elections for the Legislative Council just concluded in Palestine it is not a fact that the whole Arab electorate refrained from voting in protest against the new Constitution; whether in view of this protest by so overwhelming a majority of the population of Palestine His Majesty's Government will not now consider the desirability of modifying the Constitution so as to bring it into closer accord with the sentiments of the native population and the Arab Community throughout the East;... (c639)¹³⁵⁵

Assuming wrongly that democratic adherence to majority opinion was a moral value that needed no debate, he continued:

In the judgment of the Arab – and I think with reason – the Constitution has been so framed that under it there can be no hope in the future for any security that Palestinian sentiment can be expressed or given effect to. And when one comes to remember that between ninety and ninety-three per cent. of the population are Arab Moslems and Christians I think any one who peruses the draft of that Constitution must agree that it is one calculated to prevent the Palestinian sentiment being fully represented in the future. (c940; also 649)

That this “parody of a Constitution” was imposed by democratic Britain “upon a native people” was a “positive irony”. (c641) Further,

Why should Palestine be selected as the playground of this eccentric constitutional experiment? We have been told, and we may again be told to-day, that Jewish traditions for centuries past were connected with the territory of Palestine. But are there no Christian traditions, and those of the most sacred character, to be taken into account? Are there no Arab traditions, which, through the ages, cover a far greater period of time than the traditions of the Jewish race? (c642)

On the continually debated line on the map showing what McMahon and Hussein had excluded from the promise of independence, Islington observed that

Last year Mr. Churchill, with considerable ingenuousness, of which, when in a difficult situation, he is an undoubted master, produced an entirely new description of that line, which was perfectly described and clearly understood in 1915. His interpretation was that it was not the city of Damascus that was referred to but the vilayet of Damascus. [But] there is no such thing as the vilayet of Damascus. (c645)

Jeffries dubbed this invented Vilayet “the Vilayet of Churchill”, noting that Churchill had taken McMahon's words “the portions of Syria lying to the west of Damascus, Homs,

¹³⁵⁵ Hansard 1923, cc939–69, all citations; Sykes 1965, p 94.

Hama and Aleppo” and changed them to “the country lying to the west of the Vilayet of Damascus.”¹³⁵⁶ The Vilayet of Syria (sometimes unofficially called the Vilayet of Damascus) did extend as far south as Aqaba, but this is not what McMahon had said.

During the debate Lord Grey, Sykes’ boss as Foreign Minister when the Sykes-Picot agreement was made, and who was Balfour’s predecessor Foreign Minister until December 1916, also supported the Palestinians concerning the various wartime pledges: “There are two points involved. One is the point of our honour, and the other the point of our interest” (c653), and it would not harm Britain’s honour to admit the inconsistencies of its commitments, for instance within the Balfour Declaration itself:

It promised a Zionist home without prejudice to the civil and religious rights of the population of Palestine. A Zionist home, my Lords, undoubtedly means or implies a Zionist Government over the district in which the home is placed, and if ninety-three per cent of the population of Palestine are Arabs I do not see how you can establish other than an Arab Government without prejudice to their civil rights. That one sentence of the Balfour Declaration seems to me to involve, without overstating the case, very great difficulty of fulfilment. (c655)¹³⁵⁷

“From the point of view of honour... all these pledges should be laid out side by side” and analysed for inconsistencies, then one should simply “consider what is the fair thing to be done.” (c656) This was in stark contrast to the opinion of Cavendish, Shuckburgh and Meinertzhagen in their analysis sent to the Cabinet on 17 February 1923 [^{>159}], namely that the loss of face in the eyes of “the whole world” that would follow a repudiation of “the Jewish pledge”¹³⁵⁸ rendered the question of the “fair thing to be done” irrelevant. The Cabinet would adopt Cavendish et al.’s amoral, or immoral, view on 27 July 1923. [^{>165}; ^{>167}]

Cavendish then took the floor to try to justify the suppression of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence, to deny that the boycott of the elections had been all that successful, to defend the system of primary and secondary electors (he had misunderstood Islington’s objection to the Constitution with its Legislative Council), and to beg the question of the justice of the Mandate by appealing to Article 2 of the Mandate to justify the denial of immediate representative institutions. (cc658–60)

Lord Lamington then expressed hope that policy would change: “The late Government treated almost with contempt the case put forward for the Arab.” (c663)¹³⁵⁹ The withholding of important documents was moreover unjustified, and that included also the King-Crane Report of 1919 [^{>59}]; he then recalled how first France then Britain dropped out of that fact-finding endeavour, and wanted HMG to print that Report, which showed in detail what the people wanted, now that it had been published in the press.¹³⁶⁰ (c664) Further,

¹³⁵⁶ Mathew 2014; Jeffries 1939, p 492.

¹³⁵⁷ Also Sykes 1965, p 95.

¹³⁵⁸ CAB 24/159/6, §30.

¹³⁵⁹ Also Huneidi 1998, p 32.

¹³⁶⁰ Published by *Editor and Publisher* and *The New York Times* on 2–4 December 1922.

It was only after a visit to Palestine and Syria that I was convinced of the absolute impossibility of realising this idea of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, except in a strictly religious sense. I became convinced that nothing but the presence of our troops could ever ensure its being made a workable proposition. ... I have no prejudice against the Zionist movement [but] I hope that the Government will be more favourably inclined to listen to the representatives of the Arab population,.... (c665)

Alas, that annoying “Arab population”! Christopher Sykes, Mark Sykes’s son and himself a Zionist, wrote in 1965: “This was indeed the whole problem of Palestine: it was inhabited.”¹³⁶¹

¹³⁶¹ Sykes 1965, p 116.

John Shuckburgh, convinced that H.M.G. had built itself an impossible situation, on 4 April 1923 wrote a **memo to Cavendish**, “Personal and Secret”,¹³⁶² attempting to formulate what ought to be said to the Arabs: “I have been constantly engaged lately in searching for some way out of the Palestine slough.” The most effective way out, he ruminated, would be for *the Zionists* to significantly reduce their demands, but what the British *could* do was offer the Arabs “full self-government at once” – with conditions. (p 3) Whatever the deepest attitude of this key interlocutor were, as this memo shows he seems to have been moving towards the indigenous position – even if during this time he kept working hard with Weizmann and Meinertzhagen to protect the Zionist policy and urged his superior, Colonial Secretary Cavendish, to not even meet and talk to the Palestinian Delegation then in London.¹³⁶³ Cavendish’s ignorance to date of Zionism, together with Shuckburgh’s doubts, testify to the correctness of Sahar Huneidi’s judgment:

Indeed, seldom had Britain’s policy in Palestine seemed less of a *chose jugée* than during the first half of 1923, when the entire government seemed occupied with delving into its very foundations.¹³⁶⁴

Shuckburgh’s fledgling departure from the Zionist Mandate brought up many of the recurring themes of our history of the Palestinian-British dispute, and moreover Cavendish (‘Devonshire’) took it seriously enough to minute Shuckburgh’s memo on 10 May:

I have discussed this with Sir John Shuckburgh. As Sir H. Samuel will be coming home shortly I shall not bring the matter up at Cabinet until I have met with him. D. [Devonshire] (p 1)

A closer look at Shuckburgh’s thoughts is justified, but do not let their branchings and bloomings blind you to the actual story’s simplicity.

First, he assumed the Cabinet would decide “that the Balfour Declaration must be honoured.” However,

The breakdown (temporarily at all events) of the new Constitution [election boycott, rejection by the Arabs, >158; >160]; the weakness of our position on the literal wording of the McMahon promise; and the growing agitation both in and out of Parliament against our policy are factors that cannot be ignored.

Thus a “compromise” – between the Arabs and the Jews – had to be sought. (p 1) And it was being sought:

¹³⁶² CO 733/372/1, item 3 (pp 1-7), *all citations*.

¹³⁶³ Huneidi 1998, pp 31-32, 35-38.

¹³⁶⁴ Huneidi 1998, p 32.

After a great deal of difficulty an informal conference, over which I had the misfortune to preside, did actually take place at the Colonial Office in November 1921, at which both the [Palestine] Delegation and the Zionist representatives were present. The results of two hours discussion were entirely negative. (p 2) [¹²⁵; ¹²⁷⁻²⁸]

HMG should now “make a plain statement to the Arabs”: Cavendish’s message to them on 11 January 1923 [¹⁵⁶] was only that they should not get their hopes up for change a policy, not that there would certainly be no change of policy. (pp 2-3) Instead one should say:

The Cabinet has now completed its investigation and is prepared to take a step in advance. ... The Constitution set up by the Order in Council of 1922 was the first stage. We desire to proceed much more rapidly, in fact to cover the whole distance in one stride. We wish to give you full self-government at once, but before we can do so we are bound to satisfy ourselves on two points, viz.: (1) the maintenance under suitable conditions of the Christian Holy Places, in which the whole of Christendom is interested and (2) the fulfilment of the pledge given to the Jews in the famous Balfour Declaration. (p 3)

Fulfilling condition (1) surely went without saying, as Moslem rulers had done exactly this for many centuries. As for (2), HMG should say to the Arabs:

You know the terms of the pledge. They contemplate the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people. The phrase is a loose one and the various attempts at definition may not have been particularly happy. ... But whatever the precise significance of the phrase ‘National Home’, it must at least be held to cover (1) the due maintenance and protection of existing Jewish colonies, and (2) reasonable facilities for future Jewish immigration, settlement and enterprise. We expect you to come to a working arrangement direct with the Jews to cover these points. As soon as you have done so we shall be prepared to give you full self-government, only reserving to ourselves such powers as will enable us to see that the arrangement reached on the two reserved points (Christian Holy Places and Jewish immigration, etc.) is duly fulfilled. (pp 3-4)

This new sub-condition (1.1) was the relatively easy one, although some of the more recent Zionist colonies, the more so if they had entailed the eviction of Arab Palestinians, were in Palestinian eyes not worth “protecting”. But condition (2) was only marginally less vague than “Jewish national home”: what were “reasonable facilities”? What’s more, the self-government being offered by one of Shuckburgh’s hands was being withdrawn by the other, since Britain would retain “such powers as will enable” them to say what is reasonable. Shuckburgh’s proposal as expressed just above moreover amounted to giving “the Jews” a veto, for they could simply not make any “working arrangement” with the local population.

This seems well-meaning from Shuckburgh, but his theoretical proposal, his imagined dialogue between HMG and the locals, still left the definition of “Jewish national home” open and weak, focussing only on immigration and the accompanying “settlement” – even if the phrase “reasonable facilities for future Jewish immigration” did connote some lessening of the number of immigrants. More importantly, the proposal was a timid repudiation of two of the key “Zionist aspirations” of the Balfour Declaration [¹⁶] and the Churchill White Paper (co-authored by Shuckburgh) [¹⁴²]: (1) unlimited immigration and

eventual settlement of great portion of world Jewry and (2) this “as of right and not on sufferance”. There was moreover no mention of a Jewish state or commonwealth, nor did Shuckburgh include anything like provincial autonomy for the Jewish settlements, nor did he float the idea of political parity. In my admittedly generous reading, Shuckburgh was in effect taking the ‘national’ out of the national home, for ‘national’ strongly connoted collective political rights, and not simply some constitutionally protected immigration and respect for Jewish religion, language and culture – which the Arabs had anyway always pledged.

I cannot say whether within this framework proposed by Britain’s top permanent civil servant in charge of Palestine, head of the Middle East Department, there was any compromise that the Palestinians could have swallowed. But Shuckburgh’s secret move away from the Zionist Organization led him to indeed anticipate an “extremely” negative reaction from that side. (p 5) To my knowledge this memo never reached Palestinian eyes. Since this course was not ultimately adopted by HMG, and not discussed by the Cabinet Committee on Palestine set up on 27 June 1923 to decide definitive policy [¹⁶⁵⁻⁶⁷]¹³⁶⁵, it’s likely that it was buried quite early on.

Perhaps Shuckburgh’s tone says as much as the content of the memo. To the Arabs he would close:

The arrangement when made can be embodied in some formal document, whether in the nature of a Treaty like that with Iraq¹³⁶⁶ or otherwise, which will form part of the Organic Law of the Palestine State. This offer holds good for six months. If by the end of that time you are unable to satisfy us on the above points, we shall regard ourselves as finally absolved from all obligations and pledges what-so-ever, whether to yourselves, to the Jews or to anybody else... [and to ‘the Jews’:] if by the end of six months they have come to no agreement with the Arabs, we shall regard the Balfour Declaration as no longer binding... (p 5)

The Jews, that is, would also be told to come to an agreement with the Arabs or lose the Balfour Declaration: they would hold no veto after all.

In any case, the next time the British would say anything remotely resembling this was in the MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939 which foresaw what it regarded as “reasonable immigration”, namely a maximum of 15,000 per year for a maximum of 5 years, and independence within 10 years. And like Shuckburgh now, in 1923 (on one reading of his memo), it would simultaneously deny special provisions for the Jewish collective yet indirectly give it a veto through the power, once again, to refuse to work with the Arab majority and maintain “peace”.¹³⁶⁷ [⁴¹⁰]

19 April 1923 An-Nahda, the first Palestinian women’s economic society, is founded, stressing self-sustaining projects.

¹³⁶⁵ CAB 27/222.

¹³⁶⁶ Cmd. 2370.

¹³⁶⁷ MacDonald 1939, §§12, 14.1, 15. & §10.1.

163. Executive Committee to Nation

6 June 1923

The Arab Executive Committee, in a **Declaration to the Nation** signed by its President Musa Kazem al-Husseini on 6 June 1923, declared its boycott of the new Advisory Council which had been proposed by High Commissioner Samuel in Jerusalem after his Legislative Council scheme had failed due to the successful Arab election boycott [^{>151;} ^{>158;} ^{>160}]:

The Palestine Government has not satisfied itself with the failure it met on account of the nation's unanimous boycott of the Legislative Council and the rejection of the Constitution and it did not wish to take into consideration the fundamental demands of the nation but wishes to-day to falsify matters to public opinion and try a new experiment, the kind of which it has up till now been trying but in none of which it succeeded and that is by forming the Advisory Council to which it appointed members whose powers are only to help the present Administration based on the Zionist policy and to conform with the rule of the Constitution which is unanimously rejected by the nation and which does away with its interests and rights. ... [The AEC called] upon the members of the Advisory Council appointed by the Government and who were present at this assembly, to withdraw from the Council...¹³⁶⁸

The call for resignations was almost fully successful.¹³⁶⁹

16-20 June 1923 *The 6th Palestinian Arab Congress is held in Jaffa; participants reject the Anglo-American treaty [^{>140?}; ^{>180?}] and decide to form a delegation to London, headed again by Musa Qassem [Kazem al-] Husseini.*

¹³⁶⁸ CO 733/47, p 152, Political Report for June 1923.

¹³⁶⁹ CO 733/47, pp 153-54.

This 6th Palestine Arab Congress, held in Yaffa from 16-20 June 1923,¹³⁷⁰ first noted that the decision of the 5th Congress [p.151] to proselytize their cause throughout the world had not been energetically enough pursued, but thanked “the Liberal Party of London... and the Palestinian Committees in Egypt and New York” for their work. (p 156) The stands it took (pp 155-69) were against taxation without representation and taxation at a higher level than under the Ottomans, the revenue moreover being spent to a great extent for Zionist projects and the translation of everything into Hebrew. A tax strike could not be agreed upon because it would amount to a rebellion, and the Palestinians were not strong enough to survive the likely British reaction; a minority of more radical, younger and less wealthy delegates continued, however, to propagate such a strike.¹³⁷¹ Among the 24 resolutions adopted, broadcast to both the British and the general public, were ones in “opposition to the Rutenberg [electricity] Scheme” [see e.g. p.144], “to boycott all the Jews”, and to request the release of political prisoners and “political deportees”.

Jamal al-Husseini¹³⁷² delivered a long and highly acclaimed speech denouncing the fact that the Government

obtains taxes and distributes them to the Zionist Societies and assists Jewish immigrants, builds schools for the benefit of Jews and assists the Jewish people to make them a governing nation in Palestine. The Government first assisted the Palestine Arab farmer by means of agricultural loans but they have by power of the Jews ceased to grant such loans thereby causing the economical death of the Fellaḥ. He also said that in the terms of the Mandate which allow the High Commissioner one third of Government lands [these] lands he is granting to Jews. ... [T]he heads of all Departments are Jews, and ... there is no Arab Council to look into such vital matters. (p 160)

Jamal supported no taxation without representation, but the issue died after being referred to an “economic committee”.¹³⁷³

Salim Abdul Rahman captured the general tenor of the Congress:

You know gentlemen that I was the first man who drew his sword in the face of the Turks and enlisted in the army of King Faisal. Those who drew their swords the first time will not hesitate to draw them a second time for their beloved country and we refuse the Jewish National Home being in Palestine. (p 157)

¹³⁷⁰ CO 733/47, pp 155-69, ‘Summary of the proceedings of the Sixth Palestine Arab Congress, Clayton to Devonshire’, within the Monthly Political Report for June dated 12 July 1923, *all citations*. Also CO 733/47, pp 149-51; Kayyali 1978, pp 119-20; Robson 2011, p 81. Walid Khalidi gives the date of this Congress in Jaffa as October 1925. (Khalidi 1984, p 99)

¹³⁷¹ Ayyad 1999, pp 129-30.

¹³⁷² See Palestinian Journeys > ‘Jamal al-Husseini’.

¹³⁷³ Ayyad 1999, p 101.

As usual, the opposition was to the Jewish National Home “in Palestine”; the separate question of the right of ‘the Jews’ to a Jewish home or state *in principle, somewhere*, had not yet arisen.

In addition, opposition was expressed to the 5 June 1923 agreement between Britain and the Hashemite rulers of the Hejaz and Transjordan which “recognized the British Mandate”; in the event, Kings Hussein and Abdullah respected the Palestinians’ protest, declined to sign the agreement, and, according to Mazin Qumsiyeh, it was partly for this reason that Hussein soon lost out to the Saud family in Arabia as British favourites.¹³⁷⁴ A new Delegation to London was chosen consisting of Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Amin Bey Tamimi and Wadi Bustani, departing on 15 July with £1000 to spend during two months. (p 165)

The *Times* of London on 17 July 1923 reported deprecatingly¹³⁷⁵ that this 5-day meeting of about 100 delegates passed 27 resolutions. “There had never been any question, and not much opportunity, of election in the ordinary sense to this or any preceding Congress”; “they were simply the moving spirits of the anti-Zionist ‘Moslem-Christian Association’; but “in practice the Congress must be reckoned with as expressing, and very largely forming, the opinion of Arab Palestine”. Their opinions were shared, that is, by most of the population, and they had the power to defeat the smaller group of “sane and moderate men such as Ragheb Bey an-Nashashibi... and Arif Pasha ed-Dejani”, for instance when they successfully carried out the “boycott by the Arabs of the elections to the Legislative Council” and “the resignation from the new Palestine Advisory Council” of such moderates. The Jaffa Congress, so the *Times*, was indecisive on non-payment of taxes, and its

exhibition of arrogance and political unwisdom receives its highest expression in Resolution 9, where it hands over to the Executive Committee the duty of drawing out a revised Constitution for Palestine...

Britain was evidently not “arrogant” in drawing up or enforcing a “constitution” for a small country in the Near East.

¹³⁷⁴ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 63.

¹³⁷⁵ CO 733/54, p 447.

165. Cavendish Committee

27 June 1923

This entry covers several actions and statements on or around 27 June 1923 related to HMG's re-examination of its Zionist policy laid down a year earlier in the Churchill White Paper [>142]. Now, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin secretly **appointed some Cabinet members to a committee** to decide the new Government's Palestine policy once and for all – repudiate the Jewish *national* home or keep building it? This 'Palestine Committee' or 'Cavendish Committee' consisted of Colonial Secretary Cavendish as Chairman, Foreign Affairs Secretary Curzon, War Secretary the Earl of Derby, India Secretary William Peel [*also* >336], Air Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare, Admiralty Secretary Leo Amery MP (an ardent Zionist and Colonial Secretary 6 Nov 1924 – 4 June 1929), Board of Trade President Sir P. Lloyd Greame, Board of Education President E.F.L. Wood MP, Scotland Secretary Viscount Novar, Postmaster-General Sir L. Worthington-Evans MP, and a single friend of the Palestinians, Treasury Secretary Sir William Joynson-Hicks MP [>147].¹³⁷⁶ This Cabinet committee had access to the exhaustive background paper, signed by Cavendish and presented to the Cabinet on 17 February 1923, which had been written by the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office under John Shuckburgh [>159], the same man who expressed his doubts about the Zionist mandate in a secret analysis presented to Cavendish on 4 April [>162].

The topic was evidently of greatest importance, with the Mandate after all awaiting the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne, and opposition was strong especially in the House of Lords, where on 27 March 1923 Lord Grey, for instance, who had overseen both the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, had stated that given Palestine's overwhelming Arab majority, unless Palestine got "an Arab Government" Britain would be violating the "civil rights" of the Arabs which the Balfour Declaration pledged it would protect.¹³⁷⁷ [>161]

Ardent Zionist Richard Meinertzhagen, [>see e.g. >74; >116] who as second-highest member of the Colonial Office's Middle East Department was present at all the Committee's meetings between 5 and 27 July 1923, later recalled the opposition, on grounds identical to those of Grey, of most British officials in Palestine back in 1919, for instance of General Clayton, whom Meinertzhagen had replaced as Chief Political Officer but who was Chief Secretary from 1922 until 1925 and mooted as Herbert Samuel's successor as High Commissioner. Soon after the Cavendish Committee's Report [>167] Meinertzhagen would complain about the politicians' anti-Zionism in a private letter to Samuel:

¹³⁷⁶ CAB 24/160/91, p 1.

¹³⁷⁷ Hansard 1923, c655; Maugham 1939, Annex A, Enclosure; Barbour 1946, p 107.

I deplored any attempt to make Zionism inoperative, which appeared to be the object of the Palestine ['Cavendish'] Committee, which had recently sat in London. I believed this Committee regarded the Balfour Declaration as an unfortunate expression of policy and the Mandate as an awkward implement.¹³⁷⁸

He was also alarmed that a petition against Zionism had been recently submitted by many members of the House of Commons; this was perhaps the 'Palestine Memorial' dated July 1923 which by 1 August had been signed by 111 (or perhaps 120 [>>169]) MPs and Lords and sent by Frank Sanderson MP to the Cabinet Committee and to Colonial Undersecretary William Ormsby-Gore, who in 1921-22 had been the U.K.'s man on the Permanent Mandates Commission.¹³⁷⁹

We, the undersigned... desire to draw attention to certain essential facts of the Palestine Arab Case, which we understand is engaging the serious consideration of the Middle East Cabinet Committee now sitting. ... We... urge that the PLEDGES [*inter alia* to Sherif Hussein (>10) and in the Anglo-French Declaration (>28)] on our side should be taken into full account in the findings of your Committee. ... To impose on an unwilling people who form 93% of the population, the dominating influence of another race is a violation of natural rights, and is condemned in Art. 22. of the League of Nations Covenant [>46].

Just as in most Palestinian documents, "natural rights" were appealed to – and they were clearly distinguished from what stood in Article 22.

They "venture to suggest, therefore, that the whole population... should be consulted, and a form of government agreed upon in harmony with their wishes" be established. The "grievances embodied in Arab Protests" were justified, to wit:

The Zionising of their Administration strengthened by the existence of a Zionist Executive officially recognised [>23], and the making of Hebrew an Official Language. A Legislative Council giving them an ineffective Minority, and the still worse alternative of an Advisory Council. Heavy taxation of the Arabs to keep up an expensive Zionist Government with its debt of £2,400,000... The preference given to the Zionists in acquiring State and other lands.

A year earlier, on 21 June and 4 July 1922, 60 Lords and 35 MPs had voted against the Zionist Mandate [>144]; more were now signing such a letter.

While the exact motives for the growing criticism of Zionism are outside the scope of this chronology, according to Quigley they sprang from a waning belief in the merits of Zionism *per se* and strong opposition to it within the Palestine Administration – not to mention unanimous opposition on the part of the indigenous Arabs and some lingering doubts over what McMahon had actually promised Hussein.¹³⁸⁰ The British side of the Palestinian-British dialogue was not united *for* Zionism the way the Palestinians were united against it.

¹³⁷⁸ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 133-34.

¹³⁷⁹ CO 733/54, pp 468-82; Huneidi 1998, p 36; also Huneidi 2001, pp 73-75.

¹³⁸⁰ Quigley 2011, pp 268-75; Mathew 2011, pp 34-36; Mathew 2013, pp 232-34.

On 27 June, in preparation for the imminent Parliamentary debates on the Cavendish Committee's recommendations [p165-67], Shuckburgh, likely with input from Meinertzhagen, wrote down for Cavendish a refutation of 16 opposition arguments that had emerged in the Lords debate of 27 March [p161].¹³⁸¹ First and foremost, the Colonial Secretary was to defend the Legislative Council which, although the "Government has a majority as against any combination of two parties" and "there was no intention of giving the elected members power to control the Government", at least "by giving [some] representation... we gave the Arabs every opportunity of making their wishes known..." (p 317) The "whole policy", as Lord Islington had been arguing, was not a "hopeless failure"; it was just that "the political question between Jew and Arab presents very great difficulty, which we have not yet succeeded in solving..." (p 318) The question of the cost to British and Palestinian taxpayers was to be handled by saying that "there is no foundation for the suggestion that the cost of defence is increased on account of the policy of Zionism." (p 320) For a legal justification there was the usual litany of the League of Nations at San Remo, the Treaty of Sèvres, and the basically-accepted draft Mandate. (p 322) [p78; p92; p146] Finally, "We cannot accept Lord Grey's statement [in March in the Lords, p161] that 'a Zionist home undoubtedly means or implies a Zionist Government over the district in which the home is placed'". (p 323)

In the House of Lords on 27 June as well, clear and typical speeches were given by Mandate critic Lord Islington, Mandate supporter Milner (who had been a member of the War Cabinet issuing the Balfour Declaration), Cavendish, and Sykes-Picot overseer Lord Grey.¹³⁸² Islington re-stated his belief that

you will never be able to persuade the Arab and Christian populations of Palestine, who form the large and preponderating majority of the people of that country, to assent to a Zionist system of Government... (cc655) There is only one way of maintaining a system which is disliked and discredited by the people of a country, and that is by force. ... That will mean that a British military garrison and a British recruited and controlled police will have to be employed to put down the violence that may occur, and against the very people whom we, the British nation, have gone to that country to support and to assist, according to our pledges, towards self-government. (cc658-59)

This prediction was 100% correct.

The Palestinians, so Islington further, had with good reason boycotted the elections to a Legislative Council and the creation of an Advisory Council

because they would not accept the form of an Election, however fair it may be, which places them at the end of it in an entirely ineffective position in regard to the Executive authority in the country;... [HMG] must see, to-day, that you really cannot reconcile these two conflicting points in the [Balfour] Declaration and the Mandate... (cc656-57)

The King-Crane report should be published, as well as the McMahon-Hussein correspondence (cc660), he continued, and the members of the present Cabinet and the newly-

¹³⁸¹ CO 733/54, pp 314-28, *all citations*.

¹³⁸² Hansard 1923b, *all citations*.

set-up Cabinet Committee who “were the strongest opponents of this before they were in office” should make the courageous decision to resign the Mandate. (c662) He could only have had mainly Curzon in mind.

Milner’s rebuttal included a statement of his knowledge that in fact the Zionist “influx” was good for the locals; that “there is room for several millions” in Palestine; that Britain’s Zionist policy had brought “material progress”; in short,

I cannot imagine how any fair-minded Arab can fail to recognise either the sincerity of British policy with regard to his race, or the enormous advantages he has derived from British assistance,... (cc668, 669)

This materialistic paternalism pervaded Zionist minds.

But mainly, so Milner further, the overall picture was deciding. Implicitly admitting a certain conflict of interests,

To hold the balance even between these various interests – to administer fairly what is, in a sense, and must always remain, not an Arab country or a Jewish country, but, if I may use the word, an international country in which all the world has a special interest – I think some Mandatory Power will always be required. ... [I]f the Arabs go the length of claiming Palestine as one of their countries in the same sense as Mesopotamia or Arabia proper is an Arab country, then I think they are flying in the face of facts, of all history, of all tradition, and of associations of the most important character – I had almost said the most sacred character. Palestine can never be regarded as a country on the same footing as the other Arab countries. You cannot ignore all history and tradition in the matter. You cannot ignore the fact that this is the cradle of two of the great religions of the world. It is a sacred land to the Arabs, but it is also a sacred land to the Jew and the Christian, and the future of Palestine cannot possibly be left to be determined by the temporary impressions and feelings of the Arab majority in the country of the present day. (c669)

A neologism in political science, Palestine was now an “international country” over which “all the world” had proprietary rights – rights exercised, to be sure, by Britain. And speaking of facts, Milner literally spoke as if there were no Christian Arabs and as if the millennia-long “impressions and feelings” of the non-European inhabitants were “temporary”. This speech firmed up the doctrine of Palestine exceptionalism – the fallback position whenever Zionism’s back is up against the wall.¹³⁸³

Devonshire (Cavendish) then refused the demand made by both Islington and Milner that all previous correspondence of HMG on the matter of Palestine be made public, merely asserting that “it is contrary to the public interest that these Papers should be laid.” (c671) He dodged responsibility with the hoary Government argument that it was

our duty as the Mandatory power to continue the government of the country... according to the instructions in the Mandate [because] [t]he Mandate is not merely a national obligation, it is an international obligation, and the Balfour Declaration was the basis on which we accepted from the principal Allied Powers the position of Mandatory Power in Palestine. (cc672, 673)

¹³⁸³ See also Shavit 2013 & Alcott 2015.

In the Beginning, that is, was a British Declaration, and to now “resign the Mandate” would be to “resign [the] position of trust... deliberately placed upon us”, and that would “be taking a grave risk”. (c674) Alas, policy could not be reversed because we initiated that policy and breaking it would both unethically violate a “trust” and tarnish Britain’s reputation.

Lord Grey closed the debate by asking

how can you reconcile the Zionist policy of the Balfour Declaration with doing no prejudice to the religious or civil rights of the population of the country. That is the real problem. It is quite easy with regard to religious rights, because, whatever Government there is, I suppose nobody contemplates that there would be any prejudice to those. But civil rights are a very different matter. If this Zionist policy is to mean a Zionist Government it means a predominantly Zionist element in the Government, when over 90 per cent. of the population is really Arab. That is really not consistent with the civil rights. (c680)

Although his Committee’s meetings would not start until 5 July, Cavendish’s position in this debate was exactly that of the Committee’s report one month later [^{>167}].

High Commissioner Herbert Samuel was the only person invited by the Cabinet Committee on Palestine to testify before it.¹³⁸⁴ Judging by Colonial Office records, Huneidi's observations¹³⁸⁵ are correct that

It was during that same period that the third Arab Delegation, encouraged by the appointment of the committee, arrived in London. Even before they made an official request to be heard by the committee, Ormsby-Gore, undersecretary at the Colonial Office and an ardent Zionist, wrote to the colonial secretary on 19 July that 'I deplore most emphatically the idea that the Cabinet Committee should see those people or make any concessions.'¹³⁸⁶ ... Shuckburgh also advised against receiving them, noting that the delegation was 'in no sense an official body and to allow them to appear before a cabinet committee would be giving them too much importance', especially as they represented 'the extremist section of the Palestine Arabs', who constitute a majority perhaps, but certainly not the whole of the Arab population.¹³⁸⁷

Huneidi adds that the reason given the Delegation by Shuckburgh for its exclusion was that "the committee were not hearing oral evidence" (which was not true, because Samuel was invited to testify), but that "the real reason the delegation was not received was that Samuel objected to its being heard."¹³⁸⁸ Compare once again, though, Shuckburgh's secret, more pro-Palestinian letter to Cavendish of 4 April. [>162]

In any case, Samuel talked at the first and second meetings of the Cabinet Committee on 5 and 9 July 1923, attended as well by Colonial Office personnel Shuckburgh, Meintertzhagen, Ormsby-Gore, H.W. Young and R.V. Vernon:

The majority of the Arab population are opposed to the Zionist idea, but they are opposed mainly to the Zionist idea as they understand it, and not to the Zionist idea as it has been expressed officially by His Majesty's Government and has been accepted officially by the Zionist Organization. ... [T]hey are very much opposed to a Jewish State, to a Jewish Government, to being overwhelmed by a flood of Jewish immigration, and to their land being taken away from them for the sake of the Jews.¹³⁸⁹

That is, they were opposed to the vision Samuel himself had put forth in 1915 [>8] and had worked for from 1915 until his appointment by Churchill as High Commissioner in

¹³⁸⁴ CAB 24/171/51, p 403; CAB 27/222, p 4.

¹³⁸⁵ CO 733/54, pp 419-23; Huneidi 2001, p 73; also Huneidi 1998, p 36.

¹³⁸⁶ CO 733/54, p 423, 'Ormsby-Gore to Secretary of State', 19 July 1923.

¹³⁸⁷ CO 733/54, p 419-21, Shuckburgh to Masterton-Smith, Ormsby-Gore and Cavendish, 24 July 1923; also Huneidi 2011, p 73.

¹³⁸⁸ Huneidi 1998, note 93, citing Porath 1974, p 174.

¹³⁸⁹ CAB 27/222, p 7.

mid-1920 [>17; >31; >32; >35; >105; >115; >153], and which in fact was being realised, under Samuel's direction, before their very eyes. Yet he claimed this was not His Majesty's Government's "idea" of Zionism.

Many Committee members, so Samuel, were upset because of the broken "alleged pledges given to the Arabs" by McMahon; after noting that Sir Gilbert Clayton, "now Chief Secretary for Palestine, was the man who drafted that correspondence... and he told me specifically that Palestine was excluded", Curzon interjected that "He must have been a bad draftsman, that is all I can say." Samuel's cryptic reply: "And they never thought otherwise."¹³⁹⁰ For some reason Lord Grey was not a member of this Committee.

Samuel's glowing defence of Zionist colonisation and British even-handedness continued for thirty-two more pages of minutes, full of detail concerning the amount of Zionist investment and number and quality of Zionist immigrants; Curzon and Peel (who both nevertheless in the end abjectly supported continuing the British implementation of the Balfour Declaration) played the role of the critics of Jewish favouritism.¹³⁹¹ Had a Palestinian been present, he could justifiably have protested that they were arguing at cross purposes because, as we have seen, the issue was not one of economic prosperity or the "quality" of the European immigrants.

24 July 1923 *'The Treaty of Lausanne, containing the Mandate texts, is signed by Turkey and the Allied Powers, needing only ratification by their Governments at home. Signing for Britain was Horace Rumbold, later a member of the Peel Commission* [>309; >336].¹³⁹²

¹³⁹⁰ CAB 27/222, p 8.

¹³⁹¹ CAB 27/222, pp 9-25, *double-sided*; Quigley 2011, pp 256-58; Mathew 2011.

¹³⁹² https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

The **Report of the Cabinet-level ‘Committee on Palestine’ chaired by Colonial Secretary Cavendish**¹³⁹³ – entitled like Herbert Samuel’s 1915 essay ‘The Future of Palestine’ and taking “outside evidence” only from now Palestine High Commissioner Samuel (p 3) – was submitted on 27 July 1923 to the Cabinet after a few weeks of deliberation. The Cabinet approved it on 31 July.¹³⁹⁴ It began by trying to justify why only Samuel had been heard:

We have had the advantage of hearing a full exposition of the present situation in Palestine from the High Commissioner, Sir H. Samuel, who answered all our questions with great readiness. We have not taken any other outside evidence, mainly from the difficulty of discriminating between the witnesses who might desire to be heard, still more because the time at our disposal [was insufficient]. (p 3)

Palestinian voices had arrived in London on approximately 22 July (3rd Delegation, >164; >169), asking to be heard, and it is hard to see that much “discrimination” was needed to know that the voice of the head of the Delegation, Musa Kazem al-Husseini, was a legitimate Palestinian voice; he and the other two members, Amin Bey Tamini and Wadi Etfendi Bustani, were staying a few blocks away. But as we have seen [>166], and according to Huneidi, Colonial Office undersecretary William Ormsby-Gore was against “seeing those people or making any concessions”, and Middle East Department head John Shuckburgh didn’t want to “give them too much importance”, and anyway they were officially not regarded as officially representative of the population of Palestine.¹³⁹⁵

Ormsby-Gore moreover accepted the view of the Governor of Haifa, Colonel Symes, that Bustani “is the worst scoundrel in the place, a dangerous demagogue, violently opposed to our administration, an ‘Asiatic’ with pride and ambition”.¹³⁹⁶ Just imagine, an Asiatic citizen of Palestine! Shuckburgh, for his part, wrote to Ormsby-Gore “confidentially” that Herbert Samuel was “averse” to letting them appear, and in a “Note” Samuel himself deprecated Bustani as not even a “recognised lawyer” who had overcharged his Arab clients during various land disputes with the Zionists; he was

a man of very excitable disposition; at times quite sensible; at others incapable of forming or expressing reasonable opinions. ... The other two members... belong to the less moderate section. The more moderate members of the previous Delegation:- Shibly Jamal and Mouein Bey al Madi have been eliminated.¹³⁹⁷

¹³⁹³ CAB 24/161/51, pp 1-7, *all citations (stamped pagination = pp 201-05), ‘Committee on Palestine, The Future of Palestine, Report’, dated 27 July 1923; also CAB 23/46/15, pp 191, 201-04 (double-sided); also CAB 27/222, including minutes of the four meetings on 5, 9, 24 and 27 July 1923; also CO 733/54, pp 455-66, a late draft; also CO 733/58/35, pp 309ff.*

¹³⁹⁴ CAB 23/46/15, p 191.

¹³⁹⁵ CO 733/54, pp 419-21, 423 (17, 19 & 24 July 1923); Huneidi 1998, p 36; also Huneidi 2001, p 73.

¹³⁹⁶ CO 733/54, p 423; see also Tibawi 1977, p 270.

¹³⁹⁷ CO 733/54, p 427.

Shuckburgh described Musa Kazem as “an agreeable old gentleman, but hopelessly obstinate and impervious to argument. He speaks no English”...; and Samuel revealed:

Our present policy aims at rallying the moderates to our side. [They are] the people who are least in sympathy with Musa Kazem and his confederates.¹³⁹⁸

Thus, virtually all of the “non-Jewish community” in Palestine were extremists, because as all official enquiries had proven and would continue to prove, the populace stood virtually unanimously behind Musa Kazem and the PAC when it came to the Mandate, Zionism, immigration, land sales and independence. [>59; >88; >122; >220; >233; >336; >376; >410; >438; >442; >452]. Note also that Cavendish’s memorandum to the Cabinet of 17 February 1923 [>159], as well, had been of the view that the Arabs as well as many Britons perceived “the injustice of imposing upon a country a policy to which the great majority of its inhabitants are opposed.”¹³⁹⁹ And the British had directly witnessed the sheer total boycott of their laboriously staged elections of early 1923. [>158; >160] All of this puts to shame the Cavendish Committee’s methodology of taking testimony from nobody but staunch Zionist HMG employee Samuel.

The Report was in substance actually very critical of the Zionist Mandate. It conceded the contradictory nature of Articles 2 and 6 of the Mandate [>146], which on the one hand called for “Jewish immigration”, “close settlement” of Jews and the “Jewish National Home”, and on the other for the safeguarding of the “rights and position” or the “civil and religious rights” of the non-Jews:

It is difficult to blame those who argue that the two parts of this Article [Mandate §6] are inconsistent with each other, and, indeed, that the entire Mandate is built on the fallacy of attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable, and to combine in the same framework the creation of Jewish privileges with the maintenance of Arab rights. (p 5)¹⁴⁰⁰

The same characteristic of the Balfour Declaration was not explicitly mentioned. But this logical problem was ultimately not important because, for future policy,

It goes without saying that the consent of the Zionists would also have to be procured. We must do nothing that could be interpreted by them as a breach of faith, and we do not want to staunch the flow of the subscriptions from the Jewish world, which are still essential for the material prosperity, perhaps even for the continued existence, of their colonies in Palestine.... (p 6)¹⁴⁰¹

As for the Arabs, since they rejected the proposed Legislative and Advisory Councils [*e.g.* 137; >158; >160] Britain should make a “great concession” (p 6) to them in the form of an “Arab Agency... exactly analogous to that accorded to the Jewish Agency”, which would be nominated rather than elected, would be consulted and would give advice on certain matters, and was being offered only on condition that the Arabs accept it as a “final settlement” and give “absolute and unequivocal acceptance of the compromise”, thereafter giving up

¹³⁹⁸ CO 733/54, pp 425, 420.

¹³⁹⁹ CAB 24/159/6, p 11; Quigley 2011, p 269; *see also* Wasserstein 1978, pp 126-30.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Also Huneidi 2001, p 75.

¹⁴⁰¹ Also CAB 23/46/15, p 203.

their fundamental goals; it added that its one witness, Samuel, thought this a practical idea: "Sir Herbert Samuel is of opinion that this proposal may be accepted..." (pp 5, 6) Sole witness Samuel, as usual, was dead wrong. [>170]

The Committee indeed fundamentally misjudged Arab political opinion:

If we study their petitions and speeches we find that it is not so much the existence of the Mandate, or the Balfour Declaration, or the recognition of a Jewish National Home... to which they object, as it is the preferential position which has been accorded to the Zionists in the country, and the universal Arab belief that the scales are weighted against the Arabs in the Administration. (p 4)

Which "petitions and speeches" had been studied, I do not know, but evidently not the ones heretofore looked at in this chronology, almost all of which disagreed with the very "existence of the Mandate" and all of which rejected the Balfour Declaration. (It is hard to believe that John Shuckburgh could write such a plainly false estimate.) At any rate, the decision was made that an Arab Agency should be offered which would placate the Arabs and "succeed in removing the sting". (p 5)

The Committee taxed as "Arab extremists" those "who want representative Government" (p 6), which says everything. And the Arabs are mistaken if they

think that a complete reversal of policy is still possible, and that by refusing all compromise, perhaps even by organising some form of passive resistance, they may induce His Majesty's Government, if not to abandon the Mandate, at least to give to Palestine a full measure of self-government which they could utilise to obtain a complete ascendancy over the numerically small minority of Jews. (p 4)

Nor was it possible, "as in the case of Iraq, to place a limit of time to our commitments and our expenditure in Palestine". (I believe the Iraqis in 1920 had engaged in *active* resistance.) The reason:

The circumstances... differ *in toto*. In Iraq we are dealing with an Arab State and an Arab Government, which has already an organised existence, and the entry of which into the League of Nations we contemplate in a few years' time. There is no parallel to this in Palestine, where the Arabs in present circumstances can scarcely be regarded as capable either of forming a Government or constituting a State. In Iraq we are under no commitments to a particular class of the population as we are to the Zionists in Palestine. In Iraq we are not present, as we are in the Holy Land, as the trustees, so to speak, of civilisation, into whose hands has been committed by the world a sacred trust that it would be almost shameful to abandon. (p 6)

Iraq was in fact no longer strictly under British mandate, but a quasi-independent state since 10 October 1922, due to the Iraqi Revolt of 1920 and Britain's own political decision to go into treaty relationship with a quasi-independent, quasi-mandated Iraqi entity. And Palestine had as yet no "organised existence" because the British wanted it that way. But Cavendish and his committee wrote as if this were a fact of nature.

Par for the course, on the other hand, was the racist paternalism: In this passage the Moslem, Christian and Jewish Palestinians were seen to be in need of outside "trustees",

incapable of “civilisation” and presumably disposed to destroy or desecrate each other’s holy places as soon as Samuel turned his back – although they had behaved in precisely the opposite manner for thirteen centuries, respectively two millennia.

And speaking of “our expenditure in Palestine”:

Sir H. Samuel, in his recorded evidence, placed before us his estimate of the future of Palestine, both as regards the military responsibilities and the financial obligations which it will entail,... These estimates may turn out to be unduly sanguine; already they have to some extent been checked by the less rosy forecast of Sir G. Clayton. (pp 6-7)

To be clear: HMG had witnessed the limited rebellions of spring 1920 and spring 1921, knew of the Palestinians’ resolve to die if necessary defending their freedom, and were thus aware that one price of its pushing through the Zionist part of the Mandate, in addition to a money price, was considerable military violence and bloodshed. They estimated that aspect of the “future of Palestine” with eyes wide open. But they regarded the Jewish national home and the denial of democracy as *worth it*.

At any rate, the arguments within the Cabinet Committee pro and con show that there *were* some who supported HMG’s retaining the Palestine mandate but were critical of the Jewish national home policy – mainly Curzon and Joynson-Hicks.¹⁴⁰² In the Committee Curzon had a last chance to fully oppose the Zionism he so clearly disagreed with [>15; >45; >54; >72; >85; >94; >146], and his not doing so was another narrow escape for Zionism and a blot on Curzon’s record.

Along the way the Committee claimed that they had been open-minded, i.e.,

the alternative of a complete reversal of the policy hitherto pursued is one that, whatever the price that might have to be paid for it, we have not dogmatically refused to consider. (p 6)

Nevertheless, they in the end did not want to “tear up *in toto*... the White Paper of last summer” (p 3): when all had been said, a majority found that despite the irreconcilability of respecting Arab rights and privileging Jewish Zionists, despite the admittedly undemocratic nature of the set-up, despite Arab dissatisfaction with and rebellion against Britain’s policy, and despite high actual and foreseeable military and financial costs, there was no turning back. The argumentation was not based on ethical or political content but rather on the international support HMG had itself orchestrated, on its supposed prestige in the eyes of the Zionists, and on sunk investments:

There are some of our number [in the Committee] who think that the [Balfour] Declaration was both unnecessary and unwise, and who hold that our subsequent troubles have sprung in the main from its adoption. But that was nearly six years ago. ... [E]ver since it has been the accepted policy of His Majesty’s Government [and] by the whole of our Allies, that it met with especial favour in America, that it was officially endorsed at San Remo, that it figured in the original Treaty of Sèvres, and that it was textually reproduced in the Mandate for Pales-

¹⁴⁰² Also Matthew 2011.

tine [, it] has been the basis upon which Zionist co-operation in the development of Palestine has been freely given and upon which very large sums of Jewish money have since been subscribed. (p 3)

Palestine was being presented here as a commercial business.

Concluding:

Whether this policy has been wise or unwise, the above considerations... possess a cumulative weight from which it is well-nigh impossible for a Government to extricate itself without a substantial sacrifice of consistency and self-respect, if not honour. Those of us who have disliked the policy are not prepared to make that sacrifice. Those of us who approved the policy throughout would, of course, speak in much less equivocal terms. (p 3)¹⁴⁰³

If this is accurate, then Curzon and Joynson-Hicks, who had “disliked the policy”, had caved. At any rate, the imperative was to avoid “breaking faith with those [the Zionists] to whom we are deeply and honourably pledged”. (p 4) The pledges to the Arabs, it seems, were not only fuzzy but neither deep nor honourable. Just as with the previous Cabinet’s decision to put “the prestige of this country in the eyes of Jews throughout the world” above all the costly and undemocratic aspects of sticking with the Balfour Declaration,¹⁴⁰⁴ [>119; >142] the bottom line was here not to be internationally embarrassed by letting down the Zionists.

Thus, to the extent the Committee paid attention to the ethics or political science of the issue at all, considerable validity was conceded to the position that the policy was, from that point of view, unwise, implicitly unjust. But immoral decisions, evidently, must sometimes be pursued regardless, in the interest namely of “self-respect” and “honour”. Finally, as a practical matter, “an end must be placed to the agitation, whether in Palestine or outside, which has been the fruitful source of so much trouble, expense, and even bloodshed.” (p 6) Yet nothing was being given to the Arab majority to get them to “end... the agitation”.

This Report was marked “Secret” and it remained so, because it was suppressed, until the early 1970s. It was thus only indirectly part of the dialogue with the indigenous Palestinians, even if the delegation visiting London was likely aware of what was going on through their contact with Joynson-Hicks. The full-Cabinet conclusions adopting the Cabinet-Committee point of view, dated 31 July, although marked “Secret”, might have been accessible at least in paraphrase from various politicians including Curzon.¹⁴⁰⁵

The Cavendish Committee Report showed in some detail where HMG was ‘coming from’, and the Palestinians felt the effects, if not the specific words, of the document. Its suppression meant moreover that this first official Government admission that the Mandate was contradictory (and thus impossible to carry out) would have to wait until the same admission in the Peel Commission Report fourteen years later¹⁴⁰⁶ [>336]. The Passfield

¹⁴⁰³ See also Quigley 2011, pp 276-77 & Quigley 2022, pp 129-32.

¹⁴⁰⁴ CAB 23/26/25, pp 311-12.

¹⁴⁰⁵ CAB 23/46/15, pp 191, 201-04.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Peel 1937, XX §17.

White Paper which appeared in the meantime, namely on 21 October 1930 [234], would still pretend as if the circle could be squared, even if the memoranda and investigations it built upon of Chancellor [218], Shaw [220] and Hope Simpson [233] pointed to the British policy's basic contradictoriness.

With the Balfour Declaration, it was 1:0 for Britain. With this Cabinet decision, made after some serious wavering, it was 2:0. (With the Black Letter of 13 February 1931 it would be 3:0 and game over for the next eight years.)

1921-24 [*The Rutenberg electricity monopoly concession was considered and granted during these years, representing a specific case of denial of sovereignty, in this case over the exploitation of a natural resource, water power.*]¹⁴⁰⁷

¹⁴⁰⁷ See Jeffries 1939, pp 127-28, 427-41; Norris 2013, pp 122, 187.

In the summer of 1923 Musa Alami, son of Faidi Alami, former Jerusalem Mayor and Member of the Ottoman Parliament, returned to Cambridge where he had trained as a lawyer at Trinity Hall during 1919-22.¹⁴⁰⁸ He reacted as follows to the Cabinet decision of 31 July to keep on with business as usual but with the sop of an Arab Agency alongside the Jewish Agency, an announcement to that effect having been made in Palestine by High Commissioner Samuel,¹⁴⁰⁹ [¹⁶⁷]:

The Arabs had never budged from their initial position that the imposition of the Mandate was unjust because it infringed the promises of independence which they firmly believed the British Government had made to them; and now that the principle of self-determination was abroad and had been officially adopted by the League of Nations [⁴⁶], he felt that the Mandate ran counter to it and was therefore actually illegal, so that to co-operate in carrying out its terms would have been tantamount to complicity. As for the Arab Agency proposal, this seemed to him little short of an insult; Palestine was an Arab country and the Jewish immigrants were intruders who were being thrust upon it by force, so that to accept the proposal, even though it might have enabled the Arabs to deal more effectively with the Administration at all levels and thereby to counteract Jewish pressure on it, would have put their community on the same level as the intruders, which was intolerable.¹⁴¹⁰

Parity was intolerable. The offer was moreover “conditional on the Arabs accepting the Mandate and all its implications”.¹⁴¹¹ While going along would have been to endorse a version of unjustified parity, Alami also clearly identified the dilemma of the colonised: Accepting the Arab Agency would have “enabled” them to fight back. Standing silently on principle always had to contend with participating under protest.

Although there were two sides, that is, to the issue of accepting some participation in running Palestine, Alami and a large majority of the Palestinian elite were against it because, in their eyes, “the offer was conditioned on its being understood that acceptance signified the settlement of all Arab claims, together with Arab recognition of the Balfour Declaration and all that it implied.”¹⁴¹² As the Cavendish Committee itself put it, the Arab Agency would be offered only as part of a “final settlement” that left the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration intact.¹⁴¹³

¹⁴⁰⁸ See also Bethell 1979, pp 194-99.

¹⁴⁰⁹ CAB 23/46/15, p 191.

¹⁴¹⁰ Furlonge 1969, p 84.

¹⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹² Barbour 1946, p 111.

¹⁴¹³ CAB 24/161/51, p 6.

Recall that the 6th Palestine Arab Congress, meeting 16-20 June 1923 in Yaffa [[>]163; [>]164], had as usual concretised the desire for self-rule, more specifically proclaimed the principle of 'no taxation without representation', discussed the pros and cons of a movement to refuse to pay taxes, called for a boycott of Rutenberg's electricity, and sent the 3rd Delegation to London consisting of Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Amin Bey Tamini and Wadi Effendi Bustani. As we saw, this Delegation had left for London on 15 July 1923 hoping to lobby MPs and the Ministry of Overseas Colonies [*also* [>]167] and arriving on approximately 22 July. They had wanted to testify before the Cavendish-led Cabinet-level 'Palestine Committee' then holding its meetings, but the Committee had rejected their requests and interviewed only Herbert Samuel¹⁴¹⁴ [[>]166], although in one such request **Musa Kazem had explained to Cavendish** that the people of Palestine regarded the Cabinet committee as "a step, on the part of the British Government, towards a fair and equitable solution of the Palestine problem"¹⁴¹⁵.

Yet according to Lesch, "the delegation was not even informed that it could not address the committee until August 1", i.e. four days after Devonshire's Report to the Cabinet [[>]167] and one day after the Cabinet had accepted the Committee's report – and found it sufficient to convey to the people back in Palestine only the decision to offer the Arabs an 'Arab Agency'.¹⁴¹⁶ On 27 July, indeed, Shuckburgh advised Undersecretary of State for the Colonies Ormsby-Gore that the Palestine Committee had

decided that an interview between Und. S. of S. and the Delegation had better be postponed for a short time [and a] point to remember is that the existence of the Cabinet Cee on Palestine has never been officially announced. Sir M. Hankey is doubtless concerned (very rightly) to preserve the privacy of Cabinet Committees in general.¹⁴¹⁷

Thereupon the Delegation sent the Committee **a memo** sometime during August demanding the usual: "The only remedy to the present state [is] the establishment of a national representative government in Palestine."¹⁴¹⁸ Later in August it proceeded to the United States to explain its "struggle with Zionism".¹⁴¹⁹

The Arab Executive Committee on 2 October would review the Delegation's report of its activities in London (between 22 July and 13 September), which was read out to it by Wadi Bustani.¹⁴²⁰ It claimed to have succeeded in working closely with British supporters

¹⁴¹⁴ PREM 1/24.

¹⁴¹⁵ CO 733/58, p 308, 'President, Palestine Arab Delegation. Moussa Kazim El-Husseini', Hotel Cecil, 24 July 1923; Huneidi 1998, pp 36-37.

¹⁴¹⁶ Lesch 1979, p 166, citing 'Delegation, letters to Devonshire, July 24, 30, 1923, CO replies, July 28, Aug. 1, CO 733/54'.

¹⁴¹⁷ CO 733/58, p 299.

¹⁴¹⁸ CO 733/49, p 164; Lesch 1973, p 28; Ayyad 1999, p 101.

¹⁴¹⁹ Kayyali 1978, pp 119-21; Ayyad 1999, pp 100-101.

¹⁴²⁰ CO 733/51, pp 182-84; *also* Huneidi 2001, p 73.

in the "Political League" and to have "commenced the compilation of a book of about 60 pages to be distributed to the [Palestine Arab] nation and to the Arab newspapers." The report was likely distortionary and in any case far too optimistic:

The *Wafd* [Delegation] has been in continual touch with the representative of King Husain, and with the conservative members of the Government's party and in official written communication with the Cabinet ['Cavendish'] Committee and the Ministers, and in especial with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. ... The result of those negotiations and communications was that the clauses in the Anglo-Arab Treaty in regard to Palestine which had been rejected by the 6th [Palestine Arab] Congress [>>164] were cancelled and substituted by what was published by Reuter on the 11th for the establishment of a national representative constitutional Government in Palestine for the purpose of solving the Palestine question and concluding the Arab Treaty. ... [Our] position in the Parliament regarding the case became strong and led to the memo containing our demands signed by 120 members of the Government's party [>>165]...

Although the Colonial Secretary had "evaded" an interview with the *Wafd*, "the facts should speak for themselves" and "the position of our case has become strong and supported by a large majority of the Government's party... on the basis of the British promises made to the Arabs for the establishment of a national representative constitutional Government in accordance with the wishes of 93% of the population of Palestine."

170. Arabs reject Advisory Council

Aug & Sept 1923

The **Political Report** of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office for **August 1923** re-iterated, using a mixture of paraphrase and quotation, the reasons given by the indigenous for their opposition to current British offers:

The refusal of the Cabinet Committee to grant an interview to the delegation [in London, >166; >169] caused disgust and disappointment in Arab nationalist circles. ... The Arabs of Palestine, both Moslems and Christians, are ninety-three [perhaps only eighty-eight] per cent of the inhabitants. ... The Legislative Council [of 1922] was to be composed of only ten Arab members (elected) against ten appointed official members (some of whom are Jews and all of whom will possibly later on be Jews) and two elected Jewish members in addition to the High Commissioner. This is naturally an unjust representation in view of the wide autocratic powers which have been vested in the High Commissioner. ... The ten members... have all withdrawn for a sound reason in that their acceptance to serve on the [Advisory] Council after the elections [to the Legislative Council]... *would be considered as an acceptance of the Constitution* which the nation, whose sons they are, had rejected. [The] delegation in London wants to enlighten about our rights and interests. ... Our firm and sincere belief is that the establishment of a national representative government in Palestine is the only remedy to the present state. ... In conclusion, we avail ourselves of the opportunity to refuse the untrue idea of the existence of moderate and extreme Arab parties. ... The aspirations of this body [the Arab nation of 700,000 people] are not only remote from being extreme but also require nothing more or less than its natural rights and interests... The application therefore of the expression 'extremism' in this connection is nonsensical and is but an intended falsification.¹⁴²¹

High Commissioner Samuel wrote, or at least approved, these monthly 'Political Reports', so it is clear that HMG *understood* the Arab position perfectly well. Again, the Palestinians decided against implying acceptance of the Mandatory/mandated structure through participation in such Councils. [*also >168*]

¹⁴²¹ CO 733/49, pp 164-69.

To apply the Cavendish Committee's decisions, i.e. to stick with the Balfour Declaration policy but offer the Arabs an Arab Agency comparable to the Jewish Agency, [>167; >170]¹⁴²² Colonial Secretary Cavendish on 4 October 1923 informed High Commissioner Samuel in Jerusalem and his top official for the Middle East in the Colonial Office in London, Shuckburgh, of **what he intended to say to the Palestinians**.¹⁴²³ First would come a reminder of Britain's basic, non-negotiable policy:

The policy of the [Balfour] declaration was accepted by the principal Allied Powers at the San Remo Conference in April 1920 [>78]; its text was embodied verbatim in the treaty signed at Sèvres in August 1920 [>92], and again in the mandate approved by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1922 [>146].

HMG's standard mention of the *faux*-legal San Remo and Sèvres decisions merely brandished the argumentative power of legalism itself.

Controversy over the Balfour Declaration had been "fully dealt with", and thus presumably laid to rest, by the Churchill White Paper [>142], but to re-cap:

The declaration... involved a two-fold obligation – to the Jewish people, on the one hand, and to the Arab population of Palestine on the other. It has been the constant endeavour of His Majesty's Government, and of yourself as High Commissioner, so to conduct the administration of Palestine as to do equal justice to the interests of both the parties concerned. ... Nevertheless,... [t]he Arabs, or at least the most vocal section of them, maintain an attitude of opposition. The failure of the elections for the Legislative Council, the difficulties encountered in forming an Advisory Council under the Order in Council of 1923, mark the lengths to which opposition has been carried.

That is, the first-mentioned "Jewish people" numbered ca. 14,000,000, of whom about 0.64% lived in Palestine, while of the second-mentioned "Arab population", ca. 700,000 in number, 100% lived in Palestine. Yet they were regarded as equal despite the former's comprising only 12% of the total actual inhabitants and its largely consisting of recent European immigrants whose historical, linguistic and cultural ties to the territory, compared with those of the Arabs, were weak. This was throughout the Mandate the weird thing about British talk of a "two-fold" or 'dual' obligation.¹⁴²⁴

Since these objective differences between the two groups were so obvious, one wonders at Cavendish's wonderment as to the "underlying causes" of Palestinian dissatisfaction with Balfour, Churchill and Cavendish:

The underlying causes of Arab discontent are not so easily stated. It appears to be inspired less by dissatisfaction with the present than by fears for the future. Hostility is aroused not

¹⁴²² But see Ghandour 2010, pp 135-36. [>177]

¹⁴²³ CO 733/50, pp 47-48, all quotations.

¹⁴²⁴ See Theme Index.

so much by the policy as actually enunciated and carried out by the British Government as by the apprehension that, whatever may be the objects of this policy, its ultimate result will be the establishment of Jewish political ascendancy.

Had Cavendish been familiar with only three recent investigations into the root causes of Palestinian discontent or opposition or unrest – that of King-Crane dated 28 August 1919 [^{>59}] (leaked less than a year before, on 2 December 1922, by *Editor and Publisher*¹⁴²⁵ and in early 1923 by Jeffries¹⁴²⁶ [^{>155}], of the Palin Court dated 1 July 1920 [^{>88}] and of the Haycraft Commission dated October 1921 [^{>122}] – he would have known the “underlying causes of Arab discontent”. In fact, introspection would have sufficed, because Cavendish certainly would not have wanted his own England to be occupied and administered by a foreign power.

Shuckburgh had evidently sent to his desk the many Palestinian statements plainly explaining their “discontent”, but perhaps only relating to how the occupation was run, not the occupation itself:

A perusal of the numerous representations made by or on behalf of the Arab community shows that the special position accorded to a Jewish agency under article IV of the Palestine Mandate is a general object of complaint. The agency is vested for the moment in the Zionist organisation [sic.: Zionist Organization].

In adding that the “Zionist organisation” had not “made any attempt during the past year to exceed the functions prescribed for it...” he was moreover deflecting the “complaining” of the “Arabs” away from *Britain’s* policy towards the Jewish Zionists.

However that might be:

It may be contended, on the other hand, that, even though formally excluded from all share in the administration, the Jewish agency does, in fact, by reason of its official recognition and right of access to the High Commissioner, enjoy, and thereby confer upon the Palestine Jews as a whole a preferential position as compared with the other inhabitants of the country. To that extent it is possible to argue that existing arrangements fall short of securing complete equality between the different communities.

This went a long way to accepting the Palestinian version of things when it came to the Zionist “Administration within an Administration”.¹⁴²⁷ Remember, though, that this memo to Samuel was about what Cavendish intended to say to the Palestinians.

However, so Cavendish further, Jewish “access” was a matter of “right”, a right lacking for the “other inhabitants”, and this should be rectified not by abolishing the privileged position of the Jews, but by giving the Arabs their own “agency... which will occupy a position exactly analogous to that accorded to the Jewish agency...” This Arab agency should, “in conjunction with the Jewish agency”, be consulted on immigration matters, and in general “the above arrangements should be introduced only as an agreed settlement to which both parties are prepared to adhere.” Formally, that is, his proposed Arab agency

¹⁴²⁵ *Editor & Publisher* 1922.

¹⁴²⁶ Jeffries 1922/23.

¹⁴²⁷ FO 371/5119, p 91.

would nullify any “preferential position” for either side, yet this formal embrace of the principle of parity between the two groups gave the 12% Jewish minority the right of veto since all decisions required the assent of *both* parties.

Samuel replied to Cavendish’s proposal by saying that “the Arab agency will not be accepted by any section [of the Arab population] as full settlement”, and also that he had successfully dodged the question Arab leaders had nevertheless on 5 October put to him, namely “whether the agency might be elected by the Arabs or would be nominated by Government.”¹⁴²⁸

A few days later, on 12 October, Samuel wrote to Shuckburgh saying, “It was apparent from the outset that [the Arabs] would not accept the proposal of an Arab Agency.”¹⁴²⁹ Shuckburgh also already knew the Arab Agency proposal was dead on arrival, so evidently it was made more as a goodwill gesture and/or to justify British claims that the locals were guilty of refusal of still another good offer. In Shuckburgh’s words on 25 October to Samuel:

My general feeling is that for the moment our primary task is to make it clear to the Arabs that they are not going to squeeze anything more out of us by persisting in an intransigent attitude, and that having made our offer and met with refusal, we now intend to govern the country as we think fit without their co-operation.¹⁴³⁰

Arab “discontent”, even if not understood (by Cavendish), was accepted as the price a colonial power has to pay.

¹⁴²⁸ Still CO 733/50, p 45.

¹⁴²⁹ CO 733/50, p 570; also CO 733/51, p 180.

¹⁴³⁰ CO 733/50, p 574.

The attitude of Britain and the Arab Agency proposed at the end of the Cavendish Committee Report [p.165; 167] were unanimously rejected on 11 October 1923 by the Palestinian leadership although the nascent Opposition to the Arab Executive Committee had perhaps given initial signs of support.¹⁴³¹ But the entire Palestine Arab Congress, **in writing, rejected an Arab Agency** analogous to the Zionist agency, because they wanted only independence, and did not want collective parity with the Zionist immigrants.¹⁴³² According to Ilan Pappé,

In October 1923, Sir Herbert Samuel informed a delegation of Palestinian leaders of the government's proposal to set up an Arab Agency alongside the Jewish Agency. The delegation was headed by Musa Kazem, who rejected the proposal outright, saying that 'it did not meet the aspirations of the Arab nation'. He suspected that if he consented, the Palestinian community would be expected to extend formal recognition to the Jewish Agency.¹⁴³³

Samuel also conceded that the Agency would have consultative, not legislative, powers, and only in certain matters.¹⁴³⁴ The price would be accepting the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration and ceasing all agitation, and it was too high.¹⁴³⁵ In the opinion of Bernard Wasserstein, after this rejection "Mandatory Palestine was thus (formally) a bureaucracy unfettered by any institutions representative of the country as a whole."¹⁴³⁶ After almost two years of struggle over the Mandate, and the Order in Council, and the 'Constitution', and the Churchill White Paper and this final Cavendish proposal, which was no improvement on the non-representative, formally powerless Legislative Council proposals, the locals, standing outside, faced two formally empowered 'insider' opponents.

19 October [or November] 1923 *'A party which first termed itself the Liberal Moderate Party, and subsequently the [Arab] National Party,... is opposed to [the policy] of the Moslem-Christian Association inasmuch as it proposes to attain its ends through cooperation with the Government instead of by opposition.'*¹⁴³⁷

¹⁴³¹ Cmd. 1889, p 7; Wasserstein 1978, pp 129-30.

¹⁴³² Quigley 2011, pp 278-80; Qumsiyeh 2011, p 64.

¹⁴³³ Pappé 2010/2002, p 226.

¹⁴³⁴ Zuaytir 1958, pp 62-63.

¹⁴³⁵ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 195, citing *A Survey of Palestine 1945-46*, p 22 – see Shaw 1946.

¹⁴³⁶ Wasserstein 1978, p 131.

¹⁴³⁷ Kayyali 1978, pp 121-22.

The Mandate was seen by most countries as being in place due to Turkey's relinquishment of sovereignty over Palestine with the 'Treaty of Lausanne', in particular due to Article 16, which was signed by all parties on 24 July 1923 and ratified by Turkey on 23 August.¹⁴³⁸ Shortly thereafter **Musa Kazem al-Husseini**, head of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress (AEC), **spoke in Jerusalem with Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Kisch**, head of the Political Department of the Zionist Organization. Kisch in his notes of the conversation¹⁴³⁹ first explained that

It should be mentioned that this is the first occasion on which I have met Musa Kazem, who has in the past declined the attempts of friends to arrange a meeting, while I would not risk a rebuff by calling on him or inviting him to see me.

Did Kisch, a high-ranking officer in the British military who had been in the Foreign Office delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, belong in Musa's eyes to the British or rather to the Zionists claiming to represent world Jewry, or simply both? Other Zionists active in Palestine who held such a double 'subject position' were Chaim Weizmann (a naturalised British citizen since 1910), Albert Montefiore Hyamson, Nahum Sokolow, Leo Amery (Colonial Secretary 6 November 1924 – 4 June 1929), Max Nurock and Norman Bentwich, as well of course as Herbert Samuel and his son Edwin. This overlap means that many Palestinian/British dialogues were at the same time dialogues with the Jewish-Zionist group – but in this case Kisch was officially representing not Britain but the Jewish agency in Palestine, perhaps explaining why Musa Kazem had “declined” to meet with him.

Kisch's own explanation for Musa's no longer shunning him:

Musa Kazem gave the impression of a man who feels that he is slipping from power and... it was this feeling that prompted him to see what would transpire at a conversation with me. The conversation once launched however, his temperament took control with the result that the discussion never showed any signs of producing any useful results.

This man was attributing the fruitlessness of the conversation to his powerless interlocutor's “temperament”, not to the political, historical or ethical facts of the case, and what Kisch regarded as “useful” can only be surmised.

On the formal political issue Kisch recorded that

Musa Kazem stated that our programme and his (which he claimed to be representative of the views of the country) were so widely different that consultation would be useless.

When Musa Kazem “asked on what our claims to Palestine were based” Kisch said the Jews were “returning” to Palestine “to give to the country all we can and to take nothing from it.” Musa Kazem replied that “we had taken the bread out of the mouths of the

¹⁴³⁸ https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

¹⁴³⁹ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 59–60, *all quotations*.

Arabs” and there ensued an argument about the rivalry for government employment between indigenous Arabs and immigrant Jews and about land sales by “absent Arab landlords”. When Kisch said that “in the last four years some eight million pounds of Jewish money had been spent in Palestine” they of course argued about whether the local Arabs had benefited from it. (Yezid Sayigh writes for instance that when 88% of the population were Arabs, only 60% of civil service employees were Arabs.¹⁴⁴⁰)

Returning to the collective Jewish political claims on the country:

In connection with my views on the historical biblical argument as constituting one factor in the basis of Jewish claims in Palestine, Musa Kazem stated that if God had placed the children of Israel in Palestine, he had also driven them out and given the country to the children of Ishmael.

Kisch in closing noted that Musa Kazem had shown

what the Americans call ‘a one-track mind’ and I would add, a mind of a very narrow track, also much pettiness: somewhat the temperament of Poincare without any of his ability.

Kisch’s background feelings about Arabs such as Musa Kazem are shown in a letter he wrote to the Zionist Executive back in London: “In my opinion the present lamentable situation is the direct result of the application of the methods of English liberal administration to the government of an Eastern and backward people, accustomed to the strong hand of Turkish misrule.”¹⁴⁴¹ The concept “liberal”, for Kisch, evidently included autocracy and disregard for the well-known wishes of the ruled and excluded self-reflection.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Sayigh 1997, p 5.

¹⁴⁴¹ Wasserstein 1978, p 126; also Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, pp 108-09.

During the five days from 21 to 25 October 1923 High Commissioner Samuel toured his colony with stops in Nablus, Anebta, Tul Karem, Jenin, Beisan, Ain Taboun, Balfouria, Nazareth, Ras el Nakoura, Athlit, Tanturah, Benjamina, Yaffa, and Tel Aviv – including its “Rutenberg power house” and “new Synagogue”. In his report of the tour to the Colonial Secretary¹⁴⁴² he made observations on improved roads, the Nablus Suk, land reclamation, malaria eradication, new schools, hospitals, Municipal Gardens, the Salt Works of the Palestine Economic Board in London, a new dairy farm, a “scent industry”, better post offices and military barracks, and the population explosion of Tel Aviv.

Politically, he heard complaints against Zionism from an Imam but mostly friendly speeches from all and sundry, including from Haj Tawfiq Hammad, “one of the most uncompromising opponents of our policy in Palestine” and from Salim Effendi Abdul Rahman, regarded by British Intelligence as “one of the most dangerous men in Palestine”, whose welcoming words swearing friendship with “the great British nation” was, so Samuel, contained in the public records. (pp 528-29) The hostility of 1921 seemed to him to be gone, but as Shuckburgh and CO official James Masterton Smith wrote in December 1923 in their “minutes” on Samuel’s travelogue, “Sir H. Samuel is prone to be optimistic...” and “is foolish to be too optimistic about Palestine but we seem to be having a breathing space at present.” (pp 514-15, 568-70) Samuel nevertheless did see the necessity of giving the Arabs something, “to establish other points of contact with the people”, and proposed “the appointment of Arab Sub-Governors of the Districts.” (p 571)

8 November 1923 *Al-Hizb Al-Watani (National Party) holds its first meeting, electing Suleiman Raji Al-Faruqi as its first head and adopting a political program that calls for a national government and stresses that Palestine is an inseparable part of the Arab region. The party’s founding is initiated by Ragheb and Fakhri Nashashibi with the support of Asad Shuqeiri.*

¹⁴⁴² CO 733/50, pp 516-29, 568-71, all citations.

This entry's purpose is to note in passing that there were **differences of opinion** within the indigenous Palestinian polity, often framed in the official British documents and the secondary literature in terms of degree of 'cooperation' with Britain or in terms of 'extremists' and 'moderates'. According to Qumsiyeh,

The British supported opposition to the leadership of [Musa Kazem] Al-Husseini and the patriotic forces from a group led by Asaad Shuqairi, Aref Al-Dajani and Ragheb Al-Nashashibi. With help from the British authorities, they set up the Arab National Party on November 8, 1923. This party included wealthy landowners, merchants and Western-educated intellectuals; prominent leaders included Suleiman Taji Farouqi... The Agricultural Party was also formed in 1923, with a similar agenda of division and support for British policies and in their case the hope to divide rural from urban Palestinians.¹⁴⁴³

But cooperation in what, with regard to what goals?

Samuel had for example written to Cavendish on 19 October 1923 saying that

A party which first termed itself the Liberal Moderate Party, and subsequently the National Party, is in the process of formation. Its avowed policy, although nationalistic, is opposed to that of the Moslem-Christian Association inasmuch as it proposes to attain its ends through cooperation with the Government instead of by opposition.¹⁴⁴⁴

Its "ends", though, were allegedly the same ones.¹⁴⁴⁵

Zeina Ghandour observes that the Arab Club presided over by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Literary Club close to the Nashashibi family, and the Moslem-Christian Associations, at least in the early 1920s, did not share the same ideology through and through:

The three organizations differed in their overall objectives: the Literary Club was pro-French and wanted complete independence for Palestine. The Arab Club was Pan-Arabist. The MCAs wanted some form of autonomy under British rule. All three organizations were anti-Zionist.¹⁴⁴⁶

I believe that the documents of the MCAs and their members in the Arab Executive Committees of the Palestine Arab Congress shed strong doubt on the claim that they "wanted some form of autonomy under British rule"; to my knowledge they only ever demanded independence, not "autonomy", and their repeated demand for independence unambigu-

¹⁴⁴³ Qumsiyeh 2011, pp 62-63; also Lesch 1979, p 96.

¹⁴⁴⁴ CO 733/50, p 291, 'Report on the Political Situation in Palestine during the Month of September 1923'; Kayyali 1978, pp 121-22; see also CO 733/51, pp 180, 186-87.

¹⁴⁴⁵ See also CO 733/51, p 179; Kayyali 1978, p 130; Ayyad 1999, pp 101-04; also Eltaher, current http://www.eltaher.org/biography/english/biography_p06_en.html.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Ghandour 2010, p 141.

ously rejected “British rule”. There could however very well be documents, in Arabic or English, showing sympathy amongst MCA members for “autonomy” as opposed to full freedom, but probably at most for a number of years.

But the main point here is that Ghandour attests what this chronology shows time and time again, namely unity in “anti-Zionism”, and what could this mean except independence and rejection of Britain’s Jewish-national-home policy with all it entailed? By this logic, “autonomy under British rule” would only be real autonomy, acceptable to the Arabs, if part of the deal was British abandonment of the Jewish-national-home policy.

At any rate, a third group, according to Ayyad,¹⁴⁴⁷ was composed of non-‘notables’, including many newspaper publishers and journalists who were even more non-cooperative than the AEC, and ready under certain circumstances to engage in violent resistance.

Intra-Palestinian differences can thus be seen on several issues:

- Does the desired independent state cover just Palestine, or (Greater) Syria, or even a broader Arab region?
- What should the relationship between independent Palestine and Britain be? Should there be administrative and perhaps military assistance, and for how long?
- Is France preferable as Mandatory?
- To achieve anything with the British ruler, is “cooperation” better than “opposition”?
- If opposition, should it be violent, or only verbal, or non-violent non-verbal, such as strikes, demonstrations and public shunning?

One example of differing views would be given by the Murison-Trusted Commission ten years later when reporting on the demonstrations in Jaffa called by the Arab Executive Committee on 27 October 1933. [>268] There, “a serious divergence of opinion” emerged over whether the demonstration should stick to its “long” route or take a “short” route through Jaffa reluctantly “tolerated by the District Commander”.¹⁴⁴⁸ On such minor, if at the moment important, issues there was a normal degree of debate. But as Ghandour confirms, concerning Zionism, European immigration, and land sales to Jews in perpetuity, and more abstractly the ‘national home’ with or without eventual Jewish-Zionist political domination, there was no difference of opinion at all.

Qumsiyeh, nevertheless, is of the opinion that

The Executive Committee of the Arab Palestinian Congress scaled down its demands on the British and lowered its expectations. Instead of independence, it called now for representation. Instead of rejecting new European Jewish immigration, they called for proportional representation.¹⁴⁴⁹

But as we have seen when they demanded “proportional representation” they were demanding a ‘representative *national* government’, not representation in a British-controlled (non-‘national’) government; thus their constant rejection of Legislative and Advisory Councils with a British veto and thus no ultimate indigenous power. That said, it

¹⁴⁴⁷ Ayyad 1999, pp 107-09, 118-19.

¹⁴⁴⁸ CO 733/346/8, p 13.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 65.

could be that they for the time being tired of objecting to the Mandate itself, whether it enabled the Zionist ‘home’ or not. But for the claim that they quit “rejecting new European Jewish immigration” I find no evidence at all.

As we have seen in the King-Crane Report [p.59] and more than a dozen direct statements of their demands, the overwhelming, if not unanimous, agreement was against Zionism. But this is negatively stated. Positively, the agreement was on the indigenous Arab’s self-determination and democracy. As for “complete independence”, the documents I have seen suggest that any political tie to Britain, i.e. one going beyond a treaty, for more than a limited number of years, had miniscule – perhaps no – support. The programme of the Nashashibi ‘National Party’ – reproduced in the following entry – contained no trace of compromise on any of the positions hitherto taken by the Palestine Arab Congress and its Arab Executive Committee.¹⁴⁵⁰

Thus, the widely-discussed rivalry and differences between the ‘Nashashibis’ and the ‘Husseinis’ must have concerned other issues or family history. Ayyad’s view seems to me correct that

Both the traditional groups and leadership and the newly emerging revolutionary forces were... all acting for the achievement of a national goal, i.e., the independence of Palestine and the termination of the Zionist Idea of ‘a Jewish home in Palestine.’¹⁴⁵¹

Within, and subsidiary to, these agreed-upon goals, the political disagreements listed above arose, most of them tactical in nature, as for example on the question of whether or not to boycott the census of 1921¹⁴⁵². Ghandour, by the way, additionally urges caution in dividing Palestinians into the nationalist Husseinis and the cooperative Nashashibis, identifying many individuals who broke political ranks with the other members of their family.¹⁴⁵³

¹⁴⁵⁰ CO 733/52, pp 264-65.

¹⁴⁵¹ Ayyad 1999, p 118.

¹⁴⁵² Tamari & Nassar 2014, p XXVIII.

¹⁴⁵³ Ghandour 2010, p 129.

A history of the Mandate reflecting much about British–Palestinian relations could be written solely on the basis of the monthly ‘Political Reports’ written by the Palestine Government and sent to the Colonial Secretary, in this case Cavendish, dealing as they do with contact between the Government and its subjects in Palestine itself: discussions, intelligence about political activities and parties, excerpts from the Arabic press, etc. I’ve looked at only a few of these intensely, one being the **Political Report for October 1923**¹⁴⁵⁴, a summary of which reveals several of our typical themes.

HC Samuel first reported that he was including the recent London Delegation’s report, presented on 2 October 1923 at an Arab Executive Committee (AEC) meeting in Palestine dealing mainly with the question of its lobbying success. [→169] As also recorded in the previous entry, he continued:

A second and more widely attended meeting took place on the 26th October, at which the Mufti of Jerusalem and Mohamad Ali Taher, secretary of the Palestine Committee in Egypt, were present. The latter declared himself in favour of a revolt as the only means of attaining their demands. He was supported, it is stated, in this to a modified extent by Musa Kazem Pasha who alleged that one of the British supporters of the Arab cause in England, had also advised this course; further, the Amir Abdullah [of Transjordan] had promised that a day would come when he would aid the Palestine Arabs both morally and materially. Musa Kazem Pasha, however, deprecated any action at the present juncture, being satisfied with the progress made by the Arab cause. (p 179)

The allegedly tense relations between the Moslem-Christian Society and the National “moderate” Party of Ragheb Bey Nashashibi [→175] were then reflected upon, followed by the news that there is no support for the proposed Arab Agency, yet Samuel got an “excellent reception” from the people of Nablus at the “celebrations of the *Mowled en Nabi*” [→174]. Finally, there was some information about “a strike at the Jewish Printing Press in Haifa”, some comments on current Communist propaganda, and the news that the “club room of the Palestine Communist Party” had been raided by the Police. (p 180)

An Appendix to the Political Report (pp 186–87) held summaries from the Arabic press: from *Meraat al Sherk* [sic.], Jerusalem, supporting the new National Party’s strategy of co-operation with the Government until “they see that the Government does not wish to reach an understanding with the nation”; from *El Carmel*, Haifa, proposing a conference in Nablus for all “leaders and thinkers” to overcome the nation’s political split; from *Meraat al Sherk* again, noting that the unanimously rejected Arab Agency offered even “very much less” than the rejected Legislative and Advisory Councils; and from *La Palestine*, Yaffa, an editorial

which publishes His Excellency’s [Samuel’s] declaration of the Arab Agency in full, goes on to say that anybody reading the High Commissioner’s declaration would think the Palestine

¹⁴⁵⁴ CO 733/51, pp 178–89, all quotations.

question had already been settled; that anybody but those who look at it from a legal point of view will see that it has scarcely been improved for the following reasons:- 1) because the Palestine Mandate is contrary to Article 22 of the League of Nations. 2) The Treaty of Sèvres has been abolished and replaced by that of Lausanne. 3) Under the Treaty of Lausanne, questions concerning a country under Mandate are to be settled by those immediately concerned. 4) Only the Administrative section [the Council?] of the League of Nations approved the Mandate. From the foregoing it is evident that there is still a chance to demand the rights of the Holy Land in which the Government wishes to give Zionists an equal right to that of its legal owners.

These editors were well aware that the Treaty of Lausanne, i.e. the valid treaty with Turkey¹⁴⁵⁵, offered none of the succour for the mandate system or the British Palestine Mandate present in the verbal agreements at San Remo [->78] or in the scrapped Treaty of Sèvres [->92], a point argued by John Quigley.¹⁴⁵⁶ Indeed, the Treaty's 143 Articles *nowhere even mention* the League of Nations Covenant or the mandates; appended to the Treaty is to be sure a 'Map of the Mandate Areas of Arabia', but the Treaty text makes no reference to it, and the map itself labels Syria, Palestine and Iraq merely as "Proposed French" or "Proposed British" "Mandates".

The Political Report of the following month, November 1923, included the membership list and the entire programme of the National Party, also mentioned in the previous entry, led by Ragheb Nashashibi.¹⁴⁵⁷

1. Palestine should remain Arab for its inhabitants, clean from all European and Zionist influence, and that Palestine should remain a part of the Arab Kingdom. ... 3. The non-acknowledgement of the Balfour Declaration and the Constitution passed by the Government, the Legislative and Advisory Councils, the Arab Executive Committee, and of any influence except that of the inhabitants of the country. ... 4. The Party insists on establishing a national democratic Government in the full meaning of a Government, and that a Constitution be prepared to meet the desires and wishes of the population. 5. The Party will not refrain from claiming to establish a representative council to be elected by the people, approximately of the well educated people... 7. To entrust positions to Palestinian Citizens (Arabs) and such posts should not be entrusted to others except in emergencies.

If I interpret this correctly, the Party did not "acknowledge" the AEC because the AEC was not democratic enough, proposing instead the unilateral step (i.e. bypassing the Mandatory) of a "representative council" elected, if not by all the people, by a larger number of people than had elected, at the Palestine Arab Congresses, the AEC. (To my knowledge, though, no proposal ever arose during the Mandate to *unilaterally* declare independence and set up a government.)

Using the Colonial Office's spellings, the National Party's 'General Committee' was listed as: El Sheikh Sliman al Taji, Fahmi Eff. al Nashashibi, El Sheikh Mahmoud al Dajani, Omar Eff. al Saleh, Alayan Eff. Abu Gharbieh, Boulos Shihadeh (*Meerat al Sherk* Newspaper),

¹⁴⁵⁵ https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

¹⁴⁵⁶ Quigley 2022, p 90.

¹⁴⁵⁷ CO 733/52, pp 264-65.

Hassan Abdul Hadi, Abdel Hamid Abu Ghosh, El Haj Idris al Mughrabi, and Abdullah Mukhless (Secretary). Its 'General Assembly' was Abdel Hai Eff. al Khatib al Khalili, Mohamad Shams el Dine al Ramlawi, Sheikh Hafiz Eff. el Liddawi, Taufiq Eff. Lefahome (Nazareth), Sudki Eff. Shweikeh (Jamaine), Kamel el Haj Hussein (Jenin), Yakub Eff. Abu al Huda (Yaffa), Abdel Latif al Jayousi (Tulkarem), Assad al Kassis (Ramallah), Omar al Amer (Bireh), Sheikh Abdel Rohman Eff. el Ghizawi (Nablus), Said Eff. al Shawa (Gaza), Tagi Eff. al Saadi (Acre), Fouad al Madi (Haifa), Mohamad Yusef al Alami, Shakib Eff. al Nashashibi, Hassan Sudki, Said al Shihabi, Zaki Butsah, and Abdullah al Hussein (Beisan). Several of these men were prominent in later political moves. As an aside, Wasif Jawhariyyeh believed that this 'National', Nashashibi-aligned party was created by Ronald Storrs with the goal of "achieving division among Palestinians" – just as, "together with Sir Herbert Samuel, he paved the way for... the Supreme Muslim Council" in order to "sow division between Christians and Muslims..."¹⁴⁵⁸

Relevant to these Political Reports for October and November is a "Confidential memo" from Samuel to Cavendish. While negotiating a treaty with King (formerly Sherif) Hussein of the Hejaz, Samuel in Jerusalem needed to react to a proposal by Hejaz official Naji al Asil, presumably backed by Hussein himself, on a solution to the Palestine contradiction, and on this he wrote:

I agree that the latest draft of Article 2 [of the treaty] submitted by Dr. Naji al Asil is unacceptable in its present form. It would be very inadvisable to make any declaration at present which would commit His Majesty's Government 'to establish in Palestine as soon as possible a Native Representative Government'.

This 'Confidential' memo then acknowledged that to nevertheless keep Hussein friendly, some crumbs regarding Palestine must be offered, concluding:

It is possible that the increasing menace to the Hejaz of Wahabite aggression may render King Husain more amenable and more likely to subscribe to terms which would meet the needs of our policy in Palestine. ... I have the honour to be, My Lord Duke, Your Grace's most obedient, humble servant, *Herbert Samuel* High Commissioner.¹⁴⁵⁹

Hussein should be pressured, in the shadow of the possibility of losing his throne to other families in the peninsula, to retract his proposal "that a national government representing all the inhabitants in Palestine be established, which would permit regulated Jewish immigration on humanitarian grounds and also retain Arab political rights."¹⁴⁶⁰

¹⁴⁵⁸ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 188.

¹⁴⁵⁹ CO 733/51, pp 145-46, Samuel to Devonshire, 16 November 1923.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Lesch 1973, p 22 & note 27.

XI. League of Nations useless

Signed by Musa Kazem al-Husseini and dated 9 November 1923, the Arab Executive Committee wrote to High Commissioner Samuel taking a stand against the proposed Arab Agency.¹⁴⁶¹ The Arab inhabitants

ha[d] received such proposal with great surprise, it being impossible for them to accept this proposal after they have rejected the proposals of the Legislative and Advisory Councils which have a wider jurisdiction than that of the Agency. The Arab owners of the country cannot see their way to accept a proposal which tends to place them on an equal footing with the alien Jews.

At a deeper level of analysis,

As regards your statement that the Balfour Declaration is a twofold obligation and there is no conflict between the two undertakings, this is a strange one. There should have been no conflict between the two sides of this declaration had this country been Jewish and the Arabs enjoyed such religious and civil rights as are enjoyed by aliens only. But this country being an Arab country which has an absolute right to a free and independent life, there must needs be a conflict between both sides of this declaration and conformity between them is therefore impossible.

This statement is consistent with Zeina Ghandour's view that the Arab Agency proposed by the Cavendish Cabinet Committee [^{>165}; ^{>167}] and rejected by the Palestinians [^{>170}; ^{>172}] was different from the Jewish Agency, as set out in Article 4 of the Mandate [^{>146}], in three respects:

The Arab Agency's status would not be formalized within the constitution. Its members were to be appointed by the HC [High Commissioner], whilst membership of the Jewish Agency was elected by Jews around the world. Its proposed functions were local, rather than international, and unlike the Jewish Agency, development activities would remain completely outside its ambit. The macabre result was not lost on the Arabs. Musa Kazem Pasha commented: 'the name of the Arab Agency would make them (Arabs) feel they are strangers in their own country'.¹⁴⁶²

Had an Arab Agency representing a broad range of Palestinian opinion and undergirded by a broad electorate somehow after all come into being, could the Palestinians have achieved their independence?

In the event, for several reasons – decreased Jewish immigration in the years 1926-29, hopelessness after the new U.K. Government's review yielded them nothing [^{>167}] – there seems to have been as of late 1923 less political activity, either written or on the street, violent or non-violent, than heretofore or than as of the summer of 1929 which saw

¹⁴⁶¹ CO 733/51, pp 323-26.

¹⁴⁶² Ghandour 2010, pp 135-36, citing CO 733/51.

the August riots [202] and the political upheaval that came in their wake. There would not even be another Palestine Arab Congress until June 1928 [197]. As the Shaw Commission wrote in March 1930 concerning Palestinian positions on constitutional matters,

Apart from resolutions passed annually by Arab political organizations in Palestine and from their occasional appeals to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and to the League of Nations for the grant of independence or of a wide measure of self-government, the question of constitutional development in Palestine was seldom active between 1924 and 1927.¹⁴⁶³

[220]

The “appeals” to the League of Nations of 6 October 1924 [178] and 8/12 April 1925 [182; 183], certainly aimed at British eyes, show that in terms of political attitude, the Palestinians were pursuing their freedom just as before. Perhaps contributing to the relative tranquility was also the fact that Field Marshal Herbert Plumer, High Commissioner from 25 August 1925 to 31 July 1928, was not a convinced Zionist in the Samuel mould.

early 1924 [*The British mobilised Emir Abdullah, their ruler of Transjordan, to try to convince the Palestinians that Zionism was not bad for them.*]¹⁴⁶⁴

early 1924 *With the support of the Zionist Executive, Faris Al-Masud of Burqa, Abdel Latif Abu Hanfash from the Jenin area, and Musa Hudaib of Hebron found Hizb Az-Zurra (The Farmers’ Party).*

8 June 1924 *A journalists’ congress convenes in Haifa, including Najib Nassar of Al-Carmel, Issa Al-Issa of Filistin, Boulus Shahadeh of Mirat Ash-Sharq, Ilya Zaka of An-Nafir, Hasan Fahmi Ad-Dajani of Sawt Ash-Shab, Khalil Nasr of Al-Urdun, Jamil Al-Bajri of Az-Zahrah magazine and Sheikh Khalil Al-Majadali of Az-Zumar. Besides calling for the formation of a journalist trade union, the participants express great concern about the Palestinian cause and stress the need for a national committee to coordinate a concerted effort to serve the vital national interests.*¹⁴⁶⁵

¹⁴⁶³ Shaw 1930, p 18.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Ayyad 1999, pp 105-06.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Also Ayyad 1999, pp 108-09.

On 2 September 1921 the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress, through its Delegation then visiting London and Geneva, had written down its position against British policy and for their independence in a letter to the President of the League of Nations.¹⁴⁶⁶ [^{>117}] Now, three years later, the AEC **set down its critique of the Mandate** for the eyes of the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) of the League of Nations in Geneva. They had to send it in a roundabout way: Knowing that Samuel, in his fifth year as High Commissioner, was in Geneva, they submitted their long ‘Report on Palestine Administration’¹⁴⁶⁷ to Samuel and Shuckburgh, asking them to forward it, in English translation, to the PMC which was, on paper, the body overseeing the mandates. According to Ann Lesch, the PMC had decided at the outset “that the residents of mandated territories could neither present their case directly nor send petitions to it”¹⁴⁶⁸, thus necessitating such a detour.

This 1924 Report was signed by “Jamal Husseini, General Secretary”. [see also >262] Its final section, “Arab Demand”, was short:

The Arab demand may be summed up in the following words: – The establishment in Palestine of a National Constitutional Government in which the two Communities, Arabs and Jews, will be represented in proportion to their numbers as they existed before the application of the Zionist policy. (p 129)¹⁴⁶⁹

The citizenship status of those who had immigrated after the “application of the Zionist policy” – let’s say 1920, the beginning of the civil administration¹⁴⁷⁰ – was left open; it was the ratio at that earlier time that mattered. It was only between 1938 and 1948 that the various bodies leading the Palestinian resistance would *explicitly* welcome as full citizens all people, of whatever race or religion, who were at any given moment living in Palestine.¹⁴⁷¹ The last clause above, by contrast, anticipated Article 6 of the PLO Charter of 1964/1968: “The Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians.”¹⁴⁷²

The document sent indirectly to the PMC had 9 other sections, quoted here extensively because, like the ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ of winter 1921 [^{>99}], it put into one package the entire Palestinian experience under Britain.

¹⁴⁶⁶ League of Nations 1921, pp 2-4.

¹⁴⁶⁷ CO 733/74, pp 115-29, ‘Report on Palestine Administration’, Jerusalem 5 October 1924; *all citations*.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Lesch 1979, p 38.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Also Kayyali 1978, p 133.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Compare the ‘Report on the State of Palestine’, which took the ratio of the various religious communities “before the war” as that determining the ratio in the parliament-to-be, but leaving open the question of the status of more recent immigrants. [^{>99}]

¹⁴⁷¹ See >359; >360; >364; >374; >383; >384; >437; >438; >446; >450; >451; >454; >469; >479; also >123; >135.

¹⁴⁷² PLO 1968.

1) The 'Foreword' summed up the "case" of the "Arab inhabitants of Palestine who form over 91% of its population":

The injustice of creating a Jewish National Home for the Jews in Palestine which is the well established home of the Palestinian Arabs (Moslems and Christians) and the impracticability of training its inhabitants in self-government and preparing them for independence which is the principal aim of the mandatory system, as long as the Jewish National Home Policy is in progress.

2) The section 'Palestine After the War' first described wartime devastation and poverty,¹⁴⁷³ then:

Reason imposed that while the country and its surroundings were in such [bad] condition..., all political experiments and introductions should be postponed until the country is in such a good state as to resist any shock that such an innovation may bring about. Unfortunately political changes came in with the speed of lightning and most of the elements that usually go to relieve and revive a distressed population were all replaced by those that are instated to enhance trouble.

This part could in fact well stand for the *reason why* the international 'laws of occupation' were drafted to forbid such political and social changes.¹⁴⁷⁴ [also >19; >60; >115; >137; >147; >155]

Continuing:

Later in Southern Syria (Palestine) the Zionist Policy was declared and put into force and all its non-Jewish inhabitants (over 91%) sprung up to fight a policy which they most sincerely and rightly believed to carry with it the weapons of their subjection. The Palestine Administration, headed by 'an ardent Zionist', Sir Herbert Samuel [>105; >106], put its weight against this new nationalist movement and started to actively apply the National Home Policy, thus neglecting its principal duties and responsibilities of economical rejuvenation.

3) Concerning the 'Constitution', Ottoman rule was more democratic:

Before the Great War, Palestine, as any other part of the Ottoman Empire, sent its representatives to the Parliament in Constantinople. But still in the country itself the people had a great say in the management of their own affairs in general. [There were both elected 'Administrative Councils' and local, elected 'General Councils'.] After the British occupation this system was washed away in its entirety and an autocratic military administration took its place.

Further, the powerless and non-representative Advisory Council, the proposed Legislative Council of 1922 [>133-137; >139; >149-50; >158; >169] and the proposed Arab Agency of 1923 [>167; >168; >172; >176] were deemed by the "Arab inhabitants of Palestine" to be unworthy of their participation. The British pretext for its autocracy was that the Palestinians "are

¹⁴⁷³ Also Salt 2019, Ch. 11.

¹⁴⁷⁴ See War Office 1914, Ch. XIV.VIII.ii & iii, §353-381 (pp 288-92), especially §353-55, 363, 364, 369, 372; also Hague Convention (IV) Regulations [on war] 1907, Articles 42, 43, 49, 55. [also >19; >60; >88; >115; >137; >147]

not yet fit for” a democratic constitution, a claim which held no water, and Britain had even abolished local elections, “which rights they enjoyed since these systems were introduced into the country a long time ago.”

On this constitutional issue of self-government under the Mandate in the year 1924 Penny Sinanoglou gives a very different, misleading rendering:

From the early days of British mandatory rule it was clear that establishing representative government was going to be extremely difficult. In his opening statement at the 1924 session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, Palestine’s high commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, surveyed political developments in Palestine and explained the hitherto unsuccessful attempts on the part of the British administration to establish a legislative council.¹⁴⁷⁵

One moment, please. The attribute “extremely difficult” and Samuel’s reference to HMG’s “attempts” at a legislative council imply that Britain *wanted* “representative government”. The rhetorical picture is of a colonial power trying its best to install self-government, but for unnamed reasons it was therein frustrated. As this chronology shows, nothing could be farther from the truth – and from what the AEC was attesting, from its own experience, in this statement. She also writes that “The mandate was unworkable so long as Jews and Arabs could not be brought together in a joint, representative legislature.”¹⁴⁷⁶ The “Arabs” were always willing to be brought into a legislature, provided it was 1) a real legislature (i.e. one which could eventually supplant the Mandate itself) and 2) representatively elected.

4) In great detail the ‘Government’s Land Policy’ was shown to be “a plan whereby the Arab farmer is driven to the land markets with his title deeds in hand to sell away land at whatever price the Jewish purchaser wishes to offer.” For example,

1 – An Ordinance, therefore, was promulgated (1921) prohibiting exportation of local products – grain and olive oil. This resulted in a great precipitation [fall] of the prices of these products;... 2 – [An old Turkish law removing title to land not cultivated for three years was invoked, and] the war-weakened farmer found it impossible for himself in the present crisis... to cultivate all his lands within three years. 3 – To enhance the troubles of the Palestinian farmer, the Government proclaimed the Ottoman Agricultural Bank as under liquidation and asked its debtors – all poor farmers – to settle their accounts [forcing them to sell land].

See also point 8) below. These points anticipate the messages of the Shaw, Hope Simpson and Lewis French Reports and the Passfield White Paper. [>220; >233; >234; >303]

5) Under ‘Jewish Immigration’ the Report showed how i) not even the rule of limiting Jewish immigration by the country’s “power of absorption” was followed, leading the Administration, in the wake of such over-immigration, to ii) employ the resulting unemployed Jews for public works formerly done by (cheaper) Arab labourers, raising Arab unemployment, and iii) creating two groups “each ready to jump at the throat of the other”; & iv) not even the approaching bankruptcy of the country led Samuel to reduce immi-

¹⁴⁷⁵ Sinanoglou 2019, p 44, referencing Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, Ch.6 [Wasserstein 1978].

¹⁴⁷⁶ Sinanoglou 2019, p 70, also 83-84.

gration. (In fact, he and Baron Ormsby-Gore MP, testifying before the PMC, said Britain could not “introduce self-governing institutions... because the Arabs had made clear they would use such institutions to restrict Jewish immigration”.¹⁴⁷⁷)

6) ‘Public Security’ had suffered as “Both camps of unemployment” provide more criminals, and

The principles underlying the Zionist Policy had completely shaken the confidence of the people in the good will of the Government and later on contracted their hatred and contempt to the Administration. ... The riots that broke out in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa (1920, 1921) which were the off-springs of the Zionist Policy, gave the Jews to understand that troubles ahead must be fiercer and consequently they should arm themselves. ... The Zionist Executive... formed a secret armed force known as the ‘Hagana’, under the nose of the Police and with his full knowledge if not encouragement.

Because it was keeping political fires under control, so the Report, the police force was not available to fight normal crime. Finally, the Government promulgated three Ordinances: detention without trial, “joint responsibility” of all villagers “for a crime the perpetrator of which is not traced out”, and “Punitive Police Posts” set up at Palestinian villagers’ own expense.

7) The ‘Finance’ section showed deficits, lack of public knowledge or oversight concerning the public purse, and “absurd” disproportionality in expenditures, i.e. large amounts for “Public Security... caused by the Zionist Policy which requires great forces to protect it” while little is spent on agriculture or education. The Government in general was too large, as the Zionist Policy required extra Governors and “a host of clerks” and many translators of official documents into Hebrew. “The country is overtaxed.”

8) ‘Economic Policy’ ran on two tracks: one for Jews and one for Arabs. Arab farmers received almost no assistance, while concerning taxes and regulations

Jewish farmers... are treated much more leniently by special Jewish police and estimators. The Government incurred great expenses in building roads... and railway extensions... to Jewish Colonies. ... The Court of Inquiry for the Jaffa Disturbances [3-122] writes in its report: ‘Jews enjoyed greater facilities than Arabs in the matter of obtaining permits to travel on and import merchandise by Military Railways’. All railways in Palestine were military. The Jews reaped the best harvest that a small country like the Holy Land could give.

(Here is a good place to remind readers that the yishuv was subsidised from all over the world – subsidies I however cannot quantify.)

There was also simple corruption, with Jewish firms profiting from inside information from the Administration, and

Later on a department of commerce and industry was established. The Director, who was of course a Zionist, gave preference to Jews in all commercial and industrial concerns. ... [E]conomic favouritism was more apparent in certain secret concessions that the Palestine Government granted to certain Jews: – 1. [The] Rutenberg Concession, a monopoly for har-

¹⁴⁷⁷ Pedersen 2010, p 44, citing PMC Minutes, 4th session, 24 June-8 July 1924, p 88, and 5th session, p 65.

nessing the waters of the Jordan and that of Auja near Jaffa to generate electric power... [and] 2. The Kabbara Concession, which was secretly granted, (1921) to a Jewish land Company... between the two ports of Jaffa and Haifa, for a period of 200 years against a nominal yearly rent [although] one hundred and seventy [Arab] families who still live on that land and who cultivate parts of it and own it were treated as a negligible lot.¹⁴⁷⁸

To complaints 4-8 the British could of course say they were merely doing their 'duty' of enabling the "close settlement" of Jewish immigrants as 'required' of them by Article 6 of the Mandate.

9) 'Conclusion':

The Palestine Arabs met this oppressive policy with patience. Their opposition has been conducted on constitutional methods. ... It is a gross error to believe that Arab and Jew may come to an understanding if only each of them exchanges his coat of extremism for another of moderacy. *When the principles underlying two movements do clash, it is futile to expect their meeting halfway.* The Zionist Policy is best described by Dr. Eder, ex-chairman of the Zionist Executive in Palestine, when he was asked to do so by the [Haycraft] Court of Inquiry for the Jaffa disturbances of May 1921 [p.122]: "There can only be one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish predominance as soon as the number of that race are sufficiently increased." (*emphasis added*)

To my knowledge the British never distanced themselves, in so many words, from utterances such as that by Eder. And this early analysis by the Palestinians is still relevant today, almost 100 years on, because many people still commit the "gross error" of attributing parity to two sides in this conflict and, at least in public, say they should meet in the middle or at some two-state partition line. Given the power imbalance, one is reminded of Ghassan Kanafani's answer to a reporter, in 1970, who suggested it might be better for the Palestinians to negotiate with the Israelis: that would be like a negotiation "between the neck and the sword".

It might be thought that the large amount of work that went into this politely-phrased report, done at the Congress's own expense, would be rewarded by an invitation to come to Geneva to talk things over, or by a small delegation of the PMC to Palestine to see things on the spot, but such was the relationship pertaining to communication between the powerful and the Palestinians that neither of these things happened – neither in response to this 1924 analysis nor in response to two similar ones, in the form of 'petitions', submitted officially to the Council and to the PMC a year later [p.182; p.183].

1924 [The United States Johnson-Reed Act severely limits immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe.]

October 1924 The Turkish Grand National Assembly adopts a new constitution and declares Turkey a republic. Kurdish is forbidden in public places, Kurdish-owned land can be expropriated and given to new Turkish settlers in Kurdistan, the word 'Kurdistan' is omitted from educational books, and Turkish geographical names are substituted for Kurdish.

¹⁴⁷⁸ See Forman & Kedar 2003; also Smith 1993, pp 100-09.

179. Yousuf Haikal remembers

2 November 1924

In his Memoir, Yousuf Haikal **recalls a ‘Balfour Day’** – one of the 2 Novembers between 1924 and 1927, plausibly that of 1924 – that was perhaps typical of others during the Mandate:¹⁴⁷⁹

We were engaged in studying our lessons for our great exam, on November 2, which was the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and was a strike day. Although governmental schools and the Arab College (in Jerusalem) were banned from taking that day off, student leaders met and decided to join the strike in line with our national sentiments. Mr. Khaleel Tutah [or Khalil Totah, *see also* >253], the director of the College, knew of the students’ plan, and he entered the food court where some students were and started talking to them calmly. But as he noticed that they were committed to the strike he changed his tone and began threatening students that they might be fired from the college. The students didn’t change their minds and left the food court as he was talking, chanting slogans against the Balfour Declaration.

The Director, like hundreds of ‘subaltern’ Palestinian employees of the British–Palestine Government, was certainly not a *supporter* of the Balfour Declaration, yet had a job to do.

[*also* >168; >306; >312]

While the students were chanting against the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate in the school’s backyard, another protest organized by the Islamic College students passed by the adjacent street. Students from our Arab College joined the protest and all of them headed towards the headquarters of the government chanting against the British and the Jews. One of the students who was carried on the shoulders of the protesters recited a poem which read: ‘Allah is greater, we don’t want the *Toura*, bow down Balfour.’ ‘*Toura*’ is the Arabic name for the Mount of Tur in Jerusalem where the headquarters of the government were built during the Ottoman time by the Germans.

The boys were getting an education outside the official British–determined curriculum:

After midday we went back to the College for our lunch but didn’t enter classrooms on that day. The *Maarif* Administration [Palestine Government Education Department] was not happy with the protest, and we were surprised to learn that they decided to shut down the College until further notice. The students left Jerusalem to their towns and villages. We left Jerusalem filled with anger as we were preparing ourselves for the Matriculation exam and because we were angry at Balfour and his government. We kept anticipating news of the Arab College, and were surprised when we learnt that the *Maarif* had decided to end the work of the director of the Arab College, Khaleel Tutah, because he hadn’t done his job of preventing the students from striking, as well as three other teachers, Darwish Al-Miqdadi, Jalal Zuraiq, and George Mummar.

Director Tutah could apparently satisfy neither his students nor his employers.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Haikal, Yousuf, ca. 1924–27 [year unclear] (Arabic); passages translated by Yousef M. Aljamaal.

One day, those three teachers called on me when they visited Jaffa, and I went with them to the office of *Falastin* newspaper where we met with its director Issa Al-Issah. They spoke to him how the *Maarif* administration kills national sentiments among students and the role the press should play in explaining this to the public, on the one hand, and on the other hand warning the *Maarif* administration against doing this. Then we went to the office of the Moslem-Christian Association to meet with its director Omar Al-Bitar as well as Raghieb Abu-Alsoud, Yousef Ashour and Issa Al-Issah. They also spoke to us about the danger of the role played by the *Maarif* administration to kill national sentiment among students.

The many Palestinians employed by the British were obviously *in between* Britain and their people.

180. Anglo-American Convention

3 Dec 1924/5 Dec 1925

In light of the increasingly important part the US would play in securing the foundations of a Jewish state in Palestine it is relevant to note that the US and Britain followed up the establishment of the Mandate with **a bi-lateral Convention**, signed in London on 3 December 1924 and ratified in the US on 3 December 1925. It incorporated the Mandate text verbatim [¹⁴⁶] and expressed US agreement with it:

Article 1: Subject to the provisions of the present convention the United States consents to the administration of Palestine by His Britannic Majesty, pursuant to the mandate recited as above.¹⁴⁸⁰

When the British Government in March 1939 [^{386ff}] during the lengthy and fundamental London talks set up by then Colonial Minister Malcolm MacDonald showed signs of repudiating the Balfour Declaration, U.S. Ambassador in London Joseph Kennedy would base his complaints to the British Government on this Convention.¹⁴⁸¹

21 March 1925 *Based on the Ottoman Societies Law, the Palestinian Arab Workers' Party (PAWS) is established in Haifa as a moderate trade union movement, led by Sami Taha.*¹⁴⁸²

¹⁴⁸⁰ U.S. Government 1925; see Quigley 2022, pp 135-37.

¹⁴⁸¹ See FO 371/23232, p 95.

¹⁴⁸² See also Regan 2017, pp 126-30.

High Commissioner Samuel reported to Colonial Secretary Leo Amery¹⁴⁸³ about a speech by Christian Palestinian Khalil Sakakini at the Haram-ash-Sharif, surrounded by participants in the general strike prompted by Balfour's visit to open the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on 1 April 1925. According to Akram Zuaytir, the Palestine Government had expropriated the university's land from its Arab owners.¹⁴⁸⁴ He presented the crowd with a "**motion, none too politely phrased**, inviting Lord Balfour to leave the country which he had entered against the wishes of the inhabitants [and which] was passed and communicated through the District Governor to the High Commissioner." (p 124)¹⁴⁸⁵ It was the first visit to Palestine or Syria of the author of the Declaration which did away with Palestine. The Governor of the Jerusalem-Jaffa District secretly reported¹⁴⁸⁶ many other details of Arab rejection of Balfour and noted that Balfour's "personal interest in Zionism" made him more than merely the man who happened to sign the despised Declaration. That is,

The Arabs see in Lord Balfour the personification of British interest in Zionism and consider him not only the initiator but the faithful supporter of the policy. It was only natural, therefore, that his visit should arouse strong feeling in the country; feelings of anger, of indignation, and of despair.

All Parties issued protests, the "general strike was... generally carried out", "no motor cab drivers were to be found, and Hababo, the Government contractor, closed his doors." Black flags were flown, and

The Arab press appeared with their front pages heavily outlined in black and with leading articles in English. The 'Falastin' published a special English edition. ... [Non-Government] schools almost without exception struck. ... Both Moslems and Christians instructed the heads of their Communities to prevent Lord Balfour from visiting the Haram and the Holy Sepulchre. ... These apprehensions continued until Lord Balfour left Jerusalem. ... The representatives of the Arab press refused to accompany their colleagues to interview Lord Balfour at Government House.

Only a few Arabs attended the Government reception for Balfour or the opening of the Hebrew University itself, and "the Moslem-Christian Association of Nablus despatched a certain number of telegrams to the Mayor of Jerusalem [Ragheb al-Nashashibi] in protest at his presence."

Kayyali reports of Balfour's visit:

When Balfour came to Palestine for the opening of the Hebrew University even the Orthodox Jews, who overwhelmingly opposed Zionism, declared three days of mourning; Arabs

¹⁴⁸³ CO 733/92, p 124, Samuel to Colonial Secretary, 21 April 1925 with Political Reports 1 March – 9 April; Kayyali 1978, p 134.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Zuaytir 1958, p 63.

¹⁴⁸⁵ See also Beška 2015.

¹⁴⁸⁶ CO 733/92, pp 121-30, all quotations.

closed their shops and flew black flags; he was refused entry to the area of the Mosque of Omar and participation in a service at St George's Cathedral. There were even stronger protests against Balfour when he arrived in Damascus.¹⁴⁸⁷ Falastin put out an unwelcoming issue in English.¹⁴⁸⁸

That the Anglican powers that be at St George's Cathedral rejected Balfour spoke volumes.

Ronald Storrs, then Military Governor of Jerusalem, later wrote:

It seemed incredible that so distinguished and delightful a person could be for the Arabs an abominated enemy, yet the anxiety lest they might somehow succeed in treating him as such was upon me day and night. ... What chance indeed had he of being allowed to realize the depth of Arab feeling when the scores of abusive telegrams awaiting him at Government House were destroyed by his secretary without his being informed of their existence? ... On the other hand, from all accounts few men can ever have received an ovation comparable with that accorded him at his reception in Tel Aviv – the delirious accumulated enthusiasm of two thousand years. ... [In Damascus and Lebanon the] journey that had begun so brilliantly ended (after an agonized prayer for his departure by the French Governor of Damascus) in two days' marooning on a liner in Beirut Harbour, guarded from a hostile shore by the circling of a French torpedo-destroyer.¹⁴⁸⁹

George Antonius, who had been given the job of escorting Balfour and was with him on his journey through Damascus and to Beirut¹⁴⁹⁰, explains Balfour's incomprehension at his rejection by his non-awareness of the local non-Jews, if you will:

Of the Arabs he was first not even conscious, except to the extent to which he may be said to be conscious of, say, the ground-lads who fielded the balls for him on the courts at Cannes.¹⁴⁹¹

¹⁴⁸⁷ Jeffries 1939, p 596; also Ayyad 1999, pp 110-12.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Kayyali 1978, p 134.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Storrs 1937, p 436.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Boyle 2001, pp 128-29.

¹⁴⁹¹ Boyle 2001, pp 130-31.

Read this and the following entry together with entries >178, >183, >191 & 227.

As it had in October 1924 [^{>178}], the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Congress (AEC) petitioned not the British directly, but the League of Nations in Geneva. They sent two letters,¹⁴⁹² or “petitions”, signed by Jamal al-Husseini in Jerusalem, one a “political memorandum” addressed to the President of the *Council* of the League of Nations rejecting the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration as such, and the other addressed to the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission listing fourteen concrete grievances (covered in the next entry [^{>183}]). Commissioner Leopoldo Palacios of Spain was delegated to write a Report on the petitions for the attention of the rest of the PMC members, and he noted that “the two Arab memoranda... are printed and bound in a single pamphlet, with consecutive numbering of the pages, the date of the pamphlet being April 12th, 1925.” (p 180)

The first letter/petition, began by quoting the Covenant’s Article 22 defining “Certain communities” whose “existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised” [^{>46}], then gave the AEC’s usual analysis:

Palestine was a part of the Turkish Empire that has reached a higher stage of development than any of the other parts of that Empire which are governed by this article of the Covenant and which now, to a considerable extent, enjoy the benefits of this provision, as Iraq and Transjordan. But Palestine, as stated before the Permanent Mandates Commission by the High Commissioner for Palestine in October 1924 (Minutes of the Fifth Session,... p 36) is administered as one of the colonies of the Mandatory. ... [Whereas] Palestine, before the war, enjoyed wide measures of self-government. (pp 161, 162)

Palestine, along with Iraq, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon, were uncontestedly ‘A’ Mandates. (pp 212-14) After quoting the passage in Article 22 declaring the tutelage of such “colonies and territories” as Palestine, i.e. ‘A’ Mandates, to be a “sacred trust of civilisation”, the letter asked,

Does this sacred trust coincide with the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, which was made the basis of the Palestine mandate and which totally ignores all political rights of the Arab inhabitants, who form the overwhelming majority of the population, safeguarding solely their ‘civil and religious rights’, which are safeguarded in all countries of the civilised world, even for minorities? Was this condition of treating a ‘liberated nation’ as a minority in its own country, where the followers of a certain creed, dispersed all over the world, where they in most cases enjoy the full rights of the citizens of the countries they live in, are treated as full citizens, for the reason that 2,000 years back they held sway over that country for a period of 250 years; was this premeditated by the League of Nations to whose tender care the national interests of Palestinians was laid as a ‘sacred trust of civilisation’? (p 161)

¹⁴⁹² PMC 1925, all citations, mainly from Annex 7, pp 160-73.

After recounting McMahon's pledges [>10], the AEC proposed League of Nations action:

The League of Nations should have asked Great Britain to abolish the Balfour Declaration, which conflicts with the principles of the Covenant in accordance with Article 20 of that Covenant, which reads in part as follows: 'In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of the Covenant, it shall be the duty of such Member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.' An explanation of why the League of Nations has unduly neglected [this] undertaking... would be most helpful. (p 162)

(To my knowledge no such explanation was ever given, not even in the comprehensive Peel Report of 7 July 1937 [>336] which did however, according to Jeffries, make a stab at showing how the Balfour Declaration might be exempt from Article 20.¹⁴⁹³) Furthermore, the stipulations of Articles 2 and 3 of the Mandate itself [>146], calling for "self-government for localities" and "the development of self-governing institutions" were contradicted by Article 2's stipulation to found "a Jewish National Home" which a self-governed Palestine would reject. (p 162)

In other words, according to the AEC there was a "clash" between Article 2's two parts – the "Jewish National Home" and the "civil" rights of non-Jews. The Arab community's civil right of "economic well-being", guaranteed in the Mandate Preamble as well as Article 2, would include retention of their agricultural land and preclude Article 6's "immigration" and "close settlement by Jews on the land" that are necessary for the National Home. (pp 162-63) Concerning Mandate Article 4, requiring "an appropriate Jewish agency" to advise the Administration, the petitioners asked the penetrating question:

To bind the Administration of Palestine to act in conformity with advice tendered by a body that represents a community dispersed all over the world of which a small minority lives in Palestine is a unique action in the history of Imperialism. If, for the sake of argument, we assume that the inhabitants of Palestine accept any sort of constitution that the mandatory Power flings to them and some sort of Legislative Council is established, what would be its relation to this Jewish agency, and could the one Administration be subject to the lines of economic, social, etc. actions laid down by the Council as well as those laid down by the Jewish agency when obviously in most cases the two lines are diametrically divergent? The Jewish agency follows the 'Jewish National Home' policy, while the self-governing institutions that are to be encouraged in accordance with the second part of Article 2 and Article 3 of the Mandate and which must be predominantly Arab, will follow the Arab national policy: how could the Government cope with this impossible situation? Would the representatives of the inhabitants in a Legislative Council submit to advice given by a completely foreign body that has no direct relation even with the mandatory Power? (pp 163-64)

This passage was unique in its imagining, in practical terms, how the constitutional set-up *could even function*, and was to my knowledge the first time the unique kind of settler-colonialism was identified wherein the settlers and the colonialists ("the mandatory Power") were two different communities with "no direct relation". The AEC was correct

¹⁴⁹³ Jeffries 1939, pp 487-88.

in another sense that the British-Zionist mandate was “unique... in the history of Imperialism”, namely, that it was in effect altruistic (selfless) on the imperialist’s part, for the costs to Britain throughout far outweighed the benefits.

Even if the colonisation was for the benefit of a third party, though, the British were the main actors in passing what A.L. Tibawi calls a “sentence” on the Palestinian people:

[The sentence] was passed by a great power when it promised to facilitate the establishment of a national home for one people in the national home of another people at a time when that power had no rights of sovereignty over the territory concerned and when the case for the defense by or on behalf of the inhabitants of the territory was not heard.¹⁴⁹⁴

The Palestinians were the erased vertex of the Britain-Zionism-Palestine triangle, perhaps at times heard, but never heeded.

In closing, the AEC wrote:

The Zionist experiment in Palestine has, during the last six years, brought the country to the verge of ruin. ... The situation may only be saved by the establishment of a National Constitutional Government in which the two communities – Arab and Jewish – will be represented in proportion to their numbers. (p 164)

Jamal and the AEC, in Quigley’s paraphrase, were saying that

[e]ven if Article 22 was legally valid, they said, the manner in which the particular mandate was imposed infringed on the promised status of being ‘provisionally independent.’¹⁴⁹⁵

How could forcing a mandate on them, that is, be consistent with provisional independence? It was in fact contested by nobody that Article 22 included the inhabitants of Palestine as one of the “communities” whose “existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised” [>46]; and, if independent, no Jewish national home could be legally imposed upon it because the overwhelming majority of those inhabitants undisputedly rejected it.

Although this first of the two petitions was addressed to the League of Nations Council, for some reason it was dealt with by **the Permanent Mandates Commission, which declared it inadmissible:**

In view of the fact that in the first petition the very principle of the Palestine Mandate is contested, the Commission has decided not to take it into consideration.¹⁴⁹⁶

(Even if the PMC could *read* petitions, according to Susan Pedersen its remit stated that it “was allowed neither to hear petitioners nor to conduct fact-finding missions to the territories”.¹⁴⁹⁷ [*see also* >191]) The PMC (and indirectly the Council) thus dodged the Palestinians’ claims and questions. In his Report on the first petition Palacios had likewise reasoned:

¹⁴⁹⁴ Tibawi 1977, p 196; also Andersen 2017, p 11.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Quigley 2021, Ch. 12 ca. p 94; use Search function in the online version; also Quigley 2022, p 64.

¹⁴⁹⁶ PMC 1925, p 219, also >188.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Pedersen 2010, p 39.

Its contents do not concern us. The Mandates Commission should take action with regard to everything relating to mandates and their proper application and execution, but within the limits of the mandate itself – *i.e.* with a view to ensuring its continuance, its due observance and its execution. It is not for us to discuss whether the arguments submitted are just or unjust, nor do the fundamental principles of the mandates system concern us; these matters form part of the whole policy of the League of Nations, and it is outside our competence to discuss their details. (p 180)

To argue and debate the case that the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration is logically and politically unacceptable, that is, you have to first accept it – a Catch-22. More importantly, in order to go over the books from the basics on up, to whom or what could the Palestinians turn now that the British and the PMC had said No? Only the Council of the League of Nations itself was left, and to it the PMC duly referred this petition. But to my knowledge no answer ever came from the Council either. In purely logical terms, the two remaining options were 1) to work for a change in world public opinion and 2) either violent or non-violent resistance at the scene.

Read this and the previous entry together with entries >178, >182, >191 & 227.

The Arab Executive Committee sent yearly memoranda to the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC)¹⁴⁹⁸, including in 1924 the lengthy one dealt with earlier [>178], and in 1925 its **two detailed petitions** dated 8/12 April [this entry & >182], signed by AEC General Secretary Jamal al-Husseini and in part also by AEC Member Wadi Bustani.¹⁴⁹⁹ This entry deals with the second petition. As noted in the PMC minutes¹⁵⁰⁰ by Spanish Commissioner Palacios, the ‘Rapporteur’ assigned by the PMC to deal with the AEC [also >182; >189; >191; >192; >206; >227], the PMC “received through the proper channels two memoranda, signed ‘Jamal Husseini’”, the proper channel being namely “through... the High Commissioner for Palestine”; and, so Palacios, although the two memoranda were bound together into a single pamphlet, their contents were quite different:

The first printed document is addressed to the President of the Council of the League of Nations [and] attacks and repudiates in principle the actual basis of the Palestine Mandate [and] in my opinion... should be forwarded to the Council... Its contents do not concern us. (p 180)

Repeating its formal decision: “In view of the fact that in the first petition the very principle of the Palestine Mandate was contested, the Commission has decided not to take it into consideration. (p 219)

This principle, so the PMC, had applied to other Palestinian petitions as well, for example:

The British Government, in a letter dated July 4th, 1925, forwarded to the Secretariat a general protest from the Secretary of the National Party in Tul Karem against the Zionist policy carried out in Palestine. The British Government did not offer any observations on this protest as they understood that the Permanent Mandates Commission had expressed the view that it could take no cognisance of requests to alter the terms of the mandate. As this petition, which is in very general terms, is obviously incompatible with the provisions of the mandate, I presume that the Commission will not consider that it is in a position to examine it. (pp 140, 220)

A “stereotyped procedure” for examining, or rather not examining, complaints by locals had also become clear during 1924, as shown in the minuted words of Commissioners William Rappard, Frederick Lugard and D. F. W. van Rees.¹⁵⁰¹ The door to the international body ‘overseeing’ the Mandatories was shut and locked.

The AEC had started its “pamphlet”, i.e. prefaced *both* petitions, by explaining that

¹⁴⁹⁸ Lesch 1973, p 25.

¹⁴⁹⁹ PMC 1925, pp 164-73, = Annex 7.

¹⁵⁰⁰ PMC 1925, *all further citations*.

¹⁵⁰¹ Jeffries 1939, pp 599-602.

the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress, representing 91 per cent of the population, has the honour to submit the following specific cases of complaints for consideration by your Commission. A political memorandum has, meanwhile, been submitted to the Council of the League of Nations. (p 164) [>182]

The AEC then objected to a matter of procedure: not only did the mandated people have to approach the PMC through its adversary, the mandatory power,¹⁵⁰² but they were in Jerusalem while the mandatory Power was in the indeed more powerful position of having British officials present in person in Geneva.

This Committee, taking advantage of your kind patience, would venture to point out that the procedure of enquiry adopted last October [1924, >178] by your Commission in examining the Palestine question was neither fair to the Palestine Arabs nor sufficiently enlightening to the Commission itself. That procedure gave only one party of the controversy, represented by Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner for Palestine, a Jew and a well-known 'ardent Zionist', the invaluable advantage of appearing before your Commission to defend his policy, refute and depreciate the complaints brought by the second absent party. (p 164)

As well-paraphrased by Rapporteur Palacios,

the [Commission's] procedure allowed of his [Samuel's] appearing alone before the Commission and bringing forward arguments against opponents who were not able to refute his statements. (p 180)

Never during the Mandate, to my knowledge, did the PMC make an effort to remedy this unequal situation. Recall that similarly, in July 1923, the Cabinet Committee on Palestine chaired by Colonial Secretary Cavendish had taken oral testimony from one person only: Herbert Samuel. [>166]

Concerning the Palestine-Mandate problem in general, at the PMC meeting of 28 October Commissioner Freire d'Andrade had expressed an attitude typical of the PMC:

What the Commission ought to do was to try to bring the two parties, Arabs and Jews, together. The report in question [PMC Rapporteur Palacios' Report on the AEC 'pamphlet'] was designed precisely to convince the Arabs of the necessity of accepting the principle of the mandate. The solution of the problem would then automatically result.¹⁵⁰³

In his 'Report on the AEC's Petition' Palacios actually outdid Freire d'Andrade in extolling the virtues of togetherness:

The problem is... for us to exercise the greatest possible amount of tact in harmonising the two principles on which the mandate is based - namely, that of the Jewish home and that of the well-being and self-government of the various populations in Palestine. We should seek to attain both objects simultaneously, with equal energy and the same apostolic enthusiasm. Each should be complementary to the other, each should moderate the other and each should serve as a corrective to the other. In fact, each policy should lend support to the other. (p 181)

¹⁵⁰² Also Khalidi 2006, p 45.

¹⁵⁰³ PMC 1925, p 129.

The two boxers, that is, should remain in the ring, correcting and even supporting each other, with each perhaps also refereeing the fight. Palacios and the PMC were buying the British 'dual obligation' line.

A warning went out, however, to only one "party":

The Arabs – above all, their most responsible leaders – should not lose sight of the fact that, so long as they reject and combat one of the fundamental bases of the Palestine mandate, the Permanent Mandates Commission, faithful to its mission, will be led to conclude, by the very force of circumstances, that the Arab protests against the non-observance of the other principle – which they hold to be favourable to their claims – will lose much of their weight.
(p 181)

On its side of the scales the Jewish-Zionist side already had the "weight" of the British-Zionist Mandate, which in addition had unequalled weight inside the League of Nations.

The "specific cases of complaints"

In this **second petition**, quite similar to that of a year earlier [178], the AEC brought fourteen concrete claims of unfair treatment and illegality concerning (*my paraphrasing*):

1. the concession for hydroelectricity from the Jordan River given without a public tender process to Pinhas Rutenberg, in secret, only "in agreement with the Jewish agency", and under suppression of an earlier concession to an Arab of Bethlehem;
2. Rutenberg's production by diesel generators of electricity in Haifa without a concession;
3. the concession to Rutenberg for hydroelectricity from the Auja River, Jaffa District, likewise given without tender and by the Central Administration rather than the Jaffa municipality;
4. the privatisation of salt production formerly under Government monopoly, the concession having been given to the 'Jewish Economic Board' of British-Jewish Zionist Sir Alfred Mond (Lord Melchett);
5. the illegal confiscation of 3,000 hectares of valuable land along the Haifa-Egypt railway line from 170 families living off that land (the Kabbara Concession);¹⁵⁰⁴
6. the "usurpation of municipal rights of election... Leaving aside the efforts of the Government to establish the sham Legislative and Advisory Councils which the inhabitants have so forcibly and successfully resisted" – not even municipal elections had occurred;
7. the sewage effluents from Jewish to Arab quarters of Jerusalem allowed by the Administration and Zionist Executive;
8. the ordered closing of the Mamilla Cemetery in Jerusalem near the Jewish Quarters;
9. inordinately "harsh methods used by the police" as documented by the Supreme Moslem Council;
10. the imprisonment and trial on false charges of nationalist activist Salim Bey Abdurrahman in Tulkarem, who was acquitted after five months of solitary confinement;
11. generally terrible prison conditions;

¹⁵⁰⁴ See Forman & Kedar 2003; also Smith 1993, pp 100-09.

12. changes in judicial rules, contradictory to traditional Moslem and Sharia law, allowing for instance continued imprisonment for two months after acquittal and evidence taken as fact with fewer than two male and four female witnesses;
13. excessive Jewish immigration to the Jerusalem, Haifa and Jaffa Districts despite precarious economic conditions;
14. the Zionist flag, anthem and 'Eretz Israel'.

Regarding the last point, the letter noted that Government officials stood when 'Hatikva' was sung, but not when the Arab anthem was sung, and the Government often printed the name 'Eretz Israel' on stamps and correspondence although it was a "Zionist name with political meaning which is quite provoking to the Arabs" – while by contrast the "Arab national" name (*Surial Janoubiah*) and the Moslem-Christian name (The Holy Land) were only "of a geographical significance". (p 172)

The PMC claimed or admitted that it lacked enough knowledge to be able to deal with the Palestinians' fourteen points. (pp 125-30) Anticipating this to be the case, the AEC in this second petition had invited the Commission to Palestine:

[W]e venture to suggest that the Permanent Mandates Commission would honour Palestine by a visit, for the purpose of studying the complaints on the spot in the presence of the parties concerned. (p 164)

Palacios adopted a general attitude of fairness, albeit within the constraint of acceptance of the rightness and goodness of the Mandate *per se*, and in particular supported this suggestion of a "visit to the spot",

for such a visit would not only enable the Commission to hear personally the Arabs and the other elements of the population but would also give the Committee [sic.] some idea of the atmosphere and the numerous imponderable factors which are of the first importance in solving the problem. I also think that we should, forthwith and with a view to making good the involuntary absence of the adverse party which submits its complaint to us, publish the allegations made and the arguments advanced by the Committee of the Arab Congress at the same time as we publish the Minutes of the Commission's discussions and the comments of the British Government. (p 181)

The PMC, though, after very long discussion, rejected the Rapporteur's argument for educating themselves by going "to the spot"; PMC Commissioner from the U.K., Sir Frederick Lugard, was instrumental in the internal debate in seeing to it that no such visit took place. (pp 123-26) [¹⁹¹] (Lugard had been High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, assisted by racist author C.L. Temple.¹⁵⁰⁵)

The thoughts of the PMC and the British on the Arab complaints contained in this second petition will be looked at in more detail in entries >189 & >191.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Said 1979, p 94.

184. An Arab-Amery exchange

21 April 1925

Staunch Zionist **Leo** (Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett) **Amery**, a school friend of Churchill and Colonial Secretary during the politically quiet years 1924–29, on 21 April 1925 **met in Jerusalem with Sheikh Suleiman al-Taji al-Farouki**, President of the National Party, and with Arab Executive Committee representatives Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husseini and Amin Bey Tamimi. It was thus a “joint delegation” of somewhat non-unified Palestinian politicians who confronted Amery – an attempted unity which, according to Lesch, would be short-lived¹⁵⁰⁶. The Palestinians registered political complaints concerning for instance the police system and public works, as well as economic complaints, saying that “funds and wealth are going out of the country” and that the “taxpayers in Palestine are paying taxes only for others who are living [here] as a consequence of the Balfour Declaration”.¹⁵⁰⁷ Continuing:

The self-government which the inhabitants previously enjoyed under the Turkish regime consisted of Municipal elections, provincial elections and councils. ... The percentage of Arab officials in the previous Govt was 95%. ... [Covenant Article 22 meant that] their independence should be recognised subject to the assistance and advice of the Mandatory Power and provided that the Government will consider the wishes of such inhabitants. ... [I]njustice [was] done to the inhabitants in consequence of the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in the country [and] the obligations given to the Arabs [should] be fulfilled *before* the fulfilment of the obligations given to the others.¹⁵⁰⁸

The exchange became typical, Amery replying that greater Arab prosperity was proven by the increase in the Arab population, that only “misunderstandings” led to the false view that there was “incompatibility” between the two stated goals of the Balfour Declaration, and that the Arabs’ refusal of both the Legislative and Advisory Councils, in 1922 and 1923 [>135; >137; >143; >160; >170; >172], disqualified them from complaining; he added, “I am sure... that the gentlemen here do not really expect that the British Government could change its policy on this matter”.¹⁵⁰⁹ Why not? Was it not reasonable to “expect” democratic behaviour from Great Britain, a pinnacle of domestic democracy?

Amery’s placatory words played the same role as those of Samuel, whose stint as HC was ending: It had been

necessary [for Samuel] to issue what he described as ‘reassuring statements’ to the Arabs, and, on the other, to do nothing to prevent the Jews from advancing steadily towards their

¹⁵⁰⁶ Lesch 1979, p 98, citing Political Reports, CO 733/90, CO 733/92 and CO 733/93 of February, March and April 1925.

¹⁵⁰⁷ CO 733/92, pp 213–18.

¹⁵⁰⁸ CO 733/92, pp 219–22.

¹⁵⁰⁹ CO 733/92, pp 223–29.

goal of an ultimate Jewish majority. This was, in fact, the policy which was to be pursued in Palestine with great persistency, certainly until the MacDonald White Paper of 1939...
[>410]¹⁵¹⁰

Such was the British use of dialogue.

Kayyali, by the way, interprets this meeting as an example of “cooperation” with the occupier:

Sheikh Suleiman al-Taji al-Farouki was President of the National Party and with Musa Kazem's collusion spoke for cooperation with the British when Amery visited Palestine [at a time of] decline in Jewish immigration and lack of unity, plastered over by cooperation between the Arab Executive Committee and the National Party.¹⁵¹¹

In light of the fact that the petitioners in this crassly unequal setting were first asking for “self-government” and that “the wishes of [the] inhabitants” be fulfilled – a precondition for the “advice and assistance” part of Article 22 – as well as identifying as an “injustice” the cornerstone of British policy, the Jewish national home – it is inaccurate to characterise the three men's behaviour during this encounter as either “cooperation” or “collusion”.

¹⁵¹⁰ Barbour 1946, p 101.

¹⁵¹¹ Kayyali 1978, p 135.

A clear revelation to the local inhabitants of which people counted most in Palestine was the Palestine Government's diversion of spring water near Jerusalem into Jerusalem itself. In Sahar Huneidi's rendering:

Another contentious issue which arose in 1925 further illustrated the way in which [High Commissioner] Samuel prioritized the needs of the Jewish community. He sanctioned the diversion of water, by a government ordinance, from an Arab village [Artas, or Urtas] to Jerusalem for the benefit of the growing community of Jerusalem Jews. This ordinance was enacted 'to enable the authority undertaking the public supply of water to Jerusalem to acquire temporarily, water available from the spring at Urtas village for the purpose of relieving the water shortage of Jerusalem'.

Further, so Huneidi, the governor of Jerusalem had earlier in 1925 "ordered [the locals] not to use [the spring water] for planting vegetables under penalty of a fine", and "the Urtas Springs Ordinance No. 13 of 1925 was passed by Samuel on 25 May 1925", but "the case of the Artas water had been taken to court and had been won by the Arabs."¹⁵¹²

In Vincent Lemire's rendering,¹⁵¹³ on 25 May 1925

after a particularly dry winter, the Mandate government decided to divert almost all the water resources of Artas village to Jerusalem. On 9 June the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Congress vigorously protested to the High Commissioner Herbert Samuel against what they explicitly called 'Zionist spoliation'. ... While the Artas case allows one to restate the distinction between the urban elite and rural peasantry, it also allows one to add water resources as a constituent element of Palestinian national consciousness and land defense. (pp 31, 33, 41)

Responding to Zionist demands, the Water Supply Department Advisory Board was expanded to include two Jewish Jerusalemites, a Mr. Solomon and a Dr. Levy. (p 37) The connection to European-Jewish immigration was that demand for water in Jerusalem was partly due to the building boom in its Jewish quarters. (pp 37-38) The well was even fenced off. (p 39)

Lemire paraphrases **the Arabs' memorandum of protest** to the Colonial Office:

The protest over the diversion of Artas waters was widely covered by the local press, and notably in two full columns on the front page of the Tuesday, 9 June 1925 issue of *The Palestine Bulletin*. The text is well-structured and divided into three parts: a preamble introducing the water crisis; a chronological account intended to demonstrate the expedited and arbitrary nature of the decree promulgation procedure; and finally a political interpretation of the case aimed at extending their understanding of this particular act of spoliation, of which the Artas peasants consider themselves the victims, to encompass the entire process

¹⁵¹² Huneidi 2001, pp 188-89 & 289, note 99; also Lemire 2011, p 38.

¹⁵¹³ Lemire 2011, all further citations.

of Zionist colonization in Palestine. (p 42) ... The 'inhabitants of Artas Village (Muslims and Christians) ... are the exclusive and uncontested proprietors of Artas spring.' (p 43) ... [T]he last part of the memorandum attempts to synthesize the events' political significations ... by drawing parallels between the Artas case and a number of precedents, (p 45)

The Palestinians' lawyer, Mogannam Elias Mogannam, "himself a member of the [Arab] Executive Committee", won the case before the Palestine Supreme Court of Justice, but the Privy Council in London on 16 February sided with the Mandatory authorities, i.e. in favour of the water needs of newly-arrived urban-Jerusalem residents. (p 49)

186. Citizenship Order in Council

1 August 1925

Alone among the Mandates,¹⁵¹⁴ **the Palestine Mandate stipulated (in Article 7):**

The Administration of Palestine shall be responsible for enacting a nationality law. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine. [^{>146}]

Groups other than Jews were not mentioned, perhaps because it was regarded as self-evident that previous Ottoman citizenship should be extended in time. Put into effect on 1 August 1925 and published in the *Official Gazette* of the Government of Palestine on 16 September,¹⁵¹⁵ this ‘Order’ from His Majesty, decided “with the advice of His Privy Council”, started with a statement of Britain’s coloniser status:

WHEREAS by treaty, capitulation, grant, usage, sufferance and other lawful means His Majesty has power and jurisdiction in Palestine:...

It then straightforwardly dealt with Palestine’s residents: “Turkish subjects habitually resident in the territory of Palestine upon the 1st day of August, 1925, shall become Palestinian citizens.” (Part I. Article1) Having a Palestinian father was also sufficient, unless he was a citizen of another country. (II.3) As for people “born within Palestine” with “Turkish nationality”, but who were “habitually resident abroad”, on the other hand, joining the citizenry was not automatic but required additionally 1) a “declaration... of desire to become a Palestinian citizen”, 2) residency in Palestine during the six months prior to such declaration, and 3) the declarant could not be a citizen of another country. (II.4 & 5) Mohamed Ali Eltaher, an active anti-Zionist journalist and intellectual [^{also >176; >249; >286}], was one Palestinian who after emigrating from Palestine to Cairo in 1912 as a 16-year-old was refused Palestinian citizenship although he was born in Nablus to Palestinian parents, grew up in Yaffa and visited Palestine and Greater Syria many times.¹⁵¹⁶

As with “naturalisation” of people with no ties to Palestine (see just below), granting or withholding citizenship was at the “absolute discretion” of, “with or without assigning any reason”, either the “Government of Palestine” or the “High Commissioner”. (I.2, II. 4 & 5, III.7(3) & (5)) With the effect of making the declaration of a desire to become a citizen even more difficult for people born in Palestine but residing abroad, Herbert Samuel in November 1925 used the discretionary power thus granted him to shorten the deadline for such a declaration from August 1927, as foreseen in the original Order of 1 August 1925, to August 1926.¹⁵¹⁷ Long into the 1930s, both the Arab Executive Committee and the Palestinian press, particularly the Bethlehem newspaper *Sawt al-Sha'b* edited by Issa

¹⁵¹⁴ Qafisheh 2008, p 98; Banko 2012, p 651.

¹⁵¹⁵ CO 742/2, pp 460-66 of the collection of Gazettes for 1925; also Bentwich 1926, pp 37-44. https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoyvizjW3WknFiJnKLWHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Palestinian_Citizenship_Order_1925.html.

¹⁵¹⁶ Eltaher, current http://www.eltaher.org/biography/english/biography_p09_en.html

¹⁵¹⁷ Banko 2012, p 652.

Bandak, criticised this denial of automatic citizenship to native-born Palestinians.¹⁵¹⁸ The Shaw Commission in 1930 [p.220] sided with the Palestinian view that those born in Palestine but now residing abroad should easily become citizens, and regarded this grievance as a contributory cause of the uprising of August 1929 which it was that Commission's remit to investigate.¹⁵¹⁹ But as Rashid Khalidi summarises the many words of this Order in Council, it fulfilled Article 7 of the Mandate in that

Jewish immigrants, irrespective of their origins, could acquire Palestinian nationality, while native Palestinian Arabs who happened to be abroad when the British took over were denied it.¹⁵²⁰

Naturalisation was possible for anyone who had been resident for two of the last three years, was of "good character", spoke English, Arabic or Hebrew, and intended to reside in Palestine. (III.7) But in practice, many Palestinians abroad had become stateless (no longer "having Turkish nationality") and could – obviously – not meet the residency requirement for naturalisation, and/or could not apply in person in Palestine within the deadline – even if application was theoretically possible from overseas (IV.18).¹⁵²¹ As a result, of 9,000 applications for citizenship from Palestinians overseas, only about 100 were granted.¹⁵²² By 1948, 99% of the somewhat over 130,000 naturalised Palestinians were Jewish, and most of those retained citizenship in other countries, while in 1946 about 43% of resident Jews had not wanted to become naturalised Palestinian citizens.¹⁵²³

¹⁵¹⁸ Banko 2012, p 653.

¹⁵¹⁹ Shaw 1930, pp 133-34.

¹⁵²⁰ Khalidi 2020, p 36.

¹⁵²¹ Qafisheh 2008, pp 97-103; Banko 2012, pp 652-53; Khalil 2014, pp 205-06, 210-11.

¹⁵²² Peel 1937, XV §9; Norris 2013, p 97; Khalil 2014, p 211; also Banko 2012.

¹⁵²³ Qafisheh 2008, pp 120, 123, 201.

187. Ibrahim Tuqan writes *Mawtini*

1925-29

Sometime during the years 1925-29 while studying at the American University of Beirut Ibrahim Tuqan, poet of Nablus, wrote '*Mawtini*' ('My Homeland'), which became the national anthem of Palestine as of 1936. Its lyrics:

My homeland, My homeland
Majesty and beauty, sublimity and splendor,
Are in your hills, are in your hills

Life and deliverance, pleasure and hope
Are in your air, are in your air
When will I see you? When will I see you?
Secure and prosperous
Victorious and honored
Will I see you in your eminence
Reaching the stars, reaching the stars?
My homeland, my homeland

My homeland, my homeland
Our youth will not tire, until your independence
Or they will die, or they will die
We will drink from death and never be to our enemies
Like slaves, like slaves

We do not want, we do not want
An eternal humiliation nor a miserable life,
An eternal humiliation nor a miserable life,
We do not want, but we will bring back
Our illustrious history, our illustrious history
My homeland, my homeland

My homeland, my homeland
The sword and the pen not the talk nor the quarrel
Are our symbols, are our symbols
Our glory and our covenant and a duty to be faithful
Arouse us, arouse us

Our honor, Our honor
Is a noble cause and a waving banner
Is a noble cause and a waving banner
O, behold you in your eminence

Victorious over your enemies
Victorious over your enemies
My homeland, my homeland

It is still acclaimed and sung today.¹⁵²⁴ Tuqan was only one of many political poets, including for example Abd al-Karim al-Karmi, Abd al-Rahim Mahmud, Asaf al-Nashashibi, Ibrahim al-Dabbagh, Muhammad Hasan Ala al-Din, Burhan al-Abbushi, Muhammad Khurshid, Qayasar al-Khuri, George Bitar, Bulos Shihada, and Mutlaq Abd al-Khaliq.¹⁵²⁵

¹⁵²⁴ <https://www.delinetciler.net/showthread.php?t=135178>; see also e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb-KJrb7REA> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRMmCWLzk4U>

¹⁵²⁵ Kanafani 1972, p 29.

188. Petition from Mosul to PMC

3 August 1925

On 30 October 1925 the Permanent Mandates Commission minuted:

The Chairman [Marquis Theodoli of Italy] made the following communication concerning a general protest against the 'Zionist policy of Balfour' which he had received from the 'National Party' (*Al-Hizb Al-Watani*), dated Mosul, August 3rd, 1925: 'As this petition is also [i.e. like the Palestinian petition of 8 April] obviously incompatible with the provisions of the mandate, I have decided that it does not deserve the attention of the Commission and that it is not necessary to submit it to the mandatory Power.' *The Commission approved these communications.*¹⁵²⁶ [*also >182; >183*]

Like a prison administration that could only deal with complaints about the food, the PMC eschewed any role in even considering complaints of any section of the prison population which objected to its incarceration as such.

1921-1925 *'[T]he fertile lands of seven villages in the valley of Marj Ibn Amer were sold in 1921 by the wealthy Lebanese Sarsaq family to the Zionists. ... In all, 400,000 dunums [40,000 ha] of land belonging to 22 villages... were taken between 1921 and 1925 and 1,764 families comprising 8,730 individuals were expelled. A similar expulsion of 1,500 villagers from Wadi Al-Hawareth was accomplished by force (killing some of the peasants in the process).'*¹⁵²⁷

¹⁵²⁶ PMC 1925, p 139.

¹⁵²⁷ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 60.

The **British 'Comments' on the Arab petitions** to the League of Nations Council and to the Permanent Mandates Commission, respectively, of 8 and 12 April 1925 [>182; >183], were addressed not to the Palestinian Arab Executive Committee but to the PMC and sent from the 'Foreign Office, September 18th, 1925' (although signed 'Colonial Office, September, 1925').¹⁵²⁸ These comments challenged some of the premises of the AEC before denying any validity at all to any of the Arabs' fourteen complaints in the second petition. First, HMG once again cast doubt on the AEC's democratic legitimacy:

The petitioners claim to represent 91 per cent of the whole population of Palestine. It must not be assumed to imply that 91 per cent, or any other appreciable percentage of the population have in fact taken part in the selection of the Committee. The Committee consists of 24 members, who were elected on June 16th, 1923, by a body of 120 persons styled the 'Palestine Arab Congress'. [>164; also >39; >82; >95; >109; >151; >197] The members of this body were themselves selected at meetings of the local committees of the Moslem-Christian Association in the more important towns and villages of Palestine. There are several other Arab political groups in Palestine, and only a small number of the leading men of the country are directly associated with the Committee from which these petitions emanate. *At the same time, the general ideas underlying the policy of this Committee have no doubt commended themselves to a large part of the Arab population.* (p 173; also §462, p 121)

To weaken the AEC's claim that its *material* views were those of 91% of the population, the Britons had reduced "91%" to merely "a large part" of (only) the "Arab" population, then moved on to the correct *formal* point that the AEC had not been elected by the system of universal suffrage and were moreover a "small number" (perhaps the size of the British Cabinet). In a moment of honesty HMG had admitted that the "Committee's" ideas were those of the masses.

Spanish Commissioner Palacios, the Rapporteur in charge of the AEC petitions, based on the same facts, did not buy the British slant, attesting that the Committee,

if not speaking (as they claim) in the name of 91 per cent of the population of Palestine, undoubtedly do voice the sentiments of an immense majority on the admission of the British themselves... (p 180; also §462, p 121)

Moving closer to the truth, Palacios had replaced the British phrase "large part" with "immense majority"; in fact nobody was challenging the claim that the AEC's political positions were those of 90% the populace – a 'supermajority' in anybody's book – and I know of no documents at all by Palestinians explicitly arguing 1) against independence, 2) for the Mandate as written, 3) for the Jewish national home or 4) for immigration from Europe. I will publish any such documents sent to me by readers.

¹⁵²⁸ PMC 1925, Annex 7a, pp 173-80, all citations.

The British next denied that Samuel had admitted before the PMC in 1924, as claimed by the AEC, that Palestine was being administered as a colony, and quoted from page 56 of his Samuel's 1924 statement:

The underlying idea pursued by the Government was that it should deal with the Arabs in regard to their possession of their land, their religion, their development generally, exactly as if no Balfour Declaration had been made at all. The policy of the Palestine Government was therefore precisely the same as would be the policy of the British Government towards the local inhabitants in India, Ceylon, or in any British colony. (p 173)

This schizophrenic fiction was claiming that in certain administrative areas the Balfour Declaration was irrelevant. At any rate, the British Government's interpretation of this was:

It will be seen that Sir Herbert Samuel was not discussing the constitutional position of Palestine but merely explaining that the Balfour Declaration did not affect the policy of His Majesty's Government in promoting the welfare of the local population of Palestine.

Such fine points aside, what Samuel then said, just after the comparison with "any British colony", revealed his and HMG's real goal as Mandatory:

As he [Samuel himself] had already stated publicly, the object of the Government was to stimulate and aid both an Arab and a Jewish revival. He had urged upon the Jews – and the Jewish element of the population entirely agreed – that if, under the terms of the mandate, the Arab population did not succeed in rising to a higher level of civilisation, discredit would fall on the Zionist movement itself. A degraded and backward Arab population would be a reproach to the whole Zionist policy. (p 173)

On top of what the language of "aid", "civilisation", and "backward" implied of his and his Government's attitudes towards their Palestinian interlocutors, and aside from the fact that he was for the umpteenth time *not* talking about what the Palestinians had umpteen times been talking about, viz., honour, freedom and democracy rather than material "welfare", the *reason* given for the alleged intent to treat all inhabitants equally and fairly was not the justice *per se* of doing so, but to avoid damage to the good name of Zionism. The bottom line, the central focus of Samuel's and HMG's minds, was the success of the ethno-religiously Jewish-Zionist element of the population.

In a comment immediately following this Samuel corrected the AEC concerning the length of the Jews' ancient reign: "The Jewish occupation of Palestine did not cover a period of 250 but of about 1,250 years." (p 174) He evidently thought this strengthened the general "Jewish" claim to political status in the present day.

Further *pace* Samuel (and Leo Amery): 1) McMahon had not promised Palestinian independence to Hussein [-10]; 2) the Palestinians were not better represented under the Turks than under the British (a stance which ignored the fact that the Ottomans had explicitly *not* adopted a Jewish national-home policy); 3) the Jewish agency was *de jure* separate from the Palestine Government (*see* Mandate §4, >146); 4) nobody but Rutenberg had replied to a "public notice" of July 1921; 5) the Rutenberg contract was financially favourable to the populace; and 6) the salt concession was likewise a good deal for the

public (the AEC had merely insisted that the matter remain in the government domain). The locals were moreover 7) not competent to deal with such a complex thing as hydroelectricity; only Europeans, from either Russia or Britain, could do this. (pp 174-76) In defence of their defence of the Rutenberg concession HMG wrote that "it is practically impossible for any person who has not had a wide experience of such matters [as had Rutenberg] to form an opinion of any value upon them." (p 175)

8) The more complicated Kabbara concession given to the "Jewish Colonisation Association... of Baron Edmond de Rothschild" was defended on grounds of the necessity for fighting mosquitos and braking the sand dunes' movement towards the railway line, even if this meant relocating and compensating some Arab locals and in general disrespecting their deeds of ownership. The British were moreover happy that the JCA, rather than HMG, paid for so much of the project itself. (pp 176-77)

Regarding 9) the sewage or drainage problem in Jerusalem, it was claimed on the one hand that they had had "the nuisance removed" but on the other that a British expert was being brought in on "the general question of drainage", which in some quarters indeed still involved some nuisance. (pp 177-78) Complaints about 10) prison conditions were "entirely unfounded" and, along with complaints about detention rules, were dismissed as "a common feature of political agitation". (p 178)

Details about 11) unemployment statistics and 12) rules of evidence in the courts were then brought forward in adversarial style; 13) prohibition of Arab flags was only when they were part of "a partisan demonstration"; 14) the Arabs did not even have a "song of a similar kind" to the Hatikva that would be worth standing up for; 15) the use of the non-political, merely Hebrew term "Eretz Israel" was done in a most discreet manner; and 16) it was not the case that 'Suria-al-Janoubiah' was customarily used in Arabic as the name for Palestine. (pp 179-80)

Colonial Secretary Leo Amery was responsible for this missive which did not grant a single thread of justification to the Palestinians' complaints. [see also >214] In the event, in contrast to the omniscient HMG, the Permanent Mandates Commission was on its own admission not informed enough to judge all of these questions, and it left it that way, leaving British "tutelage" unsupervised.

Both Chaim Weizmann and Emir Faisal, who had fought with Allenby against the Ottomans, been King of the short-lived national government of Syria [see >37; >53; >60; >69; >71; >91] and was now the British-installed (and affirmed by a referendum) ruler of Iraq, had multiple identities. The former was Russian, British and Jewish while the latter was of the Hejaz, an Arab and a Moslem. They were also both important agents in the politics in and around Palestine. **Their conversations in Baghdad** on 6 October, 1925, thus qualify in an extended sense as part of the Palestinian–British dialogue. As told by Weizmann,

Faisal said to me: You would be astonished if I told you how many Arabs from Palestine have come to me with the wish that I mediate between Zionism and the Arabs. I replied to Faisal that we do not know who really represents the Arabs in Palestine, and asked him to tell me on what basis, in his opinion, we could come to an agreement with the Arabs. Faisal replied that at present the Arabs were much more capable of negotiating than they had been three years ago. The sole fear of the Arabs is that they will be dominated by a Jewish majority. He gave as an example the speeches that were made at [the Zionist] Congress, which made the Arabs extremely uneasy, and demanded a limitation on immigration. I replied that, as far as we were concerned, this condition was not negotiable. I then explained to him quite frankly that we desired a Jewish majority in the country, but that we were at the same time ready to guarantee that such a Jewish majority would not oppress the Arabs.¹⁵²⁹

The “we” entering the demographic race was the Zionist Organization which he headed, as well as the various British Governments which always regarded the immigration of Jews from Europe – in numbers by some definition substantial and in any case “limited” not politically, but only economically – as “not negotiable”. Even the MacDonal White Paper of 1939 insisted on another 75,000 immigrants, to be sure limited to 5 years then stopped.¹⁵³⁰ [>410]

¹⁵²⁹ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 60; also Weizmann 1949, pp 266, 403, 466–67, 585.

¹⁵³⁰ MacDonal 1939, §14.1.

Read this together with entries >178, >182, >183 & >227.

At its Seventh Session in late October 1925, the Permanent Mandates Commission dealt with the two petitions, or memoranda, sent to it by the Arab Executive Committee.¹⁵³¹ Recall that the first challenged the Mandate as such [>182] and was thus ignored as beyond the PMC's remit. (pp 180, 219) The second petition, on the other hand, [>183] was dealt with because it presented fourteen concrete areas of dissatisfaction about the *how*, not the *fact of*, the Mandate:

As regards the second petition, the Commission has discussed the matter at length, first in the presence of the accredited representative of the mandatory Power [Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies William Ormsby-Gore MP, pp 98-121] and then *in camera* after he had left. In spite of the very numerous allegations made and the information contained in this petition and in the report and comments of the mandatory Power, and in spite of the supplementary information given by the accredited representative, the Commission has not been able to reach a unanimous and final decision concerning the numerous questions raised. Indeed, the Commission doubts whether it can make any adequate recommendation on so complex and delicate a subject on the sole basis of written documents, even by examining these documents in conjunction with the accredited representative of the mandatory Power ... [and] has decided to postpone its final decision. (p 219)

Although out of its depth, the Commission did not discuss the petition with those who wrote it. Unlike their adversaries in the persons of High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel or Colonial Under-Secretary Baron Ormsby-Gore, the Palestinians were not heard, although their voices would have added a second, non-written "basis" to the allegedly inadequate "written documents". Indeed, the PMC as a rule paid attention only to memoranda from the Jewish Agency, "given [its] official standing under the mandate" (Mandate, Arts. 4 & 6, >146).¹⁵³²

Formally, the Palestinians were arguing with two institutions: the League of Nations in the form of either its Council or its PMC, and the British Government. The PMC was the court to which the Palestinians could appeal in their disputes with the British Government, but evidently not in its dispute with the LoN Council over getting a hearing of their first, more fundamental, petition, regarding which the PMC had passed the buck to the Council. In the case of the second, more specific, petition, I do not know whether the PMC ever sent the AEC a point-by-point or even general reply to its fourteen grievances. [>183; >189] According to the minutes of the Seventh Session, though, the second petition was at least admitted into evidence. (pp 133-34) The general rule was that

¹⁵³¹ PMC 1925, all citations.

¹⁵³² Pedersen 2010, p 49, citing PMC Minutes, 17th session (3-21 June 1930), pp 138, 140.

[P]etitions or parts thereof will not... be accepted... if they contain complaints which are incompatible with the provisions of the Covenant or of the mandates. (p 133)¹⁵³³

Perhaps the Palestinians had divided their attack into two parts knowing that the first, more important petition would be excluded by the PMC; the second petition avoided making fundamental objections to the Jewish Home, which could after all easily be construed as a “provision” of said mandate and therefore off-limits. In the event, the entire AEC submission containing both petitions did get published by the PMC as Annex 7 (pp 160-73), but all along the PMC was unclear about its policy on either hearing witnesses or informing petitioners of their thoughts or decisions. (pp 33-35, 127, 133-34)

The Permanent Mandates Commission, after a long North-South debate between pro-Zionist members William Rappard (Switzerland), D. F. W. van Rees (Holland) and Sir Frederick Lugard (Britain) and the somewhat Zionism-sceptical members Chairman Marquis Theodoli (Italy), Gomes Freire d'Andrade (Portugal), and Leopoldo Palacios (Spain)¹⁵³⁴, decided to leave it up to the Chairman whether, concerning its own thoughts and decisions, to 1) inform the petitioner only, 2) inform both petitioner and mandatory Power in parallel, or 3) inform the petitioner only “through” the mandatory Power (who could, if it so wished, decide not to forward the Commission’s explanation to the petitioner). (p 134) The PMC routinely heard one or more representatives of HMG, whereby HMG’s delegate, Lugard, never recused himself. Hearing petitioners was not done.

In this case the PMC had another reason for not sending a reply or explanation to the petitioners: as it itself said, it did not know enough about the situation in order to construct a message. At its 16th Meeting on 28 October 1925 Palacios despaired that

The Arabs had added to their second petition such an enormous quantity of complaints of all kinds, but the subjects upon which they complained were of such scope that they embraced in fact the whole policy of the Mandatory Power in Palestine. It would be materially impossible for the Commission to ascertain whether these various complaints were or were not well founded. (p 124)

A reasonable interpretation of the situation would however be that the Palestinians were merely asking the PMC to do its job.

On 30 October, in what could be regarded as an *indirect* answer to the Palestinians, the Commission, after officially declaring itself too ignorant of the facts, simply related verbatim the lengthy testimony on 26 & 27 October of pro-Zionist Colonial Under-Secretary William Ormsby-Gore¹⁵³⁵, again as the *only* witness, after which, as we have seen, it “decided to postpone its final decision.” (pp 136, 219) (Recall that a year earlier Herbert Samuel had been the only outside witness invited to testify. [>183])

Some Commissioners argued that going “to the spot” – accepting the AEC’s invitation to visit Palestine – would be a good remedy for the Commission’s ignorance. But after British Commissioner Lugard tenaciously brought arguments against a visit, it rejected

¹⁵³³ Also Pedersen 2010, p 45.

¹⁵³⁴ Also Pedersen 2010, p 53.

¹⁵³⁵ PMC 1925, pp 5, 98-121.

the idea. Lugard was re-enacting the British withdrawal from the 'International Commission for Palestine', the abortive group which shrank down to only the two U.S. Commissioners, Henry King and Charles Crane [^{>59}], and one of his arguments was actually that the Commission *did* in fact know enough to pass judgment on the validity and truth of the AEC petitions. (pp 123-26, 136-38)

The debate over the visit illuminates the Palestinians' impossible position. Palacios, the PMC's designated Rapporteur in this matter, argued in favour, explaining that

in the fourth conclusion of his [Rapporteur's] report, he had made a suggestion regarding a visit to Palestine *because* that suggestion was in reality the substance of the petition of the Arab Committee. ... In [its] second petition, it appeared that the Arab Committee considered that the PMC had not obtained sufficient information from the explanations of the British High Commissioner in Palestine [Samuel], who had appeared alone before the Commission [in 1924] without being confronted *at that moment* with persons who were in a position to refute his arguments. ... [H]e had explained *in the most prudent manner possible* the necessity for trying to consult the various interests involved. (p 123, *emphasis added*)

Nevertheless, Palacios' conclusion in discussion with his fellow Commissioners was even weaker than the fourth conclusion in his Report, which had said that the Commission would "consider the suggestion" of a visit (p 181), now saying merely:

He would give no definite reply, either 'Yes' or 'No', to the Arabs, but merely say that there was a possibility. (p 124)

The PMC visit would have been a 'Commission of Enquiry', of which there were many during the years 1919-1947, but with two differences: this one was initiated by the Palestinians, and the Commission was technically independent of the (accused) Mandatory, whereas in the cases of the British Commissions of Enquiry [^{>88}; ^{>122}; ^{>220}; ^{>233}; ^{>336}; ^{>376}; ^{>438}; ^{>442}] it was HMG investigating HMG. The only 'external audit' tolerated by Britain would be the investigation by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) in the summer of 1947 [^{>460ff}]; already in November 1947, though, it again refused permission for the U.N. to investigate on the spot.¹⁵³⁶ [^{>478}]

At that point in the debate Chairman Theodoli deflected it to a general discussion of whether the Permanent Mandates Commission, which was charged with overseeing the workings of the various Mandates in the mandated territories, had a *right* to make such fact-finding visits to such territories; the PMC was evidently on a short leash. Commissioner van Rees opined that although "there was a good deal to be said for and against", the PMC *should* have a general right to enquire on the spot; however, "it was to be feared that the arguments in the present instance were mainly unfavourable". (p 124) That is, he let an anticipated *material* concern influence a *formal* debate. Evidently not one to go out on a limb, he said in conclusion that he

¹⁵³⁶ UNGA 1947p, §24.

would accordingly prefer to reserve his opinion. For the moment, he was unable to say personally whether he would be in favour of the proposal of M. Palacios. It should also be remembered that the Permanent Mandates Commission was a purely advisory body. (p 124)

Theodoli countered that the PMC was not merely advisory, but rather, according to the Covenant [Article 22, last paragraph, (>46)], “Its principal duty was... that of receiving and examining the annual reports of the Mandatories”. (p 124) And as Commissioner Freire d’Andrade argued, to “examine” a Mandatory’s report entailed the right to send a “committee of enquiry”. (p 125)

It was now Britain’s PMC rep Lugard’s turn to make the argument that would carry the day:

[T]he proposal that the Commission should either visit Palestine itself or send a sub-committee to conduct an enquiry was quite impracticable. No mandatory Power could accept such a procedure. Its prestige would inevitably suffer, for the Commission or sub-committee would be in the position of a court of enquiry in which the mandatory Power was the defendant. (p 124)

Exactly! That’s the whole idea of oversight.

Lugard was playing the ‘impracticability’ card and letting the Mandatory’s behaviour determine that impracticability. He also said that if

any member of the Commission received an invitation from the mandatory Power to go... to Palestine, that would be a different matter. [But:] Generally speaking, it was impossible for the Commission to adopt the policy of challenging the whole administration of any mandatory Power by visiting the territory to *listen* to all who criticised it. Such a course would be a signal for local trouble. (p 128, *emphasis added*)

In Lugard, HMG had the right man in the right spot.

The minutes thus reveal a lack of knowledge not only about Palestine, one of its territories to oversee, but about its own competencies and even its own remit. This is quite amusing until one realises that the Permanent Mandates Commission had in fact been created to be weak: not only could it not question the provisions of the Mandates, and lacked explicit permission to visit mandated territories, but, according to Jeffries, in 1919 when the League of Nations Covenant was being written, a move to give it the power to declare a mandated country’s independence was explicitly rejected by Lloyd George and British representative Lord Cecil.¹⁵³⁷

In the event, the Mandatory’s wishes were thus the bottom line, with even Palacios emphasising that in his report he

had paid great attention to the susceptibilities of the mandatory Power [and] had been careful to pay the greatest attention to the feelings of the mandatory Power, in view of the fact that he shared his colleagues’ view that true co-operation between the Commission and the mandatory Powers was essential. (pp 127, 126)

¹⁵³⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 542-43, 556.

Commissioner Rappard chimed in that “the Commission ought not to appear to question the mandate, based partly on the Balfour Declaration”. (p 127) Thus, the prestige and honour of the Mandatory was the deciding factor, as it had been in the Cavendish Committee’s decision not to renounce the Mandate on 27 July 1923.¹⁵³⁸ [¹⁶⁷] “Co-operation between the Commission and” the mandated people was not foreseen. And to be sure, there was the underlying difficulty of the particular Palestine Mandate, as van Rees pointed out:

The mandate of that country contained two great principles which appeared somewhat contradictory [and that when the Commission] had asked Mr. Ormsby-Gore whether the mandatory Power had drawn up any programme of policy for the future, in order to conciliate the hopes of the two parties in the country... [he] had replied in the negative and had stated that this would take time. ... If the Commission had not been satisfied [with Ormsby-Gore’s answers] ... *it was the result of the mandate itself*, which raised a problem hitherto unsolved and perhaps unsolvable. (p 126, *emphasis added*)

This fact, articulated just above by no lesser a person than Ormsby-Gore, namely that in light of its basic contradiction the “mandate itself” made no sense, did not bother the PMC. It had of course been the position of the Palestinians for at least eight years and was the reason for the first of their two petitions challenging the Mandate fundamentally as not only self-contradictory but in violation of Article 22 of the Covenant. But now, the PMC in its admitted ignorance shoved such questions over to the Council, not even using its soft “advisory” power to suggest to the Council that it might do well to revisit the Palestine Mandate text. In the end, Palacios, Theodoli and Freire d’Andrade were weaker than the northern European members Rappard, van Rees and Lugard.¹⁵³⁹ Commissioners Beau, Bugge-Wicksell and Yamanaka expressed no opinion.

According to John Quigley, the PMC *itself* had at one or several times in various contexts “said that mandatory powers had no right of sovereignty but that the people under the mandate held ultimate sovereignty.”¹⁵⁴⁰ Ironically, if this is correct the question arises of why, indeed, the PMC would need to go on a fact-finding trip: It knew the answer on first principles, namely, that the inhabitants, by virtue of possessing sovereignty, should have the freedom to decide their political path for themselves. In this particular case, though, a visit to Palestine was the only practical proposal which the Palestinian petitioners and the PMC could have agreed upon – one which was arguably within the PMC’s remit. But not even that happened.

¹⁵³⁸ CAB 24/161/51, p 3.

¹⁵³⁹ Pedersen 2010.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Quigley 1990, p 15, citing Hall, Duncan, 1948, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeships*, p 81; also Khan 1947, pp 654-55.

A triangle connected Palestine, Great Britain and the League of Nations (resp. its Permanent Mandates Commission, PMC). What was said on the PMC-HMG edge of the triangle most likely made it to Palestinian ears. The British were obliged to send yearly reports on their administration of Palestine, and Article 22, §9 of the Covenant stipulated:

A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the Mandates.¹⁵⁴¹ [^{>46}]

In October 1925 the PMC noted.¹⁵⁴²

One hundred copies of the report by His Britannic Majesty's Government on the administration of Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1924 were received in the Secretariat on July 8th, 1925, and 100 copies of Appendices to the report on October 3rd, 1925. The Commission examined this report on October 26th and 27th in collaboration with the accredited representative of the British Government, the Hon. W.G. Ormsby-Gore, M.P., Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. (p 212)

That is, the defendant joined the judge in judge's chambers for his deliberations. As we have seen [*e.g.* >182], in their petitions the Palestinians had explicitly rejected this procedure in which "in examining the Palestine question... only one party of the controversy" was heard. (p 164) The only Commissioner who showed sympathy with their objection was Palacios, who argued the basic necessity of "making good the *involuntary absence* of the adverse party which submits its complaints to us..." (p 181)

In its "general observations" which concluded its Seventh Session, during which it had failed to deal with the Arab Executive Committee's two petitions [^{>182}; ^{>183}] and heard the long testimony of Ormsby-Gore, the Commission first thanked Herbert Samuel for his "valuable report" (sent from Jerusalem) and stated that it was

impressed with the broadminded view of the relations between the different racial and religious groups which was presented to it by the mandatory Power. [However:] The Commission... regrets that certain elements of the population do not appear to recognise that the essential principles embodied in the mandate, the observance of which is the sole care of the Mandates Commission, provide the only substantive basis for the economic and political development of the country. (p 212)

This was arguably in contradiction to the last paragraph (§9) of the Covenant Article 22 which, albeit vaguely, implied a duty to see if the *Mandatory* was in "observance" of the Mandate, but in any case the PMC position was that the Jewish national home was one of the "essential principles" of the Palestine Mandate, and thus the Jewish national home

¹⁵⁴¹ League of Nations 1919, Art. 22 last paragraph.

¹⁵⁴² PMC 1925, *all citations*.

was a necessary condition for Palestine's *political* development. This is an astounding admission. That the JNH was necessary for the economic development of the country had been argued often, but this was a further, indeed unprecedented claim.

Commissioner Freire d'Andrade in a meeting on 28 October had spelled out what accepting the "principle" of the Palestine mandate meant:

Account should be taken of the fact that the mandatory Power could not grant to the Arabs, because they were the most numerous element of the population, too great an influence in the administration of the territory, for they would use that influence to pursue a policy against the interests of the Jews, that was to say, a policy against one of the principles of the mandate. (p 129)

The representative of the democratic Republic of Portugal was stating that the indigenous Arabs should not have much power because as "the most numerous element" they might defend their rights over against the "interests" – not rights – of a minority. This presumed democrat felt that the JNH trumped democracy.

As for Ormsby-Gore's contribution to the PMC-British discussion (pp 98-121), the question of "autonomous administration" – which had been covered in HMG's 8 July report to the PMC – gave him occasion to relate that there were 23 Arab, 4 Jewish and 1 German "locally elected councils". (p 111) Thereupon Commissioner Rappard broadened the topic somewhat:

With regard to the fears expressed by M. Palacios that the mandatory Power was paying more attention to that part of the mandate concerning the Jewish National Home than it was to the provisions for the granting of local self-government to the Arab population, [he] desired to emphasise the fact that the Jews developed more quickly than the Arabs, quite independently of the action of the Administration. ... From a sociological point of view, the Jews progressed far more rapidly than the Arabs, who had remained in practically the same state of civilisation for the last two thousand years. (p 112)

Aside from the misreading of Article 2 of the Mandate, perhaps shared by the entire Commission, which swore not "local" "self-governing institutions", but such for "the country", and aside from the truth or otherwise of Rappard's racist sociological analysis, like many other such lecture-ettes during the Mandate no attempt was made to establish the relevance of any such "development" data to the question of the *political* justice of occupying a country.

Palacios replied that of course the country-wide, Mandate-bestowed "close connection" between the Administration and the Zionist Organization "must be maintained", but he criticised the fact that still

The Central Government was a Government of officials,... for a representative government had not yet been established. Local government in the small towns... was carried out by elective councils [but] in the large towns, no elections had yet been held... (p 112)

(According to Mustafa Kabha, elections in the big cities were actually to be held every four years starting in 1927.¹⁵⁴³) In 1924 and 1925 there had in fact been a Commission for Local Government in Palestine chaired by Ronald Storrs and by late 1925 made up of Storrs, George Antonius, Norman Bentwich, Sydney Moody and Michel Fred Abcarius.¹⁵⁴⁴

Ormsby-Gore answered, explaining why in both large towns and country-wide, elective democracy was still waiting:

[He] asked the Commission not to forget the difficulty of applying principles of democracy to a country with so mixed a population as that of Palestine. [Moreover, the] Zionist Organization was not connected with the Government. It was an organisation of the worldwide kind, drawing most of its finances from the United States of America and most of its members from Poland. (p 112)

Instead of the usual argument that the Mandate's pledge to do what is necessary to establish a Jewish national home precluded democracy, the reason given was that this is "difficult" due to the "mixed population"; only in pure-race countries, evidently, could democracy work. Or, in a darker interpretation, the Arab part of the mix was not fit for democracy. At any rate, like d'Andrade, Ormsby-Gore had found an arcane but semi-plausible reason to deny self-determination.

Ormsby-Gore answered still another question about local government with his "mixed population" theory:

The Local Councils Ordinance, 1921, had established [local] councils, the majority of which were in Arab villages. It was difficult to introduce such institutions in communities of mixed races, such as Haifa and Jerusalem. (p 100)

Palacios then in effect demanded of Ormsby-Gore to say why this was so difficult because, he reminded Ormsby-Gore, at its sessions in both 1924 and 1925

The impression of the Commission was that the Administration had shown great interest in the first part of the mandate concerning the establishment of a Jewish National Home. On the other hand, the Administration seemed to have moved less swiftly with regard to the application of the other principles contained in the mandate [viz., self-government]. ... The Arabs [complained] that, under the Turkish regime, they enjoyed a more or less representative form of government which they did not possess under the British Government. ... In view of the fact that the mandate aimed at securing for the population the greatest possible measure of autonomous government, and that Article 3 of the mandate was entirely clear on the point, ... could not the [mandatory Power and the] Jews be urged to take into consideration the earlier rights possessed by the population? In the preceding year, his colleague, Sir F. Lugard [of Britain], had expressed the view that the Arab population was not perhaps sufficiently advanced to enjoy a representative system of a European type. (pp 110, 111)

That is, the Ottomans had with some success allowed considerable self-government to "communities of mixed races". Ormsby-Gore countered that

¹⁵⁴³ Kabha 2007, p 94.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Boyle 2001, pp 114-18.

in Turkish times the only persons who had possessed votes or the right to sit on a local municipal council had been Mohammedan Ottoman subjects. ... But before an effective machinery could be established in the towns it was necessary to establish a status of citizenship. This had been effected by means of the Palestinian nationality law [^{>186}]. ... [W]herever the Administration had found communities of one race living all together and already sufficiently advanced to enjoy the advantages of local councils, these had been set up and the members composing them had been elected by the community. In other places where the same conditions did not prevail, the members of the local municipal council had been nominated by the Government. Such, for instance, was the case in Jaffa. (p 110)

I don't know the truth or falsity of Ormsby-Gore's claim that for *municipal* councils passive and active political rights were restricted to Moslems, but I do know that under recent Ottoman law Christians and Jews could vote and be elected to the Ottoman parliament. However that may be, Ormsby-Gore seems to have been saying that actually, it's not so much that a given locality had a mixed-ethnic population as such, but rather, as his fellow-Briton Sir Frederick (later Baron) Lugard had said in 1924, one of those ethnic groups was "not perhaps sufficiently advanced".

In the end, instead of taking up these points, Chairman Palacios

merely noted once again that Zionism had the law entirely in its favour: it was, in fact, in a privileged position because of the terms of the mandate. The Administration was but doing its duty in making use of the aid which the Zionists could give it. (p 112)

Along the way Freire d'Andrade congratulated Ormsby-Gore on British pacification of Palestine, "particularly notable at a time when the entire Moslem world was in a state of upheaval"; but on the topic of self-rule he put forth a typical, mildly critical view:

It must, however, be borne in mind that Article 22 of the Covenant [^{>46}] enjoined the Mandatory to advise and assist those peoples under mandate who were already provisionally recognised as independent, until such time as they were able to stand alone. Material progress might, of course, contribute to that object, but the Mandatory ought not to confine its efforts to that aspect of the question. For that reason, he thought that the report before the Commission was very incomplete on the subject of general administration. It gave no idea of the manner in which the mandatory Power secured the co-operation of the people with a view to educating them by degrees and enabling them to stand alone. He quite saw that this was not easy just at present: the predominant Arab element was strongly opposed to the Jewish element. ... But willy-nilly, whether it was in the right or in the wrong, the Arab element must be persuaded to observe the provisions of the mandate concerning the Jews. That was essential, and the Arabs must be thoroughly convinced of the fact. ... According to the Covenant and the mandate, Palestine was to be governed by its people... (pp 101-02)

The last sentence quoted stood like an erratic block in the speech: Was Palestine "to be governed by its people" after all? Even if its majority could not be "persuaded to observe" the Jewish-national-home part of the mandate?

Ormsby-Gore's answer against this hesitant argument for self-governing institutions was that

The leaders of the Arab political party were determined on non-co-operation as long as the Balfour Declaration continued to form part of the policy of the mandatory Power and as long as its principles were embodied in the mandate. It was fair to say, in general, that, for the time being, self-government was out of the question owing to racial antipathies. (p 102)

That the alleged “racial antipathies” might have something to do with the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration was not explored.

Further, picking up on his theory of “racial antipathies”, Ormsby-Gore said:

The Arabs objected to the Jews because the latter were much more efficient and better equipped. They felt that the Jews were disturbing their old easy-going ways. (p 104)

The Arabs, that is, were not motivated by concern over ownership of their country, and an epithet like “old easy-going” had to be thrust into the Commissioners’ ears.

In closing out the issue of denial of self-rule, Ormsby-Gore pleaded with the Commission:

He asked the Commission not to be disappointed at the slowness of the progress made. His Government was always ready and anxious to grant representative institutions to peoples under its rule, but it had found that, in some cases, its efforts in this direction had been premature and, consequently, it was now rather more cautious. He hoped the Commission would not press the British Government to move too fast in that direction. (p 105)

At one point in this performance Ormsby-Gore did indirectly grant the truth of Palacios’ claim that the Zionists had a privileged position, arguing circularly that “the Commission should remember that it was, after all, the Balfour Declaration which was the reason why the British Government was now administering Palestine.” (p 111) In the beginning, that is, was the Balfour Declaration, *nota bene* a unilateral British policy. In any case, whether at country-wide or town level, democratic institutions proportionally representing Palestinians and Jews were ‘impossible’, because, “as the High Commissioner for Palestine officially stated before the Mandates Commission in October 1924”, the democratic non-Jewish majority would immediately vote to abandon the Balfour Declaration. (p 162)

It is worth imagining what such sittings would have been like had the Palestinians been present for testimony and cross-examination. It is moreover hard to imagine that had Malcolm MacDonald not replaced Ormsby-Gore as Colonial Secretary in May 1938, the White Paper of May 1939 Paper giving the Palestinians 90% of what they wanted would have been enacted.

Jeffries reports that at a PMC meeting a few years later Swiss Commissioner Rappard put things even more bluntly:

[The] Mandate absolutely excluded parliamentary democratic government of Palestine by its inhabitants, because it conferred certain powers on the Mandatory, in regard of that territory, which were incompatible with the sovereignty of a free Government. If a free and democratic Government were installed, the powers of the Mandatory would disappear and there would be a breach of the terms of the Mandate.¹⁵⁴⁵

¹⁵⁴⁵ Jeffries 1939, p 568.

According to this Swiss Ur-democrat, it was the Palestine Mandate itself that was anti-democratic, but that didn't count.

This and some preceding entries have focussed on the PMC's oversight, such as it was, during the years 1924 and 1925, while Susan Pedersen's valuable research has covered 'Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations' and 'The impact of League oversight on British policy in Palestine' more broadly, over a longer period of time.¹⁵⁴⁶

The remarks of William Ormsby-Gore in this entry show what is meant when I observe that the Palestinians' arguments were simple and clear while those of the British were complicated and convoluted. The reason for this difference, moreover, is that the Palestinians had justice on their side.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Pedersen 2005, 2010.

193. Both political parties to Mills

July 1926

According to Kayyali,

In July 1926, a group of Arab politicians from the two major parties [the National Party and those behind the Arab Executive Committee leading the Palestine Arab Congress] entered into negotiations with one of the major British officials in Palestine [Eric Mills] with the purpose of working out an arrangement that would facilitate Arab participation in the Government. These politicians pointed out that the basic source of difficulty was the insertion of the Balfour Declaration in the Mandate. The Palestinians were eager to see that this international obligation did not frustrate the Arabs' civil, religious and political rights, including their participation in the administrative and legislative setup in the country: an elected Constitutional National Government. Furthermore, they requested that the Mandate should include a statement to the effect that HM Government did not consult the Palestinians when it accepted the Mandate and the Zionist clauses thereof.¹⁵⁴⁷

The desired "National Government" would of course have a large Arab majority. According to Ann Lesch, new High Commissioner Plumer "would not forward the Arabs' proposals to the colonial secretary, and Mills had to break off the talks in mid-August".¹⁵⁴⁸ Mills, by the way, served the National Home project from 1917 until 1948, as of 1934 upon the retirement of Albert Montefiore Hyamson as head of the Immigration Department.

11 August 1926 *Reflecting the point of view of High Commissioner Lord Plumer, Eric Mills issues a statement stressing 'the pledge of the government to encourage and develop the establishment of self-rule in the country.'*

August 1926 *The British Mandatory authority issues the 'Seizure of Land Law' with the intention of seizing Palestinian lands under the pretext of establishing economic projects. [see also event '1928']*

28 September 1927 *In the first municipal elections since the British occupation, the following mayors are elected: Nablus – Suleiman Abu Razzaq Tuqan, Acre – Abdel Fatah Saadi, Nazareth – Salim Bishara, Tulkarem – Abd Al Rahman Haj Ibrahim, Safad – Mohammed Hassan Abd Al Rahim, Ramallah – Mousa Khalil Mousa, Jenin – Aref Abdel Rahman, Hebron – Makles Hamuri, Bethlehem – Nicola Shaheen, Beit Jala – Jeries Abu Awad, Beer Saaba – Tago Saath, Khan Younis – Haj Salim Husseini, Al Majdal – Haj Taha Zaqut.*

¹⁵⁴⁷ Kayyali 1978, pp 136-37, citing Izzat Darwaza's book (in Arabic) *The Palestine Question (Al-Wadiyya al-Falastiniyya, Saida, 1959)*, pp 271-280.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Lesch 1979, p 189, citing CO 733/155/57316 and CO 733/167/67105. I have not yet found this reference to Mills.

During the superficially peaceful years 1924-29 British discrimination against the Palestinians was tangible in the area of land grants and development. For instance, when the Zionist Organization wanted to agriculturally develop land adjacent to the Dead Sea, Shuckburgh first answered that such development must await further progress concerning the “mineral exploitation” of the Dead Sea, but reassured the ZO that Herbert Samuel’s successor as High Commissioner, Herbert Plumer,

is prepared, however, to undertake that, in respect of such areas in this region as may ultimately be found to be available for agricultural, as opposed to mineral development and are suitable for such development, the Zionist Organization will be regarded as having the first claim to consideration on grounds of prior application.¹⁵⁴⁹

Albeit for Zionist eyes only, many Palestinians were probably aware of such general Zionist-favouring bias [>183] and perhaps also of such particular policy utterances. Regarding lands at Beisan, as well, correspondence between Plumer, Colonial Secretary Amery, Sir Ernest Dawson, Commissioner of Lands Albert Abramson, Sir John Shuckburgh, William Ormsby-Gore and Zionist Organization official Leonard Stein¹⁵⁵⁰ confirms Kayyali’s view that

the Colonial Secretary regarded the Zionist Organization as having first claims on the lands suitable for agriculture, and the Palestine Government were active in procuring these for them.¹⁵⁵¹

The policy even led some Jewish converts to Christianity to appeal to their Jewishness in order to obtain state land.¹⁵⁵² Near the Egyptian border and the Dead Sea at another time as well, Amery and Director of Lands Stubbs were eager to grant “state land” to the Zionist Organization.¹⁵⁵³ With Articles 2, 6 and 11 of the Mandate behind it the British Palestine Government was able to ‘legally’ favour use of government or Bedouin land by Zionists, giving rise to

dozens of articles published in the Arabic press on the Dead Sea during the mandate years. Some of these articles highlighted the dispossession of land and resources previously used by local Arab communities.¹⁵⁵⁴

On this topic see the reports of Walter Shaw (19 March 1930) and John Hope Simpson (21 October 1930). [>220; >233]

¹⁵⁴⁹ CO 733/ 118, p 564, Shuckburgh to Eder, 4 January 1927.

¹⁵⁵⁰ CO 733/133/4, pp 1-27.

¹⁵⁵¹ Kayyali 1978, p 137; see also Stein 1984; Shilony 1998.

¹⁵⁵² CO 733/133/4, pp 3, 10-11.

¹⁵⁵³ CO 733/118, pp 3-4, 558-70.

¹⁵⁵⁴ Norris 2013, p 187, also pp 22, 66, 97-98.

This is perhaps a good place to mention British discrimination in favour of Jewish-Zionist entrepreneurs, going back to 1921, in granting electricity, irrigation and mineral concessions. [see also >121; >144; >147] The most famous case is the receipt of concessions from Herbert Samuel, during his stint as High Commissioner, by Pinhas Rutenberg to develop hydropower near Jerusalem, on the El-Auja River at Yaffa and on the Jordan River, despite various valid pre-existing concessions possessed by Greek citizen Euripides Mavrommatis; the latter even won the relevant lawsuits he brought in 1924 and 1925 before the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, e.g. “Greece vs Britain”, decided on 30 August 1924.¹⁵⁵⁵ According to Jacob Norris,

As Jamal al-Husseini emphasized to the high commissioner in 1927: ‘The granting of the Rutenberg Concession sunk deep in the hearts of the people and needs a real counter-grant to neutralise its very unwholesome effect [rather] than the granting of another concession of this dimension to another Zionist [at the Dead Sea for Moshe Novomeysky].’¹⁵⁵⁶

Nevill Barbour has written that

Industrial activities in Palestine which [were] entirely, or principally, due to Jewish energy and capital include the Rutenberg Electric Works, the Nesher Cement Factory, the Dead Sea Potash Works, the Shemen Soap and Perfumery Factory, and a host of minor undertakings.¹⁵⁵⁷

The preconditions for the 1929 disturbances [>202] were being laid by Britain’s granting the Zionists such economic privileges.¹⁵⁵⁸ William Rubenstein notes that during the relatively tranquil years when Leo Amery was Colonial Secretary

an amazingly wide range of the infrastructure and characteristic institutions of the future Jewish state came into existence: Palestine was electrified, tens of thousands of acres of wasteland were reclaimed or purchased from the Arabs, roads and railways were extended.¹⁵⁵⁹

Contemporary observer J.M.N. Jeffries, who devoted much journalistic attention to this topic, wrote:

If Mavrommatis were allowed to take up his concession, as he proposed to do, it was goodbye to the Zionist domination of the natural resources of Palestine and also to the hopes of turning Palestine into a modernized industrial country in which the Arabs would be extinguished.¹⁵⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵⁵ http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1924.08.30_mavrommatis.htm ; also Jeffries 1939, pp 594-95.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Norris 2013, p 187.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Barbour 1946, p 147.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Zuaytir 1958, pp 64-65.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Rubenstein 1999.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Jeffries 1939, pp 612 & 612-26.

The independent Palestine state wished for by the indigenous would have had the power to develop resources and industry according to its own values and laws, but the British diligently demonstrated their obedience to Articles 2 and 11 of the Mandate [¹⁴⁶].¹⁵⁶¹ In manifold ways the British privileged Zionist, and punished indigenous, industrial and agricultural activity.¹⁵⁶² Later, incidentally, when long-standing Zionist Lord Reading in December 1935 died in office as Chairman of the Rutenberg works, officially the Palestine Electric Corporation, he was succeeded by fellow Liberal politician Lord Herbert Samuel.¹⁵⁶³

1928 The British Mandatory authority issues the 'Settlement of Land Ownership Rights Law' [or Title Ordinance] through which it is then able to seize lands belonging to Arab tribes and families and hand them over to the Zionist movement. [see also **event 'August 1926'**]

February 1928 In February 1928 a representative government under a provisional constitution was established in Transjordan; British-Egyptian treaty negotiations were in progress for more independence; Iraq was promised that Britain would soon support its entry into the League of Nations; and even in Syria, where a major rebellion had been quelled in 1925, reforms were promised and a constituent assembly set up to draft a constitution.¹⁵⁶⁴

March 1928 Hassan Al-Banna founds the Muslim Brotherhood (Jamaat Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimun) in Egypt.

April 1928 [T]he Islamic Physical Training Club held a meeting... chaired by Ragheb Afandi Al-Imam [where] Izzat Darwaza proposed the formation of clubs in each and every part of Palestine under the name of Young Men's Muslim Associations. In this discussion Hasan Sudqi Ad-Dajani, Hasan Abu Al-Saud, Arif Al-Budiri, and Musa Al-Kayyali participated.¹⁵⁶⁵
[see also >227; >288; > 386]

5 April 1928 'The pressured Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress... held a meeting of 16 figures in Rawdit Al-Maarif. ... [T]hey protested against the illegal laws enacted by the government such as the law concerning local governments [and] decided on a compulsory donation of ten or more maleems required of each Palestinian.'¹⁵⁶⁶

¹⁵⁶¹ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 594-95; John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 200-01; Quigley 2011, p 273.

¹⁵⁶² Farsoun & Zacharia 1997, pp 80-84.

¹⁵⁶³ Samuel 1945, p 263.

¹⁵⁶⁴ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 202.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Ayyad 1999, pp 119-20.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Ayyad 1999, p 121.

After studying the myriad proposals for Legislative Councils, I believe Zeina Ghandour is correct that “these ‘offers’ of limited institutional representation” were mere vehicles for the Arabs to harmlessly vent their views rather than even “baby steps towards the full adult stride of self-governance”.¹⁵⁶⁷ According to her, High Commissioner Samuel had early on attested the “extreme impatience” of the Moslem “community” with regard to taking the baby step of setting up the Supreme Moslem Council (SMC), arguing that “For political reasons it is urgent that Moslem opinion be satisfied as soon as possible.”¹⁵⁶⁸ As we know, the Jewish National Home was not compatible with country-wide proportional representation, but the “Arabs” had to be placated.

Reviewing previous Legislative Council proposals on 7 May 1928, for instance, Middle East Department chief Shuckburgh, after reading some reports by officials working under High Commissioner Plumer, reported to Colonial Secretary Amery:

The Secretary of State will remember the general position in regard to the question of establishing a Legislative Council in Palestine. Its establishment was provided for by the Order in Council of 1922 [^{>133; >135; >150}], but it never came into being because the Arabs refused to co-operate and boycotted the elections. [^{>151; >158; also >163}] Subsequently, certain other efforts were made, with equal ill-success, to associate the Arab community more closely with the Administration. ... In the summer of 1926 certain tentative overtures were made by the Arabs with a view to reviving the question of a Legislative Council. The suggestions then advanced by the Arabs were unacceptable [to the British] and nothing further came of the matter. [^{>196}]... The general attitude of H.M.G. has remained as stated in the Duke of Devonshire’s telegram of November, 1923, that is to say, we take the position that we have done our best to secure Arab co-operation, but that, as they have refused to co-operate, we can and will do no more and must leave it to them to revive the question if they so desire.¹⁵⁶⁹

Plumer himself wrote to Amery on 17 July 1928,

My view is that it would be prejudicial to the interests of the people of Palestine as a whole to attempt to introduce any form of Representative Government at the present time or for some little time to come.¹⁵⁷⁰

The ‘common interest’ can of course justify anything, and the “little time” lasted another twenty years. The well-known sufficient reason for Arab “non-co-operation” was rejection of the entire Mandate system and, within the Palestine Mandate, the Balfour Declaration, which stated HMG’s aim of satisfying “Zionist aspirations” and of establishing *in*

¹⁵⁶⁷ Ghandour 2010, p 137.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Ghandour 2010, p 137, citing CO 733/8.

¹⁵⁶⁹ CO 733/155/9, pp 1-3.

¹⁵⁷⁰ CO 733/155/8, p 3.

Palestine “a national home for the Jewish people”, but even if this Arab condition were somehow overcome, only a Council representing all sectors of the populace proportionately would have had a chance at their “co-operation”.

One particular proposal¹⁵⁷¹ was made by Chief Secretary in Palestine Colonel G.S. Symes on 1 April 1928 for a bi-cameral Council:

The Lower House – or Representative Assembly – would be constituted on a popular basis but should possess little more than deliberative functions; special arrangements might be desirable for separate debates in the Arabic and Hebrew languages. I believe that a constitutional reform on these lines, if proposed soon, might be made satisfactory to Arab amour propre and prove to be of educational value besides providing a safety valve for Nationalist sentiment.

Aside from the fact that there were just possibly additional reasons for the Arabs’ demands than *amour propre*, such as justice, democracy, self-determination or defending their country, in view of the declared legislative powerlessness of the “Lower House” the entire proposal was objectively speaking an insult to the Arabs’ levels of intelligence and knowledge; in Symes’s view they needed “education” by Britons, and his imagined Upper House would have “a clear official [British or British-appointed] majority... in which the real authority for legislation would be vested”. Symes also recalled that the earlier proposal (of 1922) was open to the “serious... objection” that “its composition made the Government dependent for a majority on the support of the Jewish members of the Council,...”.

Returning to Shuckburgh’s analysis for the attention of Amery, he first reminded his superior that

it has to be remembered that ‘the development of self-governing institutions’ is one of the obligations which Article 2 of the Palestine Mandate imposes on the Mandatory Power.

And because the Permanent Mandates Commission was aware of this [>19], “sooner or later the question of a wider measure of self-government will have to be faced”:

The Jews are definitely opposed to anything in the nature of a Legislative Council at the present stage. They are naturally apprehensive of any advance in the direction of self-government in a country where they form only a comparatively small minority. In an elected Parliament they would be swamped by the Arab vote.¹⁵⁷²

Since both Shuckburgh and Amery were committed Zionists, and since the Mandate obliged Britain to accord the Zionist community a special place in numerous respects [>146], and since for instance High Commissioner Plumer made no efforts towards a *representative* Council, it is safe to say that during these relatively tranquil years HMG continued to give priority to the interests of “the Jews” referred to by Shuckburgh.

Shuckburgh accordingly continued:

¹⁵⁷¹ CO 733/155/9, pp 4-7.

¹⁵⁷² CO 733/155/9, p 3.

My own view is that, while we certainly shall not be able to resist indefinitely the demand for a Legislative Council, we had better go on resisting it, at any rate for the present. ... [Symes's] 'Lower House' might be harmless enough so long as all power could be withheld from it. But how long would that be? Once such a body were in existence it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent it from acquiring powers similar to those enjoyed by Legislative Councils elsewhere in the Empire. I would hesitate to embark on such a hazardous experiment. Clearly, there is nothing for us to do unless and until the High Commissioner raises the question officially. It is more than doubtful whether he will do so, as his time is so nearly at an end...¹⁵⁷³

If Shuckburgh was right that it was in the nature of things that “such a body” would likely be a foot in the door resulting in a far more powerful Legislative Council, the Palestinians would have been well-advised *not* to boycott such British proposals, however woefully insufficient, undemocratic and insulting they were.

One Sir S.H. Wilson, through whom the message to Amery went, commented, “I agree with Sir J. Shuckburgh... and can't help feeling that the longer we can put off its being raised the better”; and Plumer advised his successor, John Chancellor: “Arabs will press for establishment of a Legislative Council and responsible government. Put off granting them as long as possible.”¹⁵⁷⁴

These British-British communications reveal that priority was given not to democracy, or what might be right or wrong, but to the avoidance of a “renewal of... agitation amongst the Arabs of Palestine” and the quelling of “strife and disorders.”¹⁵⁷⁵ Wise it would be to play to the Arabs' *amour propre*. Later on as well, on 1 April 1936, during his reign as High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope wrote to the Colonial Office concerning an Arab Delegation visit to London and expressing his fear of violent native outbreaks which actually immediately did occur: “The mere fact of their reception in London would give great satisfaction to the Arabs as placing them on the same footing as the Jews who had already been received here [in London].”¹⁵⁷⁶

¹⁵⁷³ CO 733/155/9, pp 1-3; Ghandour 2010, pp 137-38.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Ghandour 2010, p 138, citing Chancellor Papers, box 11, file 1, Notes on an Interview with Lord Plumer, 15 August 1928: pp 14-20.

¹⁵⁷⁵ CO 733/155/9, pp 5, 6.

¹⁵⁷⁶ CO 733/307/10, p 47, also pp 56, 58; Ghandour 2010, p 138.

197. 7th Palestine Arab Congress

20-27 June 1928

During the years following the official approval of the Mandate by the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922 [^{>146}], street clashes had been seldom and net Jewish immigration low [^{>Appendix 6}]. According to Porath, this **7th Palestinian Arab Congress**, commencing 20 June 1928 in Jerusalem and whose Secretary was the lawyer Mogannam Mogannam, once again “revolved around the question of establishing a representative legislative body similar to that which had been set up in the other mandated countries...”; it demanded political treatment equal to that given to the inhabitants of Syria and Iraq; and assured the world that the Palestinians would continue the traditional treatment of Jews in Palestine as equals.¹⁵⁷⁷ According to May Seikaly, while maintaining basic nationalist positions this Congress also saw intense internal divides between political factions and even between Moslems and Christians.¹⁵⁷⁸ According to Abdelaziz Ayyad,

the involvement of young intellectuals in the Congress led to the adoption of reasonably acceptable measures. In accordance with the Palestinians' established right, they demanded the formation of a parliamentary democratic state. ... They also emphasized... that Palestine was no less civilized compared to its Arab sisters. Furthermore, they declared that Palestine was no longer willing to accept colonial rule. A representative body for Palestine was to be created in order to formulate a constitution, which would guarantee the formation of a parliamentary government.¹⁵⁷⁹

According to Lesch, this PAC formed “seven permanent committees to elaborate and execute the main policy planks” and even attempted to form a “parliamentary government”.¹⁵⁸⁰ The Congress, attended by 250-277 delegates¹⁵⁸¹, elected a 48-member Executive Committee which included twelve Christians and had an administrative staff consisting of three secretaries – Jamal al-Husseini and two others.¹⁵⁸²

On 20 June 1928 this 7th Congress sent to the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) in Geneva a petition demanding self-determination [^{also >178; >182; >183}] which included the usual, simple political demand:

The people of Palestine cannot and will not tolerate the present absolute colonial system of government, and urgently insist upon and demand the establishment of a representative body to lay its own Constitution and guarantee the formation of a democratic parliamentary Government.¹⁵⁸³

¹⁵⁷⁷ Porath 1974, pp 253-55.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Seikaly 1995, pp 207-08; also Robson 2011, pp 103-06.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Ayyad 1999, p 116.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Lesch 1979, p 100, citing the Central Zionist Archives S25/4210.

¹⁵⁸¹ PASSIA 2001, p 40 (with photo); Matthews 2006, p 45.

¹⁵⁸² Also Wikipedia, '>Palestine Arab Congress'.

¹⁵⁸³ Farsoun & Zacharia 1997, p 101.

The idea of simply forming a “government” to rule Palestine was thus evidently entertained, for instance by this 7th PAC, but during the entire Mandate the Palestinians never actually took this step. Any step in this direction by this PAC – and indeed all other actions of this PAC – deserve further research.

The PMC waited until 4 March 1929 to answer through the Swiss diplomat William Rappard:

After examining this petition, the Commission will, I think, feel bound to state that, as trustee of the principles of the Covenant and of the Mandates, it is not called upon to recommend any particular form of government in the mandated territories. It is for the mandatory Power alone to determine the regime applicable. ... In the present instance, it seems obvious that a form of democratic and parliamentary government is not provided for by the Covenant or by the Mandates, and that it is not even compatible with the obligations devolving upon the mandatory Power under those engagements.¹⁵⁸⁴

With rare lucidity the incompatibility of the Zionist Mandate with democracy was here enunciated – and Swiss democrat Rappard was unruffled by the PMC’s coming down against democracy. The “engagements” referred to were of course Jewish immigration, land settlement and the cultural and political development of the Balfour Declaration’s Jewish national home; those engagements were indeed *not* compatible with the “particular form of government” wanted by the 7th PAC (standard democracy), a form the PMC was thus “not called upon to recommend” – even if that particular form of government was the one in effect in his own country, Switzerland, and in the other countries whose citizens filled the chairs of the meetings of the PMC, viz. France, Italy, the U.K., Holland, etc. It was not for the people of Palestine “to determine the regime applicable”.

While the Arabs as usual opposed all Zionist immigration, at the other pole of opinion at that time stood British Colonel F. H. Kisch, head of the Palestine Zionist Executive [*see* >173], who was opposing the new Immigration Regulations as too restrictive.¹⁵⁸⁵ For the six months ending on 31 March 1929, namely, the

Officer Administering the Government has approved the following [Jewish] Labour [immigration] Schedule [...] 300 unskilled workmen not over the age of 35, 100 women workers, 150 men for employment in industrial undertakings not over the age of 45, and 50 skilled artisans not over the age of 45. [signed] E. Mills, 6 November 1928.¹⁵⁸⁶

These immigrants would belong to various occupational categories, but they were also building blocks of the political Jewish national home.

23 September 1928 *On the eve of Yom Kippur, district commissioner of Jerusalem Edward Keith Roach and chief of police Douglas Duff notice a bedroom screen separating men and women at the Western Wall, an infringement of the status quo arrangements under the Ottomans. The following day the police arrive to remove the screen.*

¹⁵⁸⁴ CO 733/167/6, pp 59-60.

¹⁵⁸⁵ CO 733/152/3, pp 21-28.

¹⁵⁸⁶ CO 733/152/3, p 8.

September 1928 [*Khairiyyeh al-Saqqa sings at a party thrown by Ragheb al-Nashashibi attended by Wasif Jawhariyyeh, Ali Bey Jarullah, Ishaq al-Budeiri, Majed Abdul Hadi, Hamada al-Afifi, Fakhri al-Nashashibi, Hassan Sidqi al-Dajani and others.*]¹⁵⁸⁷

¹⁵⁸⁷ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 197-98.

Disturbances at *al-Buraq* (the Western or ‘Wailing’ Wall) broke out on 23 and 24 September 1928. A summary of what had led up to them would be written by John Chancellor on 17 January 1930 in an all-encompassing Memorandum to fresh Colonial Secretary Passfield (Sidney Webb) [^{>218}].¹⁵⁸⁸ (Chancellor had become High Commissioner on 6 December 1928.) After two pages covering the history of the Wall and its perception by Moslems, Jews and HMG, Chancellor had reviewed, as an example of the tension between Moslems and Jews at the western side of al-Aqsa Mosque, an article which had appeared at “the beginning of September 1928, i.e. before the [Jewish] Day of Atonement (the 24th September)” in the Jewish journal ‘Hahed’.¹⁵⁸⁹

“The article,” wrote Chancellor, “under the title of ‘On the pilgrimage celebrations,’ praises the work of the Yeshurun Congregation in Jerusalem in reviving the old institution of pilgrimage [to the Wailing Wall]...” Due to the increase in the Jewish population and Jewish tourists there was too much congestion on pilgrimage days, thus requiring an enlargement of the congregation area.

The article then proceeds to say that the enlargement of the enclosure by the demolition of the dilapidated houses encumbering it would not be offensive to the religious feelings of any community; the Jews would pay the full price of the land and houses; if the Arab leaders had any sense of justice they would have raised no objections to this scheme; it is the duty of the Government to intervene and expedite a settlement; just as the Government expropriated land for work of a public nature, such as the construction and widening of roads, so ought they to do for the most Holy sanctuary of the Jewish people, which cannot be regarded as of less significance.

That is, compulsory purchase of Arab property (under the doctrine of eminent domain) was tolerable in order to accommodate a recent rise in Jewish visitors to that property.

The article then urged the “Palestine Zionist Executive and the Chief Rabbinate and the Vad Leumi” to go to the Palestine Government and the League of Nations to get a solution, and concluded by saying,

If Israel knows that this holy place is redeemable, the whole people will hasten to redeem it; and if success attends our efforts, it will serve as a sign of the beginning of the redemption of Israel.

Both the Government and the League of Nations duly received pro-demolition petitions from all over the world, leading Permanent Mandates Commission members Orts and Theodoli to the view that they were co-ordinated by the Zionist Organization. Chancellor’s take:

¹⁵⁸⁸ CO 733/183/1, pp 124-41.

¹⁵⁸⁹ CO 733/183/1, pp 136-37 (printed page numbers 25-27).

The effect of this Jewish propaganda in Palestine and abroad... was to obscure the purely religious aspect of the Wailing Wall and to rouse again the political and racial antagonism of Arabs and Jews which had been suppressed or at least masked for nearly six years, now, however, with a dangerous religious colouring. About this time a society was formed among the Sheikhs of the Mosque entitled 'the Society for the Protection of Al-Aqsa'.

Eleven months later a much larger conflict broke out over whether to alter the long-standing rules governing use of the space to the west of the Wall. [>202; >203; >207; >245]

1 November 1928 *'The Mufti had ample proof of [the Zionists'] aims regarding the Wall. ... This is why he convened a Moslem conference in November of 1928.'*¹⁵⁹⁰

¹⁵⁹⁰ Mattar 1983, p 110.

This Command Paper bore the title ‘The Western or Wailing Wall in Jerusalem: A Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies [Leo Amery]’, dated 19 November 1928.¹⁵⁹¹ It determined questions of policy regarding the Western Wall that arose after an altercation between Jewish worshippers and the Palestine Police on 23 and 24 September 1928 [→198]. To paraphrase: The *Mutawalli* [Trustee] of the *Abu Madyan Waqf* complained that, in violation of the *status quo* concerning the Moslems’ and Jews’ use of the Wall and the pavement in front of it, Jewish worshippers had attached a dividing screen to the pavement and introduced innovations such as additional petrol lamps, mats and an “ark much larger than was customary.” The Deputy District Commissioner came to the Wall and told the Jewish “beadle” in charge of such things to remove the screen by the following morning, which didn’t happen, so on the morning of 24 September the police removed it themselves amidst protests by many Jews.

Both the Palestine Government and HMG agreed that “the importation of the screen and its attachment to the pavement constituted an infraction of the *status quo*, which the Government were unable to permit.” There had been similar infringements by the Jews at that place in 1922 and 1925 which had been resolved similarly. HMG were clear that while the Wall was holy to both religions, both the Wall and pavement were the property of the Moslems. Binding for HMG was the *status quo* as it had been “under the Turkish regime”, which also clearly included the right of Jews of access to the Wall at defined times.¹⁵⁹² HMG found, in sum,

It would be inconsistent with their duty under the Mandate [Article 13 (→146)] were they to endeavour to compel the Moslem owners of the pavement to accord any further privileges or rights to the Jewish community. The possibility that such privileges or rights might be acquired by the Jews by mutual arrangement with the Moslem authorities has been lessened by the fact that public opinion in Palestine has definitely removed the matter from the purely religious orbit and has made of it a political and racial question.¹⁵⁹³

The Government nevertheless urged the two sides to cooperate and mutually agree upon rules for the use of the area. As would also pertain to the entire Mandate-cum-Jewish home, such a “protocol” coming out of ‘direct negotiations’ was thought to ensure peace – while removing responsibility for solving the conflict from Britain’s shoulders.

According to Akram Zuaytir, at least one powerful British Zionist, Alfred Mond (Lord Melchett), holder of a large salt concession in Palestine [→183] and later business partner of Herbert Samuel in the Palestine Electric Company [→232], wrote “in 1922, when he was

¹⁵⁹¹ Cmd. 3229 (5 pages); see also Mattar 1983.

¹⁵⁹² See also Khalidi 1984, p 31.

¹⁵⁹³ But see the Zionist view of Rickenbacher (2017, pp 29-31, 34).

Minister of Public Works in Britain: "The day when the Temple will be rebuilt is very near. I shall devote my life to the building of the Temple of Solomon in place of the Mosque of Omar."¹⁵⁹⁴

1929 *"The Arab Bank [of Palestine, headed by Abd al-Hamid Shoman], which established branches in all the major towns of Palestine and in the capitals of neighboring Arab countries, became the most successful and prestigious Arab banking institution throughout the Arab world."*¹⁵⁹⁵

¹⁵⁹⁴ Zuaytir 1958, p 276.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Khalidi 1984, pp 101, 275.

XII. “the simplicity of our demands”

The 48-member Arab Executive elected by the 7th Palestine Arab Congress in June 1928 [>197], consisting of representatives of all districts and intended to be a permanent parliament,¹⁵⁹⁶ sent a delegation on 3 January 1929 to meet with brand-new High Commissioner John Chancellor,¹⁵⁹⁷ who would turn out to be the most pro-Palestinian of all High Commissioners, in order to **present and read out to him a memorandum**.¹⁵⁹⁸ Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Yacoub Farraj, Awni Abdul Hadi, Mogannam Eff. Mogannam [*also >185*] and Jamal al-Husseini first confessed to Chancellor that

although it may seem a repetition of the previous memorandums, yet we wish to convey to Your Excellency that such wishes and demands are not new in nature, for the Arabs have been clamouring for the maintenance of their natural established rights ever since the first Arab Congress was held in Paris in 1913 [>9], and even long before that during the Turkish Regime. (p 72)

They cited the Anglo-French Declaration [>28] and Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant [>46] in support of those “natural established rights”, but:

What actually took place is that the Arab territories underwent a terrible process of division and subdivision, thus separating one part of the country from the other against any geographical or racial unity, resulting in a policy to separate the unity of the Arab demands and to deprive them of their natural and approved rights. (p 73)

While under Turkish rule the administration of the country had been done by “a handful of officials, the majority of whom, if not the whole, [were] Arabs,” under the “Civil Government of Palestine” as of 1 July 1920 such administering had been done “by hundreds of foreigners, the salary of any of them being triple that of the ‘*Mutasarref*’ [former officials].”

It would be illogical to state that such a system of administration as we have in Palestine with such preponderous influx of foreign officials was a simple rendering of administrative advice and assistance [as prescribed by Article 22]. It is, in fact, wholesale colonial rule with hardly any say for the inhabitants of Palestine in the Government of their own country. ... [W]e believe that it is only the famous thorn of the Balfour Declaration which is causing His Majesty’s Government to hesitate in allowing the Arabs of Palestine to enjoy the privilege of self-determination. (p 74)

The delegation explained also that the 7th PAC had presented a similar memorandum to former High Commissioner Plumer just before he left in July 1928 but were told to await the arrival of Chancellor to get any answers.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Al-Hout 1979, p 87.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Porath 1974, pp 255-56; Ayyad 1999, p 116.

¹⁵⁹⁸ CO 733/167/6, pp 72-78, *all quotations*.

Now, since Your Excellency has arrived to represent His Majesty's Government in Palestine, and it is for you to administer the country in accordance with Article 22 of the League of Nations on which the Mandate was based, it is our duty to submit to Your Excellency that Article 22 above referred to, even though it does not satisfy the Arabs' cry for liberty and independence, yet it has placed Palestine under Class A of the Mandates and differentiated it from Mandates under Class B and C which comprised countries in which 'it is recognised that self-government would be impossible'. ... [T]he two previous High Commissioners have not succeeded fully in their duty so long as the country was administered as if it were under Class C of the Mandates and even worse. (p 75)

In demanding "a Parliamentary Representative system of government"

we cannot but wonder how Great Britain, the foremost nation in applying the system of Parliamentary Government, can force the people of Palestine to a 'System of Taxation without Representation' [and even] 'Legislation without Representation'. Such system should not be borne by the most backward nations of the world. (p 76)

Signed by Awni Abdul Hadi, the memorandum closed:

We sincerely hope that Your Excellency will not give us the usual answer that you will communicate our memorandum to the Colonial Office, or that you are new in this country and you wish to study the question, for we believe that [due to] Your Excellency's past experience, coupled with your study of our case before your arrival to Palestine, together with the simplicity of our demands and the fact that the country has passed through a process of experience since the British occupation of Palestine, Your Excellency will find the means for the speedy execution of our just and reasonable demands. (p 77) [see also >263]

The decade-long "process of experience", presumably, would mean they just might conceivably now be able "to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world".¹⁵⁹⁹ Chancellor however did give them "the usual answer" – sent the memorandum on to the Colonial Office and pleaded that he needed time to study it – putting them off, in fact, until just before he left for his summer leave in June.¹⁶⁰⁰ I find it worth underlining one particular truth in the above message – the utter "simplicity" of the story.

On 15 January 1929 Chancellor wrote to Colonial Secretary Leo Amery, a staunch Zionist, that after speaking with the delegation on 3 January he believed that despite the fact that

certain international obligations in regard to Palestine had been assumed by His Majesty's Government under the Mandate... it will be difficult to resist much longer the demand for the conversion of the present Advisory Council [composed of the Heads of the Departments in the Government] into some form or other of Legislative Assembly, more particularly in view of the forthcoming establishment of representative government in the politically less advanced territory of Trans-Jordan.¹⁶⁰¹

¹⁵⁹⁹ League of Nations 1919, §22.

¹⁶⁰⁰ CO 733/167/6, pp 79-80, 83.

¹⁶⁰¹ CO 733/167/6, pp 69-71; Porath 1974, p 255.

The Palestinians, that is, were even readier than some other Mandated people for self-government. But the “international obligations” – the “thorn of the Balfour Declaration”, as the Arab delegation had put it – stood in the way.

In his rebellious memorandum of a year later, dated 17 January 1930 and addressed to Amery’s successor Colonial Secretary Passfield [218], Chancellor would recall that

Shortly after my arrival in Palestine at the end of 1928, the Arab Executive submitted to me a request that some form of representative Government should be established in Palestine. I informed the Executive that I would consider the request. Confidential conversations on the subject were conducted with certain of the Arab political leaders by the Chief Secretary [Harry Luke] during May 1929, which resulted in the Arab leaders agreeing to co-operate in the working of a nominated Legislative with an unofficial [non-British] majority and with the powers intended to be given to the abortive Legislative Council of 1922. ... [Several LC] proposals were still under consideration at the time of the outbreaks in August. [133-37, 150; 158]¹⁶⁰²

He thought he had detected signs of co-operation.

On 12 June 1929, seven months before the above-quoted memorandum, he would write secretly to Passfield¹⁶⁰³ that the Arabs

now realise that it is useless for them to continue to agitate for the repudiation of the Balfour Declaration and abrogation of the Mandate. Their fears that the country would pass under the domination of the Jews have in a large measure been allayed; and the better educated of them are fully aware of the fact that their country has greatly benefited from the influx of foreign capital, which followed upon the decision that a national home for the Jews should be established in Palestine. (p 35)

Chancellor was dead wrong in these assessments, but would learn much before he left the job on 1 November 1931.

To Passfield he continued:

I share Mr. Amery’s view [Colonial Secretary until 4 June 1929] as to the necessity for proceeding with extreme caution with regard to the constitutional development of Palestine. And I recognise that the obligations devolving upon the Mandatory power are incompatible with the establishment of a democratic form of Government. (p 36)

Zeina Ghandour correctly comments that this last statement identifying the incompatibility of the Mandate with democracy – yet siding with the Mandate – was HMG’s “bottom line... This never wavered, gave, or shifted.”¹⁶⁰⁴

But Chancellor’s correct and prescient assessment, as on 15 January 1929, shortly after putting off the Palestinian delegation, was that

¹⁶⁰² CO 733/183/1, p 126/§23.

¹⁶⁰³ CO 733/167/6, pp 34-46, also further quotations; see also Porath 1974, p 256.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Ghandour 2010, p 138; also Khalidi 2006, p 36.

unless some steps are taken before long to associate the people more closely with the government of the country there is reason to think that political agitation against the Government may assume an objectionable and even a dangerous character. (p 36)

Once again, a British top official's reason for moving towards satisfying Arab demands was not that it was right or just, but merely practical in avoiding "agitation" on the ground; indeed, the August 1929 riots were not far off, not to mention the turn towards non-verbal resistance after the Black Letter of 13 February 1931 [246] which made it clear to the Palestinians that no "steps" were going to be "taken... to associate the people more closely with the government of the country".

Finally, so Chancellor further, because the Palestinians were a "politically minded and articulate people", and "constitutional advances made in Transjordan and the other neighbouring territories under mandate" had been realised, "some form of representative Legislature" must be set up. (pp 37-38) He then however suggested to Passfield a Legislative Council hardly more representative of the population percentages of the Moslems, Christians and Jews than the one offered in 1922 [118; 133-38], moreover all nominated rather than elected and made up of 15 unofficial and 14 official members including the High Commissioner. (p 45)

On 17 June the Arab Executive Committee would tell Chancellor in writing and in person that although they had put the issues to him at their meeting of 3 January and had since then complained in writing of "The Local Authorities Ordinance", which had "appeared in the Official Gazette as a bill and which had completely deprived the inhabitants of the only right left to them of the rights they enjoyed under the Turkish regime", they had received "no reply". Moreover,

In fact this Administration has placed the country in great economic crisis which compelled a not inappreciable number of the inhabitants to sell their lands to foreigners who only buy the lands for political purposes, i.e. to create a foreign nationality on the remains of the Arab Nationality. [This in effect if not in intention allows others to] take advantage of the poverty of the people and rob them of their lands [and furthers] a complete destruction of the Arabs' entity and independence [and] complete ruin of the Arab Nationality.

The political nature of the immigration was common knowledge. The only remedy was "Parliamentary Government".¹⁶⁰⁵

30 April 1929 *Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies Ormsby-Gore states before the House of Commons: 'I am certain that every Government will do what they can to facilitate the realization of the Zionist aim, policy and ideals, as governed by the terms of the Mandate in the terms of the Balfour Declaration.'*

¹⁶⁰⁵ CO 733/167/6, pp 23-26.

201. A secret political party

early July 1929

According to Abdelaziz Ayyad, Amin Al-Husseini, Jerusalem correspondent of *Filistin*, reported that

a secret meeting was held in Jerusalem. In attendance were [Amin al-Husseini and] Amin At-Tamimi, Mohammed Ali At-Tamimi, Muin Al-Madi, Izzat Darwaza and Ahmad Al-Imam. They decided to form an underground party, which would later go public. Jamal Al-Husseini was nominated to become the secretary after resigning his post in the Higher Islamic Council [the Supreme Moslem Council].

These and another member of the Supreme Moslem Council, Amin Ash-Shawwa, would secretly represent the different districts of Palestine, with Amin al-Husseini responsible for Jerusalem and Yaffa.¹⁶⁰⁶ This became the Palestine Arab Party, the most popular of the several parties that emerged into the open in the early and middle 1930s and combined to form the Arab Higher Committee at the beginning of the 1936-39 Rebellion. [>288ff]

It was in 1929 that both Darwaza and Isa al-Sifri published fundamental works for Arab unity and independence and, therefore, against Zionism; and in 1934 Darwaza would publish a novel, *The Angel and the Landbroker*, dealing with the plight of villagers who lost their land to Zionist purchasers – similar to a 1928 novel by Najati Sidqi, *The Grieving Sisters*.¹⁶⁰⁷

14 August 1929 Article 3 of the constitution of the Jewish Agency states: 'Land is to be acquired as Jewish property... the title to the lands acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people. The Agency shall promote agricultural colonization based on Jewish labor... it shall be deemed a matter of principle that Jewish labor shall be employed...' ¹⁶⁰⁸ [>233]

15 August 1929 A group of Jews demonstrate outside the Mandatory offices before provocatively marching through the Muslim quarter to the Western Wall, waving flags and singing patriotic Zionist songs.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Ayyad 1999, p 123.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Lesch 1979, p 65.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Also Boyle 2001, p 179.

Reports and interpretations of the Buraq Uprising in Jerusalem during the week 23-29 August, 1929, fill entire libraries. The micro-story is that Jewish worshipers had broken the long-standing rules governing their use of the space at the Western Wall of al-Aqsa, to which they had had access under certain specific conditions for centuries, causing Moslems to demand British enforcement of those rules; this led to **street protests and riots** with many deaths and woundings, the first such resulting from British live fire into the demonstrators¹⁶⁰⁹. [also >198; >199] The macro-story is that this spark turned pent-up resentment towards Zionism and the pro-Zionist British Government in Palestine into massive protest and often violence towards Jews and/or Zionists, who sometimes retaliated in kind.

On 13 September 1929 the British would set up the Shaw Commission [>220] to deal with these August “disturbances” and their causes, and in May 1930, on recommendation of the Shaw Commission, John Hope Simpson went to Palestine to study a particular cluster of causes, namely those of ‘Immigration, Land Settlement and Development’. [>233] The Council of the League of Nations, as well, at the urging of Britain, in December 1929 would set up the Löfgren Commission to study the rights of the various groups at the Western or Wailing Wall. [>245] My topic is how the Palestinians and British perceived the events of August, but I’m leaving out of this chronology a vast amount of verbal communication, much of it in the local press, during the months after the riots. I will look at the Reports of the Shaw and Hope Simpson inquiries, and the resulting ‘Passfield’ White Paper of 21 October 1930, in great detail, but not before looking at some interactions between the local population and, principally, High Commissioner John Chancellor.

August-September 1929 [*Collective punishment – fines, arrests – imposed on Arabs after the riots. The Palestine Arab Congress compiled a list of Palestinians mistreated while under arrest.*]¹⁶¹⁰

¹⁶⁰⁹ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 202; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 66-67; Boyle 2001, pp 155-56..

¹⁶¹⁰ Cronin 2017, p 26.

The London *Times* of 27 August 1929 carried **this letter** from Amin al-Husseini, head of the British-created and financed Supreme Moslem Council:¹⁶¹¹

Sir,- The Burak, called by Europeans the 'Wailing Wall' and by Jews 'Kotel Moravi,' is a part of the western wall of the Mosque of Omar, which is held by Moslems as a very sacred shrine sanctified by the text of the Koran, as it clearly appears from the simple reading of chapter 17, which begins thus:- Glory be unto him, who made His servant go nightly from the sacred Mosque to the Dome of the Rock of which we have blessed the precincts.

The Dome of the Rock is the Mosque of Omar as it is publicly known. This blessing we believe was effected because God had made His servant Mohamed alight with his horse called Burak on that spot in that sacred nocturnal journey to heaven. Thus the place since those days has been called the Burak by all Moslems. It is because of this sanctity that all buildings around that area were bought by Moslems and made into inalienable beneficent Moslem public property from times immemorial.

Thus the immovable properties, walls, lands, and private roads around the area of the Burak were, and still are, the uncontested Waqf property of all Moslems. The Jews for long have been permitted, as well as followers of all creeds, to visit the Burak, but with no pretensions of prayers, preachings, or anything that may be interpreted as a kind of worship, as registered and acknowledged by the Turkish as well as the British Governments. [c.199] This is what they call the *status quo*, this is what we ask for, this is what the League of Nations laid down as a principle, and this is what the Jews now desire to trample on.

The Jews at different times claimed a right to pray there, but every time they wanted that they were immediately stopped, as registered in the Waqf Departments, Jerusalem, and as attested by the present Government. Jewish attempts after British occupation naturally increased and in 1919, through Governor Storrs, they tried to buy the place and its precincts from the Moslems at whatever price the latter would reasonably fix. But the unanimous condemnation by the Moslems of any such proposal put a stop to Jewish aggression temporarily.

Now they tried new tactics to get into possession of the Burak. They began to claim that it is their duty to pray in the place, although they have never done that before. But prayers must have their usual rites, and this means that they must have lights, chairs, mattings, tables, benches, and all other things that they use in the synagogue. And when they make use of these things in the place, they acquire prescriptive rights in it by having it totally in their hands and for their use. This naturally puts the Moslem rights in it to nullity. They went farther than this. They made the Government stop tourists from visiting that place on certain

¹⁶¹¹ See also Meinertzhagen 1959, p 140.

days, as if the place were their own. Thus the Jews actually strove to make the place their own, although in theory it may remain as a Moslem sacred property.

AMIN AL-HUSEINI, Grand Mufti, and President of the Supreme Moslem Council in Palestine

Various non-Moslems indeed also dealt with these questions. [>198; >199; >245]

204. Meinertzhagen to Passfield

29 August 1929

Virulently pro-Zionist Richard Meinertzhagen [58; 61; 65; 74; 116; 165; 429], since 1926 retired from his top job at the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, entered in his diary for 1 September 1929:

The recent disturbances in Palestine prompted me to write to Uncle Sidney on the 29th. As he now fills the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies, I hope he will try to remedy affairs. I know he is sympathetic to Zionism.

“Uncle Sidney” was Sidney Webb, now Lord Passfield, married to his maternal aunt Beatrice Potter, and, in his own rendering in his autobiography, Meinertzhagen lobbied him not to fall prey to the British love of the backward, unintelligent but romantic Arab [116].¹⁶¹²

¹⁶¹² Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 141-44.

205. Chancellor on the riots

1 September 1929

According to the Shaw Commission Report of 19 March 1930 [^{>220}],¹⁶¹³ on 1 September 1929 High Commissioner Chancellor in Jerusalem issued a **'Proclamation' to the people of Palestine** reading in part:

I have returned from the United Kingdom to find to my distress the country in a state of disorder and a prey to unlawful violence. I have learned with horror of the atrocious acts committed by bodies of ruthless and blood-thirsty evil-doers, of savage murders perpetrated upon defenceless members of the Jewish population regardless of age or sex, accompanied, as at Hebron, by acts of unspeakable savagery, of the burning of farms and houses in town and country and of looting and destruction of property. These crimes have brought upon their authors the execration of all civilized peoples throughout the world.

He announced that as a consequence he would not fulfil his promise to the Arab Executive to discuss "constitutional changes". The Palestine Arab Executive replied in a "long memorandum" to Chancellor putting the blame for the disturbances on the Jews. [^{see >207}] For instance, according to Susan Boyle,

On August 14, 6,000 to 10,000 demonstrators in Tel Aviv raised the Zionist flag, chanting and calling for Jewish control of the wall; in Jerusalem, another 6,000 to 7,000 gathered for a Brith Trumpeldor meeting and then moved on to the wall for a similar demonstration.¹⁶¹⁴

Chancellor's momentary rage would soon be tempered by the Shaw and Hope Simpson reports and by his own experience on the spot over the next two years.

6 September 1929 *'Reinforcements sent to Palestine at an early stage in the disturbances were as follows: - 5 warships..., 3 battalions of infantry, 1 squadron armoured cars..., 2½ sections armoured cars, 1 squadron and 1 flight R.A.F.'*¹⁶¹⁵

¹⁶¹³ Shaw 1930, p 68.

¹⁶¹⁴ Boyle 2001, p 151, citing Sheean, Vincent (1935), *Personal History*, pp 355-57.

¹⁶¹⁵ CAB 24/205/41, p 26; Regan 2017, p 185.

Shortly before founding, together with Shakib Arslan, the French-language journal *La Nation Arabe*, published in Geneva, Ihsan el Djabri wrote to the President of the Assembly of the League of Nations concerning a political solution to prevent future violent outbreaks between religious groups in Palestine.¹⁶¹⁶ According to the Permanent Mandates Commissioner who “reported” on this “long petition” in June 1930¹⁶¹⁷, Leopoldo Palacios, el Djabri represented “the Syro-Palestinian delegation” in Geneva (along with Arslan)¹⁶¹⁸ [>152] and made the following points with regard to the “remoter”, as opposed to the “immediate”, causes of the August outbreak:

[T]hey reside in the vicissitudes which led to the introduction of the mandate, and in the fact that the mandate is incompatible with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League [>46] and with the promises of independence which Great Britain made to the Arabs in 1915 [*e.g.* >10; also >28]. The petitioner maintains that the idea of the ‘Jewish National Home’ is *unjust*, because it fails to recognise established rights, goes beyond the scope of the Israelite religion, and serves the interests of even the unbelieving Zionists; that it is *impracticable*, because [Palestine] can never support the great number of Jews scattered throughout the world; that it is *harmful*, because the ownership of the land, which is now in the hands of the Arabs, could be transferred only at the cost of great sacrifice. The petitioner therefore trusts that the League of Nations will decide in favour of the abolition of the mandates (in the historical section of his petition he includes the mandate for Syria in his criticism) and the cancellation of the Balfour Declaration.

How did the British and the PMC deal with such a petition? The Mandatory had replied “briefly” that

it is unfair to say that the Jews have made the Wall, to which they have acquired an historic right of access, into religious property or a sanctuary. The Commission of Enquiry [the Shaw Commission, formed and authorised on 13 September 1929 >220] will investigate the causes of the conflict. Lastly, the allegations relating to the origins, the essence and the acceptance of the mandate and the demand for its abolition should not be considered as admissible.

Palacios then opined that for the PMC “no further importance need be attached to the allegations made in the petition” since they are inadmissible, since the Mandatory “has replied pertinently” already, and since all the petition’s points were at the moment under discussion by the PMC in its Extraordinary Session [3–21 June 1930]; further, “the Shaw report is to be examined in the presence of the accredited representative of the mandatory Power”. As with earlier attempts by the Palestinians to get the PMC to go over the books [>182; >183; >191], this petition was dismissed out of hand, preventing any dialogue and enlightenment of the Commissioners.

¹⁶¹⁶ League of Nations Archive, R2282, 6A/14036/224.

¹⁶¹⁷ PMC 1930, p 130off (Annex 6).

¹⁶¹⁸ See also Sinanoglou 2019, p 41.

October 1929 'Al-Qaff Al-Akhdar (the Green Hand [or Green Palm] Gang), headed by Ahmed Tafesh, becomes active in the Galilee area.'¹⁶¹⁹

¹⁶¹⁹ Also Lesch 1979, p 212.

On 14 and 17 October 1929 HC John Chancellor received a delegation of his subjects, namely members of the Arab Executive Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi, Jamal al-Husseini and Mogannam Eff. Mogannam, with Cambridge graduate George Antonius as translator.¹⁶²⁰ [*also >200*] The subject was the Palestine Government's allegedly anti-Arab behaviour since the August disturbances, in particular Chancellor's issuance of new 'Regulations' concerning the Wailing Wall's use by Jews; new regulations were regarded by the delegation as unnecessary if Chancellor really believed ownership and use of the wall and the pavement in front of it should remain as they had been (the *status quo*) for as long as anybody could remember – and as written down in an administrative order dated 1912 and in the British White Paper of 19 November 1928, a British Government Statement of Policy with which the delegation's position was fully consistent. [*>199*]

According to the British minutes of the visit, the delegation stated that the August incidents in Jerusalem had reawoken Arab anger at many other things:

[T]he population of Palestine which is now in a very sensitive state saw nothing but a series of acts which it concluded were directed against itself. This simple population saw on one hand Government wiping out £P. 75,000 of the Tel Aviv debt, and on the other severe sentences; beating of Arabs by the Police, but never of Jews; relief to Jews only but none to Arabs although many are in distress. ... It was not merely the case of sentences on a few Arabs: or that Mr. Bentwich was still in his office, but they had bigger issues before them, the Balfour Declaration and the whole future of their country. (pp 79-80)

This was the third High Commissioner whom the Palestinians had to educate. It is not necessary to delve into the details of the rules of use of the area adjacent to the Wailing Wall to grasp the style, or 'music', of these interviews in the High Commissioner's office at Government House, presumably illustrating one method of "tutelage" of a backward people by an advanced one.

Chancellor began with a gripe: In response to his issuing new Regulations, the Arab Executive had sent him

a telegram which contained expressions which were not proper for anybody to address to the High Commissioner. ... I felt that you could not have realised what your words meant when you wrote them. To tell me that 'you will not tolerate such proceedings' [or] that 'my instructions are void' is highly improper language and if you had not withdrawn that telegram it would have been impossible out of respect to the King whom I represent for me to have continued to have relations with you. Now to break off relations with you is the last thing I want to do, and I cannot help you unless you come and tell me freely what is in your minds. ... But as regards public opinion in England I can tell you that you would do your cause nothing but harm in all quarters and among people of all shades of opinions by showing a want of respect to the King's representative in Palestine. (pp 74-75)

¹⁶²⁰ CO 733/163/5, pp 72-98, *all citations*.

The Arabs had amended the telegram, removing the offensive phrases, and pleaded duress, paraphrasing what the AEC said in “withdrawing” its offensive telegram:

the Executive Committee in their actions are not always their own masters, but have to yield to the pressure of their followers. ... The common people could not always look at matters broadly, but took an immediate view of events. ... Mr. Mogannam said that if it had not been for their efforts that had made them hoarse the resolutions that had been adopted would have been much stronger. His Excellency said that if that had been the case, then people would have suffered. Awni Bey said that was realised by them. The principle that guided them was that there should be no difference[s] between them and the British Government. (pp 77-78)

Awni Bey continued:

They were perfectly well aware they could not [win over public opinion in England] by any rupture of relations or any serious disagreement with the Government [and he] wished to let His Excellency know that the people did not see things clearly, but concentrated on immediate facts and their only inference was a denial of justice. ... [T]he people came to them... and said how His Excellency [Chancellor] in his first Proclamation [>205] had insulted the Arabs...

The minutes then recorded that “His Excellency said it was not true that he had insulted the Arabs.” (pp 80-81) It seems that the Palestinian leaders were eager to speak directly to the British public.

There ensued a back-and-forth over details which were symbolically powerful for both Moslems and Jews, and then Awni, “speaking as a lawyer”, brought up the substantive matter of the Collective Punishments Ordinance:

In principle, this Ordinance, which was enacted in 1926, made whole villages punishable for the acts of an individual; that was a principle of justice which was not found in any civilised country... His Excellency said the law could not be altered. Awni Bey pressed that its alteration should be considered; that would be sufficient for them. (p 90)

This was at least a sort of dialogue. Chancellor did not deny the AEC’s charge that Britain was committing onerous and unfair collective punishment.

In fact, returning to the trigger of the uprising, the Wall, during this time there was indeed much discussion in the Colonial Office about the possibility of “buying” or even “expropriating” the entire Wall. Zionists Lord Reading and Mr. Rutenberg floated ideas along these lines, and recently-retired Colonial Secretary Leo Amery had said in a letter to the Chief Rabbi while he was still in office in 1928 that although “there can be no question of expropriating the pavement in front of the Wall... I suppose there is always the possibility of the League of Nations recommending expropriation and in that case we might possibly be justified in doing so irrespective of our present declaration.”¹⁶²¹ As with the entire Mandate, the League of Nations could ‘run interference’ for HMG.

¹⁶²¹ CO 733/163/5, pp 1-2, also pp 205-13.

208. Chancellor and Passfield on self-government October 1929

As we have just seen, the eight-month-old High Commissioner, dealing with people who had lived in Palestine all their lives, felt no compunction when demanding unconditional respect for his own King or himself as “the King’s representative in Palestine”. [>207; >205] According to Philip Mattar,

The High Commissioner condemned only the Palestinians in his uncharacteristically emotional proclamation of September 1, 1929. [>205] He also suspended discussions on a legislative council, which the Palestinians sought, and applied the hated Collective Punishment Ordinance to entire Arab villages. Moreover, 90 percent of the people arrested on charges connected with the disturbances were Palestinians. These actions embittered the Palestinians, who turned militantly anti-British.¹⁶²²

Having suspended work on a new Legislative Council just after the riots, **Chancellor re-started the effort** on 19 October 1929, telling his boss Passfield that a constitution moving towards self-government for the country as a whole should be drafted, but two days later Passfield supported the Zionists’ wish to block any such move towards self-determination.¹⁶²³ According to Porath, Passfield’s predecessor Leo Amery, although no longer Colonial Secretary, on 6 December 1929 wrote to his fellow Zionists within the CO confirming that if HMG were some day forced to set up representative democratic institutions as proposed by Chancellor, then the Balfour Declaration part of the Mandate could be salvaged only by limiting those institutions’ powers over against the Palestine Government and the High Commissioner.¹⁶²⁴ Everybody knew that; it was why LC proposals always contained limited remits and veto powers for the HC. [see e.g. >133ff]

‘Self-government’ and ‘self-determination’ were of course synonyms for the “existence as independent nations” and “standing alone” of the Covenant’s Article 22 §4 [>46], and were the constant basic demand of the Palestinians – immediate independence, whether with or without some further ‘help’ from Britain or a trade-and-defence treaty with Britain. The “self-governing institutions” of Article 2 of *the Mandate* [>146], on the other hand, was constrained, no, prevented, by the aspiration towards a Jewish national home, and were mere institutions within the overall absolutist Mandatory rule stipulated in Article 1.

To British eyes, on the other hand, a country-wide parliament with real, but not ultimate, power looked radically pro-native, even if offered only to prevent the natives’ agitation [e.g. >442]. At times some Palestinians went ahead and demanded a truly representative parliament, and negotiated for it, although it was far short of self-government in the sense that no foreign power would have any more say at all. Following the LC initiatives of Samuel/Churchill in 1922 [>133; >142; also >110] and Chancellor/Passfield in 1930 [>225; >228; >234] would be one in 1934-35 concocted by High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope [>279;

¹⁶²² Mattar 1988, p 50.

¹⁶²³ Porath 1977, p 22, citing CO 733/163/67013/Part II, 19 October and *ibid.*, Cable No. 237, 21 October.

¹⁶²⁴ Porath 1977, p 22, citing CO 733/167/67015. I have not yet found this.

>283; >284; >289; >290]. Apparently Britain's hope died hard that some such "institution", although within the corset of the Mandate's preclusion of self-government, would be acceptable and calm things down.

209. A Syrian-Palestinian compromise

21 October 1929

Shortly after the August 1929 disturbances former Colonial Officer Harry St. John Philby discussed in Damascus a possible compromise solution with members of the Syrian Nationalist Party, whose leaders such as Riad Sulh, Emir Adil Arslan, Nabih al-Azmah and Shukri al Quwatli were “for complete and immediate independence”.¹⁶²⁵ Philby was an Arabist who was head of Intelligence in Palestine from November 1921 until sometime in 1924, when his resistance to Jewish immigration and his belief that the British should stand by the Anglo-French Agreement of 1918 [->28] got him fired.¹⁶²⁶

In spite of French repression they met to help plan an “Arab congress” for 27 October 1929 in Jerusalem to better deal with the Wailing Wall events [->211]. In a letter to Colonial Secretary Passfield dated 21 October 1929¹⁶²⁷ Philby explained that on the evening of 20 October the concerned Arabs held a meeting attended also

by delegates from the Palestine Supreme Moslem Committee [Council, created by the Palestine Government under Samuel in December 1921 with Amin al-Husseini at its head (->131)] and may therefore be considered representative of all important elements.

Philby had in the days preceding assured them that HMG was open to compromise, and on 21 October they

handed me a written draft of what they consider a reasonable settlement might be. They had considered it very carefully and had excluded everything possible in their desire for a swift and permanent settlement.

He sent Passfield a “literal translation” of their draft, which “must not of course be treated as an official proposal by the Arab leaders”. Its nine points, slightly shortened:

1. Palestine to be ruled by a constitutional, republican Govt.
2. Legislative power shall vest in a representative assembly elected by direct or indirect voting and comprising Arabs and Jews in proportion to their numbers residing in the country...¹⁶²⁸
3. The executive administration shall vest in a Govt. responsible to the representative assembly and comprising Jews and Arabs in proportion as above.
4. The British High Commissioner... shall have a right of veto in respect of any decision inconsistent with the undertakings assumed by the British Govt. in the Mandate for Palestine relating to the rights of minorities and of foreigners and contrary to the interests of the country.
5. [A staff shall assist the High Commissioner.]
6. The immigration of foreigners... shall not be forbidden, though the Palestine Govt. may limit the numbers of immigrants to the capacity of the country to absorb them in agriculture and industry.

¹⁶²⁵ Boyle 2001, p 211.

¹⁶²⁶ See e.g. PREM 4/52/5, pp 1328-38; Wikipedia, ‘St John Philby’.

¹⁶²⁷ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 62-63.

¹⁶²⁸ See also Boyle 2001, p 158.

7. There shall be no objection to the continuance of the Zionist Agency acting in an advisory capacity to the Palestine Government in matters affecting the interests of the Jews; and the Arabs shall have the right to set up a similar agency to protect the rights of the Arabs.
8. [Responsibility for “public security” shall gradually be transferred from the High Commissioner to “the national Govt.”]
9. The organic law shall be subject to revision and modification once every five years.

Point (4), even so vaguely formulated, was the main compromise with HMG.

What Mahdi Abdul Hadi prints as the “Arab draft of points, presented to John Philby, Damascus, 21 October 1929”¹⁶²⁹ differs somewhat from Philby’s “literal translation”. Abdul Hadi’s point (2) does not mention “direct or indirect voting” but does say the assembly “will enact legislation and will approve the constitution”; point (4) is more precise than Philby’s concerning what the High Commissioner can veto, namely “any regulation or law which conflicts with Britain’s international obligations concerning the rights of minorities... In case of disagreement, the whole matter will be submitted to the League of Nations”; and the Mandate is not specifically mentioned. In both versions the British “undertaking” or “obligation” to establish the Jewish national home is conceivably excluded, as only “the rights of minorities”, etc., are mentioned.

Point (6) in Abdul Hadi’s version, instead of the absorptive capacity “in agriculture and industry”, was stronger in that it limited immigration by “the *social and economic* possibilities of the country”. (*emphasis added*) Point (8) added to Philby’s version in leaving the “army” under British control but the “police force... under the control of the national government and its expenses will be borne by it.”

Philby at this time did not officially represent HMG, yet he met as well with Hajj Amin al-Husseini and “a number of his lieutenants... at the offices of the supreme Moslem Council, who agreed to meet the British Government half way by whittling down their extreme public demands” along the lines of the Damascus draft, with “certain modifications”. Jamal Bey al-Husseini was just leaving for England as representative of the Arab Executive Committee of the PAC, and Philby gave him a general letter of introduction and advised him to “adopt a moderate and reasonable attitude in discussing matters in England.” Philby also discussed, “partly with Dr. [Judah] Magnes and Mr. [Joseph] Levy [of the *New York Times*] and partly with Hajj Amin al-Husseini and his friends”, what he called “my scheme” – the broad idea of some compromise close to the Damascus draft, and the advice to the Arabs to rely on British friendship.¹⁶³⁰ Faisal on 8 December would approve a version of this draft.¹⁶³¹ [[>]213]

The meetings between Philby and Syrians and Palestinians in Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo, also related by Yehoshua Porath and Philip Mattar,¹⁶³² led Philby to write again to Passfield on 1 November enclosing a “Final Draft” containing some changes made af-

¹⁶²⁹ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 63.

¹⁶³⁰ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 65.

¹⁶³¹ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 66-67.

¹⁶³² Porath 1977, pp 20-21, citing both CO 733/175/67411/Part III, ‘Philby to Passfield, Cairo, 1.11.29’ and Izzat Darwaza, *Hawla al-Harakah*, p 59; Mattar 1983, pp 111-12; Mattar 1988, pp 52, 144.

ter consultation with the Zionist and Moslem-Palestine sides mentioned just above; he thought the Arabs would accept these. Point (1) now read, "Palestine shall henceforth be administered on a democratic constitutional republican basis." Immigration moved up to Point (2), now limited by "due regard for the interests of the country and its economic capacity to absorb". Point (3) re-stated the provision that Arab and Jewish numbers in the "legislative assembly" shall be in the same proportion as in the population. It added Point (4): "Any person who has resided continuously for a period of not less than two years in Palestine is entitled to adopt Palestinian citizenship." [also >186] Point (5) kept the proportional-representation conditions for the Executive and "both senior and junior grades of the administrative services with due regard to their numbers and qualifications." Point (7) – point (4) of his first version – dealt with the delicate issue of the High Commissioner's veto power by limiting it, ambiguously, to anything "inconsistent with the proper exercise of [Britain's] international obligations... or detrimental to the rights of minorities..." and also foresaw for dispute-settlement the Council of the League of Nations, which also, according to Point (10), would "review and revise... these arrangements" every 5 years.¹⁶³³ If one of Britain's "international obligations" was establishing the Jewish national home, of course, the door was open for applying the Articles of the Mandate.

Whatever the respective inputs of Syrian "Nationalists", Palestinians and Philby, insofar as these drafts left Palestine subordinate to some combination of HMG and the League of Nations, for however long, and left non-negligible European Jewish immigration as a *right*, they diverged from the bulk of the Palestinian proposals recorded in this chronology, which demanded independence and the right to determine immigration on their own and which did not see the office of British High Commissioner as more than temporary.

These drafts do ignore the Mandate text, the Jewish national home and thus the Balfour Declaration, and even if this does not imply their renunciation, they are at least consistent with, for example, the resolutions of the Women's Congress of 26 October [>210] which were typical of most Palestinian manifestos in demanding Britain's nullification of the Balfour Declaration and an end to immigration. I have not yet found out whether or how the 'General Assembly' or 'National Conference' in Jerusalem of 27 October, chaired by Yacoub Farraj, [>211] dealt with these drafts.¹⁶³⁴

¹⁶³³ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 65-66.

¹⁶³⁴ See PASSIA 2001, pp 41-42; see for British reactions CO 733/175/67411/III/A.

In October 1929 a meeting of about 300 female nationalists in Jerusalem,¹⁶³⁵ including the influential wives of Musa Kazem al-Husseini and Awni Abd al-Hadi, marched through the streets to High Commissioner Chancellor's house. According to one of them, Anbara Khalidi:

I attended my first Palestinian women's nationalist meeting in October 1929, when the call went out for a general meeting to be attended by women's delegations from the whole of Palestine. It was chaired by Mme Zakiyya al-Husayni, wife of Musa Kazim Pasha al-Husayni (1850-1934). ... [S]he was a woman who had the ear of all the men in the Mandate, from the High Commissioner down to the lowliest officials in the administration. One telephone call from her was enough to accomplish anything she wanted. The aforementioned meeting was held in the house of Mme Tarab, wife of Awni Abd al-Hadi (1889-1970), a cultured and intelligent Palestinian lady. ... [T]he [Khalidi] family was already represented by my friend and sister-in-law Wahida al-Khalidi, who was elected vice-president of the committee. Those present at the meeting decided to go out on a protest demonstration through the city streets, ending at the mansion of the High Commissioner where a memorandum prepared at the meeting was to be presented to him expressing our fears about the increase in Jewish immigration, the Mandate's obvious partiality for Zionism, the neglect of Arab rights in their own homeland and so forth. At that same meeting they also adopted a resolution, fortified by a solemn oath, to boycott all Jewish shops. ... We then chose five ladies to carry the memorandum, whose demands were consonant with those of the higher executive committee [AEC of the PAC], to the High Commissioner. He apparently received them very cordially, but I should add that the ladies who presented the memorandum refused the coffee offered to them, in conformity with an ancient Arab custom that refuses hospitality under similar circumstances unless a genuine promise is obtained that the demands will be met.¹⁶³⁶

This was an example of communicating, but under protest: no smiles over coffee.

The resolutions of this Women's Congress accordingly "rejected the Balfour Declaration and Zionist immigration, called for the establishment of a National Government responsible before a Representative Council, and urged the development of National Industries."¹⁶³⁷ According to Lesch, this was only one of the "frequent protests" sent by the Moslem and Christian women of Palestine to one or the other High Commissioner.¹⁶³⁸

Another account of the Congress and Chancellor's reception of some delegates, in the 1937 book by Mrs. Mogannam E.T. Mogannam, reprinted the women's resolutions.¹⁶³⁹ [320] In by now familiar terms opposition was declared to (i) the Balfour Declaration's

¹⁶³⁵ PASSIA 2001, 26-29 October 1929.

¹⁶³⁶ Khalidi 1978, pp 134-35; also Ayyad 1999, pp 133-34.

¹⁶³⁷ Kayyali 1978, p 150, citing CO 733/17, p 6, Situation in Palestine, 28 November 1929; also Regan 2017, pp 130-32.

¹⁶³⁸ Lesch 1979, p 63; also pp 102-03.

¹⁶³⁹ Mogannam 1937, pp 70-76, all citations.

“destruction of the Arab nationality,” (ii) the lack of “a National Government, responsible before a Representative Council in which the population will be represented in proportion to their numerical strength,” and (iii) thwarted “development of national industries and trade [which is] an effective and essential step to the achievement of political independence.” The Congress further urged “every Arab to buy nothing from the Jews but land, and to sell them everything but land.” Any Arab who does not “make every possible effort, with full force and determination, to secure the abrogation of [the Balfour] Declaration... should be deemed a traitor to his country and nation.”

For social and religious reasons, so Mrs. Mogannam, the women had preferred to meet with Chancellor’s wife, but she refused, and “the deputation had no other alternative but to wait upon the High Commissioner at Government House, and to ignore all traditional restrictions.” After the cordial reception by Chancellor,

The demonstration proceeded in about 120 cars, starting from the place of the meeting, through Damascus Gate and other streets and presented the Memorandum at the various Consulates. The Consul of the Turkish Republic, of all the foreign Consuls, greeted the demonstrators and wished them every success in their movement.

The Executive Committee of the Congress deputation consisted of

President, Madame Dr. Khalidi; Treasurer, Miss Shahinda Duzdar. Members: Mesdames Jamal Hussein, Musa Alami, Ouni Abd El Hadi, Shukry Deeb, Boulos Shihadeh, Subhi El Khadra; Misses Zahia Nashashibi, Fatma Hussein, Khadijah Husayni, Zlegha Shihabi. It has been the privilege of the author to be the general secretary of this committee.

Branches of their society formed in Jerusalem, Acre, Nazareth, Haifa, Yaffa, Ramallah, Tulkarem, and Safed. Their work was for political nationalism and the development of Arab women. On 28 January 1932 this Women’s Congress would send a similar letter stating both women’s and national grievances to the Permanent Mandates Commission via High Commissioner Wauchope and the Colonial Office in London, which forwarded it to the PMC on 22 June 1932. [^{>257}; also ^{>269}; ^{>320}; ^{>356}]

26-29 October 1929 *The first Arab Women’s Union in Palestine is founded in Jerusalem, headed by Zalikha Ash-Shihabi. ... The first Palestinian Arab Women’s Conference is held in Jerusalem with at least 300 in attendance; expresses total opposition to the Balfour Declaration and to Jewish immigration. In a demonstration after the meeting the women form a motorcade of 80 cars protesting British policy.*¹⁶⁴⁰

¹⁶⁴⁰ Also Kayyali 1978, p 150.

211. General Assembly Arab Congress

27 October 1929

The Arab Executive Committee around 27 October 1929 convened in Jerusalem an assembly, called by many the 'Arab Congress', which included Bedouin Sheikhs and some delegates from Transjordan but does not count as an 8th Palestine Arab Congress. Kayyali records:

According to Police reports, 'Great enthusiasm and determination to "save the country" even at the cost of their lives was manifested. Judging from the attitude of the Assembly it was apparent that the people were in a state of extreme excitement and approximated to a revolutionary disposition. It is said that the Arabs now await the 'decision' of the commission [Shaw Commission, >220], and if these are unsatisfactory the only course open to them is a general uprising. A general strike was called and observed on the Balfour anniversary.'¹⁶⁴¹

I do not yet know whether this General Assembly passed any resolution regarding the 'Damascus drafts' prepared by various Arabs of Syria and Palestine and modified by St. John Philby during the 10 or so days surrounding this conference. [>209]

5-6 November 1929 *An Arab village conference was held in Jaffa on November 5-6, 1929. A letter sent from the conference asked for the removal of taxes like ushr and wirco and to replace them with simple customs taxes [and] opening an agricultural credit union.*

¹⁶⁴¹ Kayyali 1978, p 150.

According to Abdelaziz Ayyad,

On Thursday, 14 November 1929, the Palestinian bourgeoisie, who benefited from commercial exchange with the Zionists, held its congress in Haifa... through the participation of 45 members. Nimer An-Nabulsi was chosen as chairman. Rashid Al-Haj Ibrahim, also in attendance, was one of the wealthiest merchants of Haifa. Hasan Sadiqi Ad-Dajani and Tawfiq Az-Zayba were selected as secretaries. They protested against the trade protectionism of Zionist goods like cement and other items. ... Politically the conferees *supported the political ends* which the Palestinians committed themselves to accomplishing. Two telegraphs were sent by the Congress, one to the High Commissioner, and the other to the Shaw Commission [p.220]. In these telegraphs they demanded the *cancellation of the Balfour Declaration policy*. The participants in this conference committed themselves under oath to work for achieving these goals and to boycott the Zionists' goods.¹⁶⁴² (*emphasis added*)

¹⁶⁴² Ayyad 1999, p 134, citing Kamil Mahmoud Khillih, 1974, pp 472-73.

On 8 December 1929 Emir Faisal, who had taken Damascus from the Ottomans while fighting with Allenby, who in the first half of 1920 had been King of Syria, whose ministerial staff had included several Palestinians, and who was now King of Iraq, wrote to the British Acting High Commissioner in Baghdad:¹⁶⁴³

I wish first of all to express my sincere thanks to His Majesty's Government for their having so kindly asked for any observations that I may have regarding Palestine... It appears to me that any possible solution should be sought for in the actual pledges made, or more correctly in a definition of these pledges... I believe that, but for the pledge made to the Zionists, there would have been no need for a discussion of the pledges given to the Arabs, because the latter are natives of the land and the Declaration of 1918 [Anglo-French, >28] can bear no misconstruction or argument.

Had it not been for the Balfour Declaration... Like many who came after him during the following 90+ years, he was imagining the political situation in the Arab Near East without a British-enforced Zionist state. [*also >37*]

As for the Zionists, they claim that the Balfour Pledge makes Palestine a national home for them. ... We find that they take no account of any other race, even a race which possess a crushing majority, and has been settled in the country for hundreds of years...

His take on British intentions:

His Majesty's Government have on many occasions declared that by using the expression 'National Home', they did not intend to expel the Arabs, at once or gradually, from their home and replace them by the Jews, with the object of establishing a purely Jewish Government in Palestine, but that they only intended to find a place of refuge for the Jews who were despised in the various countries of the world, in order that if any Jew wishes to emigrate he might find for himself a place in which he could take shelter and reside. If the object of the [Balfour] Declaration... be as indicated above, I can see no great obstacle to prevent an understanding.

He then set forth three "solutions which occur to my mind": (paraphrasing) First, a unified Syria, Iraq and Palestine could be "a national home for the Semitic race, both Arab and Jews, with due regard... to the Sykes-Picot Agreement..." Second, Palestine and Transjordan could be unified "and a treaty concluded on the basis mentioned in the third solution." Third, an "Anglo-Palestine Treaty" for Palestine only "on the following lines":

- a) A national government to be set up in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants.
- b) Both parties to be silent as regards the Balfour Pledge.
- c) Immigration to be restricted and a maximum fixed thereto subject to the extent to which economic conditions may permit.

¹⁶⁴³ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 66-67, *all quotations*.

- d) The nationality of immigrants not to be stated. Acquisition of Palestinian nationality and the enjoyment of 'public rights' to be made conditional on residence for a period of one or two years as necessary.
- e) Following naturalization an immigrant should sever relations with the country from which he has emigrated.

Point c) is unique in proposing first a "maximum" number of immigrants – presumably determined by several criteria – and then saying that this number might be lower, depending on "economic conditions"; this was unlike the British policy of first trying to measure 'economic absorptive capacity', stating no maximum, and eschewing mention of non-economic criteria. Point d) reveals Faisal's secular political philosophy.

Finally, wrote Faisal, "as regards the remedying of the present situation arising from the Wailing Wall question, I consider it advisable that His Majesty's Government should create an opportunity for directly interested Moslem nations, especially the Arabs, to send representatives to give their opinion on the solution of this question."

Leo **Amery** [*also* >16; >30; >184; >196; >199; >242; >290; >342] had stepped down as Colonial Secretary on 4 June 1929 (remaining an MP until 1945). The December 1929 issue of 'The Monthly Pioneer', a Jewish Zionist journal, featured **his article 'The Future in Palestine'**¹⁶⁴⁴ expressing views which contribute to our understanding of the British side of whatever dialogue occurred with the Palestinians. On 13 September 1929 the Shaw Commission had been set up to investigate the violence of August 1929 [>202; >220], and Amery duly advised his international readership to await its findings; however,

the Commission is only concerned with a particular situation. The fundamental position remains unaffected... Great Britain has undertaken, by the Balfour Declaration, and by its assumption of the Mandate, to carry out the policy embodied in those documents, and there is no question of any British Government... going back on [that policy]. After all, it is not merely a question of having put our [Britain's and Zionism's] hand to the plough and taking it off before driving our furrow. The ploughing has been done, and even if there be still much work needed, we are well on our way towards the harvest. The progress achieved during these years, whether by the Government or by the independent efforts of the Zionist Organization, may, at each stage, have seemed slow to some of the more ardent spirits. But when the immense difficulties of the situation and of the time are realised – Arab suspicion and resentment, breaking out at intervals, as in 1921 and again this August, and always latent – the sum total of achievement is seen... as a great constructive achievement.

The Arab contribution to the dialogue was thereby reduced to passive “suspicion”, “resentment” and “outbreaks”, with no mention of the many written and verbal statements, positions, arguments, negotiations, presentations and long trips by delegations made since 1921, nor of countless processions and demonstrations and mass meetings.

Amery believed European-Jewish immigration would once again increase if “we... get on as quickly as possible with the work at hand [and] show unmistakably the sincerity and tenacity of our purpose..., our first business [being] to make clear that there is no weakening in our determination...” The Balfour Declaration’s “Jewish National Home did not imply the setting up of a Jewish nationalist state”, but Britain also rejected “that type of nationalism by the Arabs.”

The Jewish National Home is based, not on sufferance from the Arabs, but on an internationally recognised right. ... [T]he immediate task of the British Government in Palestine is to leave no doubt in the minds of the Arabs that this right will be upheld, and that no agitation or clamour will lead to concessions which will in effect impair it... [Towards] a common Palestinian patriotism... the Jewish community, with its higher education and wider outlook, can do much to help [for instance] by going out of their way, even, to show interest in their Arab fellow citizens...

¹⁶⁴⁴ CO 733/178/6, p 6.

The trope of the JNH's internationally-bestowed legitimacy was here marched out, and the Jews in Palestine should "show interest" "even" towards Arabs! The "Arab minds" of whom he had been in charge as Secretary of State for the Colonies for four-and-a-half years should be filled, that is, with the two ideas of British-Zionist intransigence and the Jewish minority's right of veto over any legislation. The latter idea was spelled out in his cover letter to Shuckburgh, Middle East Department chief from 1921 to 1931, upon sending him a copy of 'The Monthly Pioneer':

My general theme is that we must make it quite clear that we mean to carry out the Mandate. ... Above all we should not, I think, encourage any unilateral negotiations with the Arabs, the results of which are then to be communicated to the Jews. ... As regards constitutional progress I hope that any announcement... makes it absolutely clear that the conditions precedent to any consideration of it will be good behavior on the part of the Arabs for a period of years. When and if anything of the sort should come, it is obvious that it cannot come in any form which would enable an Arab majority, directly or indirectly, to frustrate the Mandate. ... [U]ltimately we must envisage, I imagine, an unofficial majority to provide that each element should be represented only in proportion to its numerical strength, but that no vote for any purpose whatever should be valid unless it secures a majority of both sections of the Legislature. ... There might, of course, be deadlocks, but provision would have to be made in that case for giving the initiative to the Governor.¹⁶⁴⁵

If the Arab majority behaved itself they would (perhaps) get a constitution giving the Zionists a veto over anything they might decide. Amery here clearly expressed the parity principle of equal power for the majority and the minority, expressed not in individual, but rather in collective, ethno-religious terms. He also bluntly and unashamedly came out against democracy. This final result of Amery's decade-long study of the situation was embellished by his hope that the Palestinian solution would resemble that of the English- and French-speaking elements of Canada; he was evidently unaware that the Canadian constitution included no such clauses, and he was indifferent to the fact that both "elements" in Canada were in equal measure European immigrants and colonists.

¹⁶⁴⁵ CO 733/178/6, pp 17-18 and CO 733/167/6, p 16.

The newspaper *Al-Sirat el-Mustakim* (The Middle or Straight Way)¹⁶⁴⁶ on 13 December 1929 expressed Palestinian resentment:

The anger of the nation does not interest the government. The Palestinian nation, old and young, its wealthy and poor, is suffering due to the situation brought about by the practices of the British mandate, with the nation waiting for justice and mercy. The entire nation is suffering due to what happened to its children, lands, economies, and in walks of life at the hands of repressive Zionists and English rulers. Jaffa had its big and great share in this.¹⁶⁴⁷

As explained earlier, both my lack of Arabic and the need to limit the scope of this chronology mean I give little attention to Palestinian journals and newspapers. A few other entries resemble this one in picking out an instance of editorial opinion more or less at random. English-language works by Rashid Khalidi (1997), Weldon Matthews (2006), Mustafa Kabha (2007), Emanuel Beška (2011, 2014, 2014a) and Noha Tadros Khalaf (2011) provide overviews and some history of the papers' pre-World War I beginnings.

[also >4]

¹⁶⁴⁶ Also Matthews 2006, p 58 & *passim*.

¹⁶⁴⁷ *Al-Sirat el-Mustakim*, 13 December 1929, translated by Yousef M. Aljamal.

The Shaw Commission [220] to look into the August 1929 outbreak [202] was announced on 13 September 1929, and it visited Palestine from 24 October until 29 December.¹⁶⁴⁸ Word had gotten out in London that the Commissioners were taking stands on the deeper, not just the immediate, causes of the outbreak, and these opinions were not favourable to Zionism. On 20 December 1929, Balfour Declaration authors Balfour, Lloyd George and Jan Smuts were therefore moved to put a letter in the *Times* claiming that the Shaw Commission had, in thinking thoughts about the fundamental situation, overstepped its remit and was not politically qualified to judge the Zionist Mandate. Needed was a new “searching enquiry” by an “authoritative commission” into “the whole working of the mandate”.¹⁶⁴⁹ According to Jeffries, this idea of a new, post-Shaw commission of enquiry was taken up on 28 March 1930, when the contents of the Shaw Report were known, at a meeting between Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, Colonial Secretary Passfield, U.S. Zionist Felix Warburg and leading British Zionists Weizmann, Lord Reading and Lord Melchett, at which they decided to send Jan Smuts as the lone investigator; instead of reliable Zionist Smuts, for some reason, John Hope Simpson would be chosen.¹⁶⁵⁰ [233]

¹⁶⁴⁸ Shaw 1930, p 4.

¹⁶⁴⁹ <https://www.jta.org/1929/12/22/archive/lord-balfour-lloyd-george-and-smuts-in-joint-statement-ask-new-commission-for-searching-probe-of-a>

¹⁶⁵⁰ Jeffries 1939, pp 647-49.

Jamal al-Husseini arrived in Britain in autumn 1929 with letters of introduction from the Mufti and St. John Philby and “deputed by” the Supreme Moslem Council and the Arab Executive, of which he was uncontestedly the Secretary, although some Executive members were at that time disavowing him, or at least his visit.¹⁶⁵¹ He requested to see Colonial Secretary Passfield, and after some resistance from underlings, including Shuckburgh, who memoed “I do not like this at all”, upon the recommendation of High Commissioner Chancellor Passfield on 12 December agreed to an “interview” with Jamal.¹⁶⁵² It took place on 19 December, with Passfield’s report on it to Chancellor and the minutes of CO official O. G. R. Williams¹⁶⁵³ recording that Passfield, faced with Jamal’s desire for a speedy solution, said the Government needed more time, at least until the (Shaw) Commission of Enquiry was finished – which finally happened on 19 March 1930 [220]. Then

Jamal Bey... said... what the Arabs were looking for was a revision of the policy of the British Government, so that the Arabs could have ‘justice’. In the course of further discussion it became clear that what Jamal Bey meant by ‘justice’ was, not redress of practical grievances due to conflict of interest between Jews and Arabs, but the grant to Palestine of some form of representative government. He envisaged an elected legislature with representation proportionate to the Arab majority and the Jewish and other minorities in the country. In reply to a question from the Secretary of State as to where the British Government came in, Jamal Bey made it clear that the Arabs objected to any British official representation in the Legislature, but would accept some form of veto to be exercised by the High Commissioner.

Jamal argued on the basis of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations [46] that Palestine belonged to the “certain communities” who had “reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations could be provisionally recognised”, i.e. the Class A-mandated territories. Thereupon “The Secretary of State declined to admit that Palestine could be regarded strictly speaking as an A Mandate Territory.” (Passfield hadn’t done his homework: the only other class of Mandates mentioned in Article 22 covered “other peoples, especially those of Central Africa...”, and the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nation itself always regarded Palestine unquestionably as a “Territory under A Mandate” along with Transjordan, Syria, the Lebanon and Mesopotamia/Iraq.¹⁶⁵⁴) Passfield closed by disabusing Jamal of the notion that Great Britain could be satisfied “with a mere veto upon the actions of the Legislature.”

¹⁶⁵¹ CO 733/178/1, pp 3, 4, 67, 76, 82, 86.

¹⁶⁵² CO 733/178/1, pp 4-6 & pp 2-10, 88, *passim*; Porath 1977, p 23.

¹⁶⁵³ CO 733/178/1, pp 69-72, 73-74; Porath 1977, p 23; also Lesch 1979, p 167, citing CO 733/178/67500 and her interview with Jamal on 8 May 1971 in Beirut.

¹⁶⁵⁴ E.g. PMC 1925, pp 212-14, 198-205.

Jamal's main reason for being in London was to distribute a **pamphlet entitled 'Arab Statement on Palestine to Members of the House of Commons'**.¹⁶⁵⁵ This 7-page statement provoked a 16-page Colonial Office "Commentary" on it,¹⁶⁵⁶ a reply more candidly described in intra-CO correspondence as a "counterblast"¹⁶⁵⁷. CO official Williams denounced as "impertinence" Jamal's "undesirable publicity" in England (e.g. a meeting in "a Committee Room of the House of Commons", articles or letters to the editor in the *Morning Post*, the *Financial News*, and the *Daily Mail*, and a public debate during which Jamal reiterated that the Arabs had nothing against "Jews as Jews" but only as Zionists); he said of the pamphlet that "though full of questionable statements, it is an effective piece of propaganda and may give us a lot of trouble when Parliament reassembles."¹⁶⁵⁸

The Statement's preamble:

The Arabs in Palestine bear no hatred to Jews as Jews. Their continual complaint is of the aggressive predominance of the political Zionists. Arabs have lived with Jews before the War on friendly terms as Arabs and Jews now still live in Syria and Mesopotamia. There is no truth in the rumour spread by anti-Arab propagandists that Arabs use their anti-Zionist movement as a screen to hide an anti-British Campaign. Arabs have good faith in British people and believe that it is through the friendship and assistance of Great Britain that they will be able to attain their full national aspirations.

The same general message had already been sent to Britain many times, one early example being the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress's 'Report on the State of Palestine' given personally to Churchill in 1921. [>99; >100]

After repeating the litany of British and French promises of independence, the MPs were taken through the issues and facts of 1) self-government, 2) the 93% Arab majority, 3) the absence of Arabs and presence of many "ardent Zionist Jews" at the top levels of the Palestine Government, 4) high taxes in Palestine compared to Egypt, Syria and Iraq, 5) immigration since 1920 "not in proportion to the economic capacities of the country", 6) the politically motivated replacement of Arab workers by Jewish immigrants, 7) the campaigns and "scandals" surrounding the British Electric Corporation of Jerusalem and the Petah Tikvah orange harvest in 1927, 8) the sale of private land tilled by Arab tenants by absentee owners to Jewish Zionists, 9) Herbert Samuel's liquidation of the Agricultural Bank, 10) "evicted Arab tenants and owners", 11) the privileged granting of the Dead Sea, Haifa Harbour and electricity business concessions to Zionists, and 12) the Wailing Wall conflict started not by indigenous Arab Jews but by Zionist Jews.

In conclusion:

The Palestine Arabs are not the Bedouin Rovers and outlaws that have been described by their enemies. Thousands of their students are now scattered in the American, European or English Universities. ... THE ARABS OF PALESTINE MAKE THE MOST PEACEABLE DE-

¹⁶⁵⁵ CO 733/178/1 pp 59-62, all quotations if not otherwise indicated.

¹⁶⁵⁶ CO 733/178/1, pp 11-27.

¹⁶⁵⁷ CO 733/178/1, pp 9, 10.

¹⁶⁵⁸ CO 733/178/1, pp 5, 7, 64, 65, 77, 81.

MANDS. THEY WANT A PALESTINIAN NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THEIR COUNTRY IN WHICH BOTH PALESTINIAN ARABS AND JEWS WILL PARTICIPATE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR NUMBERS. IMMIGRATION OF ARABS, CHRISTIANS AND JEWS EQUALLY, TO ALL OF WHOM THIS COUNTRY IS SO DEAR FROM RELIGIOUS POINTS OF VIEW, TO BE SUBJECT TO THE ECONOMIC CAPACITY OF THE COUNTRY TO ABSORB THE NEW ARRIVALS. Jamal Husseini, Palestine Arab Executive and Supreme Moslem Council, Bank Buildings, 16, St. James's Street, S.W.1.

The Palestinians were asking the British Parliamentarians to judge the Palestinians' demands by their own democratic standards.

What said the Colonial Office's "Commentary", or "counterblast", which was approved by the entire Colonial Office all the way up to Passfield? It said:

The measure of self-government contemplated here [by Jamal] is out of the question, if only because of the necessity for reserving to the Mandatory the power to carry out the responsibilities set out in the second paragraph of the Preamble of the Mandate.¹⁶⁵⁹

(That paragraph favoured "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". [p.146]) The message here was that Jamal, after clearing the hurdles of showing his credentials as a representative of the Arabs, of being recommended by the out-of-favour Philby, and of impertinently writing newspaper articles in England, simply wanted to talk about the wrong things - namely Zionism and the general political situation. The self-imposed "responsibility" to forcibly establish the JNH trumped all.

On the same day that Passfield granted Jamal the interview, 19 December, *The Financial News* in London printed a letter from Jamal refuting the claim by MP Frank Smith in the 13 December issue of the paper that the Jewish national home cost the British taxpayer nothing, with Jamal quoting the annual reports of the Permanent Mandates Commission showing that expenses in 1921-25 had for instance been about £8,500,000, and that grants-in-aid had been paid since then. Smith was also wrong, so Jamal, to call HMG's dedication to the Zionist cause "trivial", because it not only broke a series of promises of self-government to the Arab inhabitants, but "is arousing the indignation of the Arab world in particular and the Moslem world in general, in which it has always been the wise policy of Great Britain to cultivate confidence and goodwill."¹⁶⁶⁰

¹⁶⁵⁹ CO 733/178/1, pp 27, 9.

¹⁶⁶⁰ CO 733/178/1, p 64.

XIII. The decisive year 1930

This 9-page entry relates the content of and context for High Commissioner Chancellor's serious flirt with Palestinian self-determination – a memorandum with over 100 separately numbered paragraphs – as well as several bureaucratic reactions to it. Compare this HC's education of his Colonial Secretary (Passfield) with HC Samuel's education of his own ignorant boss (Devonshire) in entry >153.

A year-and-a-half into his 3-year term as High Commissioner, John Chancellor on 17 January 1930 sent **a memorandum to Colonial Secretary Passfield** containing opinions as favourable to Palestinian self-determination as would ever leave the pen of any high-ranking British colonialist.¹⁶⁶¹ The memo was “the big despatch on policy in which, among other things, the High Commissioner recommended important alterations in the terms of the Mandate.”¹⁶⁶² It began an intra-British quarrel that would end 13 months later with HMG's ‘Black Letter’ [^{>246}] repudiating the relatively pro-indigenous, anti-Zionist proposals of Chancellor, Shaw [^{>220}], Hope Simpson [^{>233}] and, albeit far less pro-Palestinian, Passfield. [^{>234}]¹⁶⁶³ Triggered by the uprising of August 1929 [^{>202}] as well as this Chancellor memorandum, 1930 also saw the Shaw and Hope Simpson investigations, another Arab Delegation to London [^{>222}], another ‘Cabinet Committee’ report [^{>231}], the Löfgren Report on the rights of the various religions in Jerusalem [^{>245}],¹⁶⁶⁴ and the investigations of Lewis French on land questions.¹⁶⁶⁵

1930 was one of several times when Zionism escaped by the skin of its teeth from a reversal of Britain's pro-Zionism, but in the end Prime Minister MacDonald's ‘Black Letter’ to Weizmann [^{>246}] returned to business as usual: no independence, no democracy, a Jewish national home, European immigration, and land acquisition by those with the necessary financial and political strength. It arguably also ended Palestinian hopes of extracting anything from Britain by means of dialogue.

I do not know to what extent the contents of this SECRET memo, which was closed to the public until 1980, became known amongst Palestinians either in London or Palestine. Passfield officially forwarded it to the Cabinet only on 27 March 1930, but I do not know if Chancellor's wish that it be sent also to Walter Shaw, who was finishing up his investiga-

¹⁶⁶¹ CO 733/183/1, pp 124-41, *all quotations*; also CO 733/182/9, pp 35-107; Porath 1977, pp 22-23. For excerpts see also CO 733/187/6, pp 43-59.

¹⁶⁶² CO 733/183/1, p 20, Williams to Shuckburgh, 9 May 1930.

¹⁶⁶³ See Jeffries 1939, pp 634-69; Sheffer 1973; Abboushi 1977; Porath 1977, pp 22-36, 143-44; Kayyali 1978, pp 157-62; Tannous 1988, pp 157-67; Seikaly 1995, pp 139-44, 155; Smith 1996, pp 88-93; Ayyad 1999, pp 124-30, 133-35, 142-43; Beckerman-Boys 2013 & 2016.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Löfgren 1930.

¹⁶⁶⁵ French 1931, 1932; Jeffries 1939, pp 669-80.

tion into the August 1929 disturbances, was fulfilled.¹⁶⁶⁶ However that may be, Chancellor first set the stage, saying he was doing, in parallel, what the Shaw Commission was doing:

I have the honour to submit for your Lordship's consideration my views as to the causes which led to the recent outbreaks in Palestine, and my recommendations as to the measures necessary to prevent their recurrence. The principal immediate cause of the disturbances was undoubtedly the dispute between Jews and Moslems concerning their rights and claims at the Western or Wailing Wall. The Western Wall dispute was, however, only a secondary issue, and, until it has been considered in relation to the situation as a whole, its importance as a cause of the bitter hostility of the Arabs towards the Jews which the recent outbreaks have revealed, may be over-estimated. In order to explain the situation in Palestine it is necessary to examine... the history of the relations between the Arabs and the Jews and the Mandatory since 1915. (p 124/§1-3)

Chancellor accurately saw the "situation" as the result of the triangle of forces – the indigenous people, their coloniser, and international Zionism. The tone of this memorandum was much different than had been his Proclamation to the people of Palestine on 1 September 1929 just after the uprising. [>205]

Brief treatments followed of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence [>10], Balfour Declaration [>16], Anglo-French Declaration [>28], Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant [>46], the Inter-Allied [which became the King-Crane] Commission [>59], "a Zionist commission with *liaison* with the Commander-in-Chief" [>23; >31; >59; >77; >88; >99; >112; >122; >126; >142; >143; >155; >201], the independent Syria of King Faisal [*e.g.* >60; >69; >71], the Palin "Military Commission of Inquiry [whose] Report to the Commander-in-Chief... was never made public" [>88], the Mandate [>146], the Principal Allied Powers conference at San Remo [>78], the Supreme Moslem *Sharia* Council [>131; >227], the 1921 Jaffa disturbances [>103], the October 1921 Moslem-Christian Delegation to London [>123], the 1922 Churchill White Paper [>142], the August 1922 Order-in-Council for a Legislative Council [>150], and his "confidential" talks with Arab leaders in early summer 1929 [>200]. (pp 124-26/§4-23) This overview rivals the longer one of the Royal ('Peel') Commission of 7 July 1937 [>336] and renders this Memorandum essential reading for students of the Mandate.

He added the general comment that to date,

British officials generally have established relations of mutual confidence with the inhabitants of the country with whom they work. But the Central [Palestine] Government has had few opportunities of establishing contact with the leaders of Arab opinion. This lack of contact has been productive of misgiving in regard to legislation. Any acts of the Government which appeared to be ambiguous or partisan in spirit became at once the cause of suspicion and distrust. That distrust could only be dissipated through intimate contact between Arabs and the Government; such contact could not be made unless the Arabs had participation through some representative means in the acts done or contemplated by the central authority. (p 126/§25)

¹⁶⁶⁶ Sheffer 1973, p 46, citing CO 733/183/77050, Beckett's minute January 31 within CO 733/183/2 or /3.

Perhaps I am misunderstanding Chancellor's comment, but the notion that previous High Commissioners Samuel and Plumer, and their staffs, had "had few opportunities of establishing contact with the leaders of Arab opinion" is ridiculous; they had had ten years of "contact" and ten years of reading the Arab-Palestinian press, and any contactlessness was by conscious choice. But at least he was sincerely seeing the need for them to be officially *represented*. Chancellor then added that the Palestinians were aware that their neighbours in Trans-Jordan and Iraq were well on the way to real independence, so why weren't they? (p 126/§26)

After recounting the Arabs' grievances concerning the Jewish National Home as such, the hydro-electric Rutenberg concession, "the grant of a concession for the development of the mineral resources of the Dead Sea to Mr. Novemeysky, a Jew, and Major Tulloch, a British officer", Jewish-Zionist influence over Palestine Government policy, as well as the "grievous levels of unemployment" caused by Jewish European immigration during the years 1924-26, the presence of "an alien population, which is... in Palestine not on sufferance but as of right", and the real or contemplated sale of state land to Zionists, Chancellor wrote that it was "as a consequence of Zionism" that there was "latent hostility... between Arabs and Jews"; the background was "hostility to Zionism... since 1918". (pp 126-28/§27-29, 35)

Chancellor told Passfield that the Arabs' rejection of the Mandate and denunciation of Zionist policy meant that HMG had two choices:

(1) to withdraw from the Jews the specially privileged position (as compared with the Arab inhabitants of the country) which has been given to them under the Mandate, but which is not justified by the terms of the Balfour Declaration, and to grant the people of Palestine a measure of self-government, or (2) to continue the present policy unchanged and to enforce the provisions of the Mandate by maintaining military forces of sufficient strength to keep order and to protect the Jews. ... I reject the second alternative, because it is altogether repugnant to modern sentiment, and because it would provide no permanent solution of the present difficulties in Palestine and no palliative apart from repression by force of arms, for a situation which has become dangerous... (p 128/§40, 41)

"Modern sentiment" is a good way to capture the post-World War I international enthusiasm for self-determination associated with Woodrow Wilson [*e.g.* >20]. Unusually for a British official, he was taking his opinions from an ethical reservoir. His basic three reasons against business-as-usual were that it was unethical, unsustainable, and would require over-costly, violent repression "permanent[ly]".

In part (1) of his basic analysis, just above, Chancellor was correct to point out that the Mandate went farther than and could not entirely be derived from the Balfour Declaration. (To be sure, the imbalance in the Balfour Declaration, as I have argued [*>16*] *severely inclined* that document towards privilege for Jewish Zionists.) By separating the two documents he was opening the logical door to abiding by the Balfour Declaration while, without contradiction, revising the Mandate seriously away from Zionism. Stepping through that door, he concretely recommended paying lip service to the Balfour

Declaration while choosing the first option above of “withdrawing from the Jews” their “specially privileged position” – even if the “measure of self-government” he foresaw fell short of indigenous demands:

[T]he time has not yet come for establishing any system of democratic parliamentary government in Palestine... (p 130/§59)

He also endeavoured to show that thus revising the Mandate was consistent with the Covenant’s Article 22 (pp 129-30/§42-55), but emphasised that revision was not abrogation, and that in talks with Arab leaders he “impressed upon them that it was vain to ask HMG to abandon the policy of the Balfour Declaration” since “declaration of policy so formally and so unanimously made could not be rescinded”. (p 130/§57). His own specification of what it meant to choose Alternative (1) came in his “Summary of Conclusions” (p 135, §103) [*see also* >326], *quoting*:

1. That the Balfour Declaration should be reaffirmed, and that it should be given effect to in the spirit of the statement of British Policy contained in Command Paper 1700 of 1922. ([his own Paragraphs in his text:] §40-48.)
2. That the Mandatory should submit to the League of Nations proposals for the amendment of Articles 2, 4, 6 and 11 of the Mandate [¹⁴⁶] with a view to removing from them those provisions which give or appear to give the Jews a privileged position in Palestine over the indigenous population. (§49-55.)¹⁶⁶⁷
3. That, subject to the reservations of such powers as may be necessary to enable His Majesty’s Government to discharge their obligations under the Mandate, the people of Palestine should be granted a measure of representative government, which should provide that the representatives of the people shall have some share in the responsibility for the administrative and executive acts of the Govt as well as for legislation. (§59-63.)
4. That a special commission should be appointed under Article 14 of the Mandate to study, define and determine the rights and claims of the Jews and Moslems relating to the Wailing Wall. (§64.)
5. That all the cultivable land in Palestine was now occupied. (§72-77.)
6. That no cultivable land now in possession of the indigenous population can be sold to Jews without creating a class of landless Arab cultivators. (§78-81.)
7. That legislative measures should be taken (a) to ensure that the indigenous agricultural population shall not be dispossessed of its land, and (b) to prevent the creation of a class of landless peasantry. (§82-85.)
8. That the immigration of Jewish agricultural colonists should be restricted to the number required to develop and cultivate the land now in Jewish ownership. (§86-87.)

These ideas were similar to the Philby/Palestinian compromise of October 1929 [²⁰⁹] and were taken up, to a greater or lesser degree, by the Shaw Commission, the Hope Simpson Report and, watered down, the Passfield White Paper [²²⁰; ²³³; ²³⁴].

Points (5)-(8) were exactly what Chancellor wrote in a separate dispatch to the Colonial Office a week later, on 23 January 1930:

¹⁶⁶⁷ Also CO 733/190/1, pp 2-3, 11-15, 26.

If more land now in occupation of the indigenous population is sold for the purpose of Jewish settlement, either the existing cultivators will be dispossessed of their land and will cease to be cultivators, or their holdings must be reduced below what is now regarded as the average area sufficient to support an Arab agricultural family.¹⁶⁶⁸

Throughout, he was defining “cultivable land” as

land which is cultivated, or which can be brought under cultivation by the application of the labour and the financial resources of the average individual Palestinian cultivator. This definition excludes marshes, coastal sand dunes, the rocky hills, and the wilderness of Judea and a considerable area of arid country in the Beersheba sub-district... It is possible that some of the excluded area could be cultivated at great initial cost by scientific farmers...¹⁶⁶⁹

By applying this definition which, the last sentence notwithstanding, did not assume more intensive agriculture through expensive investment in land reclamation (by British or Zionist capital), Chancellor’s conclusions were almost identical to those that would be drawn by John Hope Simpson a few months later. [^{>233}] In contrast to later Zionist writers such as Kenneth Stein (*see*), he was taking as his starting-point the indigenous Palestinians, how the agricultural situation presented itself to *them*, rather than to people living in Europe who could work with a large amount of imported capital. From the facts that the indigenous population was increasing and that any Jewish immigrants would also need land could be deduced a significant reduction of immigration. On these definitions and reasoning, that is, the calculation of the economic absorptive capacity of the country – the official criterion ever since the Churchill White Paper [^{>142}] – would yield a much lower result.¹⁶⁷⁰

The political, as opposed to economic or existential, Point (2) of his Summary was strong in wanting to remove from the Mandate text [^{>146}] anything that even *appeared* to “give the Jews a privileged position”. This would mean removing from Articles 2 and 4 the goal of the Balfour Declaration – the Jewish national home – and stripping the Jewish Agency, formerly called the Zionist Commission, of its official status. From Articles 6 and 11 Jewish immigration, close settlement and economic privilege would disappear.¹⁶⁷¹ As for Point (3), if the “measure of representative government” was large enough, it would likewise have a radical consequence: as Porath correctly observes, alone the granting of self-government to the Arabs would mean “putting an end to the Zionist character of the Mandate”¹⁶⁷².

What Chancellor meant in Points (2) and (3) about Jewish privileges has been confirmed countless times by those living in Palestine at the time. For instance, one Palestinian whose father worked in the Palestinian Administration reports:

¹⁶⁶⁸ CO 733/185/2, p 106, Chancellor to Shuckburgh; also CO 733/185/2 *passim*; Ghandour 2010, p 67.

¹⁶⁶⁹ CO 733/185/2, p 3.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Also Sheffer 1973, pp 44-45; Porath 1977, p 28.

¹⁶⁷¹ CO 733/183/1, p 135, Conclusion #2.

¹⁶⁷² Porath 1977, p 23; also CO 733/187/6, pp 38-39.

From the start British policy was aimed at privileging the Jews in Palestine. They were appointed at senior level in all sections of the Mandate government; at the department of education, where my father worked, for example, Jews were given higher rank posts to Arabs of equal or greater competence, and, to his and his colleagues' chagrin, were left free to run their own education system...; the Hebrew university was established in Jerusalem as far back as 1922 when the Mandate government was barely in operation, but nothing comparable was ever allowed for the Arabs.¹⁶⁷³

A question is obvious: Why did not the British simultaneously establish a University of Palestine for the “non-Jewish communities” it was ‘tutelaging’?¹⁶⁷⁴

Chancellor’s memorandum also covered his own dialogue with his non-Jewish subjects:

I have pointed out to the Arab leaders the extreme folly of their action in refusing to co-operate with the Government in the working of the elected Legislative Council which was offered them under the Order-in-Council of 10th August, 1922, and the unfortunate consequences to themselves of their refusal to accept the policy of His Majesty’s Government stated in the White Paper of 1922.(p 130/§58)

In so refusing, they were “in a state of isolation and impotence” with “little opportunity for pressing their views in regard to draft legislation [etc.]” Chancellor

urged them not to repeat that folly at the present time [and that] their successful conduct of affairs under such representative institutions as His Majesty’s Government felt justified in granting them, would furnish the strongest argument in favour of an advance in the future stage along the road towards the fulfilment of the aspirations. The justice of that argument was acknowledged, and the leaders admitted that they had acted foolishly in refusing to co-operate with the Government. They explained that the Arab politicians were divided into two parties, the policy of one of which was ‘all or nothing’ while the policy of the other was ‘take what you can get and ask for more’. The former party had up to now been in a majority. (p 130/§58)

All colonised, oppressed people face this dilemma of co-operating under protest or co-operating not at all.

If we assume for the moment that a revised Legislative Council proposal included 1) real powers and 2) a correction of the crass under-representation of Moslems and Christians compared to Jews plus British officials, could a way have been found, in 1922 or at any other time when confronted with British proposals for an LC, to go along with Chancellor’s advice while at the same time rejecting the legitimacy of British rule? Perhaps each session of the LC could include an opening caveat that the Arabs rejected the legitimacy of the whole set-up, constituting perhaps a way to avoid what Shira Robinson calls the “recognition trap”¹⁶⁷⁵. But Chancellor was here shifting fault for the Palestine mess away from Britain and onto the Arabs while at the same time promising that if they “successfully” submitted to tutelage they might be “granted” an “advance in the future”.

¹⁶⁷³ Karmi 2017, p xxvi.

¹⁶⁷⁴ See Kayyali 1978, pp 166-67, >254.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Robinson 2013, p 16.

Nevertheless, Chancellor had indeed changed his earlier pro-Zionist views,¹⁶⁷⁶ and privately observed that his recommendations #5-8 [see just above], which would restrict land ownership by Jews, would “be a great blow to political Zionism.”¹⁶⁷⁷

In November 1932 George Antonius would take an opportunity to describe the systemic problem of lack of personal contact or dialogue between the Administration and the non-Jewish people, in part caused by Arab refusal to participate in the Mandatory’s colonialist schemes, in an article he wrote for an academic journal.¹⁶⁷⁸ Intimately acquainted with the topic of his article – ‘The Machinery of Government in Palestine’ – he wrote that not only were there virtually no Palestinians in top government positions, but

in the higher strata of the central departments, and more particularly in the central secretariat, which is the natural resort to which the public might bring their grievances and appeals from the decisions of the departments, personal intercourse is at a discount. A marked preference manifests itself, on the part of the hard worked officials, for transacting as much business as possible by correspondence. Thus a subtle barrier arises which screens off the arcana of the executive from all but a privileged few of the population of the country.

In addition to this lesser-known quotidian separation of ruler and ruled, of course, “no representative of the people sits on... the supreme executive or legislative bodies” of the Administration. The broader “screen”, or “barrier”, seems to have been circumvented only by the “privileged few” who were active in the Associations, Congresses and Delegations.

I do not know whether a copy of Chancellor’s promising memorandum leaked from the Colonial Office to Jamal al-Husseini, who was then in London, or to any of the Palestinians’ British supporters. Perceiving the abandonment of Zionism implicit in Chancellor’s memo [see also >326], HMG tried to keep it secret by not circulating it to the usual desks of London Ministries (viz., Dominions, India, and War Offices, Air Ministry and the C.I.D.). According to Sheffer, its contents did become known to and influence the Shaw Commission Report of 19 March [>220] and John Hope Simpson’s report of 21 October [>233], whose conclusions were in broad agreement with those of Chancellor, but I have not been able to confirm this.¹⁶⁷⁹

A speculation: Had for instance the Editor of the English edition of *Falastin*, the Indian Moslem Akhter,¹⁶⁸⁰ known the contents of the memo, he would certainly have integrated its views into the paper’s editorial opinions, if not published them verbatim. Knowledge of Chancellor’s views *and suggestions* would at least have nudged them closer to heeding Chancellor’s advice to participate, even if the demand of immediate independence was not in the deal. They would face exactly the same dilemma in May and June 1939, when an even more radical abandonment of the Zionist national home, in the form of the (Malcolm) MacDonald White Paper [>410], came not just from a High Commissioner but from

¹⁶⁷⁶ Segev 1999, pp 306, 334-335.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Sheffer 1973, p 45, citing Chancellor to his son January 15, 1930 Rhodes House, Oxford.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Antonius 1932, p 59.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Sheffer 1973, pp 46, 50, citing CO 733/183/77050 [= /183/2, probably part ‘A’], Beckett’s minute, January 31, 1930.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Khalaf 2011, p 45.

the Colonial Secretary, the Cabinet, and the House of Commons (albeit with the caveat that full independence would take another 5, 10 or even more years). [^{>394ff; >402; >412}] The Palestinians would in 1939, by the way, decide not to boycott the talks leading up to that White Paper, but would decline to join Britain on another 5-to-10-year journey.

Due to the Shaw Commission Report, which would be published on 19 March, and Chancellor's memorandum, which had been shared with the Cabinet on 27 March, on 3 April 1930 Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald – who according to Paul Kelemen had been one of “the first British politicians to declare their support for a Jewish state”¹⁶⁸¹ – would find it necessary to publicly confirm in the Commons that it was sticking with the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration.¹⁶⁸² As part of a flurry of activity within the Colonial Office Drummond Shiels MP [*also >242*] minuted to Sir S. Wilson:

If there is to be a break with Sir J. Chancellor – and I recognise that it may be inevitable – the Govt will be subjected in any case to a certain amount of adverse criticism; but their position will be far less vulnerable if they have not put themselves technically in the wrong by ‘short-circuiting’ the High Commissioner.¹⁶⁸³

CO official N.L. Mayle wrote that Chancellor in his memo of 17 January 1930 was expressing

views on the questions which the [Shaw] Commission of Enquiry are investigating. ... It is not clear how far we should subscribe to [his] conception of the constitutional position of Palestine. ... [He] goes on to say in paragraph 44 that it may be contended that if, and in so far as, the provisions of the Mandate are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant or the Balfour Declaration, they are ultra vires, and therefore invalid. ... In the meantime, we should refrain from endorsing, or appearing to endorse, the High Commissioner's view that Article 22 of the Covenant is the constitutional document laying down the principles governing the status of Palestine.¹⁶⁸⁴

On my reading, it appears that Mayle was proposing severing the connection between the Mandate and Article 22 (but sticking with the former).

During the intra-CO debate over whether the memorandum should be shown to the Shaw Commission, Colonial Office official Beckett advised caution.¹⁶⁸⁵ In his summary, Chancellor's

main theme is that the mandate as it stands is unworkable and must be amended with a view to removing provisions which give or appear to give the Jews a privileged position over the indigenous population. At the same time he proposes that ‘the Balfour Declaration should be reaffirmed and given effect to in the spirit of the [1922] White Paper.’ But as a matter of fact, what he proposes amounts to leaving hardly anything of the Balfour Declaration which was in effect whittled down pretty considerably in 1922. And I am not sure that his proposals

¹⁶⁸¹ Kelemen 1996, p 72.

¹⁶⁸² Beckerman-Boys 2013, p 130.

¹⁶⁸³ CO 733/183/77050, p 8 – either in 182/9 (part 'A') or 183/1 (part 'B').

¹⁶⁸⁴ CO 733/ 182/9, pp 5-6.

¹⁶⁸⁵ CO 733/ 182/9, pp 8-13, all further un-footnoted citations in this entry.

would really satisfy anybody. If we give the Arabs everything they want except the nominal abrogation of the declaration, they will have nothing left to agitate for except that – and they will go all out for it.

In addition, so Beckett, it would be embarrassing to go before the League of Nations and say that we have just now noticed, “after 8 years”, that the Mandate “is inconsistent with your Covenant. Please expurgate the parts we find inconvenient and hand it back.” (pp 8–9) CO official Williams added: “that H.M.G. should throw up the Mandate seems out of the question” (p 10), while Shiels commented that Chancellor’s memo

is certainly important! The Dispatch is carefully prepared and impresses generally the view which must crop up constantly in the minds of those who have any responsibility for Palestine, viz., that the two parts of the Balfour Declaration are incompatible, and, administratively, almost impossible of application. (p 12)

In 1937 both Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden [^{>323}] and the Royal (Peel) Commission [^{>336}] would agree with Shiels (and the Palestinians) that the Balfour Declaration was self-contradictory.¹⁶⁸⁶

Getting back to the central issue of self-government: Chancellor received a pro-Zionist telegram on 31 May from Passfield, who had just spoken with Rutenberg and Lord Reading, and on 5 June he replied that of course, the “Zionists... oppose establishment of Legislative Council until the Jews are in a majority in Palestine;...”¹⁶⁸⁷ Numan Abd al-Wahid writes that similarly, a few months earlier,

On the eve of the [Shaw] report’s publication Lord Passfield confessed to Weizmann that he opposed ‘a representative legislative council’ because he ‘feared that such elected bodies might become focuses of legal resistance to the proclaimed policy of the Government and the obligations [for a Jewish national home] it had undertaken...’¹⁶⁸⁸

According to Abd al-Wahid, prominent Zionist MP Josiah Wedgwood had in 1928 also written that democracy in Palestine had to be postponed until “Jews are in the majority.”¹⁶⁸⁹

21 January 1930 *The Executive Committee of the Palestinian National Congress decides to send a delegation to London to attempt to negotiate the issue of Zionist immigration (arrives in London on 30 March) ... [including] Awni Abdul Hadi, Ragheb Nashashibi, Alfred Rock, Jamal Al-Husseini and Haj Amin Al-Husseini.* [^{>422}]

1930 *Sheikh Asad Shuqeiri, [MP in the Ottoman Parliament 1908-12 and] father of Ahmed Shuqeiri who will later become the first head of the PLO, founds the Liberal Party (Hizb Al-Ahrar). ... Izz ed-Din Al-Qassam and his men obtain a written fatwa from Sheikh Badr Ed-*

¹⁶⁸⁶ Peel 1937, XVIII §13; XIX §3, 9; XX §13, 17.

¹⁶⁸⁷ CO 733/183/1, pp 39-40; Sheffer 1973, pp 58, 39.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Al-Wahid 2011, citing Gorney, Joseph, 1983, *The British Labour Movement and Zionism*, p 69. Frank Cass and Company Limited, London, 1983, p 69.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Al-Wahid 2011, citing Wedgwood, Josiah, 1928, *The Seventh Dominion*, p 4.

din At-Taj Al-Hasani, legitimizing the declaration of jihad against the British and the Jews in Palestine. ... Abdel Qader Al-Husseini founds and leads the Al-Jihad Al-Muqaddas (Holy War) organization.

The journal *Al-Nafir* on 9 February 1930 published an editorial with the title 'The greater the need, the fewer the helpers', taking the Palestinians to task:¹⁶⁹⁰

My dear youth brothers, Let's talk frankly in light of facts and logic. What did we do of benefit to this nation in recent years, that followed the World War? Nothing. I claim that we are to be held responsible for this, even if at the same time conditions and unfolding events have also played a role in our not being able to fulfill our role. But don't we feel ashamed, noting that we haven't reached the level of what youths who came before us did, who played a critical role in the pan-Arab movement's history? Didn't those Arab youths in Arab countries, and in Turkey and in exile, talk only about the rights of all Arabs to life? Didn't they stir up a big noise which resonated? Didn't they form Arab clubs, and hold conferences, and meet the ambassadors of foreign countries for the sake of the cause of Arabs in general and without giving priority to one region over the other? Didn't their masses martyr themselves for the sake of the independence of Arabs, instantly seeking this independence? Where are we compared to Abdikareem Almahleel and Mahmoud Almihmasani and Abdilghani Alarisi? Where do we stand compared to those youths who gave us the best examples in their honorable Jihad, their patience with bad conditions, and their smile for death, for the sake of a free life and Arab independence? My dear Arab independence-seeking brothers, the forced colonization which we were placed under has divided us and weakened our shared cause.

Another three Palestinians would be martyred by hanging in June 1930. [>229]

¹⁶⁹⁰ *Al-Nafir*, 9 February 1930, translated by Yousef M. Aljamal.

220.* Shaw Commission Report

19 March 1930

This 15-page entry covers the work of the Commission headed by Walter Shaw which analysed the 23-29 August 1929 outbreaks just as the Palin Court [*>88*] and Haycraft Commission [*>122*] had analysed the outbreaks of 1920 and 1921, respectively, and just as the Royal (Peel) Commission [*>336*] would analyse the strike and uprising of 1936. Uprisings prompted enquiries and tempted the British to abandon Zionism, but not until 1939 [*>376; >410*] did HMG give in – almost fully – to that temptation.

Anbara Salam Khalidi [*see also >28; >59; >210*], a Lebanese Jerusalemite and early feminist married to Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, head of the Arab College, met Sir Walter Shaw sometime between late October and late December 1929 during his investigation of the causes of the unrest of August [*>202*]. She found him “sympathetic to the Arabs and their justified fears of burgeoning Jewish immigration as well as other aspects of British policy, which refused to recognize Arab rights.”¹⁶⁹¹ And indeed, that British policy did disregard Arab rights turned out to be the main finding of **the Commission’s Report** delivered to HMG on 19 March 1930.¹⁶⁹²

With Colonial Secretary Passfield’s approval, High Commissioner John Chancellor appointed the Commission on 13 September 1929, a month after the riots. (p 184) The top politicians in the Colonial Office were facing the consequences of the Zionist Mandate by ordering this high-powered investigation, but in the background was the idea that population transfer might solve things: According to Weizmann, Passfield (Sidney Webb) for instance told him personally that in order to “stabilise conditions” and “avoid unrest”, “Transjordan might be a way out”, and Passfield’s Under-Secretary Drummond Shiels told him personally that expelling large numbers was “desirable” – but apparently leaving moot the question of whether the transfer would be fully voluntary.¹⁶⁹³ But the Shaw Commission would not come close to recommending such ethnic cleansing or, as Antonius reportedly viewed it in talks with Judah Magnes in 1929 or 1930, “religious-ethnic cleansing”.¹⁶⁹⁴

Its remit was to “enquire into the immediate causes which led to the recent outbreak in Palestine and to make recommendations as to the steps necessary to avoid a recurrence.” (p 3) The restriction of identifying only the “immediate” causes, not the underlying ones, was not obeyed by the Commission because, it said, in order to make the required “recommendations” it had to look at non-immediate causes – those it put in the category of “grievances of long standing”. (pp 96-97; also 111-12) It could not ignore the facts of long-term Zionist intent, of immigration, land sales, or thwarted self-determination, all sup-

¹⁶⁹¹ Khalidi 1978, p 136.

¹⁶⁹² Shaw 1930 (Cmd. 3530), all citations.

¹⁶⁹³ Masalha 1992, pp 32-33, citing Flapan 1979, p 69 and Weizmann 1968-72, p 591; Said 1979, pp 99-103; Cronin 2017, p 28.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Boyle 2001, p 174.

ported by HMG. Their overstepping of their remit, however justified, earned them severe criticism on 2 April 1930 from high-ranking politicians in and outside of the Cabinet [^{>223}] and a rebuke from Prime Minister MacDonald in the House of Commons on 3 April [^{>224}].

This 'Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929' was chaired by Walter Shaw, a retired judge, with three MPs as members – Conservative Henry Betterton, Liberal R. Hopkin Morris and Labourite Henry Snell (who would on basic points dissent from the rest). Between late October and late December it heard 120 witnesses in Palestine, listed in the Report's Appendix III (pp 185-88), including Constables Hassan Subhi al-Kayyali and Saleh Zayed, Group-Captain Playfair, R. Cafferata, H.C. Luke, P. Rutenberg, George Antonius, Tewfik Kamel, Abdel Khader Rashid, Hassan al-Zahani, Saleem Farah, Alfred Rock, Tawfiq Hammad, Muhamad Kadamini, Subhi Bey al-Khadra, Amin al-Husseini, Fuad Dajani, Bashir Ghazawi, Hussein Taha, Mahmoud Khalil, Butros Saleem, Francis Newton, Aref el Aref, Izzat Darwazah, and many local Jewish Zionists. Its 200-page report appeared as Cmd. 3530 in 'March 1930', followed on 27 May by a White Paper¹⁶⁹⁵ affirming its findings and confirming the need for two additional investigations, namely those by Hope Simpson [^{>233}] and Löfgren [^{>245}], respectively, into land questions and Western Wall issues.

Due to the 'overly' large number of people wishing to testify before it, the Commission appointed certain individuals as representatives of various groups of witnesses. To speak for the Palestine Government it named R.H. Drayton and Kenelm Preedy (whose testimony was severely criticised as pro-Arab in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's coverage¹⁶⁹⁶). For the Palestinian Arab Executive it appointed W.H. Stoker, Reginald Silley, Awni Abdul Hadi and Mogannam Mogannam, and for the Zionist Executive Boyd Merriman, Gerald Isaacs, S. Horowitz, S.E. Karminski, W.A. Davies and L.J. Stein. They held "47 sittings in open session and 11 in camera", in open session hearing 26 Government, 47 Palestinian, and 37 Jewish-Zionist witnesses; they travelled widely in Palestine, Transjordan and Syria. (pp 3-5) The Report resembles modern-day academic and think-tank articles in that it says everything three times: This is what we're going to say, these are our findings, and this is what we've said; readers strapped for time can therefore go directly to Chapters XIV ('Summary of Findings and Recommendations') and XV ('Conclusions') [pp 157-71]. The rest of the Report, though, reveals details about the thinking of the Palestinians and the relatively pro-Arab mind-set of many British officials. The three well-known long-standing "grievances" it looked at in detail were those which had been dwelt upon by the Palestinians for the last dozen years – immigration, land sales and self-rule.¹⁶⁹⁷

Before dealing in depth with these three deep grievances it devoted much attention to things such as British military strength in Palestine (pp 12-14, 145-50, 157), the geography of Jerusalem (pp 26-28), and the history of the clashes concerning the "Wailing Wall"

¹⁶⁹⁵ Cmd. 3682.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Jewish Telegraphic Agency, December 30, 1929 <https://www.jta.org/1929/12/30/archive/luke-white-washed-police-force-praised-in-preedys-summary>

¹⁶⁹⁷ See also Zuaytir 1958, pp 67-70.

going back to September 1925 and September 1928 [^{>198}], clashes which led to copious investigation and discussion between September 1928 and late 1929, including the Command Paper of 19 November 1928 (Cmd. 3229) [^{>199}] (pp 6-25, 153-55).

In common with many British observers [*e.g.* ^{>15}; ^{>88}; ^{>122}; ^{>242}] it mentioned the problem of the ambiguity and contradictoriness of British policy documents:

The difficulties inherent in the Balfour Declaration and in the Mandate for Palestine are factors of supreme importance in the consideration of the Palestine problem. The issue of a clear definition of policy, backed by a statement that it is the firm intention of His Majesty's Government to implement that policy to the full, would be of the greatest assistance in securing the good government of the country. (p 163/§39)

Based on Palestinian statements covered til now, this belief is wrong: Had the British said with utmost clarity what its goals were, resistance by the native Palestinians would have been even greater.

The Report, under the pressure of immigration by the thousands [*see* Appendices 6-8], devoted considerable space to the issue of land ownership and use, covering especially cases of eviction of Arabs from the land they had long lived on and tilled. (pp 97, Ch VIII/ pp 113-24) The Mayor of Nablus, for instance, testified that

In the early days the Jew who came worked on his land and employed Arab labour. Since immigration commenced in large numbers these Jewish employers have turned away the Arab labourers and have employed Jews in their place thereby throwing out of work a large number of Arabs. ... I understand, as all Arabs understand, that the Zionist policy is to dispose of the Arabs in every possible way and to replace them with Jews. (p 113)¹⁶⁹⁸

There followed a detailed analysis of how many hectares (actually *dunums*, one-tenth of a hectare) were in Zionist ownership, that only 10% had been purchased from peasants and the rest from absentee owners of large tracts, and that despite concern ever since 1921 that many Arabs were being evicted, various Land Ordinances had not remedied this problem. (pp 114-17) (Related to this grievance, according to Furlonge, at some time during the first half of the 1920s High Commissioner Samuel and Attorney-General Bentwich had "abolished the Ottoman Land Bank which the Young Turks had set up to provide easy credit for cultivators, without putting anything in its place;..."¹⁶⁹⁹) Finally, High Commissioner Plumer had in 1927 "appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Attorney-General and with the present Commissioner of Lands [Albert Abramson] as one of its members" to measure the extent of the protection needed for indigenous peasants. That Committee had strongly recommended, to no avail, heightened protection. (p 116) [*also* ^{>93}; ^{>306}]

The perceived necessity for change had eventually led to a purportedly stronger Land Ordinance issued on 31 July 1929. (pp 114-17) However,

¹⁶⁹⁸ See also CO 733/42/38.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Furlonge 1969, pp 90, 136; also El-Eini 2006, p 174.

it is unlikely that this [most recent] law will have the effect of diminishing the numbers of those rendered landless or divorced from the soil in consequence of the purchase over their heads of the holdings the cultivation of which they now rely for their subsistence. ... [It] does nothing to check the tendency to which we have referred [displacement]. (pp 117, 124)

Finally, the well-known large sales by the Lebanese Sursok family in *Marj Ibn Amir* and by the heirs of a French subject in Wadi el Hawareth were analysed in detail. (pp 117-20)

The Commission's opinion was that no matter how you cut it, assuming yields per dunum achieved by present agricultural technology, the ratio of produce and land to a growing population was decreasing:

[T]aking Palestine as a whole, the country cannot support a larger agricultural population than it at present carries unless methods of farming undergo a radical change. (p 121)

Through its attestation that the local population was also growing (p 123), the implication was obvious that if agricultural productivity did rise, and water shortages could be avoided (pp 121-22), it could just as well be for the benefit of the indigenous as of immigrants. These points had been anticipated by the Arab Executive Committee in its complaint to the Permanent Mandates Commission already on 6 October 1924.¹⁷⁰⁰

Attention was also paid to the political, cultural, or social, rather than just the economic, consequences of displacement. In any particular case,

Even if some suitable place could be found for the graziers and some other available land for the cultivators, it seems likely that the tribe will lose its identity as a tribe and become a scattered community. (p 119)

The Report in this section not only went beyond the economic to the political and social consequences, but to the ethical level: Necessitated partly by the lack of non-contradictory *legal* principles governing land ownership,

in some cases, the cultivators who were or may be dispossessed have a strong moral claim to be allowed to continue in occupation of their present holding. (p 120)¹⁷⁰¹

One well-known instance which fuelled the political and economic dissatisfaction of the Arab population and which ties these themes together was, according to Barbour,

the case of the area known as *Marj ibn Amir*, or the *Emeq*. This area comprised 200,000 dunums (50,000 acres [20,000 ha]) of land, which was cultivated by about 8000 Arabs, who inhabited twenty-two villages. The land belonged to absentee, non-Palestinian landlords, and the Zionists had been considering its acquisition since 1903. Negotiations which were actually in progress in 1914 were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. Between 1921 and 1925 these lands were transferred to the Jews for the sum of LP.726,000. Twenty-one of the twenty-two villages had to be abandoned by their inhabitants, whose subsequent fate has never been definitely established...¹⁷⁰²

¹⁷⁰⁰ CO 733/74, pp 115-29, Point 4), >178.

¹⁷⁰¹ See also Forman & Kedar 2003.

¹⁷⁰² Barbour 1946, pp 117-18; Shaw 1930, p 118; Zuaytir 1958, p 64.

Recall that this case, revolving around the sale of land by Beirut family Sursuq in 1911, had been raised in the Ottoman Parliament by Syrian Member of Parliament Shukri al-Asali and other MPs. [5]

The more immediate causes

Restated, the Commission had a twofold task:

Were the events which occurred between the Day of Atonement in 1928 and the 23rd of August, 1929, influenced as they largely were by religious motives, sufficient in themselves to have produced the state of feeling which undoubtedly existed on the latter date? Or was the problem rather that grievances, both political and economic, of long standing had produced a state of irritation among the Arab peoples of such a nature that when further acted upon in the manner which we have already described, they arose against those whom they regarded as the cause of their troubles of both a political and economic character? (p 96; also p 152)

The Report only rarely or obliquely revealed awareness that the Palestinians also viewed the Christian and Jewish British as “the cause of their troubles”. In any event “the cause” in the sense of the root of the matter could be broken down into objections to 1) immigration, 2) land transfer from Arabs to Jews, and 3) a knot of issues called “constitutional grievances” which combined the simple lack of self-rule with the question of the relative weight given to the locals and the Zionists by the foreign ruler.

The Commission eventually answered their own question (*just above*) equivocally: On the one hand, yes, the conflict was between two “races”, but beneath this visible level were non-racial factors which might have pertained regardless of the ‘race’ of the unwanted immigrants.

There can, in our view, be no doubt that racial animosity on the part of the Arabs, consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future, was the fundamental cause of the outbreak of August last. (p 150)

If “consequent upon” means that the “racial animosity” was caused by the political, national and economic factors, then racial animosity was relatively recent and superficial. A different reading, however, is simply that “racial animosity on the part of the Arabs...” (the reverse animosity was not mentioned) “was the fundamental cause...”. That is, as so often, British mastery of their mother tongue was put to use to obfuscate, to straddle the fence.

To its credit, somewhat later the Report rephrased the “view” stated just above a smidgeon more clearly by writing that political factors were the real cause:

The fundamental cause, without which in our opinion disturbances either would not have occurred or would have been little more than a local riot, is the Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future. (p 163/§44)¹⁷⁰³

¹⁷⁰³ See also Boyle 2001, pp 164–65.

The Commission's stated goal was "to frame recommendations as to the steps necessary to avoid a recurrence of such outbreaks" (p 96), and if their finding was that "political and national" and "economic" woes were the "fundamental cause", there was logically no way around recommending, in best medical fashion, the eradication of these underlying causes. To prevent a "recurrence" (pp 96, 97) of the outbreaks, that is, it would be necessary to allow Arab aspirations to be fulfilled, i.e. to treat the "grievance" of denied self-rule as legitimate. This conclusion was however only implied, not explicitly drawn.

One of the more immediate causes investigated was incitement by both the Arab and Hebrew press, but this, they said, had not been decisive. But here as well, bets were hedged:

Nevertheless we feel that too great a liberty of expression has been allowed to the Press in Palestine and that the use of that liberty played a part in the events which led up to the disturbances. ... [A]t some stage an example should have been made of one of the papers in which exciting articles appeared. ... [T]he Executive of the Government of Palestine possesses the power to suspend the Press without recourse to the Courts. (pp 90-91; also 156)

In future, that is, this power should be used.¹⁷⁰⁴ And while the singing of Zionist anthems and chants by Jews of "the wall is ours" on 14 August 1929 had provoked Arab hostility, the main "immediate cause" of the outbreak had been "the Jewish demonstration which had taken place at the Wailing Wall on the 15th of August"; but again: without the "political grievances [the] disturbances either would not have occurred or would have been little more than a local riot." (pp 154-55, 163, also 96)¹⁷⁰⁵

Further, a long statement was reproduced from the 'Society for the Defence of the Mosque of Aqsa and the Moslem Holy Places' which appeared in *Al-Jamiyya* on 12 August 1929 and attested certain Jewish encroachments at the "Holy Burak". (pp 48-49, also 54) The question was adumbrated as well of arming or disarming the Jews (they were ultimately, but temporarily, disarmed). (pp 66-67, 85-87) Finally, so-called "Minor Arab Grievances" were dealt with, for instance the granting of the natural-resource concessions to Zionists, the denial of citizenship to Palestinians now abroad [p.186], and debt relief at taxpayer expense for bankrupt Tel Aviv. (pp 132-35)

Questions of personal guilt or "responsibility" for the deaths and chaos, possibly incurred by various Arab and Jewish leaders, surfaced throughout the Report but were mostly answered inconclusively. To be sure, the Report largely exonerated the Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, of misbehaviour during August 1929 (pp 73-78) and began its discussion of allegations against the Arab Executive thus:

Opposition to the Balfour Declaration is an important element in the policy of the Palestine Arab Executive and, as we have already stated, it is our opinion that their feelings on this political issue might have provided a sufficient motive to have caused them to incite or to organize disturbance [since as] the natural consequence of their political views the members of the Executive are opposed to such Jewish activities as immigration and land purchase. ... Whether or not Jewish immigration and Jewish land purchase, to name no other issues,

¹⁷⁰⁴ See Khalaf 2011.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Also Mattar 1988, p 144.

were factors of such importance in the life of the *felaheen* of Palestine that they needed no public ventilation by the Arab Executive to keep them in the minds of the people is a question which must be judged in light of later Chapters where these issues are discussed at length. (p 78)

Nine years earlier the Haycraft Commission had already refuted the propaganda that the mass of Palestinians was not interested in political independence.¹⁷⁰⁶ [>122] Was grass-roots discontent enough, though, without any alleged incitement by the AEC or the ‘notables’? Yes, concluded the Shaw Commission: “the less educated Arab” who took part in the outbreak of August 1929, no less than the leaders, was moved by the commonly-known history of the McMahon and other pledges. (p 129)

In the end the Commission found no “definite evidence” of “subversive activities” or of “premeditation” or “incitement” on the part of the AEC or on the part of three of its allegedly subversive members – Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Sheikh Taleb Markha of Hebron and Subhi Bey al-Khadra of Safed – but only that they were “engaged in the organization of the Arab side of a political campaign.” (pp 78-82)

Deeper constitutional grievances

The Report’s explicit handling of “Constitutional grievances” (Ch IX/pp 124-31) covered familiar ground. First, that the Palestinians knew they were being treated worse than the inhabitants of Iraq and Transjordan with respect to self-government:

Those who wish for similar developments in Palestine have therefore grounds for the opinion that, were it not for the obligations cast upon His Majesty’s Government by the policy contained in the Balfour Declaration, their hopes and expectations might to some extent have been realised. (p 125; also 128)

The McMahon and other pledges, as well as the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations, spoke against the Mandate, as all Palestinians knew:

[V]illagers and peasants alike are taking a very real and personal interest both in the effect of the policy of establishing a national home and in the question of the development of self-governing institutions in Palestine. No less than fourteen Arabic newspapers are published in Palestine and in almost every village there is someone who reads from the papers to gatherings of those villagers who are illiterate. ... The Arab *felaheen* and villagers are therefore probably more politically minded than many of the people of Europe. (p 129)

The broken promise of independence rankled:

The Arabs argue that if these proclamations and appeals [>10; >14; >18; >21; >22; >25; >28] did not constitute a pledge, then they were a deception practised in the moment of [Britain’s] need by a great nation upon the credulity of a trusting and confiding people. [also >99] They aver that if they had suspected that the policy of Great Britain was, or would be, to create a National Home for those whom they regard as an alien race in the country in which they have lived for thirteen hundred years, they would not have taken the action they did or have incurred the risks inseparable from it. (p 126)

¹⁷⁰⁶ Haycraft 1921, pp 12-13, 43, 45, 52.

The Commission also attested that objectively, the Palestinians now had weaker political rights than they had had under Ottoman rule after 1908. (pp 127-28)

Back to the right of self-government:

For twelve years the Arab leaders, and with them the majority of those who are politically active, have not ceased to reiterate the claim that a representative government should be established. ... [However] we have then the position that in a country where the Government has constantly to decide issues involving the interests of two races, the great majority of the people have no recognised channel of approach to the Administration while a small minority of a different race has close and official relations with the Administration through the exercise of which the interests of that section of the people can be pressed upon the Government. (pp 129-31)

As an aside, the reason why the pitiable HMG “have constantly to decide” such issues was that its own policy gave a minority more power than the majority. In any case, to resolve this “issue” the Report did propose one small step, namely a public statement that “the special position assigned to the Zionist Organization by the Mandate does not entitle it to share in any degree in the Government of Palestine” (p 142)

The Report moreover noted that the Arab leadership had recently once again written to the Colonial Office saying:

We therefore here once again repeat that nothing will safeguard Arab rights in Palestine but the immediate creation of a National Government which shall be responsible to a Parliament all of whose members are elected by the people of the country – Moslems, Christians and Jews – [according to the] Turkish system of secondary electors. (pp 16-17)

Even more sympathy for the Arab leadership’s view peeked through later in the Report:

[W]hen the question of constitutional development in Palestine again comes under review, regard should be had to our conclusion in Chapter IX of this report that the absence of any measure of self-government is greatly aggravating the difficulties of the local Administration. (p 165)¹⁷⁰⁷

Though framed in terms of the convenience of the local British Administration, this overall call, also issued persistently over several years by High Commissioner Chancellor [^{>218;} ^{>225;} ^{>250;} ^{>251;} ^{>255}], was for at least increasing the voice of the indigenous population. That might lessen “the difficulties of the local Administration” in, for instance, quelling further widespread ‘disturbances’ like those of August 1929.

Strangely, towards the end of the Report the Commissioners wrote that “The outbreak neither was nor was intended to be a revolt against British authority in Palestine.” (p 158) Earlier in the Report, treating the immigration issue (Ch VII/ pp 96-112), the Commission had in fact already hesitated to place Britain in the center of the troubles:

On the Arab side witness after witness, many of them persons of experience and of influence in the Arab community whose views they were undoubtedly expressing, told us of growing apprehension and alarm due to the conviction that *the policy of the Zionists* in re-

¹⁷⁰⁷ Also Jeffries 1939, p 610.

gard to land and immigration must inevitably result in the complete subordination of the Arabs as a race and the expropriation of their people from the soil. It was further contended that in districts other than rural the admission of Jews on anything like the scale demanded entails the displacement of Arabs by Jews and inevitable unemployment on a large scale. (pp 97-98, *emphasis added*)

The destructive policy, that is, was “of the Zionists”, not of the British. Elsewhere, on the other hand, it was recognised that it was “the present practice and policy of the Palestine Government” which was the irritant for the Arabs. (p 98) And that policy was that of the Balfour Declaration, as the Commission stated in a passage which also politely revealed their frustration with basic documents’ imprecise language:

It is, in our view, incontestable that difficulties inherent in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate are factors of supreme importance in the consideration of the Palestine problem. These difficulties were appreciated in 1922; partly to meet them, but still more with the object of removing uncertainty as to the future conduct of British policy in Palestine, Mr. Churchill in June of that year issued the statement (contained in the White Paper of 1922) [>142], which, without doubt, is by far the most valuable contribution that has yet been made to the elucidation of the Palestine problem. It is not possible by summary or by quotation to indicate either the purport of the statement or the extent to which Mr. Churchill defined the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. We therefore reproduce his statement in Appendix V to this report. (p 139)

That is, they threw in the towel on divining Mr. Churchill’s meaning. Note in passing that by the time of Shaw’s relatively objective Report, the leitmotif “the Palestine problem” was entrenched, rather than, for instance, ‘the Zionist problem’, ‘the Balfour problem’, ‘the Mandate problem’, or ‘HMG’s problem in Palestine’.¹⁷⁰⁸

Wherever the root cause was, one witness drew an analogy:

As an example of Arab evidence of this character we would quote Sheikh Freih Abu Midyen, the Sheikh of Beersheba, who stated that ‘Palestine is a small country which cannot hold the number of Jews brought into this country; it is like a carriage on a railway line; if you put more into the carriage than it will carry, it will burst; there remains nothing for the Arabs in this country except to die or leave the country.’ (p 98)

The Report immediately went on to quote the usual clauses in the Balfour Declaration [>16] and Mandate text [>146], which outlined Britain’s alleged “dual obligation”, before quoting from the statement, addressed to the Colonial Office, of the 1st Palestine Arab Delegation in London, dated 17 June 1922 [>143] which rejected with no ifs or buts the Churchill White Paper [>142]. Specifically, concerning the example of immigration, the quoted passage contained the logic of the indigenous position:

The Memorandum [i.e. the Churchill White Paper] provides for ‘a special committee to be established in Palestine, consisting entirely of Members of the new Legislative Council elected by the people, to confer with the Administration upon matters relating to the regulation of immigration.’ Since the immigration of a foreign element into any country affects

¹⁷⁰⁸ Jeffries 1939, p 646; Ngcukaitobi 2018, p 252.

the native population of that country – politically, economically and socially – it is only right and proper that the people who are so affected have complete say in the matter.¹⁷⁰⁹ The Committee proposed above does not give the people of Palestine control of immigration. Its powers are merely consultative. While we see that in Article 6 of the Draft Mandate the Jewish Agency, which is the Zionist Organization, a foreign body, has been given more powers than the actual inhabitants of the country. Nothing will safeguard the interests of the Arabs against the dangers of immigration except of a Representative National Government, which shall have complete control of immigration.¹⁷¹⁰ (pp 99-100)

This by the way is an example of how the Palestinians, under pressure, dealt with the Mandate text instead of simply declaring its illegitimacy and ignoring it.

Immediately after thus quoting the Delegation of eight years previous, the Commission laid out a basic normative assumption:

It will be observed that it is a cardinal principle of the policy laid down in 1922 that immigration should not exceed the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals and that it should not have the result of depriving any section of the present population of their employment. (p 100)

This near-direct quotation from the 1922 White Paper of course credited only economic, but not political, objections to a given level of immigration, but the Commission did agree with the Arabs, after looking at the empirical data (including Jewish unemployment), that these “cardinal principles” had been violated in practice. (pp 106, 109, 111-112) Therefore, since immigration was too high by HMG’s own rules, it “suggested” to HMG that “those principles should be clearly re-stated and reaffirmed.” (p 112) But in practice it was the non-British Zionists, gathered together in the Jewish Agency, who set the rules:

We are of the opinion that what is practically the delegation of responsibility by the Palestine Government to a body whose members comprise less than 3 percent of the population of that country cannot be defended. (p 104)

Furthermore, through meticulously quoting from well-known Zionist statements of their goal of maximising immigration – most recently at the Zionist Congress in Zürich in August 1929 – the Report showed understanding for the Arabs’ political fears, namely their “belief that the ultimate Zionist aim is that there should be a Jewish majority in Palestine...” and that all factions of Zionism “ardently desire a Jewish State or Commonwealth in Palestine...” (pp 111-12, 110) The immigration was political, as James de Rothschild would say in the House of Commons on 17 November 1930: “we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews...”¹⁷¹¹; and as Churchill would confirm before the Peel Commission in 1937 – immigration was primarily determined not on economic criteria but on the political criterion of an eventual Jewish majority¹⁷¹². [->327]

¹⁷⁰⁹ See Dahl 1989, pp 3, 119-27, 184, 207-08.

¹⁷¹⁰ Cmd. 1700, p 25/§6.

¹⁷¹¹ Hansard 1930a, c179.

¹⁷¹² FO 492/20, pp 502, 504, 506, 507.

Finally, the Report recommended “machinery” within the Palestine Administration which would officially include Arab representation and opinion. (p 112) This “machinery” appears to resemble the Arab Agency proposed by the Cavendish Committee in 1923 to counterbalance the official Jewish agency (the Zionist Organization) but which had been flatly rejected by the Palestinians. [>167; >170; >172; >176]

As the Report itself said in its Recommendation #44:

The feeling as it exists to-day is based on the two-fold fear of the Arabs that by Jewish immigration and land purchase they may be deprived of their livelihood and in time pass under political domination of the Jews. (p 163)

The two elements of the “two-fold” fear are of course logically related: Were the Palestinians under no foreign political domination at all, they would have politically prevented such ‘economic’ displacement. The Report did recognise “interplay” between political and economic causes of the disturbances, adding that for the Arabs the prospect was real that they “might ultimately come under the political domination of the Jews. Racial antipathy needed no other stimulus...” (pp 153, 151-52)

Under the delicious title “Difficulties inherent in the Mandate” (Ch XI/pp 136-44) the Commission members tried first to unravel the “guarded statement [which] may be read two ways” known as the Balfour Declaration:

Upon one construction the second aspect of the policy – the maintenance of the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine – is an over-riding condition, on the absolute fulfilment of which every active step in the creative aspect of the policy is to be contingent. But upon another construction the first aspect of the policy takes precedence; there would be a binding obligation on His Majesty’s Government to pave and prepare the way for the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine and the second aspect of the policy would be a minor consideration. (p 137)

This admirably got to the gist of why the Balfour Declaration created problems for HMG’s wordsmiths and negotiators, and for Parliamentarians who over the years debated these two positions. The Shaw group was thus stating that the War Cabinet’s 1917 Declaration could offer no guidance, leaving open as it did a wide variety of policies depending on which of, or which mixture of, the two constructions one felt like applying. A mock debate then followed over whether to allow peasants to be displaced in order to show that neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Mandate text offered any guidance. (pp 137-38)

While the Commission did not zero in on the Balfour Declaration’s “sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations” [>16], which leaned the Declaration markedly towards the second of Shaw’s two “constructions”, and while it felt that the other attempt to clarify it, namely the Churchill White Paper of 1922 [>142], had leaned slightly towards dampening the hopes of the Jewish National Home-ists, now in 1930 it was admitting that no “unequivocal” clarification had been achieved – and therefore still another attempt to straighten out the 67 words of the Balfour Declaration would have to be launched. (pp 139-42) This became the Passfield White Paper of 21 October 1930. [>234]

But the Report did include recognition that the “ill-effects” of the overall British policy, having led to the situation where “the idea of compromise scarcely exists”, were “to some extent the inevitable result of the dual nature of the task with which His Majesty’s Government have charged themselves in Palestine...” (p 140) (The phrase “have charged themselves” for once recognised that HMG had fashioned its own predicament.) In any case, the insight emerged that there could be no clarity because of “the conflict between the two principles which underlie the Balfour Declaration” (p 144) or, more clearly,

A National Home for the Jews, in the sense in which it was widely understood, was inconsistent with the demands of Arab nationals while the claims of Arab nationalism, if admitted, would have rendered impossible the fulfilment of the pledge to the Jews. (p 151)

The two parts of the Balfour Declaration, and therefore of the Mandate and of British policy, were irreconcilable.

This irreconcilability had already been exposed, in so many words, many times: by all the early analysts of the Balfour Declaration [>16], by Balfour himself [>55], by thousands of petitioners to the King-Crane Commission [>59], by the Palin Court of Inquiry [>88], by the 1st Palestine Arab Delegation to London [>117], by Shuckburgh, the person permanently in charge of Palestine in London [>125], by British Parliamentarians [e.g. >161], by the Cavendish Cabinet Committee on Palestine [>167], and now by the Shaw group, which however drew no consequences in terms of a policy change. Instead of openly choosing one or the other of these ineluctably irreconcilable goals, HMG had chosen an assumedly possible third path – to which the Commission did not explicitly object – namely:

On our reading of the White Paper of 1922 the primary duty which it laid upon the Palestine Government was one of *holding the balance* between the two parties in that country. (p 143, *emphasis added*)¹⁷¹³

The “balance” metaphor reflects accurately the zero-sum nature of the ‘game’ the U.K. was playing in Palestine: any step at all would have to be either towards the indigenous people or towards the Zionists, any benefit to one side a cost to the other. Another seven years would transpire before a British commission of enquiry (the ‘Peel’ or ‘Royal Commission’) [>336] would state once and for all that the logic of the matter was that the two tasks inherently fought against each other and that “balancing” them had only led to a violent malaise:

The Palestine Government [sic.: the British Government] have attempted to discharge the contradictory obligations of the Mandatory under conditions of great difficulty by ‘holding the balance’ between Jews and Arabs. Repeated attempts to conciliate either race have only increased the trouble. The situation in Palestine has reached a deadlock.¹⁷¹⁴

This was an explicit repudiation of the Shaw Commission’s conclusion (p 143) just quoted. For this 1937 Royal Commission, the only remaining options, unless a side was taken, would be the bloody status quo or partition into Arab and Jewish states.

¹⁷¹³ Also Palin 1920, §44, 68.

¹⁷¹⁴ Peel 1937, XIX §3/p 363.

Labour MP Snell's dissent

Commission member Henry Snell dissented on a number of points. Of the three involved parties, he said, it was not the Jewish Zionists or the British who should change:

What is required in Palestine is, I believe, less a change of policy in these matters [immigration and land transfers] than a change of mind on the part of the Arab population, who have been encouraged to believe that they have suffered a great wrong and that the immigrant Jew constitutes a permanent menace to their livelihood and future. I am convinced that these fears are exaggerated and that on any long view of the situation the Arab people stand to gain rather than to lose from Jewish enterprise. ... Jewish activities have increased the prosperity of Palestine [and] have raised the standard of life of the Arab worker... (p 174)

That is, Jewish immigration was justified because it (allegedly) brought economic progress – and the Palestinians' political and emotional objections don't matter. (p 175) As Jeffries put it, Snell “developed for them the ‘lucre, not liberty’ doctrine so amazingly put forward by the Labour wing of pro-Zionists”.¹⁷¹⁵ Snell alone among the Commission members missed the point that the Palestinians were demanding their political and ethical rights. To its credit, the Commission majority was not guilty of this misunderstanding. Snell was also dismissing Palestinian protests as mere “fears”, moreover “exaggerated” ones. He would again bring these arguments in the House of Commons debate of 17 November 1930. [[>]242] As Lori Allen observes, the colonised Palestinians were confronted with British interlocutors who claimed to be out to ascertain objective facts, but who judged Palestinian opinion only on the basis of what they perceived to be their feelings (or “affect”), such as nationalist fervour or, in this case, “fears”.¹⁷¹⁶

To bolster his opinion that land acquisition by Jewish Zionists was above reproach, instead of looking at the facts as had the Commission, Snell simply quoted words by Dr. Ruppin and Mr. Jabotinsky to the effect that there was no intent “to clear the Arabs off the land.” (p 176)

He relied on the technical/economic solution of higher food productivity (176-77) and added a normative view:

I am further of the opinion that any land that may be found to be unexploited should be made available to the Jews, and that they should be free to win back to fertility land now more or less derelict. The Arab, on the other hand, should be secured in the possession of sufficient land to provide him with a decent standard of life. His right of occupation, however, should carry with it the obligation to cultivate efficiently. (p 177)

And this requirement of “efficient cultivation” would apply in spades to the nomadic Bedouins. (pp 177-78) According to Snell, that is, the indigenous people did not have the right to use or not use land they owned as they saw fit – a principle that would not have gone down well in Snell's home country. Property rights were abrogable, and the extrap-

¹⁷¹⁵ Jeffries 1939, p 638.

¹⁷¹⁶ See Allen 2017, pp 386-87, 389, 399-401.

olation of the principle to the political dimension, applied that is to all of Palestine as the country owned by the Palestinians, is obvious. Dereliction and unreadiness for self-rule disqualified the owners.

Snell was one of the respectable British racists:

The two peoples were thrown together under quite unusual circumstances, without any unifying influence of language, religion or race. The impact upon an undeveloped people, fatalistic in their outlook and devoted to their ancient ways, of a highly-gifted and progressive race, burning with a great ideal, would in any case impose a great strain on both. (p 178)

[also >8]

Note that Snell ignored the indigenous part of the Jewish “people”, who shared with the Moslems and Christians the Arab “language” and possibly even “race”; this co-option of the phrase “the Jews” to refer only to Zionist, European Jews was standard British parlance.

Snell also said that for the uneducated Arabs “the failure to obtain such a measure of self-government as would satisfy them” did not contribute to their unrest, for “I am unable to believe that they were conscious of any serious grievance on constitutional questions.” (p 178) In fact, instead, the lower-class Arabs’ “feeling... of animosity and hostility... towards Jews... was the result of a campaign of propaganda and incitement...” (p 180) These feelings were solely the result of “misapprehensions” – which could be corrected by means of information. (p 182) The rest of the Commission, as well as earlier Commissions of Enquiry, had offered sufficient evidence contradicting Snell’s views.

The important thing for Snell was to stick by the Balfour-Declaration obligation:

I venture to suggest that the statement [the planned Passfield White Paper, >234] should lay particular emphasis upon the international responsibility of His Majesty’s Government for the fulfilment of the obligations which in the Mandate for Palestine they have undertaken. (p 181)

Here he was adding dry legalism to his Labourite-Marxist disregard for anything non-materialist – a materialism unfortunately shared by most Tories and Liberals when it came to the Palestine Mandate.

Finally, Snell believed that “peaceful political and economic development in Palestine” is mainly a matter of

equal educational opportunities for Jewish and Arab children and a wide expansion of adult training in the possibilities of racial co-operation. It is advisable, therefore, that steps should be taken to spread a knowledge of the history and the culture of the two races and of their respective contributions to civilization.

Sport would help, and “a few men of both races, carefully selected and of unquestioned character and influence, should meet together and explore the possibilities of common effort for agreed ends.” The problem was not one of power, or politics, but of lack of “racial” sitting down together with “good will”. (p 183) This British teacher was telling the kids to be nice and “co-operate”.

The other Commissioners didn't fall for this view, giving this parting thought on conciliation between the two races:

For eighty years before the first of these attacks [4-7 April 1920, >76; >88] there is no recorded instance of any similar incidents. ... [R]epresentatives of all parties told us that before the War the Jews and Arabs lived side by side if not in amity, at least with tolerance... (p 150)

Racial reconciliation was thus possible. As the Dutch member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, van Rees, a few months later would attest, the Arabs harboured no hostility towards Jews as such, but rather towards London:

[T]he hostility of the influential Arabs lay in the deep disappointment which they felt upon realising that their national and political aspirations would not be fulfilled. ... The British Government was held responsible for this disappointment.¹⁷¹⁷

For both the Shaw Commission and several members of the PMC, it must therefore have been something political, e.g. Zionism's progress, which had changed relations between Arabs and Jews for the worse.¹⁷¹⁸

Due to the similarity in remit, methodology and conclusions it is inexplicable that the Shaw Report does not mention the Haycraft Report of October 1921 [>122].¹⁷¹⁹ It does however mention the suppressed, and also similar, Palin Report of 1 July 1920 [>88]:

Reference to the report of this Court of Enquiry was made in the course of our proceedings in Palestine. The report was not produced before us in evidence since it has been regarded as a confidential document and in consequence has not been published. We have, however, been furnished with copies of it... (p 12)

The Haycraft Commission, for its part, had not even been furnished with a copy of the Palin Report. Unlike the King-Crane Report [>59], the Palin Report and Chancellor's secret memo [>218], the Shaw Report was not concealed from the public.

¹⁷¹⁷ PMC 1930, pp 35-36.

¹⁷¹⁸ Also Palin 1920, §7, 68.

¹⁷¹⁹ Also Jeffries 1939, p 643.

221. Passfield to Cabinet

27 March 1930

After the contents of the Shaw Report [220] were known, around 19 March 1930, Colonial Secretary Passfield on 27 March wrote a **Secret 'Draft Memorandum for the Cabinet'**¹⁷²⁰, which it discussed on 2 April, wherein he indirectly answered High Commissioner Chancellor's Memorandum to him of 17 January 1930:

I do not support [Chancellor's, 218] recommendation [for] drastic amendment of the Mandate itself. (p 135) ... [As to] the Arab demand for some form of representative institutions... I am satisfied that the demand for representation cannot be wholly ignored; but whether the better way of meeting it is to set up a Legislative Council (with or without an official [British] majority) or to revive the proposal of 1923 for the creation of a special Arab 'Agency' [167; 170; 172], with functions analogous to those of the Jewish Agency, seems an open question. If a Legislative Council were set up, its powers could be only of a restricted character; the circumstances of Palestine are not suited to any large measure of self-Government. (pp 107-09)

It is unlikely that Sidney Webb (Passfield), Fabian socialist and co-founder of the London School of Economics, was not aware of the Palestinians' well-argued rejections of those previous LC or Arab Agency proposals, so he just didn't feel they were worth listening to. What "circumstances" would be "suitable" for "self-Government", this supposed democrat did not say.

He summarised the Shaw Commission Report without accepting its basic points (pp 111-17) and then remarked: "In view of the progress that has been made and the increase of the Jewish population that has taken place since 1922 it may fairly be said that the foundation of a Jewish National Home in Palestine has been laid, though the edifice has still to be completed". (pp 119-20) The foundation had taken ten years, but at least this metaphor of actually building a home opened space for the question, broached at exactly this time by the 4th Delegation during its stay in London [222], as to when the "edifice" could count as completed.¹⁷²¹ This was important because were it completed, the British could declare the Balfour Declaration done and dusted and withdraw with honour. They'd come, as they said, to build a home, not a 'state', and after the roofing ceremony they would pack their tools and go. For now, though, whatever small steps the Colonial Secretary would take in his October 1930 White Paper [234] towards meeting some Arab demands, he did not come close, as had Chancellor in his 17 January memo, to questioning the entire home construction.

¹⁷²⁰ CO 733/183/1, pp 107-35, *all quotations*.

¹⁷²¹ CO 733/191/15, Document 3, Annexure I, p iv.

222.* 4th Arab Delegation in London

March-May 1930

The fourth of the delegations to London [*also* >117; >132; >157; >169] left Palestine on 21 March 1930 and included Jamal al-Husseini, Alfred Rock, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Ragheb Nashashibi and Awni Abdul Hadi (who had been not only a top official in Emir Faisal's Syrian Government [*e.g.* >69] but had also worked closely with the Shaw Commission¹⁷²² [>220]). These were more or less the same people who would form the Arab Higher Committee at the beginning of the revolt and general strike on 20 April 1936 [>296].¹⁷²³ Concerning the context of the Delegation's visit, Jeffries observed:

It is to be noted that the Arabs had not been summoned to London. Arabs never were summoned to London: it was not done. They had come upon their own initiative, because the publication of the Shaw Report was, or should have been, an important stage in the struggle for their rights.¹⁷²⁴

To my knowledge not until the St. James Conference of February-March 1939 [>386ff] were any Palestinian Arabs invited to London.

The meetings went as usual. Gabriel Sheffer dates the first meeting as 2 April, and cites a Note dated 26 April indicating that the meeting was important to the British.¹⁷²⁵ At one of the later meetings, on or shortly before 8 May 1930, attended by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald as well as Passfield, the Palestinians stood on first principles, stating that the Mandate was an "illegal document... inconsistent with the intention of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations"; they got the reply that "it is open to the Arabs to make representations to the League of Nations Council if they so desire..."¹⁷²⁶ [*see* >182; >183; >191; >227] Perhaps these Labour politicians really did not know of the Palestinians' experience during the previous decade with the League of Nations Council and its Permanent Mandates Commission – namely that their contestations were not admissible or would be argued against, in their absence, by British officials [*e.g.* >178; >182; >183; >189; >190; >191]. But John Shuckburgh at the Middle Eastern Department of the Colonial Office could have told them.

According to the Colonial Office minutes,

It was argued by the Arabs that although they would never recognise the Mandate, yet even on the basis of that document [>146] His Majesty's Government had not carried out their undertakings in regard to the development of self-governing institutions (Article 2) and the encouragement so far as circumstances permit of local autonomy (Article 3). They argued

¹⁷²² Allawi 2014, p 215; *also* Porath 1977, pp 23-27.

¹⁷²³ Peel 1937, VI §83; *also* Mattar 1988, p 53; Ayyad 1999, pp 128-29; Pedersen 2010, p 47.

¹⁷²⁴ Jeffries 1939, p 650.

¹⁷²⁵ Sheffer 1973, pp 48, 58.

¹⁷²⁶ CO 733/191/11, pp 12-17; *also* CO 733/191/15 ['CLOSED UNTIL 1981']; Porath 1977, p 25; Mattar 1988, p 53, citing CO 733/187/77105 for HC to SSC [Secretary of State for the Colonies] (*see* CO 733/187/6, pp 28-30).

that an elected Legislature with representation of Arabs, Christians and Jews in accordance with their numerical proportion would be compatible with the Mandate provided that the High Commissioner was able to veto any acts of the Legislature which were inconsistent with the Mandatory's obligations. His Majesty's Government on the other hand hold that a veto by itself would be inadequate, and that [the exclusive] power must be retained by the High Commissioner to initiate legislative action. The Arabs suggested that in the event of a deadlock between the Legislature and the High Commissioner, the matter could be referred for decision to the League of Nations. ... These suggestions were not regarded as acceptable [by HMG].¹⁷²⁷

Apparently the British were refusing a Palestinian compromise accepting a High-Commissioner veto. I suppose they saw that the prospect of constantly having to veto legislation both introduced ("initiated") and passed by the majority was not a good look for either the British or the international public.

The *Morning Post* (London) of 14 May confirmed, to Shuckburgh's approval, that

It was pointed out to the Delegation that the sweeping constitutional changes demanded by them were wholly unacceptable, since they would have rendered it impossible for the British Government to carry out their obligations under the Mandate. It was made clear that no proposals could be considered which were incompatible with the requirements of the Mandate.¹⁷²⁸

But the core issue was self-government.¹⁷²⁹

The Palestinians were correct in distinguishing their non-recognition of the unjust institution of the Mandate from the injustice, within that system, of their under-representation in the proposed legislative councils – among many other things. On 5 April 1930, for instance, a few days after their first meeting with MacDonald and Passfield on 31 March, they wrote from the Hyde Park Hotel¹⁷³⁰ that they

find it of prime importance, in view of your statement to them [the Delegation] that neither the Arabs nor the Jews have any political rights in Palestine and that these rights belong exclusively to the League of Nations, to emphasize the fact that the Arabs of Palestine are really the exclusive owners of these rights. Great Britain does not govern Palestine by right of conquest, neither did the League of Nations confer the Mandate over Palestine to His Majesty's Government in their capacity of conquerors of Palestine. (p i)

Instead, HMG had received the Mandate ostensibly due to its capacity to provide political tutelage. The Delegation was here explicitly challenging 'might makes right' and spotlighting the concept of ownership of Palestine. Further,

What political and national rights this Delegation asks for in the name of the Arabs of Palestine are due to them as the legitimate owners and the *permanent inhabitants* of Palestine.

¹⁷²⁷ CO 733/191/11, pp 13-14, 'Note on points raised in Discussion with Palestine Arab Delegation', 12 May 1930.

¹⁷²⁸ CO 733/191/11, pp 8-9.

¹⁷²⁹ Sheffer 1973, pp 49-50.

¹⁷³⁰ CO 733/191/15, Document 3, Annexure I (pp i-ix), also further un-footnoted quotations.

They were delegated to this country to confer with His Majesty's Government for the safeguarding of the political and other national rights of the Arabs of Palestine as of right and not on sufferance [¹⁴²] [in order to] achieve the following three objects: I. The fulfilment of the pledges given to the Arabs... in 1915 [¹⁰]. II. The establishment of a National democratic government in which the inhabitants of Palestine will be represented in proportion to their numbers without differentiation in race or creed. III. The alteration of the Zionist policy founded on the Balfour Declaration. (pp i-ii) (*emphasis added*)

Could it have been that the Mufti's presence on this Delegation, together of course with the always-radical Jamal al-Husseini, was the cause of this letter's unbending insistence on self-determination?

However that may be, the letter went on to make an ingenious argument, namely that "It cannot be reasonably argued now, that the Jewish national home in Palestine has not been already established under the protection of British bayonets." (p iv) [*also* >221] The argument would cause some head-scratching at the Colonial Office in October 1930, where the idea had to be confronted that the JNH might be "crystallised", i.e. declared finished¹⁷³¹, and if finished, the Balfour Declaration placed *ad acta*. This possibility later figured prominently in the Commons debate of 17 November¹⁷³² [²⁴²] over the new White Paper [²³⁴], in the considerations of the 1937 Peel Commission [³³⁶], in the negotiations leading up to the Malcolm MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939 [³⁷³; >382; >395; >406; >411], and would be, albeit equivocally, embraced by that White Paper¹⁷³³ [⁴¹⁰].

The intolerable situation on the ground was in any case due to British denial of Arab rights and promotion of Jewish immigration: "Arabs and Jews [are like] enemies living in the same room each awaiting a favourable opportunity to make a short end of the other." (p v) The Shaw Commission of Enquiry [²²⁰] had moreover just confirmed Arab complaints about un-economic immigration and unfair land sales, and the granting of industrial and natural-resource concessions was likewise unfair and politically biased. (pp v-viii)

Passfield gave a version of the talks between himself, the Prime Minister and the Arab Delegation on 1 & 6 May 1930 in a memo to the 'Palestine Committee of Cabinet' which consisted of Passfield, Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson, War Secretary Thomas [not Walter] Shaw and Air Secretary Lord Thomson¹⁷³⁴, in which he stated that the Arabs were calling for "a Government and administration exclusively Palestinian responsible to an exclusively Palestinian Legislature but with British Advisers."¹⁷³⁵ But by "Palestinian" did Passfield mean exclusively Moslem and Christian? Bear in mind that for the Palestinian Arabs the concept 'Palestinian' always included Jews, albeit with some uncertainty as to whether this included all Jewish *citizens* of Mandate Palestine [¹⁸⁶] or only those

¹⁷³¹ CO 733/183/2, p 82.

¹⁷³² Hansard 1930a, cc104, 153, 159, 197, 199.

¹⁷³³ MacDonald 1939, §6.

¹⁷³⁴ CO 733/191/15, Document 5.

¹⁷³⁵ CO 733/191/15, Document 9; *also* CAB 27/423.

Arab and other Jews who were indigenous, resp. resident before the Balfour Declaration. The Palestinians, in any case, had written of “the inhabitants” (Point II of the statement above).

Of the meetings Shuckburgh wrote, “I do not think that the Government can be said to have given anything away. The last meeting with the Arabs ended in something like a breakdown, and I understand that no attempt is to be made to re-open conversations with them.”¹⁷³⁶ High Commissioner Chancellor, for his part, wrote from Jerusalem on 24 May 1930 that the

Arab Delegation are said to be returning ‘très fâchés’ [furious] with the failure of their mission. I have pointed out to some of the leading Arabs here that the Delegation was treated with extraordinary courtesy and consideration... and that the Secretary of State had only told them what I had told them before they started, namely, that it was impossible, in view of their international obligations, for H.M.G. to grant to Palestine democratic parliamentary institutions.¹⁷³⁷

Britain’s passing the buck to “international obligations” is a recurring theme in this chronology, but for the Palestinians the bottom line was the refusal, by anyone, of democracy.

Directly to the Delegation Passfield in the end said:

Of course, this Parliament as you call it that you ask for, would have to have as its duty the carrying out of the Mandate. ... [T]he British government could not create any council except within the terms of the Mandate and for the purpose of carrying out the Mandate. That is the limit of our power. ... Would you mind considering our difficulty that we cannot create a Parliament which would not be responsible and feel itself responsible for carrying out the Mandate?¹⁷³⁸

This particular Mandate of course *contained* the Balfour Declaration. It is funny that unmilitarised people on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean were being asked to make allowances because world Power Britain was in “difficulty”.

For the Palestinians it was a Catch-22: to get representative self-government you had to sign onto the principle of denial of self-government. You could play, but with one hand tied behind your back and the other missing a few fingers. Or, as Rashid Khalidi correctly and more formally describes their “dilemma”: “For how could a representative, democratic institution like a parliament be required in effect to negate the rights of the majority that had elected it?”¹⁷³⁹ Accepting a Legislative Council subservient to the “purpose of... the Mandate” would mean accepting a Council that defeated the whole purpose, from the Palestinian point of view, of having a Council in the first place.

During the summer of 1930 rumours emitted from Geneva, as reported in *Falastin* on 29 June, that the British were going to propose an

¹⁷³⁶ CO 733/191/11, p 4.

¹⁷³⁷ CO 733/191/11, p 7.

¹⁷³⁸ Khalidi 2006, p 34, citing *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, Palestine, vol. 59.

¹⁷³⁹ Khalidi 2006, pp 33-35.

Assembly composed of 34 Arab and 6 Jewish representatives; and that, in return, the British Government will reserve for itself the judicial and executive powers as well as the right of veto over any legislative act which may be approved or rejected by the Assembly. [Even if the rumour were true, so the editors,] the imposition of such restriction upon the Parliamentary Council... would render it a paralysed body that has no power... It would be improper to call such a body a Constitutional Council or to regard such a measure as a development in self-governing institutions in the country.¹⁷⁴⁰

On 12 May the Arab Delegation in London sent a telegram to the Arab Executive in Palestine, and shortly thereafter, in a telegram to Passfield¹⁷⁴¹, Chancellor quoted many excerpts from the Arabs' telegram concerning the root problems:

During last 12 years British Government appointed three Enquiry Commissions to report Palestine conditions. [>88; >122; >220] All pointed out that Zionist policy caused all trouble. ... We [the Delegation] were delegated to discuss question with British Government in light of [Shaw] Commission's report [>220] and our established rights based on principle of self determination. ... First Immigration should be stopped [and] Arab lands should be made inalienable. Second... democratic Government in which all inhabitants will participate in proportion to numbers should be established. Government rejected our just demands and informed us they are sending expert [Hope Simpson, >233] to study land immigration problems and that shortly they will introduce constitutional changes in Government that fall short of our demands. We believe that renewing investigations about immigration [and] lands after exhaustive enquiries by Commission means questioning validity of our rights. ... Delegation leaves homeward with impression that Arab case will not justly be solved by British Government influenced by Zionists. [This means] our extirpation as nation and consequent disappearance from our country and question for us is one of life or death we believe our people will fight this policy with all non-violent means. We are convinced that every Palestinian Arab prefers death in defence of his natural rights and existence than submit to oppression.

Continuing this intra-Palestinian correspondence, somehow obtained by Chancellor and conveyed on to Passfield, the Executive in Palestine sent a telegram back to the Delegation in London endorsing the Delegation's position. And the Delegation's departure ahead of schedule on 13 May 1930 was itself a statement. [>226]

An interesting footnote is related by Neil Caplan:

From March to June 1930, a Delegation of Palestine Arabs visited London to press demands at the Colonial Office. While this visit might have afforded an opportunity for secret talks with Zionists, as in 1921, there is no record of any such meetings taking place at the C.O. or elsewhere. Jamal al-Husseini informed a British member of the Jewish Agency Administrative Committee that the Arab Delegation would meet the Jews only if forced to do so by

¹⁷⁴⁰ CO 733/187/6, pp 25-26.

¹⁷⁴¹ CO 733/187/6, pp 29-30.

H.M.G., and later reported that the Delegation had refused to meet Dr Weizmann because 'they did not recognize that [he] or any other non-Palestinian Jew had anything to do with Palestine'.¹⁷⁴²

This was the deepest message from the Palestinians: What do the colonists – whether Jews or British – have to do with Palestine? As Aref Abdul Razzak in September 1938 asked the British, “Why are you in Palestine?”

¹⁷⁴² Caplan 1983, p 84, *citing* Chancellor interview with members of the Palestine Arab Delegation, 18 June 1930.

223. The elite vs. Arabs and Shaw

2 April 1930

On 2 April 1930 a **letter in the Times** charged the Shaw Commission, which had advocated curtailing Zionist policy, with overstepping its remit, and urged there be no departure from the pro-Zionist policy. It was signed by powerful politicians Archibald Sinclair, John Buchan, the Prime Minister's son Malcolm MacDonald and Balfour's cousin Robert Cecil.¹⁷⁴³ After noting that the Commission had taken a stand on "major matters of policy", it put the Commission in its place:

This may have been natural and inevitable but such observations cannot be considered on the same plane of authority as their findings upon the specific matters upon which they were appointed to report. Technically they have gone beyond their terms of reference, for we had twice the repeated assurance of the Prime Minister that such questions were not within their province, but remained matters to be dealt with at the discretion of the Government. Our purpose in addressing you is to ask, that public judgment should realize the world-wide bearing of these problems, and to urge that the government should in the first place reaffirm the adherence of Great Britain to the letter and spirit of the Mandate and should in the second place take full and responsible advice upon methods by which its terms can be best fulfilled.

Actually, Palestine had exactly one "problem" – Great Britain – and the trope of "world-wide bearing" was code telling the Palestinians that the world, not themselves, got to determine their country's politics.

According to Susan Pedersen, it was during this spring of 1930 that Weizmann, an influential British citizen, argued against the thrust of the Shaw Report by writing to Malcolm MacDonald and various Colonial Office officials such as Shuckburgh seeking

to appropriate the language of self-determination to Zionist ends. Self-determination was a right to be exercised by peoples, he pointed out, and not by individuals, and since Arabs had been granted self-governing states elsewhere, they could not justly stand in the way of Jewish aspirations in Palestine; further, since the Balfour pledge had been made to the Jews of the world, Palestine's existing inhabitants could not 'be considered as owning the country in the sense in which the inhabitants of Iraq or Egypt possess their respective countries'. To set up self-government now 'would be to assign the country to its present inhabitants' and to cancel 'in an underhand manner' the policy of the Jewish National Home.¹⁷⁴⁴

To thus try to square self-determination with the idea that the "present inhabitants" of country should not be "assigned" that country did take sophistry to respectable heights, but at least Weizmann was reacting to the Palestinians' deep question of "owning the country". And seldom had the necessity of the concept of collective ethnic rights for the

¹⁷⁴³ The Times 1930; JTA 1930 <https://www.jta.org/1930/04/03/archive/prominent-englishmen-urge-great-britain-to-carry-out-solemn-pledges-to-jews>

¹⁷⁴⁴ Pedersen 2010, p 48.

justification of the dispossession of the Palestinians by British Zionism been so clearly expressed; only by framing the discourse in terms of “peoples” rather than “individuals” did Zionism stand an intellectual chance.

In the Commons, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald calmed Zionist fears that HMG would follow the Shaw Commission's recommendations [>220] on self-governance, immigration and land sales, thus dousing Palestinian hopes that policy would shift their way:

His Majesty's Government will continue to administer Palestine in accordance with the terms of the mandate as approved by the Council of the League of Nations. [i.e. >142; >146] That is an international obligation from which there can be no question of receding. A double undertaking is involved, to the Jewish people on the one hand, and to the non-Jewish population on the other; and it is the firm resolve of His Majesty's Government to give effect, in equal measure, to both parts of the declaration, and to do equal justice to all sections of the populations of Palestine. That is a duty from which they will not shrink, and to the discharge of which they will apply all the resources at their command.¹⁷⁴⁵

The myth of Britain's "international obligation" and of Britain's doing its "duty" in establishing the Jewish National Home was a leitmotif throughout the Mandate years.¹⁷⁴⁶

MacDonald was promising business as usual, although a "strictly temporary" suspension of immigration soon followed.

The report of the Shaw Commission, which is in the hands of Honourable Members, covers a wide field. The Commission was appointed to consider the immediate causes of the deplorable disturbances of August last, and to suggest means of preventing a recurrence. In endeavouring faithfully to carry out the terms of reference, the Commission must have found it difficult to draw lines very rigidly. The Government is now studying the various recommendations of the Commission, with a view to dealing with the immediate causes of the outbreak and to preventing a recurrence, and is in consultation with the interests concerned. I wish it to be understood that this statement includes the immediate provision of the police forces required to secure civil peace under existing circumstances.¹⁷⁴⁷

That is, the line between "immediate" causes and what the Shaw Commission itself called Arab "grievances of long standing", or "constitutional grievances" – the resolution of which were in reality necessary for preventing "a recurrence" – had been crossed, but not to worry: HMG would only be "dealing with the immediate causes", e.g. "immediately" sending in more police. Only symptoms would be treated.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Hansard 1930, c1466; also quoted in PMC 1930, pp 8-9, 121.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Also Jeffries 1939, pp 595-98, 739.

¹⁷⁴⁷ Hansard 1930, c1466; also quoted in PMC 1930, p 8.

While the Arab Delegation was demanding self-determination [>222] and the High Commissioner attempted to partially satisfy this demand, the Colonial Secretary (Passfield) and his Prime Minister (Ramsay MacDonald) held to the bottom line: unless the Arabs were willing to accept the national-home Mandate as such, no Legislative Council of whatever power or whatever composition could be pursued. In Porath's rendering, on 5 April 1930 Chancellor nevertheless **outlined to Shuckburgh at the CO a plan for a Legislative Council** with fixed ratios of (1) Government officials and subjects, (2) Moslems, Christians and Jews, and (3) elected and appointed members, but without the power to legislate on immigration or land sales; on 9 May, also according to Porath, Passfield definitively supported his CO officials' position upholding the Churchill/Samuel team's 1921/22 insistence that no Council should have the freedom to even suggest alterations in the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration.¹⁷⁴⁸ [>110; >111; >133ff]

I have not discovered Passfield's personal views on the purview of any Legislative Council, but even Chancellor wrote to Shuckburgh that

the suggestion that such matters as land, immigration, etc. should be withdrawn from the competence of the Legislative Council and dealt with by Order-in-Council seems to me to be worthy of consideration.¹⁷⁴⁹

Chancellor, the same man who wrote the promising 17 January memo to Passfield [>218], could still not let Palestinians co-determine issues normally falling within the purview of a populace, e.g. immigration policy and who had rights to the land. The Palestinian demand for this step towards democracy had zero British support.

Solicitor-General Drayton, as well, judged that the Arab demand for "the cancellation of the [Balfour] Declaration... will not be granted and that H.M.G. cannot grant it"; therefore, when the Arabs

ask for representative Government... the question at once arises as to how they are to be given effective representation without giving them, at the same time, the power to wreck the policy contained in the first half of the [Balfour] Declaration. The model of the Palestine Order-in-Council was adopted in order to ensure that, on such matters as land and immigration, the policy could not be defeated by the non-Jewish members.¹⁷⁵⁰

The question that had "arisen" was logically impossible to answer, and Drayton was alleging a blatant anti-democratic motive behind the weak and non-representative Legislative Council proposals.

The ten-year-long unanimous indigenous rejection of anything but self-determination and HMG's primary allegiance to Zionism collided on this issue of whether any Legisla-

¹⁷⁴⁸ Porath 1977, p 143, citing CO 733/187/77105.

¹⁷⁴⁹ CO 733/187/6, p 33, 5 April 1930.

¹⁷⁵⁰ CO 733/187/6, pp 34, 35.

tive Council would be a debating society or have the power to legislate – whoever was sitting on it.¹⁷⁵¹ The locals, the High Commissioner and HMG had been treading water for a decade. Some movement came only from HC Chancellor's and the Shaw Commission's shift away from Zionism, [>218; >220] in turn leading some Palestinians, during 1930, to move towards willingness to put the 'national home' issue on ice and take part in a relatively powerless 'legislature' while others moved to varying degrees of non-cooperation with the British.¹⁷⁵²

The Colonial Office records of 1930-31 show in general that given the 'mandate' to set up something earning the name "self-governing institution", both the Permanent Mandates Commission and Chancellor were, albeit mildly, pressuring HMG to get that job done.¹⁷⁵³ But Passfield and the CO during this time decided to "go slow", citing as reasons for delay the need to hold a further "round table" of all parties to answer the unresolved question of how to formulate the oath of office and how to deal with unbending Jewish opposition to any LC – and they even floated the advisability of waiting until the end of independent-minded Chancellor's stint in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁵⁴ In the end, on 22 June Passfield merely told Chancellor that since he had made his "detailed proposals... of the 12th June 1929...¹⁷⁵⁵ [>200] much has happened", but since "the question cannot be allowed to remain indefinitely in abeyance", Chancellor should "take the whole matter into further consideration"¹⁷⁵⁶.

A useful overview of pre-1930 attempts at self-governing institutions, including Legislative Councils, would be given by the Cabinet-level 'Committee on Policy in Palestine' on 15 September 1930. [see >231] The Arabs still outright rejected the LC model proposed by Churchill in 1922 [>133-137; >142], yet Chancellor now, in April 1930, was reviving a very similar LC because of the pressure exerted by the Mandate's requirement in Article 2 that "self-governing institutions" be established.¹⁷⁵⁷ Unless the 'self' was all Jews worldwide, as Weizmann saw it [>223], perhaps with a few indigenous Palestinians thrown in, this phrase could logically only mean what the Palestinians were asking for – a proportional-representative body with power to "govern". But that was never offered.

Looking ahead to the Legislative Council proposals post-1930, an overview would have to include the following.¹⁷⁵⁸

- The Passfield White Paper itself, of 21 October 1930, would contain only a general commitment to some sort of LC. [>161]

¹⁷⁵¹ Porath 1977, pp 143-44, citing CO 733/187/77105.

¹⁷⁵² Porath 1977, p 144.

¹⁷⁵³ CO 733/202/6.

¹⁷⁵⁴ CO 733/202/6, pp 2-10.

¹⁷⁵⁵ CO 733/167/6, pp 34-46.

¹⁷⁵⁶ CO 733/202/6, pp 49-50, 22 June 1931.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Porath 1977, pp 143-52.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Also Porath 1977, pp 149-50.

- During the summer of 1931 Chancellor would work out a new, 34-member LC, presenting it to the CO on 15 August, whereupon it disappeared into a drawer.¹⁷⁵⁹ [>251]
- Chancellor's successor as High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, would discuss an LC in December 1933, fruitlessly, with the Mufti, most likely in the presence of Musa Alami, Wauchope's "Arab Private Secretary".¹⁷⁶⁰ [>266]
- By 6 December 1934 Wauchope had worked out his own 29-member LC, with limited powers, which was approved by new Colonial Secretary Philip Cunliffe-Lister.¹⁷⁶¹ [>279]
- During October-December 1935 an almost identical version made its way through Whitehall, finally obtaining Cabinet approval on 21 December.¹⁷⁶² [>283] This last-ever British Government proposal, which was a bit closer to Arab wishes, was however rejected as too threatening to Zionism by the House of Lords on 26 February 1936 and the House of Commons on 24 March. [>289; >290] In my opinion this was the proverbial last straw, and the Rebellion of 1936-39 began immediately.¹⁷⁶³

The British at all times had the *power* to decide to institute a parliamentary democracy like that practiced in Great Britain, since the League of Nations was no obstacle. But it lacked the will.

¹⁷⁵⁹ CO 733/202/6, pp 4, 7-8, 28-44 (esp. 33-34 & 40).

¹⁷⁶⁰ CO 733/257/11, pp 53, 54, 'note of 3 December 1933' in *long report* of 23 December to Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister; Porath 1977, pp 147-48.

¹⁷⁶¹ CO 733/293/6, p 50.

¹⁷⁶² CO 733/293/3, p 33.

¹⁷⁶³ See Boyle 2001, p 204.

226. Palestinians depart

13 May 1930

On 13 May 1930 the Colonial Office announced the end of talks with the 4th Palestinian Delegation, which had been in London since the end of March. As already related [222], three days previously the Arab Delegation had sent a telegram to the Arab Executive back in Palestine saying that they'd taken hope from the Shaw Commission report [220] but the British

Government rejected our just demands [concerning "Immigration", land sales and "self-determination"] and informed us they are sending expert [Hope Simpson, 233] to study land immigration problems and that shortly they will introduce constitutional changes in Government that fall short of our demands. ... [The] question for us is one of life or death we believe our people will fight this policy with all non-violent means. We are convinced every Palestinian Arab prefers death in defence of his natural rights and existence than submit to oppression.¹⁷⁶⁴

The Delegation was "fairly satisfied" with the Shaw Report, but was aware that Passfield and the Prime Minister still rejected their demands.¹⁷⁶⁵ The Delegation decided to return home ahead of schedule, and its statement as it departed for home a day later contained the usual disappointments: It was "leav[ing] homeward with impression that Arab case will not justly be solved by British Government influenced by Zionists".¹⁷⁶⁶ As reported on 14 May by the *Times* of London¹⁷⁶⁷ it said in parting that the discussions had ended in "deadlock" and they had no more confidence in Britain's delivering justice:

Last night the Delegation issued a statement explaining that it had asked the British Government that immigration into Palestine should be stopped; that, owing to the scarcity of land in the possession of Arabs in Palestine such land should be made legally inalienable, and that a democratic Government should be set up in Palestine in which all the inhabitants would have a share in proportion to their numbers.

The article quoted correctly from the Delegation's statement about the willingness of "every Arab in Palestine" to die "in defence of his natural rights". This again underlined the point that the most important things for the delegation were justice and political rights, not economic prosperity or development, such as they were.¹⁷⁶⁸

According to Sheffer,

Since [the Colonial Office] held the situation in Palestine to be satisfactory, its main target was to persuade the delegation to withdraw their unwavering demand for self-government.

¹⁷⁶⁴ CO 733/187/6, pp 29-30.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Jeffries 1939, pp 650-51; also CO 733/184/1-/3 [most likely /3, 'March to September'], 'Arab Delegation to London'. These files were 'closed until 2004'.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Lesch 1973, p 31, citing CO 733/187/77105 (= CO 733/187/6), High Commissioner's telegram to Colonial Office, 14 May 1930.

¹⁷⁶⁷ *Times* (London) 1930, 14 May.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Also Beit-Hallahmi 1992, p 76.

But the Arab delegation was not satisfied. It reckoned that these concessions failed to fulfil their essential demand for self-government, and decided to leave for home. [The Colonial Office] sought a way out [concerning] how to make a gesture to the Arabs that would be acceptable to the Jews.¹⁷⁶⁹

What Sheffer calls “concessions” were of course only the unheeded recommendations of the Shaw Commission to restrict immigration and land sales to Jews, [^{>220}] not a correction of policy that would place self-determination above the desire for an eventual Zionist state.

The dissatisfaction went deeper, as to my knowledge the Delegation at no time during these exchanges expressed recognition of the Mandate itself; while it had emphasised that Britain was present in the land owned by its Palestinian inhabitants not by right but by conquest¹⁷⁷⁰, during this 1930 visit it did apparently desist from demanding in so many words simple independence or the scrapping of the Balfour Declaration. But the farthest Passfield and MacDonald went was that they “promised to act on land sales and Jewish immigration after Sir John Hope Simpson, the land expert, had investigated the situation and submitted his recommendations.”¹⁷⁷¹ Not only was this another postponement of taking a stand, but HMG would within a year reject Hope Simpson’s recommendations as they had ignored Shaw’s. [^{>234}; ^{>239}; ^{>246}]

mid-May 1930 *‘[After the 4th Palestine Arab Delegation returned empty-handed from London] a strike was declared in Palestine, mass meetings were held demanding the fulfilment of the Covenant and of Great Britain’s personal pledge of independence.’*¹⁷⁷²

mid-May 1930 *‘An all-India Moslem Conference for Palestine was held in Bombay [and] demanded the abolition of the Balfour Declaration, the termination of the Mandate and the establishment of self-government there. It decided to celebrate a “Palestine Day” throughout India, Burma and Ceylon, on Friday the 16th ... Reuter cabled that a meeting in the evening was attended by 100,000 persons.’*¹⁷⁷³

1930 *‘A series of articles in the Palestinian press in 1930 described the passage of the British “Native Lands Trust Bill” guaranteeing Kenyans against dispossession.’*¹⁷⁷⁴

¹⁷⁶⁹ Sheffer 1973, pp 47-48, 49, 50; also Stein 1984, pp 116-17.

¹⁷⁷⁰ CO 733/191/15, Document 3, Annexure I (pp i-ix).

¹⁷⁷¹ Kayyali 1978, p 158, citing the report of the negotiations sent by the London Delegation to the Executive Committee in Palestine of 27 July 1930 in Izzat Darwaza, 1959, pp 181-88; also Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 200-201.

¹⁷⁷² Jeffries 1939, p 652.

¹⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷⁴ Boyle 2001, p 168.

Although the main document for this entry bears the date 4 August 1930, communications between the Permanent Mandate Commission and both Britain and the Palestinians were ongoing and related to each other as well as to the uprising of August 1929; therefore I've given the entry the broad date of '1929-30'. Read this together with entries >182, >183 & >191.

According to Abdelaziz Ayyad, by 1929 the strength of the Arab Executive Committee within the nationalist movement was waning, challenged by younger people and an Islamic movement and showing increasing tension between the elite and the masses.¹⁷⁷⁵ Yet during the late 1920s the AEC and the Supreme Moslem Council – with some overlap of personnel – persisted in their pursuit of political rights with petitions, delegations, letters, and telegrams, some of which were addressed to the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC); in previous years as well, the Palestinians had (unsuccessfully) lobbied the PMC. [>178; >182; >183; >191; >192] Now, between 3 and 21 June 1930, the PMC in its 17th (Extraordinary) Session dealt with material submitted to it concerning the causes of the clashes between Arabs and Jews both in September 1928 and August 1929; its subsequent '**Report to the Council of the League of Nations**' bore the date 4 August 1930.¹⁷⁷⁶ It considered, in addition to the Shaw Commission Report of 19 March 1930 [>220], oral statements by the British "accredited representatives", "two memoranda from the Jewish Agency", and five "petitions" from the Arab side, namely:

1. Telegram from the President of the Supreme Moslem Council, forwarded on October 14th, 1929, by the High Commissioner for Palestine;
2. Telegram dated September 1st, 1929, from the Nablus Arab Executive Committee, forwarded, with observations, by the British Government on November 8th, 1929¹⁷⁷⁷;
3. Letter and memorandum, dated February 17th, 1930, from the President of the Supreme Moslem Council (Mufti Amin al-Husseini), forwarded, with observations, by the British Government on May 12th, 1930;
4. Petition received by the Chairman of the PMC dated September 7th, 1929, from M. Ihsan el Djabri [>206]; observations by the British Government, dated March 31st, 1930¹⁷⁷⁸; and
5. Telegram received by the Chairman of the PMC of January 8th, 1930, from the Syro-Palestinian Executive Committee at Cairo (forwarded to the mandatory Power for its observations on May 26th, 1930). (p 2)

The PMC then made clear that from what it received from the British side it "only takes cognizance" of the parts of the Shaw Commission Report "endorsed by the [British] Government itself", although that Government had "found it impossible" to deliver to the PMC the promised *minutes* of the Shaw enquiry. (p 3) Pertaining to what it got from the Jewish side it said:

¹⁷⁷⁵ Ayyad 1999, pp 119-22.

¹⁷⁷⁶ PMC 1930, all citations; also UNSUPR 1978a, use Search function.

¹⁷⁷⁷ PMC 1930, pp 130-31 ('Report by Mr. Palacios').

¹⁷⁷⁸ PMC 1930, p 130.

In considering the information furnished from unofficial sources the Commission felt bound to pay special attention to the memoranda from the Jewish Agency, since they emanate from an organisation officially recognised by Article 4 of the mandate.

The Arab interventions received “due consideration”. (p 3)

During their Extraordinary Session the PMC also received “a letter from the Palestine Arab delegation” [in London; >222] and “a telegram from the Arab Executive”. Dated 4 June, the Delegation’s letter read:

We believe that the main cause of the disturbances which have led to continual bloodshed in Palestine for the last twelve years is the persistence of the British Government in depriving the Arabs of their natural rights. We feel that there can be no security in future against the recurrence of disturbances such as those which have taken place, or perhaps of an even more serious nature, unless the British Government promptly and radically changes its policy... (pp 3-4)

The AEC telegram read:

Palestine Arabs vehemently protest against Doctor Shiels [Colonial Under-Secretary] declaration that Government desire continue old policy with repressive measures. We declare any policy inadequate safeguard our rights will result in troubles for which British Government and League will be responsible. Arabs are determined defend lines [lives?] and right no matter what results. – President Arab Executive. (p 4)

The Commission then added a word about the Arabs’ motivation:

The Mandates Commission considers that the Palestine disorders cannot justly be regarded as an unexpected disturbance in the midst of political calm, like those sudden explosions of popular passion which have so often been witnessed in the East. (p 3) ... Doubtless the Arab attacks were directed only against the Jews, but the resentment which caused the Arabs to commit these excesses was ultimately due to political disappointments which they attributed to the parties concerned in the mandate, and primarily to the British Government. ... [Just b]ecause in actual fact the Arab attacks were directed against the Jews and it was the Jews who suffered, it would be a mistake to conclude that the movement was entirely devoid of any intention to resist British policy in carrying out the mandate in Palestine. (p 4)

After much detail on Arab grievances and British rebuttals, and some prose devoted to the economic situation in Palestine, the political question of the Jewish national home and Britain’s stated desire to balance the two parts of its obligation arose when the Commission discussed the “refusal of the Arabs to associate themselves” with various Legislative Council proposals. It had sympathy with [the Arabs’] claim for “self-government”, but in the end the Jewish national home had priority:

To all the sections of the population which are rebelling against the mandate, whether they object to it on principle or wish to retain only those of its provisions which favour their particular cause, the mandatory Power must obviously return a definite and categorical refusal, as long as the leaders of a community persist in repudiating what is at once the fundamental charter of the country and, as far as the mandatory Power is concerned, an international obligation, which it is not free to set aside,... (p 7)

The populace had not been allowed to write the “fundamental charter of the country” – a protrusively arrogant way to describe the other-determined Mandate. And again, the last conceit about “an international obligation” flew in the face of the fact that Britain *was* free at any time to tell the League of Nations it was relinquishing the Palestine Mandate.

It followed this by siding with the British “accredited representative” Shiels, who had said that “No Government can do good constructive work for the whole country while it has constantly to act as an umpire”, an analogy Shiels would repeat in the House of Commons on 17 November 1930¹⁷⁷⁹ [>242]. One historian who bought this idea that Britain was merely an “umpire” – that the basic conflict was between Jews and Arabs – is Bernard Wasserstein.¹⁷⁸⁰ A.L. Tibawi, commenting on the years 1920-25, is closer to the mark in writing that “What rendered the Arab case almost hopeless was that Samuel was at once the adversary and the arbiter.”¹⁷⁸¹ At any rate, put simply, the PMC was judging that the “fundamental charter of the country” of Palestine cannot be determined by the 83%-majority of its inhabitants.

According to Lesch, British denial of Palestinian participation in the colony’s affairs went so far as to cut the locals off from the Mandates Commission:

Every year the Arab Executive (formed in late 1920) sent lengthy memoranda to the PMC. However, these communications had to be submitted to the Palestine government first, which then passed them on to the Colonial Office and the PMC with its own comments attached. Therefore the Arabs had no way of approaching the PMC directly, and the British could always rebut their criticisms.¹⁷⁸²

The Palestinians’ interaction with the PMC now, in 1930, as in 1924 and 1925 [>178; >182; >183], was always indirect, never included personal appearances, and was sometimes not even through HMG, but through the High Commissioner. (p 2)¹⁷⁸³

HMG, on the other hand, had 1) directly submitted among other things a detailed 4-page statement dated May 1930 (=Annex 1, pp 121-24), 2) sent a 4-person team to the Geneva hearings, which consisted of 21 Meetings, and 3) its representative on the PMC, Lord Lugard, was a dedicated upholder of HMG’s policy. The British statement¹⁷⁸⁴ elaborated HMG’s tightrope act, or “umpire” role:

The difficulties arising out of the peculiar character of the Palestine Mandate are well known. ... [They were] discussed in detail in the course of the observations recorded by the Commission... in November 1924... that, whereas all the other mandates... were only intended to give effect to the general principles of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the mandate for Palestine was ‘of a more complex nature’, in that it imposed upon the mandatory Power a ‘two-fold duty’, viz., that of promoting the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people, in addition to that of administrating the country in

¹⁷⁷⁹ Hansard 1930a, c103.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Wasserstein 1978, pp 7, 17.

¹⁷⁸¹ Tibawi 1977, p 444.

¹⁷⁸² Lesch 1973, p 25.

¹⁷⁸³ Also PMC 1925, p 160 (Annex 7).

¹⁷⁸⁴ Also pp 12-18.

conformity with the interests of the population as a whole. The result, as the Commission pointed out, was to create a 'conflict of interests' between which the balance had to be held. [Since 1924] the task of holding the balance has certainly not decreased in difficulty. (p 121)

At least in this passage HMG was conceding that Article 22 did in fact mean that the Mandatories were there only to coach the locals a bit on the path to full sovereignty, not more. And the Palestinian Arabs, who probably read this "statement" by the leading League-of-Nations Power, had repeatedly denied that the "interests of the population as a whole", of which they still comprised 83%, should be "balanced" with those of the Jewish group.

Around this time one Palestinian did, as a matter of fact, publicly present the difficulties bemoaned by Lugard in an understanding, if not necessarily sympathetic, light. In a US-American academic journal in 1932,¹⁷⁸⁵ George Antonius saw the Mandatory's twofold problem as

that of accommodating an incoming alien population in a country which is already peopled [and] the more substantial handicap resulting from the dual obligation placed upon the Administration – that of guiding the country towards independence while a Jewish national home is being established. (pp 56, 58)

While not claiming that fulfilling the "dual obligation" was impossible, or that one of the obligations entailed injustice, he did return to the main point that

as far back as a generation ago, [Palestine's] population had tired of being governed, and, along with other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, had successfully vindicated its right to representative government. (p 59)

However difficult the job with which Britain had burdened itself, it was denying the great majority of its subjects this "right".

My limited study of the PMC's behaviour over against the indigenous people, on the one hand, and the colonial power, on the other, leads me to doubt the conclusion of Susan Pedersen, who describes the Mandates system as Britain's "bane" while at the same time acknowledging that politicians such as Ormsby-Gore "had had a hand in forging his own shackles", i.e. in setting up the theoretical oversight system in order to achieve some international legitimacy instead of simply unilaterally setting up a Palestine colony. I find no evidence for her claim that "the body the British hoped would legitimize their actions delivered mostly reprimands..."¹⁷⁸⁶ To give only one example, Pedersen herself tells how the PMC in early 1936 even went along with HMG in opposing Wauchope's proposals for a (powerless) Legislative Council.¹⁷⁸⁷ [also >283; >285; >289; >290] Britain seems to have gotten what it wanted from the PMC, namely an unsupervised 'mandate'.

To return to the statement dated May 1930 by Britain's 'accredited representative' to the PMC (=Annex 1): the British delegation quoted from Prime Minister MacDonald's statement in the House of Commons on 3 April [>224] pledging to fulfil its "international oblig-

¹⁷⁸⁵ Antonius 1932, *all quotations*.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Pedersen 2010, p 65.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Pedersen 2010, p 54, *citing PMC Minutes, 29th session, 27 May-12 June 1936, pp 145-46.*

ation” to stick by the Balfour Declaration and stressing the difficulty presented by the Mandate’s “double undertaking”. HMG’s difficult job of determining the right amount of European-Jewish immigration was then addressed, beginning with a quotation from a PMC “observation” of 1924:

It is obvious that, if the mandatory Power had only to take into consideration the interests of the population, its immigration policy ought to be dictated primarily by considerations of the economic needs of the country. It is, moreover, equally clear that, if the mandatory Power had not to take into account the interests of the Arab population, and if its sole duty was to encourage Jewish immigration in Palestine, it might be in a position to pursue an agrarian policy which would facilitate and expedite to a greater extent than its present policy the creation of a Jewish National Home. (p 122)

This stance conceded by implication that real-life immigration policy was not based “primarily” or only on “economic needs”, but rather on the political need of Britain to establish a powerful, or even dominant, Zionist collective force within the polity; without the construction of the JNH “the interests of the population” could be served straightforwardly.

HMG also informed the PMC that Sir John Hope Simpson, presently “employed under the League of Nations as Vice-Chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission in Greece”, had been sent to Palestine to find out the purely economic limits to immigration. (p 123) [>231; >233] There followed a paragraph dealing with the dearth of “self-governing institutions” required by Article 2 of the Mandate [>146] which, with regard to vapidly, left nothing to be desired. (p 123) Finally, a new ‘Statement of Policy’ would be issued once Hope Simpson’s findings were in. [>234]

PMC Commissioner Leopoldo Palacios devoted a page to the petition of Geneva-based Pan-Arabist and anti-Zionist Ihsan el Djabri “of the Syro-Palestinian delegation” [>206] and PMC Chairman Theodoli provided a list of the “communications” received concerning the August 1929 disturbances, *inter alia* from the:

- Executive Committee of the Syro-Palestinian Congress, Cairo;
- Central Young Men’s Moslem Association, Cairo;
- New Syria Party and Young Men’s Moslem Association of America, New York;
- Palestinian Colony, Port-au-Prince, Haiti;
- Liga Union Palestina, Tela;
- Syrian Patriotic League, Sao Paolo;
- Inhabitants of Tripoli (Lebanon);
- Group of Arab Students, Damascus;
- Indonesian Benevolence Society, Cairo;
- Palestine Arab League, Chicago;
- Syrian Arab Association, Paris;
- Young Moslems’ Association, Baghdad;
- Association of Christian and Moslem Arabs of Syria and Palestine, Boston;
- Palestinian Colony of Guatemala;
- Union Palestine, San Pedro;

- Sociedad Palestino-Arabe, Havana;
- Constitutional Liberal Party, Tunis;
- Executive Committee of Indonesian Moslems, Soerabaja...

Finally, on a positive note, one of the “accredited representatives” of HMG, MP and Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies T.I.K. Lloyd, who had been Secretary to the Shaw Commission [220], defended (pp 126-28) that Commission’s findings against criticisms of it that had been made by PMC Commissioner van Rees (pp 35-42), maintaining among other things:

While the Shaw Commission does not at any point suggest that there has ever been any great sympathy between the two races, it was impressed by the fact that, until the adoption of the National Home policy, there was at least Arab tolerance towards the Jews; the later expression of racial antagonism therefore seemed to the Commission to be attributable to factors which have become operative since the introduction of that policy rather than to any more fundamental cause.

He added that the PMC, which never went to Palestine or conducted any research there [19], and was not assisted by legal experts, was in no position to criticise the Shaw Commission.

While the Permanent Mandates Commission was meeting in Geneva, High Commissioner Chancellor on 5 June 1930 informed Passfield:

As regards constitutional reform, I do not favour proposed establishment of separate Elected Councils for Jews and Arabs to deal with subjects in which the interests of their respective communities can be treated separately. Such an arrangement might be supported by Zionists who oppose establishment of Legislative Council until the Jews are in a majority in Palestine; but I believe Arabs would refuse unhesitatingly to cooperate in such a scheme. ... Until Arabs and Jews learn to work together in the interests of Palestine as a whole there can be no peace in Palestine.¹⁷⁸⁸

His ask of the Palestinians was that they at least in a limited way accept the parity framework of “working together”; their indigeneity gave them no rights or position not also held by the unwanted immigrants.

On the land sales and immigration issues, even before Hope Simpson submitted his report on them as they bore upon the 1928 and 1929 protests [^{>233}], Chancellor saw the need to restrict both, and, as he had shown in his memorandum to Passfield of 17 January 1930 [^{>218; also >326}], he realised the necessity of granting the locals some self-determination on grounds of justice. Shuckburgh’s reply implicitly agreed with Chancellor’s ethical analysis but as always towed the party line when it came to policy:

We have there to consider (or are always being told that we ought to consider) not merely the existing population, but the 14 odd millions of Jews all over the world who regard themselves as potential Palestinians. The embarrassing results of this position are obvious. But they are inherent in the Zionist policy, and must be faced.¹⁷⁸⁹

In computing majorities and minorities to govern Palestine, that is, 14,000,000 people living *outside* Palestine had to be counted.¹⁷⁹⁰ Up against such willingness to embrace such an absurdity – which *nota bene* was never applied concerning the millions of Moslems and Christians living outside Palestine – Chancellor never had a chance of winning this battle even for a relatively un-powerful, un-representative Legislative Council.

But while Chancellor was working for an LC acceptable to the Arabs [*see >251*], he was ‘communicating’ with the Arabs in another way as the person in charge of military action in Palestine, and another of the “results” of “Zionist policy” were death penalties, under Chancellor’s signature, carried out against some of the August 1929 rioters. According to David Cronin Chancellor was “adamant” that executions be carried out, writing to Passfield:

¹⁷⁸⁸ CO 733/183/1, pp 39-40.

¹⁷⁸⁹ CO 733/185/1, p 24, Shuckburgh to Passfield, 18 June 1930; Kayyali 1978, p 159.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Also Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 18 September 1934, <https://www.jta.org/1934/09/18/archive/zionists-urge-palestine-drop-plan-for-legislative-council>

I was of the opinion that if the people of Palestine received the impression that they could commit murders during racial riots without putting themselves in danger of the extreme penalty of the law, the probability of the renewal of the outbreaks would be increased. I realised that to carry out death sentences might cause trouble immediately but, on the long view, I felt that it would tend to diminish the chances of serious troubles in the future.¹⁷⁹¹

He also refused to meet with lawyers of Palestinians condemned to death or to return their bodies to their families once they had been executed.¹⁷⁹² In fact, of the 16 capital cases considered “[a]t the meeting of the Executive Council held on the 6th May”, Chancellor

decided... to commute the death sentences to imprisonment for life in all but the three following cases: (1) Fuad Hassan Hejazi (2) Atta Ahmed el Zeer (3) Mohamed Salim Zainab [and on 30-31 May] all but the case of Mohamed Khalil Abu Jamjoun.¹⁷⁹³

The blood of the three prisoners executed at Akka on 17 June (‘Red Tuesday’) was on Chancellor’s hands; they became famous martyrs, sung in poems such as the one by Ibrahim Tuqan rendered in the next entry.

Also according to Cronin, by the way, Chancellor in light of the 1929 riots also approved arming the Jewish immigrants:

I recognise that there are obvious objections on general grounds to an arrangement which in effect involves the arming of one section of the population against another section but the conditions in Palestine are unique. A new population is being introduced into the country whose presence by reason of their different manners and customs is resented by the indigenous population.¹⁷⁹⁴

While the manners of the immigrants certainly signalled to the locals a lack of respect for local customs, by highlighting this aspect, as Cronin points out, Chancellor mistook the causes of Arab unrest, which had been correctly named in the Report of the Shaw Commission as the progress of *political Zionism*.¹⁷⁹⁵ [>220] Arming the Jewish settlers, in effect if not by intention, was an important stage of building the capacity for the Zionist army ‘Haganah’.

17 June 1930 British authorities [John Chancellor] hang Palestinian resistance activists Ata Ahmed Az-Zir, Mohammed Jamjum and Fuad Hijazi at Akka prison.¹⁷⁹⁶

¹⁷⁹¹ CO 733/181/1, p 6; Cronin 2017, pp 29-30.

¹⁷⁹² CO 733/181/1, p 11.

¹⁷⁹³ CO 733/181/1, pp 8, 9.

¹⁷⁹⁴ T 161/1029, *file beginning* 20.12.1929 *and ending* 29.5.1930, approximately 9 pages in, Secret letter Chancellor to Passfield dated 29th March, 1930.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Cronin 2017, p 29.

¹⁷⁹⁶ See also Palestinian Journeys <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/story/9562/acre-prison-love>

Throughout the Mandate what was resistance for a Palestinian was a crime for the British, who jailed, executed, exiled and thus saddened and enraged the populace and its artists. Fadwa Tuqan, sister of the poet Ibrahim Tuqan, [also >272] wrote of “Ibrahim and the events of 1929” in her 1946 book *Akhi Ibrahim (My Brother Ibrahim)*.¹⁷⁹⁷

Ibrahim had much poetry of the genre which included tones and creative pictures, and which competes with the great descriptive poets. Ibrahim was the poet of the homeland, who recorded the pains and hopes of Palestine during the British mandate period, like no other Palestinian poet had done before. Look at him, immortalizing the revolution of Palestine of 1929 and its martyrs in his poem ‘Red Tuesday’. [see >228] He returned with another poem about them titled ‘The Martyr on the 4th Anniversary’ (of killing them). All of this included motivational poetry, no crying nor begging, but loud resonating screams that encourage spirits and stir the feeling of pride. For example this, evidently sparked by purchases of land from Palestinians by Zionists:

You were fooled by the sparkling gold touching it, the mirage looks sparkling from afar.

Think of dying in a land you grew up in and leaving a meter-piece of land for your burial.

Ibrahim has highlighted this issue in his poetry many times. And when newspapers spoke of the Indian leader Gandhi warning England that he would fast till the last day of his life if it does not change its political plan in India, Ibrahim compared him to the Palestinian leaders, saying:

It would be good if a leader of us	would fast like Gandhi
hoping that his fast might help.	A leader in Palestine does not fast,
since leaders die without food;	let them fast for selling the land
so that they can keep a piece	that would hold their bones.

I still remember the day when he happily spoke to us that some of his elite students started writing poetry at his hands. During this school year (1929-1930), Ibrahim was writing national poetry, sending motivational screams that looked like burning fire, like ‘The Red Tuesday’. In June 1930 a verdict was issued to hang three of Palestine’s martyrs. The people of Palestine were angered by this verdict and they submitted their protests and wishes, but nothing has changed. On Tuesday morning, the 17th of June 1930, mosques made calls to

¹⁷⁹⁷ Tuqan 1946, translated by Yousef M. Aljamal.

prayer, and churches rang their bells, resonating all over Palestine, where on this day, three Palestinians were hanged over a period of three hours, the first of whom was Fuad Hijazi, the second was Mohammed Jamjoum, and the third was Ata Al-Zeer.¹⁷⁹⁸

The hangings on 17 June were, in Shuckburgh's words, one of the "embarrassing results" that "must be faced" – faced by the Palestinians – because they were "inherent in the Zionist policy".¹⁷⁹⁹ [>228] George Antonius by the way, himself a member of the elite, in his 1938 book agreed with Ibrahim Tuqan's sentiments that it was not the elite, but rather "men of the working and agricultural classes" who had the principles and bravery to rebel against Britain, the rebellion being "in a very marked way a challenge to [the elite's] authority and an indictment of their methods".¹⁸⁰⁰

13 August 1930 In *Al-Jammiyya Al-Arabia, Sabbhi Al-Khadra*, speaking as an ex-officer of the 1916 Palestinian revolt, states: 'Britain should bear the full responsibility for suppressing the Arabs and supporting the Zionists' interests.'

¹⁷⁹⁸ Also Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 202.

¹⁷⁹⁹ CO 733/185/1, p 24.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Antonius 1938, pp 406-07.

Sir John Hope Simpson, official British investigator of the economic and land-possession situation in Palestine, had spent about two months in Palestine starting in late May 1930, and would submit his report internally on 22 August. He **wrote down his uncensored views**¹⁸⁰¹ about his own report in a letter to Colonial Secretary Passfield dated 18 August 1930. (The external publication of his report had to wait until another Cabinet Committee on Palestine had gone over the books [^{>231}; ^{>232}], and happened only on 21 October simultaneously with HMG's new Statement of Policy, known as the Passfield White Paper. [^{>233}; ^{>234}]) This letter allies him with many other high-ranking Britons who sometimes openly, sometimes between the lines, disagreed with their Government's Zionist policy.

He wrote the letter sometime on his way back from Palestine during a stop-over in Athens, and began it "My dear Lord Passfield":

There is a good deal on the Palestine question, which it is desirable that you should know, but which, for obvious reasons, it was undesirable to include in a report of which the publication might be demanded. ... For this reason, I propose to mention in this letter a number of points which have either been omitted from the report, or have been mentioned but not developed.

By hiding his true thoughts he, like all other officials and investigators who in truth rejected the Zionist Mandate, did not climb to the status of whistle-blower.

He immediately accused HMG of "failure to carry out the terms of the Mandate" while admitting this was "exceedingly difficult". (§2, 3) The Palestine Administration "has not in fact succeeded in accomplishing" either the level of immigration necessary for establishing the Jewish National Home or of ensuring the rights of the non-Jews, or of introducing "a land system appropriate to the needs of the country". (§3, 4)

It has taken no serious steps towards the development of the country and the combination of land purchase by the Jews with failure to develop the land held by the *fellah*, has produced a serious state of affairs among the *fellahin*. The attitude of the Administration has resembled that of a spectator... of a social experiment carried on before his eyes, but which he does not feel that he has a duty to take an active part. (§4, 5)

Passfield's Under-Secretary Drummond Shiels at this time liked to use the term "umpire" rather than "spectator".¹⁸⁰² [^{>227}; ^{>242}]

Shifting his criticism from his own Government to the Zionist settlers, he remarked that others share his views:

It is a curious but unfortunate fact that all British officials tend to become pro-Arab, or, perhaps more accurately, anti-Jew, though it would be quite untrue to suggest that the failure to carry out the Mandate is due to that point. I can quite well understand this trait. The

¹⁸⁰¹ CAB 24/215/1, pp 16-19 (stamped page numbers), = §1-29, *all quotations*.

¹⁸⁰² Hansard 1930a, c103.

helplessness of the *fellah* appeals to the British official with whom he comes in touch. The offensive self-assertion of the Jewish immigrant is, on the other hand, repellent. And this self-assertion is a common characteristic of the Chalutzim – the Jewish ‘Pioneer’. If the official is a Jew, his sympathies are naturally all the other way, and the Jews are the most clan-ish of people. For this reason I think it is unfortunate that [Norman] Bentwich holds the position of Attorney-General. He is a nice fellow and a very able man, but he is in a false position. No one outside the Jewish circle can trust him to act without Jewish bias. (§6)

During this period ‘Jew’ was the political term referring to the Zionist settlers, used by all three parties in the Palestine triangle.

The Arab, making up the large majority of the population, lacked the capital with which to make improvements, capital which the Jew did have, but the settler

is entirely unmoved by any consideration of what suffering may be inflicted on the Arab by the Jewish determination to create a Jewish State in Palestine. That is the true object of the settler. It is, of course, not ventilated generally, but conversation with the men, and still more so with the women, make it quite clear. The women all believe that the correct policy for the Government lies in the transfer of the Arab population to Trans-Jordania in order to make room for an influx of Jews. (§7)

The first Jewish colonisation in the 1880s, so Hope Simpson, did not pursue the political ends of dominance or a State, but lived peacefully with the Arabs; gradually, though, well-funded Zionist colonisation had taken over more land and gotten rid of Arab labourers and tenants, who were now displaced (§8-10) and heavily in debt (§11-14). Therefore,

It is essential that every available dunum of land should now be retained to provide holdings for those who, having lost their land, desire to cultivate, and to increase the size of the existing holdings where the *fellahin* have not got sufficient land for their needs. (§10)

The economic situation of the Arabs was rendered worse and even hopeless by the fact that land bought by the Jewish National Fund becomes “the inalienable property of the Jewish people” [but:]

The political aspect of the matter is even more serious, for it confirms the Arab in the belief commonly held that Jewish policy is designed deliberately to oust the Arab from the land of Palestine. And it is impossible to affirm that this belief is unfounded. The policy of the Zionists indicates that their ultimate intention, by means of steady and consistent land purchase and settlement with the provisions noted [Jews only], is to buy the country, and to buy it under conditions which will render it impossible for any Arab to earn his daily bread in the territory which they have acquired. It is a policy of the inevitability of gradualness of the most sinister kind. (§14)

“...gradualness of the most sinister kind”.

Shifting the criticism back to the Government which tolerated or encouraged this Jewish-Zionist activity and goal, he asserted that in order to carry out Article 6 of the Mandate [“close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands”, >146], since there was not at the moment even “room in Palestine for the existing agricultural population”, “efficient development” by means of “the creation of a Development

Commission” was absolutely necessary; furthermore, as a solution to the problem of eternal alienation of locals from lands in Jewish possession, land should only be leased, rather than sold, to whomsoever. (§15) This solution was ingenious and could have easily been carried out by the Palestine Government, which could answer Zionist objections by pointing out to them that they could still lease land and put their settlers on it; but Hope Simpson omitted even this mild proposal from his official report.¹⁸⁰³

He drew at least one concrete policy conclusion from his radical and therefore private, secret analysis, namely that the British taxpayer, not the Palestine Government which relied on local taxes, should pay for such agricultural development,

for it was their Government which accepted this remarkable Mandate. This was not done by the Palestinian people. The last thing which they desired was the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. (§18)

Finally, he attested that in a manner that violates the terms and spirit of the Mandate it was the Jewish Agency, not the Palestine Government, which called the shots on the matters he had been sent to investigate. (§19-20) He added a detail concerning immigration, namely that since “a large portion of the Jewish population depends for its livelihood on continuance of charitable subscriptions”, there was the danger for Britain that if these dry up, the British taxpayer would have to support them. (§20)

According to David Cronin and several others, Hope Simpson wanted to succeed Chancellor as High Commissioner, and his chances were good because he brought the expertise in ‘development’ sought by HMG. Weizmann however – who, remember, was both British and, as President of the Zionist Organization, the ultimate head of the Jewish Agency which Hope Simpson had seen to be running the country – vetoed the appointment. Colonial Office employee Samuel Wilson wrote:

Since the contents of the private letter [i.e. the one dealt with in this entry] became known to him, he [Weizmann] has taken up a position of violent opposition to the appointment, with the result that we shall probably have to look elsewhere for our commissioner and are very unlikely to get anyone so well-qualified as Hope Simpson.¹⁸⁰⁴

Why Chancellor resigned after only three years I do not know. Arthur Wauchop got the job instead of Hope Simpson, although he had no knowledge at all of Palestine, as he himself admitted: “As regards Palestine, I am very much a new boy. ... I am an entire stranger to Palestine.”¹⁸⁰⁵

¹⁸⁰³ Hope Simpson 1930, pp 54-56/Chapter V. Section iii.

¹⁸⁰⁴ CO 733/203/9, p 17; Cronin 2017, p 33.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 22 October 1931 <https://www.jta.org/1931/10/22/archive/new-palestine-high-commissioner-sir-arthur-wauchop-late-high-commissioner-sir-john-chancellor-and-1>; Cronin 2017, p 34.

231. Another Cabinet Committee

15 September 1930

Provoked into a policy re-examination by the Palestinian rebellion of a year earlier [^{>202}], fuelled by High Commissioner Chancellor's advice to slow down the Zionist juggernaut [^{>218}], and challenged by the relatively Balfour-critical Shaw Commission Report [^{>220}], another Cabinet-level '**Committee on Policy in Palestine**' had convened in London as of 30 July to try to both analyse and solve the now life-and-death problems. It consisted of Colonial Secretary Passfield, Chancellor of the Exchequer Snowden, Dominions Secretary J.H. Thomas, War Secretary Tom Shaw, and the Secretary of State for Air, Lord Thomson. On 15 September 1930 it submitted a **135-page 'Report and Appendices'** as a 'memorandum' to the whole Cabinet.¹⁸⁰⁶

The 'Report' began with a one-page cover letter (p 6), and was followed by 'Appendix I' which was a detailed draft of a new Statement of Policy to replace that of Churchill of 3 June 1922 [^{>142}]; it was written by the Committee on Policy, signed off on by the 'Colonial Office', and after some editing became the Passfield White Paper of 21 October 1930 [^{>234}]. (pp 7-15, *double-sided*) Appendix II contained John Hope Simpson's letter to Passfield from Athens expressing his real thoughts, covered in the previous entry. (pp 16-19) As a third Appendix came Hope Simpson's very long report, covered in the entry after next, of his two-month investigation into questions of 'Immigration, Land Settlement and Development' (pp 20-127 = Chs. I-XI [^{>233}]), which would be published simultaneously with the White Paper [^{>233}; ^{>234}].

The Committee on Policy in Palestine would submit a second report on 23 September which included the report of its subcommittee on the political assumptions and financial consequences of its recommendations.¹⁸⁰⁷ That subsidiary report and its recommendations, which were consistent with the draft of the broader new Statement of Policy cited just above, were approved by the full Cabinet on 24 September¹⁸⁰⁸ and will also be covered in the next entry.

The draft Statement of Policy dealt with the recommendations of John Hope Simpson on land ownership and sale, settlement, and immigration as well as 'Security' or 'Constitutional Development', including a proposed Legislative Council building on that of the 1922 White Paper. The first page of 'Appendix I', a 'Note' from Passfield to the Cabinet dated 11 September, revealed the CO's attempt to walk the tightrope between Zionism and local rebellion, but could not hide the fact that some of its recommendations would indeed "crystallise" [*see* ^{>222}; ^{>232}; ^{>242}] the Jewish national home, meaning Britain had fulfilled its "obligation" to the League of Nations of establishing a national home for the Jewish people.

¹⁸⁰⁶ CAB 24/215/1, *all references*, using **stamped** page numbers or § numbers; also Beckerman-Boys 2013, p 132, *who notes* that there are no complete minutes of these meetings.

¹⁸⁰⁷ CAB 24/215/9, pp 192-98.

¹⁸⁰⁸ CAB 23/65/6, pp 64-66.

The draft first noted that

The proposals for the new Legislative Council follow those for the Legislative Council proposed in 1922 [^{133-37; 142}], with one important exception. ... The [ten] Unofficial Members are also to be elected to the new Council in normal circumstances, but it is proposed that they can be appointed, if necessary, otherwise than by election, in case any section of the population attempts to frustrate the endeavour to set up the Council by boycotting the elections. (p 7)

To the extent that such a boycott by one side or the other was likely, this provision rendered this LC even less democratic than the one eight years earlier.

Then followed a complete history of the unsuccessful pursuit of “self-governing institutions” and Legislative Councils since 1920. (p 11) [^{see 225}] That pursuit had been unsuccessful because the Arabs had boycotted such elections in 1922-23 after seeing that the proposed Council was powerless and that even had it had powers, they would be crassly under-represented.) [^{143; 151; 158; 160}]¹⁸⁰⁹

This report’s cover letter dealt also with immigration, saying the LC would appoint an ‘Immigration Committee’ from its ranks, but the

High Commissioner [would] retain wide powers in regard to the control of immigration [and the] Committee – which will merely have the right to confer with the High Commissioner, with a reference of differences of opinion to His Majesty’s Government – may prove a useful ‘safety valve.’ (p 7)

The hottest parts of Hope Simpson’s report should only be “paraphrased” in the draft White Paper which followed as the bulk of the text of ‘Appendix 1’ (pp 8-15, *double-sided*); indeed,

As regards [his] recommendations, an attempt has been made to express some of them in more general terms than those in which he has framed them and to omit many details, so as to preserve a greater measure of freedom to HMG in the practical application of his recommendations. (p 7)

This circumspection in dealing with Hope Simpson’s unwanted views didn’t work – the Zionist lobby saw through it. [^{238; 239; 242}]

The Committee then went on to say it felt HMG had been hard done by by “the two races” or “two sections of the community [whose] interests and aims [and] aspirations” it was trying to harmonise, its having “received little assistance from either side in healing the breach between them”, resulting in “an attitude of mistrust towards His Majesty’s Government”. (pp 7-8) It bemoaned “a failure to appreciate” how hard it was to fulfil the “double undertaking... to the Jewish people on the one hand and to the non-Jewish population of Palestine on the other”. Instead of acknowledging the self-contradiction in its own policy, it was blaming both the Arabs and the Jews and building its strategy on “bet-

¹⁸⁰⁹ Also Sheffer 1973, pp 51-54.

ter relations between Arabs and Jews". (p 8) These remarks showed that the Committee had not learned from Palin, Haycraft, Islington, Chancellor, Shaw and Hope Simpson – or even Shuckburgh – that the problem was political, not racial.

It then affirmed Ramsay MacDonald's stance in the Commons [²²⁴] that Britain would "continue to administer Palestine in accordance with the terms of the Mandate", "an international obligation from which there can be no question of receding". It swore allegiance to the Churchill White Paper, expounded on the meaning of the "expression 'the Jewish National Home,' which is contained in the Mandate", and vowed to tell the Arabs that "it is useless... to maintain their demands for a form of Constitution which would render it impossible for His Majesty's Government to carry out, in the fullest sense, the double undertaking already referred to". (p 8)

The climax of this lengthy "exposition of the general principles which have to be taken into account" in carrying out "the difficult and delicate task of His Majesty's Government" (§1-9) was an assertion of tenacity, to wit,

(1) that the obligations laid down by the Mandate in regard to the two sections of the population are of equal weight; (2) that the two obligations imposed on the Mandatory are in no sense irreconcilable. (p 10)

Neither of these was true.

Moving to the specific topic of 'Land', its opening chord read:

It can now be definitely stated that at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation, there remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve. (p 12/§15)¹⁸¹⁰

This passage, which accepted Hope Simpson's views, was an alarm bell for the principled Zionists in HMG, entailing as it did that under present agricultural technology no further land should be bought by the Zionists. Yet in embracing this analysis as the assumption for building further policy, the Cabinet and the Committee were also accepting the propriety of Jewish-owned land's being shut to Arab settlement, leaving the door open for "new immigrants" to settle on land already owned by Zionist organisations and thus tilt the demographics somewhat in favour of the Jewish Zionists. Nevertheless, this elevation of the "rights and position" of the Arabs by shutting off immigration onto present Arab land was indeed a departure from business-as-usual and gave the Palestinians some hope, especially since, following Hope Simpson, the Committee recognised that the indigenous population was growing (e.g. §22)¹⁸¹¹. At any rate, the only logical conclusion, as Porath correctly writes, was that there would therefore have to be "limitation of Jewish immigration to such numbers as could be settled on unused land already in Jewish ownership".¹⁸¹²

¹⁸¹⁰ Also CO 733/183/2, p 44.

¹⁸¹¹ CAB 24/215/9, p 193.

¹⁸¹² Porath 1977, p 30, evidently based on CO 733/183/2, Part 'C' and Cab Con. 55(30) of 24 September 1930.

There followed detailed information about quantities of land, its owners, types of tenancy and numbers of Palestinians already in fact dispossessed. (pp 12-13/§16-25) Importantly, it said that development “schemes” would be very expensive, and the Palestine Government budget was already strapped by heavy military and policing outlays. (§25) For further discussion of these points see the next three entries.

The other very controversial part of the proposed new immigration policy was that, considering the urban as well as the rural job market, indeed “there is at present a serious degree of Arab unemployment” and that, in determining how many immigrants should be permitted, not only Jewish unemployment levels should be considered but rather, the “economic capacity of the country to absorb new immigrants must... take into account the position of Palestine as a whole in regard to unemployment”:

Clearly, if immigration of Jews results in preventing the Arab population from obtaining the work necessary for its maintenance, it is the duty of the Mandatory [under Article 6 protecting the ‘rights and position of the other sections of the population, >146]... to reduce or, if necessary, to suspend, such immigration until the unemployed portion of the ‘other sections’ is in a position to obtain work. (p 14/§28)¹⁸¹³

For the first time it was explicitly recognised by somebody that it was *overall* employment that should be the criterion for economic absorptive capacity. To put this into practice, though, i.e. in order to absorb the presently-unemployed Arabs, it would be necessary for the British Government to quit permitting Jewish employers to employ only Jewish labour, as was their strict policy and practice in pursuit of their vision of their national home, as explained in Hope Simpson’s report¹⁸¹⁴. [>233] Given that Zionism needed immigrants to increase the Jewish percentage of the population, this provision was absolute anathema for the Zionist project, and would eventually be abandoned by HMG on 13 February 1931 [>246].

This draft Statement of Policy, which the eventual Passfield White Paper issued a month later very closely resembled [>234], ended with an appeal to Jewish leaders to realise that settling these questions peaceably was in their own interest: Rather a limited national home than constant violent confrontation or perhaps no home at all. (pp 14-15) Overall, the pendulum was moving towards partial, hesitant fulfilment of some Arab demands. But would investment in agricultural efficiency, restrictions on land sales and fewer Jewish immigrants alone have silenced indigenous political demands? That is unlikely in light of the fervour marking the Palestinian memos and manifestos we’ve examined from the previous 12 years, all aiming for a Mandate-free life.

According to Carly Beckerman-Boys, this supposed diversion from normal pro-Zionist policy, led by Passfield, had been communicated throughout the summer regularly from Passfield to Weizmann, who was for some reason acquiescent.¹⁸¹⁵ Had Weizmann balked, or had the Cabinet had among its members any of the many staunch British Zionist

¹⁸¹³ Also Passfield 1930, §28.

¹⁸¹⁴ Hope Simpson 1930, pp 53-56.

¹⁸¹⁵ Beckerman-Boys 2013, p 130, citing PREM 1/102, 12 August 1930, Passfield to Ramsay MacDonald; see also Stein 1984, pp 116-17.

politicians who had co-written previous policy documents, the thrust of what Chancellor, Shaw and Hope Simpson had been proposing would not even have made it into the final drafting stages in late September and early October.

The 'Committee on Policy in Palestine' sent another memorandum to the Cabinet on 23 September, eight days after its first report [>231]¹⁸¹⁶, attaching the report of its 'Expert' subcommittee on the financial costs of various settlement and development schemes. The memorandum recalled that on 19 September the Cabinet had postponed approval of the White Paper draft awaiting this now completed Expert-subcommittee report. Subcommittee members were Sir John Hope Simpson, Sir Basil Blackett, Sir John E. Campbell, A.P. Waterfield, and O.G.R. Williams, with N.L. Mayle as Secretary. As for its estimate of financial cost to Britain, it drew partially on John Hope Simpson's experience managing the Greek-Turkish population transfers of 1923-24, coming up with costs of up to £10,000,000, as shown by their table of five various proposed schemes.¹⁸¹⁷

When the Cabinet then met on 24 September 1930 it confirmed its support for Hope Simpson's recommendations and its own decisions of 15 September [>231] – in essence accepting the report of its newly-formed Committee on Policy in Palestine. In summary:¹⁸¹⁸

(i) His Majesty's Government are, in our view, morally bound to see that provision is made for those Arab tenants who have been dispossessed of their holdings as a result of the manner in which the policy of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate has hitherto been applied.¹⁸¹⁹

That policy had been one of compensation and resettlement, rather than restoration of possession, and the misperception was that it was not Britain's Zionism policy itself, but rather the "manner in which" that policy had been applied, which was at fault; but at least Britain was seen as at fault, not the Jewish Agency.

Further, really getting into the weeds,

(ii) The Jewish organisations should be permitted to proceed, at their own expense, with the development and settlement of the 'reserved land' acquired by them. ... (iii) ... The Palestine Administration should take immediate steps (a) to provide, by means of legislation, that *during the next five years no further parcels of land shall be acquired by Jewish organisations*, in order to give time for the assimilation of the landless Arabs... and (b) to restrict the immigration of Jews to such numbers as can be settled on the reserve lands, or can confidently be expected to be absorbed into industrial occupation. (iv) The Government of Palestine should, as soon as possible, confer statutory 'occupancy rights' on agricultural tenants as proposed in the Hope Simpson report, and so safeguard the position of the Arab occupants

¹⁸¹⁶ CAB 24/215/9, pp 192-98, Committee on Palestine Policy Report, 23 September.

¹⁸¹⁷ CAB 24/215/9, pp 208, 206.

¹⁸¹⁸ CAB 23/65/6, pp 64-66.

¹⁸¹⁹ CAB 23/65/6, p 66; also CAB 24/215/9, p 194.

of the 'reserved land'. (v) The dispossessed Arab families should be resettled at a gross cost of (say) £2,500,000 in all, on the lines contemplated in the Hope Simpson report.¹⁸²⁰ (*emphasis added*)

To point (v) above the Cabinet added the sentence:

It should be stated in any public announcement that the money is being provided for the development of land, primarily for the settlement of landless Arabs, but that the settlement of Jews is not excluded from consideration.

The 'Committee on Policy in Palestine' had actually prefaced this sentence by writing "In order to forestall possible Jewish criticism," but the Cabinet deleted that part.¹⁸²¹

In end effect, policy points (iii) (a) and (b) above would, in fact, for a period of five years at any rate, have frozen or 'crystallised' the Jewish national home. As the Expert Subcommittee' of the Committee on Policy had written bluntly:

It is estimated that, if the present natural rate of increase of the population continues, it will double its numbers in 25 years. It is clear that within a short time the process of settlement will have to stop, and the settlement of Jews on the land for the purpose of the Jewish National Home must then be declared to be completed. Although it is not within our terms of reference we venture to draw attention to the possibility, if due regard be paid to financial considerations as well as to the interest of the existing population, Jew as well as Arab, and their descendants, of deciding that the above stage has already been reached.¹⁸²² [*also >222; >231; >242*]

Assuming in the first place that infrastructure projects would in fact greatly and rapidly raise productivity, Sheffer is right that "the choice was between expensive development and the stopping of immigration".¹⁸²³

Incongruous as the picture is of a group of Expert colonialists, most of them Knights, gathering in private rooms at "No. 2, Richmond Terrace" where they took pity on poverty-stricken, evicted and landless farm families, what was being offered was radically pro-Palestinian: it was a "possibility" that the construction of the Jewish National Home was now completed. If so, Britain's self-imposed 'obligation' stated so solemnly in the first part of the Balfour Declaration was now discharged. But as we shall see [*>234; >246*] this was beyond what HMG could tolerate, for they were not ready to cripple Zionism and render the Mandate itself purposeless.

Finally, so the Cabinet on 24 September,

The Secretary of State for the Colonies should be authorised to communicate verbally to Dr. Weizmann, in confidence, the purport of Sir John Hope Simpson's Report and of the draft statement of policy... and to discuss with him any points he might raise with regard to their

¹⁸²⁰ CAB 23/65/6, pp 64-65; *also* CAB 24/215/9, p 195.

¹⁸²¹ CAB 24/215/9, p 195.

¹⁸²² CAB 24/215/9, p 208; *also* CO 733/183/2, p 82.

¹⁸²³ Sheffer 1973, p 52.

possible effects on the execution of the Mandate and the Jewish National Home. ... Before seeing Dr. Weizmann, the Secretary of State for the Colonies might with advantage confer privately with Lord Reading.¹⁸²⁴

This passage shows us that in contrast with the various begrudging talks with various Palestinians, dialogue with British-Zionist forces was regular and well-oiled. Like Weizmann, Lord Reading (Rufus Isaacs) was powerful: former Viceroy of India, Ambassador to the U.S. and Chairman and founder, with Alfred Mond and Herbert Samuel, of the Palestine Electric Corporation. I have found no record that the contents of any Government reports or Cabinet decisions were in this manner communicated privately to any Palestinians or other Arabs.

Less clearly, and with far more words, the land and immigration policies adumbrated here and in Hope Simpson's Report did falteringly make their way into the Passfield White Paper [^{>234}]; specifically, land owned by "Jewish organizations" either lying fallow or worked by Arab tenants should remain in Jewish-Zionist possession, but further purchases by them were subject to vague provisions at the discretion of the Palestine Administration.¹⁸²⁵

¹⁸²⁴ CAB 23/65/6, p 66.

¹⁸²⁵ Passfield 1930, §15.1, 16, 23, 26-29.

Sir John Hope Simpson's '**Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development**' to Colonial Secretary Passfield was published internally on 22 August 1930 and publicly as a Command Paper on 21 October, the same day as Passfield's new 'Statement of Policy' (White Paper) [^{>234}].¹⁸²⁶ Back in March, because the Cabinet thought the Shaw Report [^{>220}] implied the advisability of watering down the Zionist project [^{>216}], it authorised High Commissioner Chancellor to appoint an investigator qualified in economic-development issues. In April he appointed Hope Simpson, who got to Jerusalem on 20 May 1930 and spent about two months in Palestine, always "in constant contact" with Chancellor. He visited numerous "tracts and villages" and got information from

official sources [as well as] both Arab and Jewish authorities and organisations. ... The Supreme Moslem Council and the Arab Executive gave valued aid in the enquiry. Specially I am indebted to Jamal Effendi Hussein, who accompanied me on tours in some of the Arab villages. (Intro, §1-4)

A good short summary of Hope Simpson's work is offered by Akram Zuaytir.¹⁸²⁷

The 153-page Report had eleven Chapters: 1. The Country and the Climate; 2. The Agricultural Land; 3. The Population; 4. Land Tenure in Palestine; 5. Jewish Settlement on the Land; 6. The Position of the *Fellah*; 7. Agricultural Development; 8. Agricultural Produce; 9. Palestinian Industry; 10. Immigration; and 11. Conclusion. Incidentally, the Hope Simpson report would be accurately summarised in the House of Commons by George Jones on 17 November 1930.¹⁸²⁸ [^{>242}]

Chapter 5 (pp 38-60) treated separately "the P.I.C.A. [Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association] Settlements" on and around which, from 1882 until the 1920s, Jews and Arabs worked and lived "to mutual advantage" under a "policy of friendship and conciliation" (pp 40-41), and the contrasting "Zionist Settlements" on and around which "the position [of the Arab] is entirely different". The gist of the difference was the policy of the Jewish Agency, or more specifically the "Colonisation Department of the Zionist Organization", both to evict Arab tenant farmers from the lands they bought and not to hire Arab labour. (pp 49-52/V.iii)

These relationships between the Zionists and the 'Arabs' are relevant to the British-Palestinian relationship that is the topic of this chronology because the Zionist Organization, to which had been delegated most of the responsibility for the land-settlement

¹⁸²⁶ Hope Simpson 1930 (Cmd. 3686), *all citations*. Page numbers are from the unispal.un.org website; in some cases I give Chapter numbers as well, and since page numbers after p 129 are lacking, page citations thereafter are approximate. Or use Search function.

¹⁸²⁷ Zuaytir 1958, pp 73-75.

¹⁸²⁸ Hansard 1930a, cc172-75.

and employment policies which privileged Jews, was the quasi-governmental partner of the Palestine Government under Article 4 of the Mandate [146]. Those policies, that is, were approved and allowed by the Government.

In detailing how land once purchased by the Jewish National Fund or the Colonisation Department of the Zionist Organization could not, according to the statutes of those organisations, ever be sold or leased to non-Jews,¹⁸²⁹ and how as a rule the new Zionist owners could hire only Jews to work the land, the report quoted from the corresponding clauses in the sale and lease contracts entered into with the Jewish National Fund (JNF):

The Constitution of the Jewish Agency for Palestine was signed at Zürich on 14th August, 1929. Sub-paragraphs (d) and (e) of Article 3 read as follows: '(d) Land is to be acquired as Jewish property, and subject to the provision in Article 10 of this Agreement, the title to the lands acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people. (e) The Agency shall promote agricultural colonization based on Jewish labour, and in all works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed...' (p 53/V.iii)

The "principle" was that *only* Jewish labour shall be employed, which Hope Simpson observed to be the case on the scene and which was more explicit in both "draft" and later actual JNF lease contracts:

The following is Article 23 of this lease: '...The lessee undertakes to execute all works connected with the cultivation of the holding only with Jewish labour' ... The lease also provides that the holding shall never be held by any but a Jew. ... 'Article 7 [of contracts with] the Palestine Foundation Fund [stipulated:] – The settler hereby undertakes [that] he will hire Jewish workmen only.' ... The lease also provides that the holding shall never be held by any but a Jew [and that the] settler undertakes to work the said holding personally, or with the aid of his family, and not to hire any outside labour except Jewish labourers. (p 53)¹⁸³⁰

Under the heading 'Policy contrary to Article 6 of Mandate', the charge against HMG was that

The principle of the persistent and deliberate boycott of Arab labour in the Zionist colonies is not only contrary to the provisions of [Article 6] of the Mandate [146], but it is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country. (p 55)

As Arthur Wauchope, who replaced Chancellor as High Commissioner as of 20 November 1931, would soon write:

It is an essential principle of the Zionist policy not only to acquire ownership but to ensure that all the work required on the land shall be performed by Jews as far as possible and, in the case of the official land-purchasing agency of the Zionist Organisation, namely the Jewish National Fund, by Jews only, and it follows, as the result of this policy, that when the land is purchased by Jews not only is the landlord changed but the tenants and practically all the

¹⁸²⁹ Also Masalha 1992, pp 14-15, 24-25, 56, 133; Lehn & Davis 1988; Shilony 1998; Beška 2007, p 31.

¹⁸³⁰ See also excerpts in Khalidi 1987, pp 304-07; also Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, pp 95-106.

wage-earning class are compelled to move also. The right of the Zionists to follow this policy cannot be called into question but it obviously creates a difficult problem in relation to the displaced Arab cultivator.¹⁸³¹

For Wauchope, as for HMG, the discriminatory scheme could not “be called into question”.

Paul Kelemen delivers an accurate view of the deep support for the Jews-only employment rule within Britain’s Labour Party, then dominant in HMG:

The Zionist labour movement’s ‘conquest of labour’ policy – which from 1920 had the Histadrut behind it and meant the exclusion of Arab workers from Jewish enterprises – was treated indulgently on the rare occasions that Labour politicians gave attention to it. They were prepared to look on it not as an aspect of colonization but as the exclusivism characteristic of craft unionism, a defensive measure by organized workers against attempts by capital to lower the price of labour.¹⁸³²

HMG was run by Labour from 5 June 1929 until 24 August 1931, and acted according to this rationalisation.

Hope Simpson’s Report encapsulated “the effect of the Zionist colonisation policy on the Arab” thus:

Actually the result of the purchase of land in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that land has been extraterritorialised. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or to cultivate it, but, by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish National Fund, he is deprived for ever from employment on that land. Nor can anyone help him by purchasing the land and restoring it to common use. The land is in mortmain and inalienable. ... It is impossible to view with equanimity the extension of an enclave in Palestine from which all Arabs are excluded. The Arab population already regards the transfer of lands to Zionist hands with dismay and alarm. These cannot be dismissed as baseless in the light of the Zionist policy which is described above. (pp 54-56)

The “extraterritorialisation” of sizable swathes of the mandated territory was thus being enabled by the Mandatory. This fascinating concept implies even that such territory was in many ways no longer under British rule.

In effect, the Zionist land-ownership and hiring practices meant that non-Jews no longer had the *right* to purchase or lease Jewish-owned land or to work for Jewish-owned businesses, whether agricultural, commercial or industrial. (Already in the year 1930, by the way, most of the countries in the Permanent Mandates Commission overseeing the Mandates would, within their own borders, have regarded such stipulations as unfair, immoral.)

Specifically regarding the removal of the possibility for Arabs of ever owning or leasing land once bought by the Zionists, Hope Simpson wrote:

¹⁸³¹ Cronin 2017, p 35, citing T 161/754/3 [National Archives, not found]; also MacDonald 1931, §5, 17, >246.

¹⁸³² Kelemen 1996, p 81.

Alterations of terms under which Jewish National Fund purchases and leases land. (Chapter V. Section (iii). Reference has been made to the terms on which the Jewish National Fund purchases and leases its land. It is there recorded that those terms are objectionable and should be radically altered. (Conclusion. Land. §4/ca. p 143)

To this clear recommendation he did not add an explicit recommendation to outlaw hiring Jews only, writing only that

If there are Arab workmen unemployed it is not right that Jewish workmen from foreign countries should be imported to fill existing vacant posts. (Conclusion, third-to-last paragraph/ca. p 152)

On these two issues the Passfield White Paper [^{>234}] straddled the fence. On the one hand it weakly agreed with Hope Simpson [^{also >230}] and Chancellor [^{>218}], writing:

However logical such arguments may be from the point of view of a purely [Jewish] national movement, it must, nevertheless, be pointed out that they take no account of the provisions of Article 6 of the Mandate, which expressly requires that, in facilitating Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land, the Administration of Palestine must ensure that 'the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced.'¹⁸³³

In any case it was without doubt the physical and economic core of the Jewish national home/state. In the end, the Passfield White Paper [^{>234}] would not call for any change in Mandatory laws regarding Zionist practices in either area.

Not only Article 6, but also Article 2, was arguably thus violated: it similarly required "safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion". [^{>146}] In sum, whatever the capacity of the land to agriculturally support any given number of people, or of commerce and industry to employ all inhabitants seeking work, HMG was unwilling to outlaw these two race-based policies of the Palestine Administration-cum-Zionist Organization – with the 'Black Letter' of 13 February 1931 retreating even from Passfield's weak formulation and endorsing in so many words the discriminatory policies.¹⁸³⁴ [^{>246}]

Hope Simpson's Chapter 5 also treated in detail another issue concerning the direct relationship of the Palestine Government to the Arabs, namely the use of 'Government Lands'. (pp 56-59)

The Jewish Agency, and the Jewish community in general, are insistent in pressing their claim to all lands in the ownership of the Government. ... It cannot be argued that Arabs should be dispossessed in order that the land should be made available for Jewish settlement. That would amount to a distinct breach of the provisions of Article 6 of the Mandate.

The "position" of the Palestinian "other section of the population", so Hope Simpson, had moreover objectively worsened, for whatever combination of reasons, in terms of the peasants' heavy indebtedness. (pp 64-68) Seeing as the Government endeavoured to balance its obligations towards the two groups, its land not yet leased could go either to

¹⁸³³ Passfield 1930, §20.

¹⁸³⁴ MacDonald 1931, §17.

Zionists, who were immigrating, or to Arabs, whose numbers were growing by a surplus of births over deaths. The Mandate text, though, in Article 6, arguably called for giving preference to Jewish, as opposed to native, use of such lands: The Mandatory “shall... encourage... *close settlement* by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.” [>146]

Concerning concretely the “Vale of Esdraelon” (*Marj ibn Amir*) the report wrote:

It is, however, unjust to the poverty stricken *fellah* who has been removed from these lands that the suggestion should continually be made that he was a useless cumberer of the ground and produced nothing from it. It should be quite obvious that this is not the fact. (p 18)

The fact that the *fellah* was breathing, that is, was proof that he had been producing something on the land he was living on.

Clear tenancy contracts were usually lacking, however, and the Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920, with its provisions for “compensation”, could not prevent the tenants’ “displacement”, which meant the removal of their means of subsistence. (pp 34-36)

The real result of this enquiry is to establish that of 688 Arab families which cultivated in the villages in the Vale of Esdraelon which were purchased and occupied by the Jews, only 379 are now cultivating the land. Three hundred and nine of these families have joined the landless classes. ... It is also to be recorded that the number, 688, does not by any means include all the families who were displaced. According to the records of the Area Officers at Nazareth and Haifa, the number of ‘farmers’ displaced from those villages was 1,270, nearly double the number accounted for in [a Zionist] Memorandum. (pp 51-52/V.iii)

Whether “families” and “farmers” referred to the same units, Hope Simpson at any rate determined that 29.4% of village families were earning their living not by cultivation but by landless labour. (p 26/III)¹⁸³⁵ Some Zionists, for instance Kenneth Stein,¹⁸³⁶ have challenged some of Hope Simpson’s findings or conclusions, but our question is whether the British should have allowed a single indigenous farmer to be evicted. The legal ramifications of the Land Ordinances of 1920 and 1921, which were in effect when Hope Simpson was at work, while beyond my scope, are said by some researchers to have eased the purchase of land by Zionist agencies and restricted Arabs’ possibilities to expand their agricultural holdings.¹⁸³⁷ Many of these points had been anticipated by the Arab Executive Committee in its complaint to the Permanent Mandates Commission already on 6 October 1924.¹⁸³⁸

¹⁸³⁵ Also Furlonge 1969, p 90.

¹⁸³⁶ Stein 1984.

¹⁸³⁷ In addition to Shaw 1930, Hope Simpson 1930, and French 1931 & 1932, *passim*, see e.g. Regan 2017, p 87, citing Weinstock, Nathan, *Zionism* (1979), p 113; but also see Shilony 1998.

¹⁸³⁸ CO 733/74, pp 115-29, Point 4), >178.

Into the principle of 'economic absorptive capacity' had been integrated the principle that any Jew who had a job lined up could immigrate,¹⁸³⁹ but Hope Simpson recommended that employment policy should instead derive from looking at the whole country:

It is the duty of the Government to look upon the country as one unit. ... It is wrong that a Jew from Poland, Lithuania or the Yemen should be admitted to fill an existing vacancy, while in Palestine there are already workmen capable of filling that vacancy, who are unable to find employment. This policy will [however] be unacceptable to the Jewish authorities. (p 136)

More generally, his report stated that

by the Government, Palestine must be treated as an entity and there must be no discrimination between the races which it contains. If there is unemployment, whether Jewish or Arab, it is clearly the duty of the Government to prevent immigration if such immigration will intensify that unemployment or prevent its cure. (p 140)¹⁸⁴⁰

In fact, throughout the Mandate no Arab unemployment, whether 'low' or 'high,' had been – or would be – regarded as ethically or politically relevant.¹⁸⁴¹ Concerning agricultural employment specifically, whether as owners or tenants or labourers, Kayyali is correct when he writes that it could be gleaned from the report that "If all the cultivable land in Palestine were divided up among the Arab agricultural population, there would [still] not be enough to provide every family with a decent livelihood."¹⁸⁴²

Chapter 10, on 'Immigration', once again looked at the hiring-Jews-only policy:

The General Federation of Jewish Labour has adopted a policy which implies the introduction into Palestine of a new social order, based on communal settlements and the principle of self labour. Where self labour is impossible, it insists on the employment of Jewish labour exclusively, by all Jewish employers. (pp 128-29)

Whatever Hope Simpson's direct or indirect criticism of these British-tolerated hiring policies were [*also* >230], and whatever the Passfield White Paper would say about them¹⁸⁴³ [>234], Prime Minister MacDonald would fully endorse them in his 13 February 1931 letter to Weizmann (the 'Black Letter'):

His Majesty's Government do not in any way challenge the right of the Agency to formulate or approve and endorse such a policy. The principle of preferential and, indeed, exclusive employment of Jewish labour by Jewish organizations is a principle which the Jewish Agency are entitled to affirm.¹⁸⁴⁴

In political, rather than technical or economics, mode Hope Simpson then wrote:

¹⁸³⁹ Furlonge 1969, p 96.

¹⁸⁴⁰ Also CAB 24/215/1, p 14/§28, Cabinet Committee on Policy in Palestine, 15 September 1930.

¹⁸⁴¹ See Matthews 2006, p 236.

¹⁸⁴² Kayyali 1978, p 159.

¹⁸⁴³ Passfield 1930, §19, 20.

¹⁸⁴⁴ MacDonald 1931, §17.

Elsewhere in this report the exclusion of Arab labour from the land purchased by the Jewish National Fund has been discussed, and it is pointed out that this exclusion is liable to confirm a belief that it is the intention of the Jewish authorities to displace the Arab population from Palestine by progressive stages. This belief, which, however unfounded it may be, is unfortunately very widely held, will be confirmed when it is realised that the immigration of Jewish labour is permitted while the Arab cannot earn his daily bread. (p 144)

Recall that Article 15 of the Mandate [2146], which if taken literally is somewhat of an erratic block in the landscape, stated: “No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Palestine on the ground of race, religion or language.” Neither Hope Simpson nor Passfield confronted the plausible position that the rest of the Mandate text violated this Article.

In the Report’s Conclusions one reads:

In closing this Report I desire to record my opinion that the observance of the Articles of the Mandate, and specially of Article 6 of the Mandate, presents extraordinary difficulty. ... It is an error to imagine that the Government is in possession of large areas of vacant lands which could be made available for Jewish settlement. In fact free areas are negligible in extent. It is the duty of the Administration, under the Mandate, to ensure that the position of the Arabs is not prejudiced by Jewish immigration. It is also its duty under the Mandate to encourage the close settlement of the Jews on the land, subject always to the former condition. It is only possible to reconcile these apparently conflicting duties by an active policy of agricultural development, having as its object close settlement on the land and intensive cultivation by both *Arabs and Jews*. To this end drastic action is necessary. (Conclusion. Land./ ca. pp 142-43)

In writing that the close settlement of Jews is “subject always to the former condition”, i.e. not prejudicing the “position” of the Arabs, Hope Simpson was actually departing from the idea that HMG should even-handedly balance two equal claims, even if the “drastic action” he urged was more in the realm of agricultural development than revision or abandonment of the Mandate, i.e. constitutional realms. These passages from the Report support the view that it was

different from previous ones in that it directly challenged the Zionist claims of the benefits of Jewish colonization for the Arabs.¹⁸⁴⁵

The Palin and Haycraft reports of 1920 and 1921 had focussed much less clearly on Hope Simpson’s questions [288; 2122] and the Shaw Commission expressed itself less directly but not in disagreement [220]. The Arab Executive Committee three years later praised both the Shaw and Hope Simpson commissions; overall, they had taken the side of the Palestinians. [264] But nowhere is the charge more clearly proven that HMG ignored and/or contravened the findings of the Commissions they themselves had set up, than in the Black Letter’s repudiation of Hope Simpson’s report.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Kelemen 1996, pp 75-76.

“Drastic action” was needed in the realm of “agricultural development” because without it the “extraordinary difficulty” of enabling the “close settlement” of Jews could not be overcome:

Without development, there is not room for a single additional settler, if the standard of life of the *fellahin* is to remain at its present level. ... The sole way in which the Mandate can be carried out is by the intensive development of rural Palestine. ... [W]ith thorough development of the country there will be room, not only for all the present population on a higher standard of life than it at present enjoys, but for not less than 20,000 families of settlers from outside. (p 153 – ‘Conclusions’, penultimate two paragraphs)

Literally, Hope Simpson was advocating an end to immigration if the *fellahin*’s “standard of life” was to be maintained – but it was up to HMG to decide whether it wanted to maintain that standard of life. Hope Simpson did not, by the way, here say why the additional “20,000 families” should be “from outside” rather than from the growing indigenous population, nor why the “higher standard of life” should be shared with immigrants.

In any case, to determine what intensive agricultural development was possible, both technically in terms for instance of water availability, and legally in terms of who owned what piece of land, expert Lewis French was soon sent to Palestine. His conclusion was that Arab families displaced by Zionist development needed in any case a plan for their resettlement, that intensification would upend the Arab peasants’ way of life, that in the longer term water was scarce in crucial areas, and that such development would cost the British taxpayer millions of pounds and take up to a decade to effect.¹⁸⁴⁶ While close examination of the technical issues covered by the French Reports is beyond the scope of this study, partly because it was apparently not even published and because political focus was always on Hope Simpson’s Report, what is relevant is that the criterion set by Hope Simpson – drastic agricultural intensification – was on this critical issue favourable to the Palestinians: without it, there was no room for any more immigration to rural areas or purchase of land by the JNF at all. The political question then arose whether rural settler-immigration and land sales should have to be suspended until such time as the intensification was achieved, but as we shall see this criterion had zero effect on the number of immigration permits over the next decade, and land continued to be bought for the sole future use of Jews only.

1930 ‘In 1930, after thirteen years of British occupation of Palestine, the Director of Education [Humphrey Bowman] admitted in his report that: “Since the beginning of the occupation, the government has never undertaken to provide sufficient funds for the building of a single school in the country,” and in 1935, the government turned down 41% of the applications by Palestinian Arabs for places in schools.’¹⁸⁴⁷

1930-31 ‘Ownership by Jewish groups of urban and rural land rose from 300,000 dunums [30,000 ha.] in 1929 to 1,250,000 dunums in 1930. ... By 1931, 20,000 peasant families had been evicted by the Zionists.’¹⁸⁴⁸

¹⁸⁴⁶ French 1931, 1932; also Jeffries 1939, pp 671-80; Stein 1984, pp 147-70.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Kanafani 1972, p 26.

¹⁸⁴⁸ Kanafani 1972, p 20.

On the same day as Hope Simpson's report, HMG released its '**Palestine Statement of Policy**' (White Paper) of 21 October 1930, "presented to Parliament" by Lord Passfield (Colonial Secretary Sidney Webb, who to my knowledge never visited Palestine).¹⁸⁴⁹ Its publication in Palestine was not until about a week later. Its 29 Sections covered: 1) general policy, which did not deviate from the principles of the Balfour Declaration, 1922 Churchill White Paper and Mandate (§2-8); 2) procedure concerning "constitutional development" and a Legislative Council (§11-13); and 3) "economic and social development" under the three headings of "land" (§15-20), "agricultural development" (§21-25) and "immigration" (§26-28). There was some departure from business-as-usual in explicitly acknowledging broad agreement with the analysis and recommendations of High Commissioner Chancellor [->218; >225], the Shaw Commission [->220] and John Hope Simpson [->230; >233].

The basic principle that would guide future policy was said to be that of regarding and treating the Jewish and the non-Jewish sides equally; to express this policy the White Paper quoted the Permanent Mandates Commission which in turn was paraphrasing the words of the British delegate to the PMC at its meeting of 9 June 1930:

[T]wo assertions emerge, which should be emphasised:- '1) that the obligations laid down by the Mandate in regard to the two sections of the population are of equal weight; (2) that the two obligations imposed on the Mandatory are in no sense irreconcilable.' ... His Majesty's Government are fully in accord with the sense of this pronouncement... (§8) [->227]

Thus the self-contradictory Articles 2 and 6 of the Mandate [->146] could very well be carried out:

However difficult the task may be it would, in their [HMG's] view, be impossible, consistently with the plain intention of the Mandate, to attempt to solve the problem by subordinating one of these obligations to the other. ... It is the difficult and delicate task of His Majesty's Government to devise means whereby, in the execution of its policy in Palestine, equal weight shall at all times be given to the obligations laid down with regard to the two sections of the population and to reconcile those two obligations where, inevitably, conflicting interests are involved. (§8)

The Palestinians' possession of their land and polity was thus reduced to an "interest", moreover equal in political status to the "interest" of those slowly but surely taking Palestine over by (British) force. At any rate, relying on extensive quotes from the Mandate text and the 1922 White Paper, the pledge was to "the essential interests of both races" (§2), to eschew any "policy which weighted the balances in favour of the one or the other party" and to fulfil its "double undertaking... to the Jewish people on the one hand and to the non-Jewish population of Palestine on the other" (§3). [->231] Parity shall reign between the indigenous majority and the immigrant minority forced upon it.

¹⁸⁴⁹ Passfield 1930 (Cmd. 3692), *all quotations*.

Jewish leaders should therefore see the futility of pressing HMG

to conform their policy in regard, for example, to immigration and land, to the aspirations of the more uncompromising sections of Zionist opinion. It is equally useless for Arab leaders to maintain their demands for a form of Constitution, which would render it impossible for His Majesty's Government to carry out, in the fullest sense, the double undertaking. (§3)

This was once again an acknowledgment that a constitution of representative-democratic "form" contradicted one of the two "undertakings", namely the establishment of the Jewish national home – and that therefore a representative-democratic constitution was out of the question. In Jeffries' words, the "British Government had to acknowledge that they made the creation of free institutions in Palestine subservient to the creation of the National Home".¹⁸⁵⁰ The White Paper did however along the way reassure anti-Zionists that "the special position of the [Jewish] Agency, in affording advice and co-operation, does not entitle the Agency, as such, to share in the government of the country." (§6)

However, neither may the Arabs share in the government of the country, because the White Paper did not budge from previous HMG positions not only on the denial in principle of Palestinian "demands for a... Constitution", but also regarding the limited powers and non-representative composition of any Legislative Council. The creation of such an LC was however regarded by Passfield as urgent: "a measure of self-government in Palestine must, in the interests of the community as a whole, be taken in hand without further delay." (§11)¹⁸⁵¹ Despite the fact of the 8-year-long "refusal of the Arab population as a whole to co-operate" with the "measure" of self-government being offered,

[HMG] have decided that the time has arrived for a further step in the direction of the grant to the people of Palestine, of a measure of self-government compatible with the terms of the Mandate. His Majesty's Government accordingly intend to set up a Legislative Council generally on the lines indicated in the statement of British policy in Palestine issued by Mr. Churchill in June 1922. (§11, 12)

With considerable stubbornness HMG evidently considered it conceivable that this time around, as opposed to eight years earlier, the Palestinians might go along with the very same LC proposal. If not, the Palestinians were warned that "all possible steps will be taken to circumvent ... an attempt" to "prevent" the British in "giving effect" to their warmed-up LC proposal. (§12, 13)

Woven into the treatment of 'Constitutional Development' are the paternalistic premises that the Arabs still need to "obtain practical experience" in governance and that Britain knows what's best, i.e. has identified the

obvious advantages to be gained by all sections of the population from the establishment of such a Council. It should be of special benefit to the Arab section of the population, who do not at present possess any constitutional means for putting their views on social and economic matters before the Government. Their representatives on the Council which is to be

¹⁸⁵⁰ Jeffries 1939, p 603.

¹⁸⁵¹ See also Gilbert 1976, pp 10-11, 17.

set up will, of course, be in the position, not only to present the views of the Arab section of the population on these and other matters, but also to participate in discussions thereon. (§12)

The offer to only “present views” and “participate in discussions”, moreover concerning only “social and economic matters”, removed any doubt that no British political concessions would be made. In particular on the matter of immigration – regarded as both an economic and a political matter by the Palestinians, but by the British ostensibly as only an “economic matter” – the LC, and *ipso facto* the Palestinians, were to be given a chance only for “discussions” but no legislative power.

Nevertheless, backed up by the two enquiries of Shaw and Hope Simpson [>220; >233] and a report of a special Cabinet Committee on Policy in Palestine [>231; >232], the Sections on “social and economic development” (§15-28) began with a bang:

It can now be definitely stated that at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation there remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve. (§15)

Note that HMG was respecting the property rights of these “various Jewish agencies” who held reserve land, exercising no pressure to open them up for Arab use. Again, this basic take on land policy had been expressed by the Arab Executive Committee ever since 1924.¹⁸⁵²

There was also a shift from the Mandate language of merely ‘not prejudicing’ the position of the Arab to one pledging “development”, “advancement” and “improvement” of the lot of the *fellahin*, for after all

the Arab population, while lacking the advantages enjoyed by the Jewish settlers, has, by the excess of births over deaths, increased with great rapidity, while the land available for its sustenance has decreased by about a million dunums. This area has passed into Jewish hands. (§17, 23, 24)

No amount of numerical acrobatics performed by Zionist historians such as Kenneth Stein¹⁸⁵³ can erase the fact of the non-availability to Palestinians, forever, of these million dunums.

The White Paper endorsed John Hope Simpson’s view [>233] that only after increased agricultural productivity, i.e., “better use of the land”, can there be “additional Jewish agricultural settlement”, and until then “transfers of land will be permitted” only if the Government is absolutely sure there is no “prejudice” to the non-Jews. (§22-24) This intent was roughly the same as that in the Cabinet Committee report of 15 September 1930, viz.,

¹⁸⁵² CO 733/74, pp 115-29, Point 4), >178.

¹⁸⁵³ Stein 1984, *passim*.

“limitation of Jewish immigration to such numbers as could be settled on unused land already in Jewish ownership”.¹⁸⁵⁴ [^{>231}] But it was not as strong as Hope Simpson’s statement in his private letter to Passfield that

It is essential that every available dunum of land should now be retained to provide holdings for those who, having lost their land, desire to cultivate, and to increase the size of, the existing holdings where the *fellahin* have not got sufficient land for their needs.¹⁸⁵⁵ [^{>230}]

Present Arab tenants should be given “some form of occupancy rights to secure them against ejection or the imposition of excessive rental”. (§24) In her Zionist-centric and largely apolitical, economic analysis of the first decade of the Mandate, Barbara Smith presents detailed and comprehensive information on the number and type of permitted immigrants, and also points out that more often than not the concept of economic absorptive capacity referred not to that of the entire economy but to the increasingly separated-off Zionist part of the economy – the *yishuv*’s ability to employ immigrants.¹⁸⁵⁶

Good news for the Palestinians and bad news for the Zionists was the White Paper’s support for Hope Simpson’s argument [^{>233}]¹⁸⁵⁷ that condoning the policies of hiring Jews only and of Jewish-owned land’s being the “inalienable property of the Jewish people” was a violation of the Mandate’s Article 6. The Zionist position was

that such restrictions are necessary to secure the largest possible amount of Jewish immigration and to safeguard the standard of life of the Jewish labourer from the danger of falling to the lower standard of the Arab. However logical such arguments may be from the point of view of a purely national movement, it must, nevertheless, be pointed out that they take no account of the provisions of Article 6 of the Mandate, which expressly requires that, in facilitating Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land, the Administration of Palestine must ensure that ‘the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced.’¹⁸⁵⁸ (§19, 20)

The White Paper was right to note that in addition to the economic justification – keeping wages up for Jews – considerations of “a purely national movement” were actually guiding immigration policy. (§20) The White Paper did not, however, take up Hope Simpson’s call for such “objectionable... terms” of land titles, leases and employment contracts to be “radically altered”.¹⁸⁵⁹ Prime Minister MacDonald’s ‘Black Letter’ to Weizmann of 13 February 1931 would anyway settle this question once and for all: in HMG’s eyes, hiring only Jews, and rendering illegal the sale of Jewish land to Arabs, were OK.¹⁸⁶⁰

For HMG, under its slightly new philosophy, the number of immigration permits for workers must depend on the “total of unemployed in Palestine”, requiring a re-definition of the ‘economic absorptive capacity’ criterion:

¹⁸⁵⁴ Porath 1977, p 30.

¹⁸⁵⁵ CAB 24/215/1, §10.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Smith 1993, pp 64–82.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Hope Simpson 1930, pp 53–56.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Also Smith 1993, e.g. pp 159, 180.

¹⁸⁵⁹ Hope Simpson 1930, Conclusions. Land. §4/ca. p 143.

¹⁸⁶⁰ MacDonald 1931, §5, 17.

[T]he obligation contained in Article 6 to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land, is qualified by the requirement to ensure that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced. (§8) ... The economic capacity of the country to absorb new immigrants must therefore be judged with reference to the position of Palestine as a whole in regard to unemployment... (§27)

Article 6 was stronger than the Balfour Declaration in terms of protection for non-Jews, and the first statement above, in this White Paper, is slightly stronger than Article 6: it replaced “while ensuring that the rights and position...” with “is qualified by the requirement to ensure...”. We now have a tangible “requirement”: the facilitation of Jewish immigration would now be justified *if and only if* the non-Jews are not made worse off – only if it were ‘Pareto efficient’, if you will.

One criterion for the number of permits was the “shortage of land” attested by the Shaw Commission [220]. (§28) It was conceded that the Arabs suffer under a general “economic depression” and a “serious degree of... unemployment”. (§27, 28) Thus, the temporary suspension of immigration for the category of “employed persons” [to be sure only one of many categories in the ‘Labour Schedules’] of May 1930 had been “fully justified”. (§28)

Clearly, if immigration of Jews results in preventing the Arab population from obtaining the work necessary for its maintenance, or if Jewish unemployment unfavourably affects the general labour position, it is the duty of the Mandatory Power under the Mandate to reduce, or, if necessary, to suspend, such immigration until the unemployed portion of the ‘other sections’ is in a position to obtain work. (§28)

More than any other passage, this threatened the further growth of the immigrants’ national home – its ‘crystallisation’ – and led to strong Zionist protests. On 17 November in the House of Commons James de Rothschild would put it this way: “we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews...”¹⁸⁶¹ [242]

Recall that in the proposed Legislative Council “all sections of the population”, even the Arabs, could “discuss” immigration (§12), but it was with the Jewish section of the population that the British were already discussing it, and indeed on this matter HMG intended

to promote amicable relations between the Jewish authorities in Palestine and the Immigration Department. It is clearly desirable to establish closer co-operation and consultation between the Jewish authorities and the Government, and the closer and more cordial co-operation becomes, the easier it should be to arrive at an agreed Schedule based on a thorough understanding, on both sides, of the economic needs of the country. (§28)

Through “amicability” and “cordiality”, that is, the Jews should be persuaded to moderate their immigration demands. All the while, though, the third party, the Palestinians, were left out, and in any case were not “authorities”, and even if they had been mentioned here in connection with deciding the immigration Schedule, the “needs” to be met were merely “economic” ones, not the political ones that were the thorn stuck ever more deeply in the side of the indigenous people.

¹⁸⁶¹ Hansard 1930a, c179.

Having already complained that they had received “little assistance from either side in healing the breach between them” after the August 1929 disturbances (§2),¹⁸⁶² in closing HMG once again deflected responsibility away from themselves; although HMG was the party nurturing the establishment of the institutions of a Jewish proto-state and working slowly but surely for the Jews to have an “imported majority”¹⁸⁶³ it shifted the responsibility onto the two communities, appealing once again to each side to lower their demands and declaring that

What is required is that both races should consent to live together and to respect each other’s needs and claims. (§28)

Of course the *Zionist Jews* were not a “race”, and before the British entered the picture the two actual “races” *had* lived together; as the Palestinians themselves and the Palin [>88], Haycraft [>122] and Shaw [>220] Commissions had confirmed, the *Zionist Mandate* was the cause of tension and conflict, not the religion or ethnicity of the immigrants. For this reason, by the way, Hope Simpson had confidentially recommended that the cost of managing the conflict on the street be borne by HMG, not the Palestine Government¹⁸⁶⁴ – a recommendation implicitly rejected by Passfield (§25).

Ghandour’s summary of Passfield’s tightrope walk:

Passfield upheld Hope Simpson’s report and emphasized the dual obligation of the Mandate, negating the precedence of the Jewish National Home over the Mandatory’s other obligations [to the Arabs]. The White Paper linked Jewish immigration directly to the number of unemployed in Palestine, ignoring previous guidelines regarding the country’s capacity for absorbing new immigrants. ... Most significantly, the White Paper provided that State Lands were to be reserved for landless Arabs, in an initiative defined as a public purpose, thereby giving it priority over Jewish settlement on those lands, which had been assured with Article 6 of the Mandate. The White Paper called for a cessation or at least reduction of Jewish immigration and was welcomed by the Palestinian population.¹⁸⁶⁵

She is accurately saying that the White Paper shifted away from Jewish priority but stopped short of indigenous priority, landing at a spot of intended parity.¹⁸⁶⁶ Many in “the Palestinian population” she refers to, though, did not welcome the White Paper, judging its concessions on the named points to be outweighed by Britain’s hard line in denying any self-determination. On this *constitutional* point the Zionists needn’t have worried, even had the Prime Minister not written his ‘Black Letter’ on Friday-the-13th in February 1931, for HMG was giving the Palestinians absolutely nothing – one consequence being that future Whitehall whims could take back any pro-Palestinian policies on *land* and *immigration*.

¹⁸⁶² Also CAB 24/215/1, pp 7-8, Committee on Policy, >231.

¹⁸⁶³ Khalidi 2009, pp 32, 25, *passim*.

¹⁸⁶⁴ CAB 24/215/1, pp 16-19, §18, >230.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Ghandour 2010, pp 86-87.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Also Jeffries 1939, p 656.

Looking back a bit, the Cavendish Committee's decision of 27 July 1923 [¹⁶⁷] that ditching the Balfour Declaration would cost Britain too much international prestige meant that Britain had painted itself into a corner. By 1930 the paint had dried, and it could have saved face by declaring, not that it was abandoning the project of the Jewish national home, but that it was now, or soon would be, finished. That is, the home was built, so the Mandate could 'legally' be relinquished with British prestige intact.¹⁸⁶⁷ Any violent Zionist reactions could have been easily squashed militarily. Such a decision, however, with the potential to complete a transition from a Mandated territory to a democratic Palestinian national home, would only come nine years later, after the Great Rebellion, with the White Paper of 17 May 1939. [⁴¹⁰]

¹⁸⁶⁷ Also CO 733/191/15, Document 3, p iv [²²²]; CO 733/183/2, p 82 [²³²]; CAB 24/215/9, p 208 [²³²]; Hansard 1930a, cc104, 153, 159, 197, 199 [²⁴²]; CO 733/197/2, pp 64-72/\$5-8 [²⁴³]; CO 733/257/12, Part 2, pp 2, 4-6 [²⁶⁶]; CAB 24/278/25, p 13 [³⁶⁴]; FO 371/21864, p 232.

On 22 October 1930 **High Commissioner John Chancellor wrote** to O.R. G. Williams, John Shuckburgh and Passfield at the Colonial Office relating the negative local Zionist reaction to the White Paper:¹⁸⁶⁸

Kisch and Rutenberg waited upon me at once to protest formally against the statement of policy. ... Rutenberg... said that [it] was contrary to the Balfour Declaration in that it had killed the Jewish National State. I told him that the Balfour Declaration did not provide for a Jewish National State, that the Jews had been repeatedly told that H.M.G. did not contemplate the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. ... He maintained that all the Jews had interpreted the Balfour Declaration as meaning the creation of a Jewish National State in Palestine [and] that by the Declaration of Policy England had made enemies of 15 million Jews! I said that that might be so, but it was only British troops that made it possible for any Jews to remain in Palestine at all at the present time.

As for the Arabs, they

purport to be disappointed that the Balfour Declaration and Mandate have not been cancelled, which shows how unteachable they are.

To Rutenberg a day later:

I assured him the H.M.G. was not hostile to the Jews or Zionism, and that the statement of policy contained little or nothing that was not in the White Paper of 1922, which the Zionists had formally accepted.

It was true that in sticking to the Mandate as such, not granting self-government, granting the Jews political status as of right and not on sufferance, and treating the two groups with parity, the new White Paper was not very different from the old. Its restrictions on land use and immigration, though, did have the potential to stop the national home before it could grow into a state. However, lacking self-government, the majority of the inhabitants would be powerless to fight any future British re-reversal of such policies.

Chancellor then complained that the letter in the *Times* that day by Conservatives Stanley Baldwin, Joseph Chamberlain and Leo Amery (supported by Churchill), which rejected the Passfield White Paper as straying a bit from the first obligation of the Balfour Declaration,¹⁸⁶⁹ meant party politics, in which case

Palestine will become a running sore and a potential danger to the safety of the Empire, like Ireland. ... The Baldwin letter has already had some bad effect in arousing the suspicions of the Moslems. The Grand Mufti came to see me to-day to ask if it meant that the Conservatives would reverse the policy of H.M.G. if they came into power. I said that I thought not.

In fact it would be the same Government, led by Labour's Ramsay MacDonald, that with the Black Letter of 13 February 1931 [^{>246}] would "reverse [its own] policy" as stated in

¹⁸⁶⁸ CO 733/183/3, pp 94-100, all quotations.

¹⁸⁶⁹ See Jeffries 1939, pp 662-63.

parts of the Passfield White Paper, reverting back to the 1922 White Paper and thus placating the Jewish Zionists. Finally, Chancellor added that “the Arabs will not meet the Jews until the Balfour Declaration has been cancelled and the Mandate withdrawn.”

That Chancellor's views had moved in favour of the 'Arab' side on Legislative Council issues (elected or nominated, reflecting majorities/minorities, weak or powerful), is indicated by his **words to Colonial Official O.R.G. Williams** on 25 October 1930.¹⁸⁷⁰ The final version of the White Paper, he said,

has been in the hands of the Jews for some days and as they are leaving no stone unturned to procure the omission of references to a Legislative Council, I fear that the delay in publication [in Palestine] may be due to pressure from them to have the statement of policy amended. The Jewish leaders to whom [CO Under-Secretary, Drummond] Shiels granted an interview made considerable impression upon him. ... He at first asked me to collaborate with him in preparing a telegram to the S. of S. [Secretary of State Passfield] urging that the statement of policy should contain only a vague reference to a legislative council and no mention of any decision as to whether it would be elected or nominated. I emphatically refused to have anything to do with such a suggestion. I pointed out to him that the course he proposed would be to shirk the issue and to confirm the Arabs, after all that was said to them in London, in their distrust of His Majesty's Government. It was then that he decided to send to the S. of S. the telegram proposing a nominated legislative council, which the S. of S. has doubtless shown you [Williams] and with which I refused to associate myself.

He was able to get Hebrew and Arabic translations of the White Paper done on 24 October and simultaneously into the hands of people locally, "so that there will be no grounds for complaints of discrimination from any party, although Kisch has complained that he, as head of the Jewish Agency, was not given priority of one hour!"

¹⁸⁷⁰ CO 733/183/2, pp 23-24.

According to the CO's collection of newspaper commentary on the White Paper,¹⁸⁷¹ *Falastin* of Yaffa on 23 October 1930 was relatively happy with it (having evidently seen an English copy):

A certain person saw in a dream another offering him 999 pounds, which he refused to receive unless the sum was 1000 pounds no more and no less. He awoke and regretted his act. ... This rightly applies to our friends the Zionists who were not satisfied with a bi-national government but insisted on having a 'Jewish State' without the participation of any 'Goy' whether an Arab or an Englishman. ... [T]he British Government in its recent official statement has put an end to the life of the Balfour Declaration but wanted to keep its name alive. ... [T]he spirit of the policy has been completely changed in its consequences... Hence, let us co-operate! (pp 42-44)

Al Jamia al Arabiya of Jerusalem was more critical, according to the British intelligence officer who transmitted the Arab-press items: "The new statement of policy... is not to be taken as granting the Arabs their aspiration but goes a long way to doing so." In their opinion, John Hope Simpson had substantiated long-standing Arab complaints [>233], but the new White Paper's Legislative Council was no better than that of 1922, since "the members thereof will be appointed whether the nation rejects to elect them or not". (pp 44-45) [>442]

Sawt Ashaab of Bethlehem on 25 October, urging co-operation with HMG,

remarks that although the British Government's new policy puts an end once and for all to the golden dreams of the Zionists, yet it gives the Arabs a Legislative Council inferior even to that of Trans-Jordan. ... [I]n the sense of the word representation... they wish... to have a free Council composed of the people and for the people. ... [Since] the Statement of Policy... eliminates the uncertainty and apprehension that overshadowed the Arabs in the past... the Arabs should not hesitate a moment to accept the new policy and to elect their representatives to cooperate with the Government, whatever is the standard of their representation, as they should bear in mind that to be, is better than not to be, represented in the Council... in constant touch with the Government... (pp 47-48)

On 27 October *Al Hayat* of Jerusalem

writes that it wants... to congratulate the British Government for stating that the Balfour Declaration does not mean the creation of a Jewish State, as both extremist and non-extremist Zionists have dreamed of, and to thank Mr. MacDonald's Cabinet for this clear statement which puts an end to that which has happened and is happening in Palestine to the prejudice of the Arabs. (p 49)

Falastin on 25 October noted that the newly-proposed Legislative Council "does not bring any effective benefit to the Arabs, as they will not be truly and fully represented

¹⁸⁷¹ CO 733/182/8, all quotations.

thereon.” Nevertheless, “The Arabs have already declared their intention to cooperate with the Government and to participate in the Administration through a Legislative Council” – even though 3 of the 10 official [i.e. British] members “will be Jewish. These are Mr. Abramson [Commissioner of Lands], Mr. Hyamson and Mr. Bentwich [Attorney General]. If however the Jews insist on refusing to participate in the Council, the aforesaid three Jewish officials will be sufficient to represent them.” What’s more, Arab opinion in the various communities is so diverse that the number of unofficial members needs to be doubled. (pp 49-50)

On 29 October *Falastin* added that all depends on whether the Government really acts in accordance with the new policy and spirit of the LC, but

it fears that [HMG will] follow the old policy and overstep, in fact, what it has defined in words in its new declaration. Looking into the record of the British Government the Arabs fail to find in it, since the day of the McMahon correspondence to King Hussein until the days of the Samuel-Churchill White Book, anything but words. (p 51)

The Black Letter of 13 February 1931 [^{>246}] would verify *Falastin*’s fears and predictions.

From Jerusalem again, *Al Jamia al Arabiya* on 29 October (pp 51-53)

is astonished at the British Government’s request to the Arabs of Palestine to accept its old policy which is put into a new White Paper and to cooperate with it for its application at a time when it declares that it is useless for the Arab leaders to maintain their demand for a form of Constitution which would render it impossible for His Majesty’s Government to carry out, in the fullest sense, the double undertaking stipulated in the Mandate. The undertaking concerning the rights of the Arabs, remarks the paper, deprives them of their national and political rights as a nation which desires to live freely in its own land; and, on the other hand, it introduces a foreign nation, in the fullest sense of the word, to be partners of the Arabs so as to form of this collection a ‘prosperous Palestinian Community’ and not an ‘Arab nation’.

Further, HMG has indeed admitted it has taken on “a difficult and intricate problem in view of its double undertaking”, but this was Britain’s problem, not the Arabs’. “30% of the rural Arab families [have been] dispossessed of their land, and a million dunums of Arab land... transferred to the hands of the Jews.” The paper’s conclusion in direct translation:

The course of events in this country after the Occupation do not record, so far as the Arabs are concerned, any display of mercy or compassion on the part of the Palestine Government for, as a matter of fact, British policy in Palestine is still based on threats, violence, intimidation, dispossession and eviction.

Finally, *Sout Ashaab* on 29 October (pp 53-54)

observes... that the British Government is at last convinced of the necessity for clipping the wings of the National Home in such a way that should save its political and moral honour from the shame which resulted in consequence of its Zionist policy. The paper is glad to note that the Government’s statement in respect of the National Home supports the just claims of the Arabs relative to the stoppage of immigration.

Even though the new LC was no better than that of 1922,

now the political situation has been completely changed [so as to] destroy the Balfour Declaration. ... If... the Arabs will not take advantage of this opportunity [to participate in the LC], they will merely prove to the world that they are incompetent to tackle the situation... *Sawt ashaab...* urges the Arab Executive not to adhere to the decisions adopted in the previous Congresses and take into consideration the [better] circumstances [and] should remember that cooperation with the Government on the basis of the new policy does not prevent the Arabs from pursuing their efforts to attain their national aims nor does it impose upon them the recognition of anything that would impede their movement for independence and Arab unity.

The “clipping the wings of the National Home” and the “better circumstances” seem to refer to the prospect that, even if the Home were not simply declared built, work on the building would slow down or temporarily halt. This newspaper was also claiming that participation in a Legislative Council and holding onto a principled rejection of the entire Mandate were not contradictory – a position theoretically solving the dilemma of whether or not to boycott, across the board, an illegitimate Mandatory.

According to Porath the Arab Executive Committee saw the White Paper as a “possible indication of a return to British justice” and called off the usual strike on Balfour Declaration Day (2 November) [²⁴³], while the newspaper run by Amin al-Husseini criticised the White Paper’s shortcomings and a group of militant students held the traditional strike anyway.¹⁸⁷²

These commentaries reflect all the issues until now discussed, both the ‘Land, Settlement and Immigration’ issues tackled by John Hope Simpson [²³³] and the basic political, constitutional issue of who owned, and should have final constitutional and legislative say in, Palestine. They express the judgment (hope) that the tide had finally turned and they show that even if the LC was in principle undemocratic, there was more chance than before of peaceful Arab cooperation.

¹⁸⁷² Porath 1977, p 31, citing Darwaza, *Hawla al-Harakah*, III, pp 66 & 68 and *Al-Jamiah al-Arabiyya* of 24 October, 27 October and 2 November 1930.

238. Still another Cabinet Committee

6 November 1930

On 6 November 1930 the London Government formed yet another Cabinet Committee on Palestine in which more weight than heretofore would be held by the Foreign Office, whose head, Arthur Henderson, was placed at Passfield's side, officially "in consequence of the fact that he [Henderson] represents the Government on the Council of the League of Nations"; as for its remit, the Committee

should get in touch with the representatives of the Zionists in the most politic and tactful manner possible in the circumstances and should make recommendations as to the attitude to be taken up by the Government in view of the reception of the recently-issued White Paper.¹⁸⁷³

In other words, the Zionists, enjoying much more support at the League of Nations than the Arabs, and who had "received" the White Paper negatively, should expressly be consulted as to what alterations of Government policy they might desire. The other two Committee members were Thomas (not Walter) Shaw and A.V. Alexander. [*also* >231; >246]

¹⁸⁷³ CAB 23/65/17, p 276.

Using the forum of a **Letter to the Editor of the Times**,¹⁸⁷⁴ sure to be seen by interested Palestinians, Colonial Secretary Passfield replied on 6 November 1930 to some allegedly false claims by Zionist critics, assuring them that the White Paper's §15 [>234] did not prevent allotting "unoccupied areas of Government land" to Jews, that §19-23 did not mean the "existing practice of the Jewish Agency of employing Jewish labour on its undertakings, and of stipulating in its leases that only Jewish labour would be employed... would be brought to an end"¹⁸⁷⁵, and that §28 did not prohibit further Jewish immigration as long as any Arab is unemployed.

§26-28 of the Passfield White Paper, on immigration, in fact were more vaguely formulated than similar positions in Hope Simpson's report and left ample room, so to speak, for Jewish immigrants. Not only for this reason is Sheffer's view incorrect that "The White Paper was, in fact, an implementation of Chancellor's original proposals" of 17 January 1930.¹⁸⁷⁶ After each phrase is parsed, both Passfield's White Paper and his letter to the *Times* exuded nothing of the pro-Palestinian spirit and little of the pro-Palestinian content of Chancellor's memo [>218] or for that matter of the Cabinet Committee on Palestine of the previous September [>232]. But the complex and sometimes equivocal long-windedness of the White Paper made it hard for the British Government to communicate with anybody, especially those whose mother tongue was not English.

Returning to Passfield's letter to the *Times*, §15 of his White Paper in fact did not take a stand on whether unused state land could be leased to Jews – only that the amount of such land was "negligible" – but it did say that until the Jews' own unused land was developed, all other land was closed to them. §20 did in fact only say that the Zionist policies "take no account of the provisions of Article 6 of the Mandate", but did not take a stand on whether they would be declared illegal. And only the most Scholastic of lawyers would claim that the wording of the first paragraph of §28 left any doubt that Arab unemployment would indeed justify a "reduction" or "suspension" of Jewish immigration. The problem for the Palestinians was twofold: the language was ambiguous and loopholed and the Cabinet members in charge of Palestine, especially with the addition of Foreign Secretary Henderson, desired to use that language to avoid confrontation with the Zionist lobby. The Government's attempt to clear up the connection between unemployment and immigration levels in the House of Commons on 17 November would again consist of political words that did not clarify anything.¹⁸⁷⁷ [>242]

In this letter Passfield further, truthfully, assured the Zionists that the White Paper's words meant that land becoming "available for settlement", for instance through irrigation, "may eventually become available for Jewish settlers", and that "colonizing opera-

¹⁸⁷⁴ CO 733/182/8, p 82; CAB 27/433, pp 347-49; *Times of London* 6 November 1930, p 15.

¹⁸⁷⁵ See Hope Simpson 1930, Conclusion. Land. §4/ca. pp 142-43.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Sheffer 1973, p 53.

¹⁸⁷⁷ E.g. Hansard 1930a, c97.

tions can continue ‘without break’ on land already owned by the Jewish Agency – such “colonizing operations” logically including immigrants to do the colonising. Finally, also accurately, eight of the “nine official categories of Jewish immigrants” suffered no restrictions by the White Paper, which mentioned only the category of “Wage Earners” [actually “employed persons”] in order to illustrate the principle of limiting immigration by the criterion of “‘absorptive capacity’ of the country at the time.”

Apparently, not even this backtracking letter placated such pro-Zionists as Stanley Baldwin, David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, from whom a letter also appeared the same day in the *Times*,¹⁸⁷⁸ meaning that even stronger backtracking on the hints of more pro-Palestinian policies might be needed.

Passfield’s Colonial Office was making extensive notes on “Jewish criticisms of White Paper”¹⁸⁷⁹, and the British view that the alarm amongst Jewish Zionists was without basis was summed up in what seems to be a one-page hand-written draft of a telegram¹⁸⁸⁰ on the back of a flyer announcing for 7 November a lecture at the University of London by Lord Lloyd (who would be Colonial Secretary 12 May 1940–4 February 1941). In the chair at the lecture was to be former High Commissioner Plumer, and the handwriting is either his, Lloyd’s or even Chancellor’s:

I have definitive assurance from British Government that Jewish protests against Government Statement of Policy are founded on complete misconceptions. Stop. Government explicitly declare their intention of executing Mandate exactly in accordance with all its terms. Stop. They make no change whatever in the interpretation of Mandate adhered to by all successive Ministries since 1922. Stop. They neither enact nor intend any stoppage or prohibition of Jewish immigration, and they expressly provide for continuation of colonisation operations without break. Stop. They set no limit to whatever expansion of National Home in accordance with terms of Mandate may prove practicable. Stop. It is indeed in order to make available additional land that Government undertakes large scheme of land development and irrigation.

Whenever, exactly, this draft was written, on one page it outlined the backtracking message of what would become Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald’s ‘Black Letter’ to Weizmann of 13 February 1930 [>246].

¹⁸⁷⁸ *Times of London* 6 November 1930, p 13.

¹⁸⁷⁹ *E.g.* CO 733/183/3, pp 49-59.

¹⁸⁸⁰ CO 733/183/3, p 60.

A series of telegrams between London and Jerusalem¹⁸⁸¹ reveal that Zionist lobbying in London against the White Paper had led on 6 November to the Cabinet's agreeing with Weizmann and "his colleagues in America" to make a statement in the House of Commons (foreseen for 17 November). [²³⁸] On 12 November a telegram to Chancellor in Jerusalem read:

Doubts having been expressed [by the Zionists] as to the compatibility of some passages of the White Paper of October 21st with certain articles of the Palestine Mandate and other passages having proved liable to misunderstanding, H.M. Government have invited representatives of the Jewish Agency to confer with them on these matters. As the parties to the Mandate are strongly desirous of securing its correct interpretation and impartial administration, it is hoped that agreement will be reached on any points of difference when a further statement concerning these issues will be made.

The "parties" – that is, HMG and the Jewish Agency – would soon agree on changes to the White Paper, in the end precipitating Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's Black Letter of 13 February 1931 addressed to Chaim Weizmann [²⁴⁶]. The publication of the contents of the above telegram, which announced a "further statement" after consultation with the Jewish Agency, was necessary because the Commons debate on the following Monday would be public. In the event the Commons would *not* approve the White Paper, and it never became official policy through an accompanying Command paper or Statement of Policy. Churchill's 1922 White Paper thus remained in effect until replaced by that of Malcolm MacDonald in May 1939. In any case this foreseen dialogue between Britain and the Zionist movement reveals starkly the contrast to the non-existent dialogue between Britain and the Palestinians.

In two telegrams back to Passfield, on 13 and 14 November 1930, Chancellor sounded the alarm, strongly advising adherence to the White Paper lest its abandonment lead to Arab uprisings; he was aware that the Palestinians had for the last decade been objecting to exactly what had happened, namely privileged Zionist access to and influence with HMG. Passfield in his reply on 14 November equivocated, saying he was "most reluctant naturally to disregard your advice in matter of proposed statement" but that for the moment all depended on "Monday's debate" [^{17 November}, ²⁴²] and the Government's (the Palestine Government's?) report on it. He only said that Chancellor should inform him "if you anticipate that additional military assistance will be required to deal with possible disturbances." Soldiers and violence, rather than sticking to the words of the Shaw Commission [²²⁰], the Cabinet Committee on Policy in Palestine [²³¹], John Hope Simpson [²³³] and Passfield's own White Paper [²³⁴], were the default method of communicating with the locals.

¹⁸⁸¹ CO 733/183/3, pp 103-16.

Prompted by the Arabs' knowledge of the heavy Zionist lobbying against the Passfield White Paper, after receiving an HMG "statement" sent to him as a telegram dated 12 November¹⁸⁸², Chancellor telegraphed (No. 324 SECRET) back to Passfield on 15 November:

I urged Arab leaders before coming to any conclusions in regard to statement, to await report of Monday's debate [in the Commons]. They repeated what they have already told me that the whole Arab population, owing to their anxiety lest H.M. Gov should modify their policy in deference to Jews, is in a state of tension but the leaders themselves still had confidence in H.M. Government and did not believe that they would retreat from promises contained in WP. They said that the statement that HMG had invited representatives of Jewish Agency to confer with them in regard to the WP while they had not given similar opportunities to Arabs would create very bad impression among the Arabs and urged me to issue a Government communique with a view to allaying their anxieties. I have not felt able to comply with that request.¹⁸⁸³

Based on reading most of what Chancellor wrote during these years, in my opinion he did "not feel able" to tell the lie requested of him because he wanted to be honest with the Arab leaders. And if Chancellor was correct in thinking the Palestinians "still had confidence" in HMG and thus believed it would hold the line, the Palestinians were wrong. However that may be, after the 17 November Commons debate the Arab Executive Committee would on 11 December deliver a 71-page document of disappointment. [>243]

In the event, after the Commons session of 17 November Chancellor would say that the Arabs had received the Government report of the Commons debate quite well¹⁸⁸⁴ – but of course the actual meetings between the Cabinet Committee and the Jewish Agency with a view to altering the White Paper were yet to take place. The importance of these meetings, which are outside the scope of this book, is indicated by the fact that Passfield's colleague at the London School of Economics, active Zionist Harold Laski, would accompany Weizmann to them, with Felix Frankfurter arriving for discussions with "My dear Webb" and with other Zionists based in England.¹⁸⁸⁵ Again, no such dialogues with Palestinians were foreseen, and Jamal al-Husseini would have a hard time in December even obtaining an audience at the Colonial Office [>244].

Shuckburgh on 12 November had already shared Chancellor's fears, but wrote a memo saying:

As regards the proposed statement [of 17 November], I understand that it is the price that must be paid in order to induce Dr. Weizmann to resume discussions with the Cabinet; and that, as it is held to be all-important at this juncture that such discussions should take place, and should be known to be taking place, the view is held that the price must be paid.¹⁸⁸⁶

¹⁸⁸² Also Jeffries 1939, p 664.

¹⁸⁸³ CO 733/183/3, pp 85-86.

¹⁸⁸⁴ CO 733/183/3, p 62.

¹⁸⁸⁵ CO 733/183/3, pp 64-65.

¹⁸⁸⁶ CO 733/183/3, p 2.

(Weizmann had resigned his Zionist job in protest against the White Paper.) In order not to “infuriate the Arabs”, Shuckburgh advised that Passfield make the necessary “kind of explanation, or apologia to the Jews” in a private letter to Weizmann, not for publication; Passfield agreed.¹⁸⁸⁷

¹⁸⁸⁷ CO 733/183/3, p 16.

Under the impression that HMG was backtracking on the Passfield White Paper [234], **the Moslem-Christian Association of Ludd**, “comprising members representing the villages of Ludd District”, on 11 November 1930 **wrote to HC Chancellor** that

The British Government should know that the White Paper included only a part of the Arab rights. If it is true that the Government decided to recede from the policy accepted therein for fear and satisfaction of the Jews, it should not forget that the policy of conciliation is not convincing and is of bad consequence, and [it] shall be impossible to put an end to the disputes and inconveniences. ... We depend upon justice and equity and shall, God willing, attain our full rights. ... (Signed) Shehadeh Bassouneh, Secretary.¹⁸⁸⁸

Five days later **the Moslem-Christian Society at Beisan wrote him to**

express our sorrow and gloominess for the retreat of His Majesty's Government in her declaration concerning the new Statement of Policy which is due to the wide spread propaganda of the Zionists... It is also required to state that the defeat of the British Government before the Jews will render those Arabs who wanted to cooperate with her on the basis of the White Book unwilling to do so, the effect of which will lead to moral disturbance and anarchy in the country. ... We regret the defeat of the British Government before the false cause of the Jews who intend to destroy the peaceful Arab nation. ... At last we beg that this our protestation be forwarded to His Majesty's Government. (Signed) Yusuf Zamreek, Secretary.¹⁸⁸⁹

The predictions of HMG's “defeat” and “moral disturbance and anarchy” were accurate.

¹⁸⁸⁸ CO 733/182/8, p 24.

¹⁸⁸⁹ CO 733/182/8, pp 25-26.

This entry should be read in tandem with entries >290 and >342 on the Commons debates of 24 March 1936 and 21 July 1937, respectively, since many of the same issues and arguments were raised.

The Commons did not end up actually voting on the Passfield White Paper [*>234*] at its sitting on 17 November 1930, but **it did discuss it at length**, frankly and intelligently.¹⁸⁹⁰ The sense of the House during the five hours of debate was that it was OK if HMG stood by it, even if its meaning was cloudy, but that it should be revised back towards pro-Zionism, or towards a perfectly ‘balanced’ position – which both Colonial Office spokesman Drummond Shiels (c207-09) and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (c119) promised to do.¹⁸⁹¹ During the debate, Shiels only vaguely elaborated the Government position, and at its end said anti-climactically:

We have made clear (laughter) what we wished to make clear and that is that we stand by the full Mandate, that we intend to carry out the policy of the 1922 White Paper as we have done in the past [and] to see that the dual obligations of the Mandate are fully carried out and that every opportunity is given for the development of the Jewish National Home consistent with the obligations imposed on us by the other side of the Mandate,... (cc208-09)

The laughter was justified.

The debate was exemplary in that stands were taken on roughly **fifteen issues or themes** often already encountered in this chronology. Most of the MPs who spoke argued for privileging the Jewish national home project – including David Lloyd George, Leo Amery (Colonial Secretary 1924-29), William Ormsby-Gore (Colonial Secretary 1936-38), Herbert Samuel (High Commissioner 1920-25), Joseph Kenworthy, Harry Snell (dissenting member of the Shaw Commission in 1929-30 [*>220*]), James de Rothschild [*also >23*], Daniel Hopkin, Harry Nathan, Henry Mond and Leslie Hore-Belisha. Those propounding equal treatment for the two communities were Shiels, MacDonald, Rhys Hopkin Morris, George Jones and A.V. Alexander. Those leaning towards justice for the Arab side were Charles Howard-Bury, Walter Elliot and Seymour Cocks. In sketching the fifteen themes I will usually cite *Hansard* column numbers but sometimes browsing the online record of the debate is faster.

1. There were **no Arabs present**, so this venue for communicating with British political society was closed to them. They of course followed parliamentary proceedings, and tried to influence parliamentarians [*e.g. >217; >244*], and *Falastin* reportedly had launched an English-language edition to cover such events.¹⁸⁹² Pro-Palestinian Arabs did lobby MPs (c171) but most speakers did not even mention the Arab point of view (c164), and only George Antonius got a mention as a “grave and responsible” man (c195; *also* 102, 140).

¹⁸⁹⁰ Hansard 1930a, cc77-210, all citations.

¹⁸⁹¹ See also Beckerman-Boys 2016, pp 223-29.

¹⁸⁹² Khalaf 2011, p 45.

2. Notwithstanding this lack of representation, **the Palestinian position was accurately presented**, in particular by Shiels, with emphasis resting on their absolute rejection of British rule and the Zionist Mandate, their demand for freedom, rejection of Legislative Council proposals and awareness that the national home meant a Jewish state. (cc89-90, 93-94, 107, 144)
3. **Ethical issues figured almost not at all**, the talk instead being of economic progress, governability, history and Jewish political aspirations. Only one speaker, Cocks, explicitly condemned the immorality of HMG's treatment of the Palestinians (cc165-66), while another hinted that maybe the moral and just introduction of "self-governing institutions" should be a Mandatory's prime goal (c93). Although Samuel did acknowledge the unjustness of extreme Zionism (cc120-23; *also* cc135-36), for him the "600,000 Arabs" were only a "practical" difficulty (cc122-23). The inimitable Lloyd George dismissed ethical treatment of the Palestinians by saying that "international interests and international susceptibilities" overrode their claims to self-determination. (cc80-81)
4. The "**historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine**" of the Churchill White Paper and the Mandate [^{>142;} >146] was accurately portrayed as the basis for establishing a **Jewish state** there – not just a 'home', 'national' or otherwise – and as the bedrock of Zionism and of British policy. (cc78-79, 90, 105, 144, 188) But the 'state' in the guise of the 'home' was also sharply criticised. (cc139, 155-58)
5. Many foundations of British Zionist policy, and concepts like 'national home' or various sorts of 'rights', were **equivocal, ambiguous, and unintelligible** (cc92, 105, 152-53, 157), leaving room for whichever interpretation was politically desired. Shiels said the Mandate text's "draughtsman-ship leaves something to be desired". (c92)
6. Britain does and should treat the Arab and Jewish communities with "**equal weight**", with 'parity', for the European immigrants were there "as of right and not on sufferance". [^{>142;}] Fulfilling the 'dual obligation' meant playing no favourites; Britain is "in the position of umpire" (cc77, 94, 102-03, 104-05, 119, 120, 157, 160-63, 181), a position adopted lock, stock and barrel for instance by historian Bernard Wasserstein.¹⁸⁹³ It was left to Cocks to object: "In Palestine we have 700,000 Arabs, whose forefathers have lived there almost as long as the English have lived in England, and 150,000 Jews, the majority of whom have only been there for about 10 years, and... the Government are trying to hold an even balance between these two races..." (c163)
7. Britain was only **reluctantly and at great personal sacrifice** carrying out its "international obligations" and doing its "Mandatory duty" (cc79, 83, 103, 106, 115), as if it hadn't volunteered for the job. Giving up now, so Snell, it would lose face: "Our country has undertaken this very difficult task, and she would be shamed and humiliated before mankind if she either abandoned, betrayed or failed in her trust." (cc152, 145, 146)
8. The Palestinians, said Lloyd George, Samuel and Amery, should quit complaining about loss of political sovereignty and realise that they have been **profiting materially** from the Jewish national home. (cc83-84, 86, 121-22, 130, 147, 171, 179, 184) Economic prosperity is what the Mandate can bring them. Only Morris dissented: "The Jews have contributed to the welfare of Palestine. [However, t]he sole question behind the whole of this issue is, which is to have political domination. That is the whole quarrel. There is no quarrel between Jews and Arabs as such. The quarrel here is about political domination." (c162)

¹⁸⁹³ Wasserstein 1978, pp 7, 17.

9. The Arabs had under-cultivated Palestine and left it “**derelict** for a millennium” (c105), a land of bogs, morasses, wilderness, here and there “a little squalid Arab village”, whereas the Jews had made it productive (cc85, 116, 179). Implied was that the Palestinians had thereby given up the right to use and live on their land as they wished. This view that the Jews deserved a large immigrant presence and political standing in Palestine because they and only they could ‘develop’ the resources of the country, had old and firm backing in Prime Minister MacDonald’s Labour Party.¹⁸⁹⁴ Samuel, incidentally, in a good example of getting lost in the details of agriculture and irrigation to the neglect of the paramount political issue, highlighted the “Kabarra swamp..., saturated with malaria [and with] 300 or 400 Arabs, who had a few water buffaloes, which wallowed in the marshes...” (c126) It was deemed relevant to the political issue at hand, so Samuel, that left to themselves the Arabs would wallow with the buffaloes for centuries to come.
10. While Lloyd George (c82) and Samuel (c131-32) defended **the Jews’ selling to and hiring only other Jews**, Elliot noted that it violated the Mandate’s Article 6 and was “a source of danger to the country” (c189), and Howard-Bury observed that it led to displacement of Arabs (c142-43). Shiels also saw “some danger in the policy” (c98), MacDonald sat non-committally on the fence (c117), and only Cocks, again, flat-out denounced Britain’s support for the practice (c164).
11. **The conflict in Palestine was a racial one** between Jews and Arabs, not a political one between Palestinians and British; lack of harmony and “better relationships” was the problem, not Zionism. (cc99, 108, 186, 207) To be sure, economic and racial conflicts fed off each other. (cc99, 117-18) Howard-Bury disagreed, citing the historic good relations between the races (cc138-39), but Snell called on his Government to work for “racial co-operation. ... One of the latest developments has been the cooperation between Arab and Jewish farmers in relation to a plague of field mice...” (cc150-52)
12. Many speakers emphasised **Jewish racial and cultural superiority**, entailing some claim to Palestine. Lloyd George spoke of that “gifted race” which had “rendered such eternal service to mankind” (cc77, 79; also 84, 88); Amery declared that the “Jewish people”, once in Palestine, would bring “a new contact, a new light, a new spirit of the whole of that region of the Middle East” (c105); Jones saw the Jews on “an entirely different cultural level” than the locals (c175); and Samuel delivered a philo-semitic panegyric identical to that forming the core of his plan for Palestine of fifteen years earlier [s>8] (cc121-22), to which Cocks replied: “I was much impressed... by the moving tribute paid by the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) to the glories of the ancient race of which he himself, if I may say so, is one of the most brilliant ornaments. [If] I take a somewhat different line on this question I hope that he and his friends will not think that I have the least prejudice against the Jewish race which has given so much to the world.” (c163) His “different line” was that any superiority would not trump or even equal the Arabs’ political right to govern their land.
13. The solution to **transfer Palestinians** across the Jordan found favour with Lloyd George (cc86, 102), Samuel (c128) and Snell, then Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party (c149). This went uncontradicted by literally hundreds of MPs – except for Cocks, who said: “I wonder what [Lloyd George] would say if it were suggested that a number of Scotsmen should invade Wales and purchase land and refuse to employ any Welshmen on the land and should

¹⁸⁹⁴ Kelemen 1996, pp 73, 78.

say to the Welsh people, 'You can go across the Severn to England.' That is what is happening in Palestine." (cc164-65) Transfer supporter de Rothschild asked Shiels what the Government thought (cc182, 207), and Shiels said "I shall be very glad to... bring [it] to the notice of" (Colonial Secretary) Passfield (c207).¹⁸⁹⁵

14. The British were **paternalistically "experimenting"** with Palestine and the Palestinians. (cc88, 117) They were "dealing with Eastern peoples", with "thrifless" Arabs who "when a grievance cannot be remedied [have] to have riots and insurrection in order to make their case known." (cc119, 140-42) Their attitudes were based on "unfounded fears" rather than rational consideration, and they needed help and education (tutelage) (cc97, 129, 137, 144, 146) – as if their leaders, poets and journalists had not for decades articulated their wish for self-determination. Cocks again saw through this: "A great deal has been said about the sacredness of the Mandate. There is more humbug talked about mandates, especially this Mandate, than about any international subject. ... [Covenant Article 22, promising] 'administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone'... sounds so paternal, so full of the spirit of loving-kindness. We go to these little nations and say: 'Let me take you by the hand. Let me guide your faltering footsteps along the ways of prosperity and peace until you are strong enough to stand alone in the strenuous conditions of the modern world.' It sounds very fine." (c166)
15. The fear on the part of the Zionist MPs was that the Government was now declaring the national home done and dusted. It had to answer the claim of the 4th Palestine Arab Delegation to London on 5 April 1930 that "It cannot be reasonably argued now, that the Jewish national home in Palestine has not been **already established** under the protection of British bayonets."¹⁸⁹⁶ And as Morris pointed out, the Permanent Mandates Commission had earlier in the fall asked Shiels "when the national home for the Jews would be established. Was it possible to say when the Jews themselves would consider that their National Home had been established? That is the crucial question of the Balfour Declaration."¹⁸⁹⁷ However, as recorded in the PMC minutes, "Dr. Drummond Shiels said he would prefer not to express an opinion on that point." (c153) The Government however assuaged Amery and others by denying "that there should be any **crystallisation** of the present position in regard to the formation of the National Jewish Home." (cc104, 113, 160, 197, 199)

James de Rothschild, speaking against "crystallisation", said that "we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews". (c179)

Rothschild was also alarmed at the message the Government's recent White Paper had sent to the Palestinians, speaking of a

quotation from the 'Felestin,' one of the most important Arab papers in Palestine, which says: "There is nothing but the name left now of the Balfour Declaration. The new Government policy is a glorious triumph for the Arabs containing not one favourable word for the Jews." (c182) [*also >237*]

¹⁸⁹⁵ See Said 1979, pp 99-103.

¹⁸⁹⁶ CO 733/191/15, Document 3, Annexure I, p iv.

¹⁸⁹⁷ See also FO 492/20, p 505, >327.

Shiels in general had to speak opaquely because he knew his Government did not yet have a position. As Kenneth Stein records, only about a week before this debate,

On 11 November the Cabinet approved MacDonald's offer to Weizmann to discuss Palestine. Three days later, HMG officially invited the Jewish Agency to confer with HMG on the compatibility of the White Paper and the Mandate.¹⁸⁹⁸

And the results of these talks were not yet in.

But the Palestinians, even if they had not read the transcript of this debate or known of behind-the-scenes negotiations with the Zionist Organisation, knew that, whatever changes in land and immigration policy might survive, their political position was still that of the underdog. They had repeatedly been accused of intractability and refusing to co-operate (*e.g.* cc89, 127, 170), but to contradict this rendering of British-Palestinian relations Morris pointed out that the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission, when interviewing Shiels, remarked that he (Shiels)

had referred to the English saying that a horse might be brought to the water but it was impossible to make him drink. The horse might, however, in this case have come to the conclusion that the water was unwholesome and that he had very good grounds for refusing to drink it. (c154)

¹⁸⁹⁸ Stein 1984, p 122.

Roughly a dozen years after their first rejection of both their colonisation *per se* and the Jewish-Home/State project in particular, the locals on 11 December 1930 sent High Commissioner Chancellor a '**Memorandum on the Palestine White Paper** of [21] October, 1930, by the Arab Executive Committee prepared by Awni Abdul Hadi'.¹⁸⁹⁹ [*see also* >263; >386] It requested that he send copies to both Colonial Secretary Passfield and the Permanent Mandates Commission. In the form of a pamphlet, Jamal al-Husseini would distribute it widely in London. [>244]

In the Memorandum's cover letter, AEC President Musa Kazem al-Husseini noted that he was re-iterating the "resolutions passed by the Great [7th] Arab Congress held in the month of June, 1928 [>197], which confirmed the demands of all previous Congresses" [*e.g.* >99], namely (p 57)

(a)... abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate as being contradictory to the pledges given to the Arabs and to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and as being in violation of the natural and national rights of the Arabs. (b)... establishment of a Government responsible to an elected Representative Council. ... [T]he first duty of His Majesty's Government [is] to prohibit at once the transfer to non-Arabs of Arab lands and to stop immigration definitely especially since... the Arabs enjoyed, under the Turkish regime, the maximum measure of self-government...

The *Fallahin* were being "dispossessed by the Jews from the lands which they and their fathers and ancestors before them had cultivated."

Points (a) and (b) showed that the AEC's first concern was as always political rather than economic. On the point of lands and immigration, as James de Rothschild had just said in the House of Commons debate on 17 November [>242], "we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews."¹⁹⁰⁰ Thus that, too, was political: stopping land sales and immigration would destroy the necessary material conditions for the political ("national") Jewish Home.

Given that the White Paper and the studies feeding into it had focussed on land and immigration rather than self-governing institutions, this exceptionally detailed 71-page memorandum, containing 58 separate points, focussed largely on concrete British injustices rather than on the basic injustice of the Mandatory's being in Palestine at all. There was still room, though, to go into the political question in some detail. It opened by quoting from a speech by Samuel [2 November 1917, at the Royal Opera House, >17]¹⁹⁰¹ wherein he revealed his intention "that with a minimum of delay the country may become a purely self-governing commonwealth under the auspices of an established Jewish majority". Moreover, against the well-known objections of the indigenous people, the 1922 White Paper [>142]

¹⁸⁹⁹ CO 733/197/2, pp 56-131, *all citations*.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Hansard 1930a, c179.

¹⁹⁰¹ Khalidi 1997, p 166.

went even farther than the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate in allowing for the indefinite prolongation of the Mandate so as to help the development of the Jewish community, a community which regarded the Jewish National Home as something that will never be “finally established” and needed British protection and support perhaps in perpetuity. (pp 64-72/§5-8)

British explanations of the Mandate’s and 1922 White Paper’s terms obfuscated:

The Arabs who failed to understand anything of these mysteries in 1922 when the White Paper was issued are no better able to understand them after the issue of the recent White Paper [*also* >234; >242]. The Zionist leaders, however, paid no heed to such ambiguous political terms and themselves determined that His Majesty’s Government had come to Palestine for the sole purpose of facilitating Jewish Immigration and close settlement on the land until such time as Palestine would become ‘an independent state under the aegis of a Jewish majority.’ (pp 67-68/§7)

For the Zionist leaders, several of whom were quoted, “their object is... that they should have in Palestine a National Home in which there should be a majority, and consequently a national supremacy, for the 16,000,000 Jews scattered all over the world”. (p 78/§18)¹⁹⁰² But look at real history, they wrote:

The Arabs have always lived on peaceful terms with the Jews in all previous centuries and were in accord with them in every matter which was in the interest of the country [and] do not bear any hatred to the Jews simply because they are Jews... [But] the Zionist Jews will never abandon their policy as regards the creation of a majority of Jews in Palestine, and this the Arabs, in no circumstances, are prepared to concede. (pp 82-83/§19)

Now, when the Arabs are a large majority, Britain should at least interpret the Mandate as meaning equal treatment for the local population, but was not even doing that. (pp 72-76/§9-15) They themselves interpreted Article 6 of the Mandate as making the Jewish national home’s realisation *conditional upon* the realisation/protection of the “rights and position of the Arabs”, which have “equal weight”; that condition is not and cannot be fulfilled, however, because “it is impossible to reconcile these two obligations.” (pp 76-77/§16-17) The interests of the Arabs and the immigrating Zionist Jews were irreconcilable and Zionist uproar over the 1930 White Paper astounded because “there was not the slightest difference between [it and] the principles laid down in the White Paper... of 1922” which they had back then embraced. (pp 78-80/§18) [*but see* >246]

On Britain’s two obligations, written down both in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate’s Article 6, the AEC was naming the one protecting the non-Jews as the superior one putting limits on the Jewish national home – not the other way around as was claimed by high-ranking Zionists before the Shaw Commission [>220], according to whom the “obligation” to realise the Jewish National Home took precedence. (pp 80-82/§18) This question of which obligation set the limits was often debated in Parliament, and Sir John Hope Simpson had just written in his report:

¹⁹⁰² Also Caplan 1983, p 125.

It is the duty of the Administration, under the Mandate, to ensure that the position of the Arabs is not prejudiced by Jewish immigration. It is also its duty under the Mandate to encourage the close settlement of the Jews on the land, *subject always to the former condition*.¹⁹⁰³ (*emphasis added*)

Throughout, so the AEC further, Britain had taken no steps towards self-government or even self-administration, the High Commissioner holding all power and having to apply force and unjust taxation to achieve the Jewish National Home. (pp 84-90/§21-24) Land and immigration policies constituted violation of even their minimal “civil” rights which were given lip service in the Mandate text, and the “position” of the Arabs mentioned in Article 6 was wrongly not taken by Britain to mean both economic position and “political position”. (pp 90-100/§25-32) British policy “was likely to destroy [the] Arab national entity”, and meant support for the Zionists’ vision of ‘national home’, namely a “Jewish majority” in Palestine. (pp 60-61/§1, also 64-67/§6-7) The semi-official Jewish Agency “has never ceased to work for the widening of the chasm between the two parties”. (pp 100-01/§33)

The Arabs had in fact been dispossessed and impoverished due to British favouritism. (pp 101-05/§34-40) In contrast to the recommendations of Sir John Hope Simpson [^{>233}], Britain continued illegal and unjust land transfer to Jews, well-exemplified in the Huleh and four other Plains (pp 103-18/§36-46)¹⁹⁰⁴, and Arab unemployment and political weakness had been caused by the unjust British immigration policy (pp 119-27/§47-53). “It is not fair that Jewish labourers from Poland or Russia should be admitted to the country at a time when there exists in Palestine one unemployed Arab labourer”. (p 130/§57) Very concretely, returning to HMG’s first High Commissioner, it noted that in Herbert Samuel’s five-year reign, despite his promises [*e.g.* >89; >105], he did not develop Palestine economically for the Palestinians. (pp 60-62/§1-3) and did not even relieve post-war hardship, and many Palestinians had to sell their land to Jews. (pp 62-64/§4)

The Passfield White Paper did make “reference to the necessity of restricting Jewish immigration and purchase of land” (p 78/§18), but the “right of the Arabs to the establishment of a national Government” was prevented both by the Mandate itself and the Palestine Government, and the Legislative Council proposal of the White Paper also fell short; therefore they saw no reason to drop their constitutional demands (pp 84-87/§20-23). Land and immigration issues were thus of secondary, derivative importance, the important point being that they should be able to decide these by and for themselves. It was furthermore futile for Britain to continue to try to maintain order by force and heavy taxation, given the lack of consent of the inhabitants. (pp 88-90/§24)

In conclusion (pp 128-31/§54-58), the AEC relied on Article 6 of the Mandate (that the “rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced”, >146) to accuse HMG of hypocrisy, claiming not to “prejudice” the Arabs yet sticking with the Mandate’s

¹⁹⁰³ Hope Simpson 1930, Chapter XI, Conclusion, Land, ca. §4, >233.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Also Zuaytir 1958, p 81.

basic double task. “With all due respect to Lord Passfield’s intellectual attainments”, he had already retreated, in the face of Zionist opposition, from some of the relatively pro-Palestinian expressions in his White Paper, which itself had been weak:

If this White Paper is designed to remove some of the apprehensions of the Arabs with regard to these questions we are unable to say that it has really dispelled such apprehensions, or some of them, in view of the reputed ability of the Jews to spread misleading propaganda and the weakness of His Majesty’s Government vis-à-vis such propaganda. ... HMG made it clear that they will not be moved by any pressure or threats... but [we] declare with regret that His Majesty’s Government have violated this promise before its ink on the paper was dried. The White Paper of October, 1930, does not contain anything new with regard to the *political* rights of the Arabs. The principles enunciated therein with regard to their economic and social rights do not ensure to the Arabs their *national* rights and economic interests. The importance is not in enunciating principles, but in the execution of such principles. (*emphasis added*)

Commenting on this AEC document a full four months later, on 8 April 1931, Colonial Office official Williams admitted, concerning one AEC complaint, that he had “not attempted to investigate” it, but in the HMG reply to them “I think it will suffice if we hedge a bit.”¹⁹⁰⁵ Perceptive CO official N.L. Mayle noted:

The memorandum was written before the issue of the Prime Minister’s [‘Black’] letter to Dr. Weizmann [on 13 February 1931, >246]. The Arab Executive would no doubt wish to revise their memorandum in the light of that letter. In so far as the memorandum might indicate a certain willingness on the part of the Executive to co-operate with the Government, they might now wish to withdraw the memorandum altogether. We can scarcely, however, enquire whether they wish to revise the memorandum in the light of the Prime Minister’s letter. Such an enquiry is bound to be regarded as a tacit admission that the Prime Minister’s letter alters the policy laid down in the 1930 White Paper.¹⁹⁰⁶

The CO however reasoned that some reply with commentary/refutation would be necessary, and one was duly written in the form of “a memorandum containing the observations of His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom upon this [AEC] document”, dated 11 May 1931 but addressed not to the Palestinians but rather to the Secretary General of the League of Nations in Geneva!¹⁹⁰⁷ Its treatment of the AEC’s statement was defensive and legalistic in nature without directly addressing the political questions, except to remark 1) that the Memorandum was written before the Black Letter which held “the authoritative interpretations of certain matters dealt with in the [draft] Statement of Policy [Passfield White Paper]”, 2) that “H.M.G. have recognised... that the two obligations are of equal weight”, and 3) that “the terms of the Mandate alone therefore preclude the Mandatory from acceding to the demands put forward in these paragraphs [on immigration, §47-53 of the AEC memo]”.¹⁹⁰⁸

¹⁹⁰⁵ CO 733/197/2, p 2.

¹⁹⁰⁶ CO 733/197/2, p 2.

¹⁹⁰⁷ CO 733/197/2, pp 7-18.

¹⁹⁰⁸ CO 733/197/2, pp 8, 10, 17; see also pp 26-55, a longer and earlier ‘Commentary’ on the AEC document.

Indeed, as I have argued [>146; >16], to the extent that they made any sense at all, the texts of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration were on the side of Zionism; the indigenous had on their side only some worthless British promises [>10; >14; >18; >21; >22; >25; >29; >105] and some small parts of the ambiguous and confusing League of Nations Covenant [>46]. But that was only the 'legal' side. As they repeatedly pointed out, the complete set of principles of justice, self-determination and anti-colonialism were on the Palestinians' side.

Returning to the Colonial Office's belated, indirect reply of 11 May 1931:

In conclusion, His Majesty's Government desire to state that they have not thought it necessary to comment in detail on all the assertions and statements made in the Memorandum. ... As pointed out, in paragraph 18 of this Commentary, some of the statements are exaggerated and misleading.¹⁹⁰⁹

Or, as CO official Beckett had written in the margin of the memorandum text, "What can one do for such people!"¹⁹¹⁰

According to Kenneth Stein, Arab leaders were divided in their reactions to the White Paper, with Jamal al-Husseini and Subhi al-Khadra insisting on a discarding of the Balfour Declaration and Musa Kazem al-Husseini and Ragheb al-Nashashibi believing that it augured relatively well for them. He also opines that "Certainly, after the Palestine issue was debated in the House of Commons on 17 November 1930, Arabs in Palestine did not believe that the White Paper would be whittled down."¹⁹¹¹ I do not know how Stein knew this, but since the Palestinians would have undoubtedly read beyond the Government's announcement, in that debate, that they "stand by" the Passfield Statement of Policy, and seeing the pro-Zionist stand of most speakers, and reading the equivocations of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, on this point he is wrong. As this long AEC document says, there wasn't much to whittle down anyway.

Around this time, concerning the "establishment of a Government" within the corset of the not-abrogated Balfour Declaration and Mandate, AEC member Ragheb Nashashibi was apparently thinking 'outside the box'. According to Nassir Eddin Nashashibi, he favoured the unilateral formation by the Palestinians of a "Constituent Assembly", a council and a government.¹⁹¹² I am not privy to intra-Palestinian arguments pro and con, nor to the likelihood of British prohibition of such an endeavour, but had this proposal for a nascent indigenous *government* been acted on it would have created a huge challenge for the Jewish national home.

¹⁹⁰⁹ CO 733/197/2, pp 18, 38.

¹⁹¹⁰ CO 733/197/2, p 1.

¹⁹¹¹ Stein 1984, p 119.

¹⁹¹² Nashashibi 1991, p 74.

Jamal al-Husseini, in December 1930 in London representing his cousin the Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, as well as, less formally, the Arab Executive Committee, met with some officials at the Colonial Office, where he

agreed to a Round Table Conference provided the Jewish representation was confined to Palestine Jews to the exclusion of Weizmann and other non-Palestinian Zionists. Any negotiations with Weizmann, Husseini argued, would involve an 'acceptance of Zionism', which the Palestinians were not prepared to accept under any circumstances.¹⁹¹³

Kayyali presents such a position as an example of "the conciliatory outlook of the Palestinian notability",¹⁹¹⁴ but this is misleading because rejecting Zionism with no ifs or buts, and granting a place at the table only to rooted and partially anti-Zionist local Jews can perhaps be seen as conciliatory towards the British and/or Jewish fellow-Palestinians, but not *towards Zionism*, the more so as the "outlook" included refusing to sit in the same room with Weizmann. As Shuckburgh correctly noted, "the Arabs were not prepared to budge an inch on questions of principle."¹⁹¹⁵ During his visit to London, which had begun in October, Jamal distributed as a pamphlet the contents of the AEC memorandum of 11 December [>243] to all members of Parliament and, as the representative of the Mufti and the [Palestine] Arab Party, twice talked personally with Malcolm MacDonald [>359], Ramsay MacDonald's son who would convert away from Zionism and as Colonial Secretary write the pro-Palestinian White Paper of 1939 [>410].¹⁹¹⁶

¹⁹¹³ CO 733/178/2, p 3, Note by Shuckburgh to S. Wilson, 15 December 1930.

¹⁹¹⁴ Kayyali 1978, pp 160-61.

¹⁹¹⁵ CO 733/178/2, p 3.

¹⁹¹⁶ CO 733/178/1, p 8.

The Löfgren Commission to investigate the legal situation at the *al-Buraq*/Western Wall belonged officially to the League of Nations, whose Council, in the wake of the August 1929 disturbances [202], had commissioned it on 14 January 1930; it set to work on 15 May. The idea had however originated with the British government, which had “notified [to the Council] the names of the persons whom they had selected to be members of the Commission”, viz. Eliel Löfgren, Charles Barde and J. Van Kempen. Its remit was “to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem”, and its Report was delivered in ‘December 1930.’¹⁹¹⁷

This was a British attempt to settle some issues between it and the Moslem Palestinians – as well as the non-Moslem ones, since the alleged encroachments by Jews at the Wall were, or were at least perceived to be, part of the broader British-supported Zionist project and thus of interest to Christians as well. The Report upheld both Moslem ownership of the Wall (and pavement next to it) and Jewish access to it, concluding:

To the Moslems belong the sole ownership of, and the sole proprietary right to, the Western Wall, seeing that it forms an integral part of the Haram-esh-Sherif area, which is a Waqf property. To the Moslems there also belongs the ownership of the Pavement in front of the Wall and of the adjacent so-called Moghrabi (Moroccan) Quarter opposite the Wall, inasmuch as the last-mentioned property was made Waqf under Moslem Sharia Law, it being dedicated to charitable purposes. Such appurtenances of worship and/or such other objects as the Jews may be entitled to place near the Wall either in conformity with the provisions of this present Verdict or by agreement come to between the Parties shall under no circumstances be considered as, or have the effect of, establishing for them any sort of proprietary right to the Wall or to the adjacent Pavement. (Conclusions A; also VI §2, 3, 6)

The wall itself had undisputedly been built by Arab Moslems.

Two other aspects are worth mentioning. First, one Palestinian eyewitness reported on something left out of the Löfgren report; he recalled that to provoke Arab revolt

The Zionist Organization sent secretly agents into the Arab villages to distribute postcards (which the author saw at the time) showing the *Haram Esh Shareef* (the third holiest shrine in Islam) with the sign of the Star of David on top and the picture of Theodor Herzl at the bottom. The Arab villagers believing that the Jews were about to occupy their holy place, rose up in arms.¹⁹¹⁸

The Löfgren Report did mention more than a dozen “appurtenances” brought by Jews to the wall for ritual use, but made no mention of a Star of David or a picture of Herzl, or

¹⁹¹⁷ <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/59A92104ED00DC468525625B00527FEA> , all quotations.

¹⁹¹⁸ Hadawi 1967/1991, p 192 note; see also Boyle 2001, pp 149–57.

of the above claim's having been put into evidence by Moslem representatives – unless it was included in Moslem exhibit #25, 'Photographic reproductions of certain propaganda pictures.'

Also instructive are some observations of Awni Abdul Hadi, who as a legal adviser was active in the disputations surrounding the Western Wall, contained in his "Notes on Balfour".¹⁹¹⁹

I represented Palestinians in the Buraq [Löfgren] Committee and delivered a 40-page defence before the committee in French and I regret that I didn't keep a full record of that speech. All I could retrieve were some notes and pages of it. ... I remember two things that happened during the conference, one I recall and one I was reminded of in a letter sent to me later by Anwar Al-Khatib. (I told the Committee members:) 'It is really hard, gentlemen, to criticize or attack any people, but I think you would excuse me if I say what others said about the Jewish people, such as French writer Ernest Renan, who said in his book *The History of Jews*: "If a Jew feels supported by others, all he could do is to complain."

The Löfgren Report lists Awni Abdul Hadi as the first of the 17 Moslems "representing" that religion's viewpoint (along with Jamal al-Husseini, Izzat Darwaza and Ragheb Dajani), indicating that the "Buraq Committee" was the same as the Löfgren Commission.

The second situation was when I said how (the Balfour Declaration meant that) 'An Englishman who does not own, gave to a foreigner Jew what he does not deserve.' I was interrupted by Bash, the lawyer of the Jews who asked: 'How do you explain the Prophet Mohammed's giving, through his Companion Ali Bin Abi Talib, of a land he does not own to his Companion Tamim Al-Dari?' Anwar Al-Khatib, who attended the session, relates that I answered him immediately by saying: 'Mohammed was a Prophet, was Balfour a prophet?' And Anwar Al-Khatib is of the family of Tamim Al-Dari.

("Bash" is probably Dr. M. Eliash, named in the Report as "Counsel for the Jewish side" along with Zion David Yellin and non-Zionist Moshe Blau.) In denying *any* British right to dispose of Palestine, Abdul Hadi was taking a unique stand on the question of the promises made by the British to the Jews during World War I. It wasn't a question of whether

the British promises made to the Jews in Palestine [were] unfounded promises. How can these British politicians make promises in a land they don't own to a group of foreigners in a country that is not theirs either?

This same theme of the unique process of a colonial Power's settling people other than its own nationals in a colony had already been conceptualised in the AEC petition to the Permanent Mandates Commission on 8/12 April 1925 [>182].

Awni nevertheless, apparently in the context of the work of the Löfgren Commission, did compare the contradictory promises of the British:

The British government had, though, made promises to the Arabs of giving them independence and sovereignty over Arab countries even before the Balfour Declaration. And there

¹⁹¹⁹ Abdul Hadi 2002, 'Notes on Balfour', passages translated by Yousef M. Aljamaal.

is a huge difference between the Hussein-McMahon letters and the Balfour Declaration, as the former asserted Arabs' right to independence, while the Balfour Declaration was a destruction of an existing entity to build a Jewish one in its place. And promises that should be considered are those that support the rights of others rather than those that oppress their rights. The Balfour Declaration is against the Natural Rights of Arabs and therefore is invalid. And any people has the right to accept or reject migration towards their country, and Arabs are made of different elements [races, religions] that made a nation, and in my point of view there is nothing called the Jewish Sect or the Jewish nation.

These thoughts do not however appear in the report of the Commission.

Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's '**Black Letter**' was **sent on a Friday the 13th** – in February 1931 –, signed "I am, my dear Dr. Weizmann, Yours very sincerely", and its 18 Sections were entered on that day into the Parliamentary record.¹⁹²⁰ It had been approved by the 'Cabinet Committee on Policy in Palestine' on 4 February.¹⁹²¹ It was in its rhetoric and timing, and some of its contents, insofar as they were intelligible, a repudiation of High Commissioner John Chancellor [>218; >225; >228; >235; >236], the Shaw Commission [>220], the Cabinet Committee on Policy in Palestine's position five months earlier [>231-32], John Hope Simpson [>230; >233], and to a lesser extent Lord Passfield [>234]. It fully re-embraced the Balfour Declaration [>16], the Churchill White Paper [>142] and the Mandate [>146], as if 1930's re-examination of HMG's pro-Zionist policy had never happened.¹⁹²²

Zionist lobbying had for many weeks occupied the new Cabinet Committee which had been set up on 6 November 1930 and was composed of Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson, Colonial Secretary Passfield, War Secretary Thomas Shaw and First Lord of the Admiralty A.V. Alexander. [>238] Three people who had been members of the identically-named Committee in September 1930 – Lord Snowden, J.H. Thomas and Lord Thomas – were no longer on board [>231]; J.H. Thomas was somewhat later a relatively pro-Palestinian Colonial Secretary [>283; >287; >290]. The minutes of the Committee's six "meetings" and six "conferences", from 6 November 1930 through 12 February 1931, as well as the drafts of answers to Dr. Weizmann's criticisms, are recorded in a 447-page Colonial Office file.¹⁹²³ Judged by the result – this letter from MacDonald to Weizmann – the lobbying had succeeded.¹⁹²⁴ One pro-Zionist lobbyist was Ramsay's son Malcolm MacDonald, the Colonial Secretary who would issue the Palestinian-friendly White Paper of 17 May 1939. [>410] He later told historian Nicholas Bethell:

Weizmann and his friends came to see me through Lewis Namier, who had been one of my tutors at Oxford, and I took the matter up with my father. He arranged for a Cabinet committee under Arthur Henderson to review the matter and in the end Webb [Passfield] was persuaded to modify his policy.¹⁹²⁵

¹⁹²⁰ MacDonald 1931, §1-18, *all citations; in both* CO 733/197/3, pp 17-20 & 57-68 *and* Hansard 1931, cc751W-757W (W = 'Written Answer').

¹⁹²¹ Porath 1977, p 33.

¹⁹²² Also Boyle 2001, p 186.

¹⁹²³ CAB 27/433, pp 1-313, 314-447; also Segev 2000, pp 335-41.

¹⁹²⁴ Also Stein 1984, pp 80-141; *but see* Beckerman-Boys 2016, pp 214-16, 218-20, 229-32.

¹⁹²⁵ Bethell 1979, p 24.

Before the Peel Commission in early 1937, Chancellor would say that in 1930-31, as High Commissioner, he had thought “the negotiations with the Jewish Agency after the publication of the 1930 White Paper were a mistake” and added, “That letter to Weizmann caused consternation in Palestine.”¹⁹²⁶ [*>*326]

Passfield broke the news to Chancellor in early February that HMG would have to publish something “more acceptable to the Jews”.¹⁹²⁷ In the same vein, in an internal reply to questions that had arisen concerning a soon-anticipated correction of the White Paper, on 6 February O.G.R. Williams at the Colonial Office wrote “that the misunderstandings and apprehensions which the new document [Black Letter] was designed to disperse were those felt by the Jews.”¹⁹²⁸ Middle East Department head John Shuckburgh, as well, wrote to Sir S. Wilson: “It is to be noted that we went to very great lengths to meet the Jews...”¹⁹²⁹

Recall that the speeches in the House of Commons on 17 November 1930 [*>*242] by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and Government spokesmen Drummond Shiels and A.V. Alexander left no doubt that for the public record, at least, peace with the Zionists was paramount, with MacDonald having assured the House:

At the present moment [the Government] are in consultation with the representatives of the Zionist movement [and] the Government will carry out the Mandate in both its aspects and, in carrying out the Mandate, will bend every energy they have to enable the development of Palestine to be continued under conditions which will make the harmony between Jew and Arab closer and closer so that the Arab may continue to enjoy the benefits he has already got from Jewish immigration and Jewish capital, and the Jew, the devoted Zionist, may see Palestine becoming more and more the complete embodiment of his ideal of a Jewish national home.¹⁹³⁰ [*see also >*106]

(While some officials were careful not to conflate “the Jew” and “the devoted Zionist”, here MacDonald was not.) Technically, the Prime Minister had a free hand in re-stating HMG policy, for in contrast to the Churchill White Paper of 3 June 1922 and later the MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939, Parliament had not approved the Passfield White Paper. [*see >*242]

MacDonald started his letter to his “dear Dr. Weizmann” with the almost-valid point that there was in the Passfield White Paper little for the Jews to be disturbed about:

[Your] attention is drawn to the fact that, not only does the White Paper of 1930 refer to and endorse the White Paper of 1922, which has been accepted by the Jewish Agency, but it recognizes that the undertaking of the mandate is an undertaking to the Jewish people and not only to the Jewish population of Palestine. ... HMG will continue to administer Palestine

¹⁹²⁶ FO 492/20, pp 469-70.

¹⁹²⁷ CO 733/197/1A, p 5.

¹⁹²⁸ CO 733/197/1A, p 2.

¹⁹²⁹ CO 733/197/1C, p 2; also Kayyali 1978, p 161.

¹⁹³⁰ Hansard 1930a, cc119-20.

in accordance with the terms of the Mandate... (§3) ... [T]he constructive work done by the Jewish people in Palestine has had beneficial effects on the development and well-being of the country as a whole... (§5)

As the letter was not to the Palestinians, MacDonald re-mentioned the alleged material benefits for them of Zionist policy most likely only because the letter was being entered into the 'Written' record of the Commons¹⁹³¹.

On immigration (§14-16), MacDonald wrote that "His Majesty's Government have felt bound to emphasize the necessity of the proper application of the absorptive principle"; "The considerations relevant to the limits of absorptive capacity are purely economic considerations." [142] There were no political or ethical considerations. Since one such consideration, whether called 'economic' or 'political', was the level or ratio of Arab unemployment, the Prime Minister continued:

His Majesty's Government never proposed to pursue... a policy that 'no further immigration of Jews is to be permitted so long as it might prevent any Arab from obtaining employment', but rather [quoting the White Paper] that 'it is essential to ensure that the immigrants should not be a burden upon the people of Palestine as a whole, and that they should not deprive any section of the present population of their employment'. (§15)

A fine distinction in any event, but here MacDonald was *dead wrong*: the Passfield White Paper had indeed made Jewish immigration *conditional* upon the non-Jews' being no worse off, having plainly stated:¹⁹³²

[T]he obligation contained in Article 6 to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land, is qualified by the requirement to ensure that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced. (White Paper §8; also §20)

Further revealing the falsity of the Black Letter's §15, the White Paper had stated that

account should be taken of Arab as well as Jewish unemployment in determining the rate at which immigration should be permitted. ([WP] §5) ... As regards the relation of immigration to unemployment,... sufficient evidence has been adduced to lead to the conclusion that there is at present a serious degree of Arab unemployment, and that Jewish unemployment likewise exists to an extent which constitutes a definitely unsatisfactory feature. It may be regarded as clearly established that the preparation of the Labour Schedule must depend upon the ascertainment of the total of unemployed in Palestine. (§27) ... The economic capacity of the country to absorb new immigrants must therefore be judged with reference to the position of Palestine as a whole in regard to unemployment... (§27) Clearly, if immigration of Jews results in preventing the Arab population from obtaining the work necessary for its maintenance, or if Jewish unemployment unfavourably affects the general labour position, it is the duty of the Mandatory Power under the Mandate to reduce, or, if necessary, to suspend, such immigration until the unemployed portion of the 'other sections' is in a position to obtain work. (§28)

¹⁹³¹ Hansard 1931, cc751W-757W (W = 'Written Answer').

¹⁹³² Passfield 1930, also following citations.

The White Paper was thus unambiguously stating that, as MacDonald put it in quotation marks, ‘no further immigration of Jews is to be permitted so long as it might prevent any Arab from obtaining employment’. Otherwise there would be no point whatsoever in making any connection between “Arab... unemployment” and “determining” immigration amounts. And why would the “position of Palestine as a whole in regard to unemployment” be relevant to measuring “economic capacity... to absorb new immigrants” if there were not a trade-off between the two quantities? The White Paper explicitly said that the number of permits “must depend upon... the total of unemployed in Palestine”.¹⁹³³ This was the part of the White Paper that had given the Palestinians some hope.

Perhaps MacDonald and his ghost-writers had not diligently re-read the actual words of the White Paper, but Weizmann most certainly had, and most certainly had a good laugh at the Black Letter’s §15. At any rate, MacDonald was loosening the screw that had been tightened by the White Paper. Incidentally, three years later Colonial Secretary Philip Cunliffe-Lister wanted to re-tighten the screw, writing in a Memorandum to the Cabinet dated 28 March 1934:

[I]f there are no Jews unemployed, or if the Jewish unemployed are provided for, then it is surely unreasonable to say that fresh Jewish immigrants must be admitted to do work which the Arab unemployed can do, thus leaving Arab unemployed to be kept on special relief or relief works.¹⁹³⁴

But this fairly clear rule was not what the Black Letter said, and Cunliffe-Lister’s slight shift towards the Arab position, while agreed by the Cabinet, would never become actual labour-schedule policy.

Returning to the letter’s text, whatever its misinterpretation of the White Paper, its practical effect, so the Prime Minister, was that

His Majesty’s Government did not prescribe and do not contemplate any stoppage or prohibition of Jewish immigration in any of its categories. ... In each case consideration will be given to anticipated labour requirements for works which, being dependent on Jewish or mainly Jewish capital, would not be or would not have been undertaken unless Jewish labour was made available. (§15)

This swept aside the non-economic, political/ethical considerations put forth by the Palestinians and the various British investigators.

While the White Paper had expressed concern about ethno-religious restrictions on employment by Jewish farms or businesses¹⁹³⁵, MacDonald was by contrast emphatic:

A good deal of criticism has been directed to the White Paper upon the assertion that it contains injurious allegations against the Jewish people and Jewish Labour organisation. Any such intention on the part of His Majesty’s Government is expressly disavowed. ... His Majesty’s Government do not in any way challenge the right of the Agency to formulate or

¹⁹³³ Passfield 1930, §27.

¹⁹³⁴ CO 733/257/12, Part 2, p 25, also pp 35, 38.

¹⁹³⁵ Passfield 1930, §19, 20.

approve and endorse such a policy. The principle of preferential and, indeed, exclusive employment of Jewish labour by Jewish organizations is a principle which the Jewish Agency are entitled to affirm. (§5, 17)¹⁹³⁶

This green light given by the Government was central; it secured the steady growth of the number of people living in the burgeoning national home and assured that within the Jewish-Zionist economy the growing local population was unemployable. There was no equal opportunity of employment in the colony.

The Black Letter was silent, however, on whether the condition that the sale or rental of Jewish-owned land should in perpetuity be determined on ethno-religious grounds also violated the Mandate Article §6. As for land sales themselves, it contained unclear words on the rules for selling or renting State lands (§8-10) alongside a denial that any “prohibition of acquisition of additional land by Jews” is intended (§13). On land improvement and the contemplated transfer of Arabs:

It is contemplated that measures will be devised for the improvement and intensive development of the land, and for bringing into cultivation areas which hitherto may have remained uncultivated, and thereby securing to the fellahin a better standard of living, without, save in exceptional cases, having recourse to transfer. (§11)

We should take a non-academic moment here to realise that the Palestinians, who kept abreast of Parliamentary doings and thus would have read MacDonald’s eighteen points in Hansard, were now faced black-on-white with their own *transfer* out of Palestine “in exceptional cases”. Many Palestinians would have asked themselves whether their own case was “exceptional”. This phrase alone demonstrated to them their status as (transferable) people not being treated with ‘equal weight’.

Rhetorically, HMG was paying lip service to Mandate Article §6’s requirement of “ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced”,

But the words are not to be read as implying that existing economic conditions in Palestine should be crystallised. On the contrary, the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land, remains a positive obligation of the Mandate, and it can be fulfilled without prejudice to the rights and position of other sections of the population [which] are not to be prejudiced; that is, are not to be impaired or made worse. (§7)

The Permanent Mandates Commission, by the way, had in June 1930 shared this opposition to “crystallizing the Jewish National Home”.¹⁹³⁷ MacDonald was correct, at least, that the Mandate §6 did not obligate HMG to make the lot of the Arabs *better*.

Here is the last-paragraph apogee of this sickening Letter:

His Majesty’s Government desire to say finally, as they have repeatedly and unequivocally affirmed, that the obligations imposed upon the Mandatory, by its acceptance of the Man-

¹⁹³⁶ Also Cronin 2017, p 32.

¹⁹³⁷ Pedersen 2010, p 51, citing PMC Minutes, 17th session (3-21 June 1930), pp 49-50.

date, are solemn international obligations, from which there is not now, nor has there been at any time, an intention to depart. To the tasks imposed by the Mandate His Majesty's Government have set their hand, and they will not withdraw it. (§18)

This heroic declaration of perseverance was a pledge, don't forget, to all 14,000,000 Jews in the world.

Distilling clear literal messages from the “circumlocutory verbiage”¹⁹³⁸ of the Black Letter is not always easy. But the careful drafting mentioned at the beginning of this entry – taking place during numerous intense meetings over a period of about three months between the Zionists and the Cabinet Committee on Policy in Palestine – succeeded as a clear emotional message, as a piece of rhetoric. As for its authorship, according to Tom Segev it was mainly written by David Ben-Gurion and Ramsay's son Malcom MacDonald¹⁹³⁹, while CO files say that both the Prime Minister and the Colonial Office had co-ordinated the drafting – together with Weizmann¹⁹⁴⁰. Perhaps Weizmann was writing the letter to himself, just as the Balfour Declaration had been a letter from the British Zionist Federation to itself [>16]? In any case, its Zionist-influenced authorship as well as its deviations from the “abortive” White Paper were now well-known to both the Arabs in Palestine and HC Chancellor; yet the officials in London felt they must break the news in Palestine by means of a “despatch” expressed “as colourless as possible [and it should] contain nothing at all likely to provoke further protests of controversy in any quarter.”¹⁹⁴¹ On 12 February, the day before the letter was sent, Shuckburgh added that

The ‘Weizmann letter’ was bound to evoke this kind of protest from the Arabs: presumably H.M.Govt foresaw and discounted this in advance.¹⁹⁴²

Even violent rebellion was a cost not great enough to outweigh the cost of displeasing the Zionists.

As Akram Zuaytir observes, ‘on the ground’ Black Letter policy would be applied, with none of the restrictions on immigration or land sales recommended by the Shaw and Hope Simpson Reports [>220; >233] being followed:

The number of immigrants jumped from 9,500 in 1932 to 33,000 in 1933, to 43,000 in 1934 and to 62,000 in 1935. ... More than 667 thousand dunums [66,700 ha.] were... transferred after the [Hope Simpson] Report... In 1935 the Arab National Fund was established to collect subscriptions... to preserve Arab land. In the same year Moslem religious leaders issued a Fatwa (Religious Opinion) that the sale of land to Jews in Palestine was contrary to rules of religion.¹⁹⁴³

¹⁹³⁸ Jeffries 1939, pp 666-67.

¹⁹³⁹ Segev 1999, pp 338-39. If Segev is correct, Malcolm MacDonald's White Paper of 1939 might be partially explained by his guilty conscience.

¹⁹⁴⁰ CO 733/ 197/3, pp 1-11, 22-25.

¹⁹⁴¹ CO 733/ 197/3, p 3.

¹⁹⁴² CO 733/ 197/3, p 8.

¹⁹⁴³ Zuaytir 1958, p 84.

In the opinion of Izzat Tannous,

As a consequence [of the 13 February 1931 Black Letter, >246], the Arab population of Palestine became convinced that Great Britain was now Enemy No. 1 and that the Zionists were Enemy No. 2. Hence, 'Fight Great Britain, the source of the trouble,' became the motto of the Arabs of Palestine.¹⁹⁴⁴

The Royal ('Peel') Commission in 1937 [>336] would similarly write:

In Arab eyes, the substitution of the 'Black Letter', as they called it, for the 'White Paper' was plain proof of the power which world Jewry could exert in London, and such confidence as they might previously have had in British determination to do at least what justice could be done under what they have always regarded as an unjust Mandate was seriously shaken.¹⁹⁴⁵

Wasif Jawhariyyeh's succinct view:

When the British government withdrew its white paper of 1930, the Arabs unanimously decided to consider the British alone, and not international Zionism, as the enemy of the Arabs, and that it was necessary to arm against the mandate government and not attack Jews.¹⁹⁴⁶

That writer, an eyewitness, also referred to the Black Letter as the 'Black Paper', perhaps humorously attributing White Paper status to it.

The Passfield White Paper [>234] had by virtue of its refusal to establish any self-governing institutions unequivocally re-affirmed HMG's opposition to Palestinian self-determination, while stating the *intention* to slightly slow the rate of Zionist immigration and dedicate a bit more land to the Palestinian peasantry. Tutored by the Zionist lobby, HMG then in late 1930 realised that it had in its White Paper inadvertently told the truth about land and immigration, and hastened by means of the Black Letter [>246] to backtrack on even these two recalibrations of its purportedly balanced, dual-obligation policy. Yet because the Mandate text said it had to, it had made another verbal pledge of some "self-governing institutions", albeit in good time. According to Porath, High Commissioner Chancellor's reaction to the Black Letter, already on 13 February, was to ask the Colonial Office for permission to announce to the Palestinians that a Legislative Council was actually HMG's goal, but a day later Passfield refused.¹⁹⁴⁷ (Unfortunately, at some point in time HMG "destroyed by statute" at least one letter from Chancellor to London, dated 20 March 1931.¹⁹⁴⁸)

¹⁹⁴⁴ Tannous 1988, p 167.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Peel 1937, III §64.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 217.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Porath 1977, pp 144-45, citing CO 733/197/87050, Cables 47 and 42.

¹⁹⁴⁸ CO 733/ 197/3, p 11.

On 16 February Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Yacoub Farraj, Awni Abdul Hadi, Jamal al-Husseini, Mogannam Eff. Mogannam, Izzat Darwaza and Ruhi Abdul Hadi came to see Chancellor, handing him a 3-page letter¹⁹⁴⁹ observing that “the Right Honourable Mr. Ramsay MacDonald attached to the White Paper of 1930 no more value than he would attach to a ‘scrap of paper.’” They told him that since the Black Letter violated not only the Passfield White Paper but the meager protections offered them by the Mandate and the 1922 White Paper,

there was hardly any hope for the Arabs in Palestine under the Policy which HMG was to follow. ... They had now to meet the public,... and they did not know what to say to them. They could only humble themselves before them. They came to submit a formal protest against this last step and to inform His Excellency of the great distress which the letter had created among the public. [In verbal reply] His Excellency said that he thought that they were unduly apprehensive about the purport of the letter. ... His Excellency said it was impossible for him to discuss with them the policy of His Majesty’s Government.

Why should a High Commissioner not be able to “discuss” his Government’s policy with those affected by it?

Musa Kazem called him out on his deprecation of the Palestinians’ apprehensions, asking why, if there was no change from the White Paper, the Black Letter had even been sent. After that, in the midst of some skirmishing about immigration, economic absorptive capacity and land dispossession, Awni Bey said he believed that His Excellency “would agree that this Letter laid down what was practically a new policy. His Excellency observed that His Majesty’s Government denied that, and he could not assent to it.” Yakub Effendi implied there must be some reason why the Zionists received the letter with “satisfaction”, while Jamal Effendi pointed out HMG’s double standard and asked, in light of Zionist takeover of 80% of the best land [and the policy of Jewish-only labour¹⁹⁵⁰],

whether if they now boycotted the Jews it would be approved by Government. Certainly not: but the Prime Minister was deliberately legalising the boycotting of Arabs by the Jews. At the end of his Letter the Prime Minister again said he hoped for a spirit of reconciliation in Palestine. His Letter had given the final blow to any such hope.

Awni Bey then recalled that when the Hope Simpson investigation [>233] had been announced, he was in London (with the 4th Arab Delegation, >222; >226) and had asked Prime Minister MacDonald whether, “if his report should be favourable to them its recommendations would be given effect” and gotten the reply, “I will carry out that report letter by letter”. [see >222] This turned out not to be the case. In closing, in answer to a personal question, Chancellor said that yes, he was aware “that the Jews were stirring up propaganda about his removal”, but that he would “not yield to Jewish pressure and resign his office” but would serve the full 3 years he had originally agreed to.

After this meeting with the Arab leaders in Jerusalem, and after a Nablus Committee, minus Akram Zu’aytir who had been sidelined by the British, called vociferously once again

¹⁹⁴⁹ CO 733/197/3, pp 35-43, 44-46, all citations.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Also CO 733/197/3, p 51; MacDonald 1931, §5, 17.

for an end to immigration and land sales¹⁹⁵¹, Chancellor wrote to Passfield on 21 February 1931 in a 'secret enclosure' that one reaction from the Palestinians was the three-page 'Manifesto to the Noble Arab Nation' from the Arab Executive handed to him on 16 February.¹⁹⁵²

The office of the Arab Executive has read the letter [from MacDonald to Weizmann], which does away completely with all the provisions which were contained in the White Paper of 1930 with regard to questions of land and immigration...

The Manifesto's second paragraph, offered here in the clearer and more trenchant translation of Abdelaziz Ayyad:

Our Executive Committee has never been fully satisfied with all things considered in the mentioned White Paper. The promises of the British Government did not then deceive us, especially when it came to the issues of land and immigration. The White Paper did not contain new things with respect to the Arab political rights. The texts and the principles included in the paper regarding the Arab economic and social rights do not guarantee the Arabs their national rights and economic interests. The texts and principles do not stand important by themselves, but rather through their execution. We are confident that all Arabs and all civilized people all over the world view this new document, the 'Black Letter,' as a new defiance of the promises which the British Government, on behalf of the British people, committed itself to Arabs and before the League of Nations.¹⁹⁵³

Building on their long and detailed 'Memorandum on the Palestine White Paper of December 1930' [>243] the AEC, as translated in Chancellor's 'Enclosure', then called the Nation to unity "to repulse the great dangers which are directed at us by MacDonald's letter" and "to give up thinking on relying on H.M.G. in defending our national and economic interests and entity. H.M.G. is weak vis-à-vis the Jewish world power":

Let this Government therefore soothe [the Zionists] in whatever way it desires and let us depend for help upon ourselves and upon the Arab and Moslem world. Let us be armed with lawful and active means which will help us to realise our violated rights. There is no doubt that our opponent is strong and obstinate but we, the Arabs, through our established rights are more powerful and obstinate than our opponent.

That opponent

now attacks us in our house mercilessly and lays his hand on the sources of wealth in the country and thus deprives us from a great part of such resources in a manner which is contrary to all principles of humanity and law. ... We should bring home to the Arab and Moslem worlds and to all the civilised countries the brutal acts which the Zionists commit in this country under the protection and patronage of H.M.G. Palestine is an Arab country and shall remain as such. There is no Government in the world which can decide its destiny in spite of the will of its inhabitants. The European Powers... gave to the Jews the well-known Balfour Declaration as if Palestine was a private property of its own.

¹⁹⁵¹ Matthews 2006, pp 85-86.

¹⁹⁵² CO 733/197/3, pp 28-31, all further quotations unless otherwise noted.

¹⁹⁵³ Ayyad 1999, p 142, citing *Filistin*, Friday, 20 February 1931; also CO 733/197/2, pp 128-31/§54-58, >243.

A change had taken place in the Palestinians' attitude:

The new letter of Mr. MacDonald has done away with any respect which the Arabs had towards H.M.G. ... Although H.M.G. definitely stated that there exists in the country no margin of land which could be made available for the close settlement of Jews, and that it is not permissible to allow the admission of Jewish immigrants from Poland or Russia as long as there exists in the country any unemployed Arabs, they now withdraw from this statement shamelessly and allow the Jews to purchase the insignificant area of land which still remains in the possession of the Arabs, and opens the way to Jewish immigration as it did before;... Notwithstanding all this, the British Government claim that it is administering justice in equal measure to both parties.

The expressions of "respect" and even friendship toward the British which were common in the AEC's 1921/22 'Report on the State of Palestine' [1999] had become unthinkable.

Oh, ye Arabs, Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqians and others... [it is] the duty of every Arab, no matter what country he belongs to or what profession he follows, to remember Arab Palestine and to treat the Jews in the same manner as they treat his Arab brethren in Palestine in that they boycott and persecute them... and not give up struggling until the Zionist policy is completely annihilated and until the era of peace which Palestine enjoyed before has been restored to the holy Palestine.

The AEC thus shifted the focus, in militant language, back to the underlying cause of any other problem – the "Zionist policy" which must be "annihilated". Wasif Jawhariyyeh summed up the Arab-British friendship story thus:

[There had been] the humiliation, disease, hunger, and separation suffered during the First Great War, under the rule of the tyrannical Turkish state. When Britain occupied the country, we were able to breathe relief briefly. But this was soon to end as we found ourselves facing a bigger and more catastrophic ordeal than we did under the Turks – the total loss of our dear country at the hands of the British occupiers, may God strike them, for He is the All-hearing, the Responsive.¹⁹⁵⁴

The Black Letter's reception, a dozen years into Britain's rule, was the turning-point away from friendship to Britain. As High Commissioner John Chancellor put it in a letter in March 1931, "The publication of the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann has had the effect of rousing the feeling of resentment among the Arabs and of distrust in the British Government, just at a time that confidence was beginning to be re-established."¹⁹⁵⁵

Out of outrage that the British allowed the Jews to boycott Arab labour, the Manifesto had declared the intention of a retaliatory boycott of Jewish goods.¹⁹⁵⁶ This boycott was one of the main aspects that interested the British Reuters news agency, which on 3 March sent out from Jerusalem a short dispatch:

¹⁹⁵⁴ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 185.

¹⁹⁵⁵ CO 733/203/9, p 38.

¹⁹⁵⁶ CO 733/197/1D, p 7, Chancellor to Passfield, 17 February 1931; Kayyali 1978, p 162.

The Situation in Palestine. Arab Indignation with British Policy. Boycott of Jews Decided Upon. National Industries to be Encouraged. Arab indignation over the Prime Minister's letter 'interpreting' the White Paper, far from calming down, is rising to fever heat. Meeting at nine yesterday morning, the Arab Executive sat on into the early hours of the morning to discuss the hated document.¹⁹⁵⁷

To be sure, although declaring HMG their enemy, the AEC in April 1931 by a vote of 20-10 agreed that a delegation should go to London to talk about the development scheme which had been proposed by Hope Simpson [233], but with the proviso that "the talks would not be considered as an acceptance of the Jewish National Home policy".¹⁹⁵⁸ This time, instead of boycotting on principle any talks with Britain, 2/3 of a divided AEC decided the best path was yes, to participate, but under a clearly-declared caveat rejecting the Zionist Mandate.¹⁹⁵⁹

¹⁹⁵⁷ CO 733/187/3, p 26.

¹⁹⁵⁸ Porath 1977, p 37.

¹⁹⁵⁹ See also Robinson 2013, p 16.

248. R. MacDonald to Howard-Bury MP

2 March 1931

Colonel Howard-Bury MP [*also* >242] had been pestering the Government in the House of Commons as to whether the Black Letter [>246] reversed the Passfield White Paper [>234], in which case it “brings us back to the position in 1929 before the riots took place”, asking the Prime Minister “whether the Arab executive were in any way consulted or an agreement reached with them before he wrote his letter to Dr. Weizmann”. PM Ramsay MacDonald replied, “It was not, in the circumstances, considered necessary to take the Arab executive into consultation in explaining and elucidating the policy already announced by His Majesty’s Government.”¹⁹⁶⁰ But of course. What was Howard-Bury thinking?

¹⁹⁶⁰ CO 733/197/1D, pp 12 & 13; Hansard 1931a, c38W.

Blake Alcott

**The Rape of Palestine:
A Mandate Chronology**

Vol. 2



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Author: Blake Alcott

ISBN:

978-3-347-89652-9 (Print – Hardcover)

978-3-347-89654-3 (PDF)

978-3-347-89653-6 (ePub)

Version: 1.01 – 20230322

This work is available in print and various digital formats in **OpenAccess**. Additional information is available at: <https://blakealcott.jimdofree.com/publications/>.

XIV. The limits to talk

The newspaper *Al-Jamia al-Arabiyya* reported on 15 March 1931¹⁹⁶¹ that Palestinian intellectual and activist Mohamed Ali Eltaher¹⁹⁶², who had long been secretary of the Palestine Committee in Egypt¹⁹⁶³, had sent a sharp statement “protesting the statements of the British Prime Minister” [the Black Letter, >246]; it was addressed to the Palestinians then in London, to Prime Minister MacDonald himself and to many English newspapers:

The statements of the (British) Minister at the Parliament regarding Palestine shook the East by surprise because the Prime Minister, following the same policy of his predecessors, has in his statements intentionally ignored the political rights of Palestine. The Balfour Declaration contradicts clearly the promises made to the Arab nation, and the letter of Mr. MacDonald that he will carry out this declaration is an implicit declaration that the promise made to the Arabs will not be respected. This is to disregard weak nations which don't have flotillas and tank guns.

The newspaper went on to report the original dissatisfaction of the Zionists with the Passfield White Paper [>234], while at the same time confirming the Palestinians' interpretation of British Palestine policy as de-revised by the Black Letter:

The Davar Newspaper has published a special issue last night which included an explanatory attachment of the text of the White Paper. We have learnt that this explanation was like music to the ears of Jews and that they hoped it would cancel the White Paper in essence. Jewish letters coming from London last night suggested that the letter sent by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister, to Dr. Weizmann was handed over to the House of Commons at the request of Jewish [sic.] MP Mr. Kenworthy¹⁹⁶⁴, considering it an official parliamentary document. ... Weizmann said about the above-mentioned letter that it resumes cooperation between the Jewish Agency and the Mandate government. He said: ‘We are happy for this opportunity which was given to us so that we could discuss our issue with the government. We found ears that were willing to listen to us and we got clarifications regarding many major issues concerning British policies in Palestine which were shaken by the White Paper. Our struggle was not for having material gains but to achieve our rights and all we wish for was to have the mandate government to collaborate with Arabs and Jews to establish a policy in the future for the benefit of all for the progress and development of Palestine.’

But the White Paper/Black Letter incident was perhaps much ado about nothing:

The content of the explanatory statement revealed that a group of Zionists heavily criticized Dr. Weizmann, who accepted the statement which does not change much of the White Paper, because his duty was not to accept, but to cancel it [the White Paper]. In other words,

¹⁹⁶¹ *Al-Sifat and/or Al-Jamia al-Arabiyya*, 15 March 1931, passages translated by Yousef M. Aljamal.

¹⁹⁶² See also Eltaher, current.

¹⁹⁶³ Regan 2017, p 166.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Hansard 1931, c751W.

Arabs rejected the minimum Jewish demands stipulated in the explanatory statement and Jews themselves refuse the statement because it does not include any of the major Jewish demands. And now it becomes clear that the hope the English government had of having good results out of the explanatory statement and the possibility of understanding among Arabs and Jews, became all in vain. And at the same time, we see abject Palestine moaning because of its bad omen and the many shocks inflicted upon it.

The White Paper, anyway, had not actually shifted the Mandatory's course.

250. Chancellor to Rothschild

late April 1931

According to David Cronin, in late April

[High Commissioner] Chancellor was in Paris, where he met Edmond de Rothschild, a French banker who had funded some of the first Zionist colonies in Palestine. When de Rothschild urged that Arabs be forced to leave Palestine for Transjordan, Chancellor replied that such drastic measures were 'out of the question'. ... When de Rothschild spoke against the idea of having a legislative council in Palestine, he was assured [by Chancellor] that any such body would be subject to gerrymandering. ... Chancellor's record of the meeting reads: 'He [de Rothschild] said that it would ruin the country to hand over the country to the Arabs. I told him that was not what was proposed. The Jewish and government members combined would be in a majority over the Arabs.'¹⁹⁶⁵

Why was the British High Commissioner of Palestine meeting with a Frenchman in Paris in the first place? But Chancellor was not lying: in addition to having no power, no Legislative Council ever offered met the elementary, axiomatic criteria of wielding legislative power and treating each individual voter equally.

1931 [*Judah Magnes arranges a meeting in London between Musa Alami and Malcolm MacDonald.*]¹⁹⁶⁶

¹⁹⁶⁵ Cronin 2017, p 34; CO 733/203/9, pp 18-21, Note of Interview of Sir John Chancellor with Baron Edmond de Rothschild, in Paris, 5.5.31.

¹⁹⁶⁶ Furlonge 1969, pp 97-98.

251. Another Chancellor LC

late May & 15 August 1931

In late May 1931 High Commissioner Chancellor tried one last time to get the Colonial Office to commit to setting up a Legislative Council, albeit one denying the “Arabs” a majority of the seats [>250]; the CO realised that such a step would meet with fierce Zionist opposition, but since it would be bad form to ditch the vague White Paper commitment to a Council, it decided not to reject it or institute a commission of enquiry into the question, but to put it, as well as Chancellor, on the back burner; “it would be well not to be in too much hurry about taking the next step in regard to the Legislative Council”, wrote Williams, gaining Shuckburgh’s agreement; the High Commissioner was asked to draft still another concrete proposal.¹⁹⁶⁷

Chancellor sent it to London on 15 August 1931, this time proposing 16 official members and 18 non-official members (13 elected by the populace, 5 appointed) and as usual with limits on what topics it could touch and with a High-Commissioner veto.¹⁹⁶⁸ According to Porath, it would still most likely have “an under-representation of Moslems as against Jews and over-representation of Jews as against Christians”.¹⁹⁶⁹ Chancellor was however set to step down on 1 November 1931, and on 24-26 August Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald would form a new Government, with Herbert Samuel as Home Secretary and Passfield replaced as Colonial Secretary by J.H. Thomas. Thomas in turn would be replaced by Philip Cunliffe-Lister on 5 November but would again serve briefly from 22 November 1935 – 22 May 1936, making way for arch-Zionist William Ormsby-Gore just as the Palestinian Revolt was getting underway in the wake of Parliament’s rejection of the last Legislative Council proposal ever to be made, that of winter 1935-36. [>283; >289; >290].

¹⁹⁶⁷ CO 733/202/6, pp 5-6, O.G.R. William’s minute, 27 May 1931; Porath 1977, p 145.

¹⁹⁶⁸ CO 733/202/6, pp 30-38; Porath 1977, p 145.

¹⁹⁶⁹ Porath 1977, p 145.

Musa Kazem al-Husseini, who had signed the 'Report on the State of Palestine' a decade earlier [>99], was now aged 78 and at the end of his tether, writing to the Palestine Government that

the British, who promised the Arabs independence in exchange for the Arabs' share in World War I, caused the Arabs pain, grief and despair. They were saddened by the damages inflicted by the British in their country. Furthermore, the British act of arming the Zionists increased their resentment and discontent. They perceived the British as bringing in and preparing intruders to kill the Palestinian people. The British seemed unsatisfied with killing Palestinians politically, he added, their main concern seemed to be the 'extermination of the Palestinians'.¹⁹⁷⁰

This quotation seems accurate in light of the fact that starting in the early 1930s the Palestinians became more militant. Rational argument, put insistently for over a decade, had not worked; one had gotten some hope after the 1929 disturbances, in the form of the Shaw and Hope Simpson Commissions reports, and the relatively friendly line taken by High Commissioner Chancellor [>218; >220; >225; >233], but in the end only the Black Letter counted [>246]. British intelligence was now regularly being made aware of plans for revolutionary action not only in Palestine but in Syria and Lebanon, lists being drawn up of members or sympathisers with, for instance, 'The Pan Islamic Arab Revolutionary Movement'.¹⁹⁷¹

31 July 1931 *In response to a Zionist conference on armaments, Sheikh Sabri Abdeen of Hebron convenes a conference that calls for the training of officers and soldiers with experience from Ottoman times in order to provide a base for building Palestinian military capabilities. He is arrested by the British.*

¹⁹⁷⁰ Ayyad 1999, p 144; also Pappe 2010, pp 249ff.

¹⁹⁷¹ CO 733/204/2, pp 25-33, 20 May & 18 June 1931; Kayyali 1978, p 163.

At the time of Sidney Webb's exit as Colonial Secretary on 24 August 1931 some British officials were detecting a growing and more confrontational opposition:

[T]he relations of the moderates, who so far have controlled the Arab Executive, with the extremists have long been obscure and equivocal; but there are now definite signs that the moderate element has been compelled to make some concessions to the extremists in order to maintain a perhaps precarious leadership.¹⁹⁷²

During the spring and summer of 1931 the Colonial Office and Palestine Government were certainly very concerned about how to monitor and control the Palestinian press, with one R.A. Furness submitting a long proposal dated 16 June "on the organisation of the proposed Press Bureau".¹⁹⁷³

According to Kayyali, the moderates did compromise with the radicals:

These concessions included the Arab Executive's refusal to accept the Government's development scheme as it was based on the Mandate and the MacDonal Letter [[>]246] which was unanimously rejected by the Arabs [[>]247]. A Press campaign led to a strike against the arming of the Jewish Colonies by the Government. The Palestine Administration retaliated by suspending Arabic newspapers accused of incitement, by suppressing a strike in Nablus with troops assisting the Police and by breaking a taxi drivers' strike in August. A number of activists were also arrested.¹⁹⁷⁴

Many journalists came together in Yaffa on 18 September 1931 to protest against British "imperialism", "Zionism", "occupation" and specifically against "the administrative suspension of Arab newspapers and the various restrictions on freedom of the Press"; simultaneously, relatively young activists met in Nablus protesting "the arming of Jewish Colonies" and criticising the Palestinian leadership for not focusing on the basic issue of "independence within Arab unity".¹⁹⁷⁵

According to Ayyad, at a "General Arab Congress" held in Nablus that same day Jamal al-Husseini in his role as Secretary of the Executive Committee argued that in light of the strengthened British pro-Zionism proven by the Black Letter, the degrees of either hopeful or corrupt collaboration with the British during the previous thirteen years ought to be abandoned in favour of unconditional insistence on independence.¹⁹⁷⁶ Strong support for this view of Jamal's radical attitude can be found, *inter alia*, in his 1933 article in

¹⁹⁷² Kayyali 1978, p 164, citing CO 733/204, O.G.R. Williams, 'Arab Incitement', 3 September 1931.

¹⁹⁷³ CO 733/204/7, pp 52-116 & *passim*.

¹⁹⁷⁴ Kayyali 1978, p 164, citing Kayyali 1968, pp 236-37 (= [in Arabic] ed. Kayyali Beirut 1968 *Watha'iq al-Muqawam al-Falastiniyya ali'Arabiyya dida al-Ihtilal al-Baritani wa al-Sahyuniyya* (Documents of the Palestinian Arab Resistance against British Occupation and Zionism).

¹⁹⁷⁵ Kayyali 1978, pp 164-65, citing Kayyali 1968, pp 243-45; see CO 733/4, pp 59-64, 'Jewish Colonies Defence Scheme' and CO 733/14, pp 2-14, 'Arming of the Jews in Palestine' (written by Meinertzhagen).

¹⁹⁷⁶ Ayyad 1999, p 143.

the journal *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* [>262], his remarks to the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1938 [>360] and his blunt, uncompromising statements at the St. James Palace meetings with Malcolm MacDonald in February and March 1939 [>387-397]. Musa Kazem was also fed up. [>252] Had such 'notables' ever actually 'collaborated' with the British?

Also at this 18 September "national meeting in Nablus" it was agreed to raise funds "to protect threatened lands" from Zionist purchase.¹⁹⁷⁷ This stiffening of Palestinian opposition to the British would lead eventually to meetings in "early 1933" attended by the likes of Ragheb an-Nashashibi and Jamal's cousin Amin al-Husseini and which vowed to end all collaboration.¹⁹⁷⁸

As an aside concerning accusations of collaboration, an earlier case around the year 1921 is instructive or even typical – namely that of Khalil Totah, as related by Tibawi:

Educated at Columbia University and married to an American lady he was a Quaker and pacifist. As a civil servant he could not refuse Samuel's invitation[s] to social functions at Government House, a flimsy evidence for accusing him of collaboration with the enemy. Eventually he was vindicated. He was the co-author of a textbook on the history of Palestine down to Samuel's time. The two authors wrote on the last page of the book a statement of fact that the Arabs rejected Zionist policy, protested against it and demanded its change, and concluded that Samuel did his utmost to reconcile the Arabs to this policy but failed. Promptly the book was banned [by Samuel, who had just sent journalist Yusuf al-Isa into exile in Damascus], but as a civil servant Totah could not defend himself. He kept silent until he was a civil servant no longer and appeared before the Royal Commission [in 1936] as an Arab expert on education. He then complained of intolerance.¹⁹⁷⁹

I don't have the knowledge to judge whether, during the years prior to 1931, people like Khalil Totah [see also >179], or leaders from the 'notables' class who travelled politely to London, could have or should have behaved differently over against the British. Given the universal Palestinian desire for simple independence and rejection of Zionism, would an attitude of absolute non-cooperation have brought the Palestinians closer to effecting a reversal of British policy? The dilemma for thousands of Palestinians, many of them civil servants, was excruciating. [see also >302; >306; >308; >312]

18 September 1931 *At the General Arab Congress, held in Nablus, Jamal Al-Husseini puts forward two suggested methods of resisting Zionist/British aims: either following the Egyptian model of negotiating with the British or the Indian one of embarking on a course of civil disobedience.*

¹⁹⁷⁷ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 71.

¹⁹⁷⁸ Ayyad 1999, pp 144-45.

¹⁹⁷⁹ Tibawi 1977, p 489.

Standing once again at square one, the Palestinians kept the level of political activity high and organised better. Political parties pursuing independence were being contemplated. [^{>259; >288}] One large, visible event was **the World (or General) Islamic Congress in Jerusalem**, organised by Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini and attended by over 130 activists from 22 Moslem countries, including Abdulrahman Azzam of Egypt, later a main negotiator at the 1939 St. James talks [^{>391; >394-97; >400; >407}], witness before the Anglo-American Committee [^{>438}] and later head of the Arab League [^{>426; >440}]¹⁹⁸⁰; it elected both an executive committee of 25 members and an action committee with 7 members¹⁹⁸¹. It straightforwardly condemned Zionism and called for Moslem boycott of Jewish businesses in Palestine. It stopped short of the usual demands for self-determination only because (outgoing) High Commissioner Chancellor had allowed the Congress only on condition that it not deal explicitly with British policy.¹⁹⁸²

This Congress was attended by many nationalist, rather than Islamist, former members of *al-Fatat* and *al-'Ahd* (1908-18) [^{>4}], and accordingly both Palestinian and broader Arab causes were addressed:

An Executive Committee, most of whose members were Palestinians, was elected mainly to propagate the 'national charter' and prepare the ground for a general conference comprising delegates from all Arab countries to devise the means and lay the plans for the implementation of the 'national charter' on a popular Pan-Arab level.¹⁹⁸³

Further according to Kayyali, though, the British convinced Faisal of Iraq not to support the Congress and some wealthy Moslem donors not to support the proposed Islamic University of Jerusalem; all in all, in Kayyali's opinion,

The Islamic Congress dealt a *coupe de grace* to the Arab Executive as it led to public mutual recriminations and denunciations between the Nashashibi and Husseini factions. The formation of the Arab Liberal Party (*Hizb Al-Ahrar*) constituted another step towards the disintegration of a largely ineffective political front.¹⁹⁸⁴

Whatever Kayyali's criteria for determining "ineffectiveness", and whatever bad blood emerged among the powerless British subjects, it is worth remembering that nobody wavered from self-determination and its corollary, anti-Zionism.

In this situation the Istiqlal (Independence) Party soon formed [*also >259*]:

The new attitude towards the British was demonstrated in the country-wide celebrations on the anniversary of Saladin's victory over the Crusaders at Hattin and in the anti-British

¹⁹⁸⁰ Gibb 1934, *citing inter alia* 'Filastin' (Jaffa), 7-18 December 1931.

¹⁹⁸¹ Boyle 2001, pp 188-89.

¹⁹⁸² Either FO 141/489/6 ["reported missing, June 2016"] or FO 141/728/10 [?].

¹⁹⁸³ Kayyali 1978, pp 166-68, *citing* Darwaza, pp 86-89.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Kayyali 1978, pp 166-67.

speeches delivered on that occasion. Concurrently, the director of the Arab Executive office Subhi al-Khadra wrote a fiery article in *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* attributing the calamities of Palestine and the Arabs to British policies. Other articles by Darwaza in the same paper exhorted the Arabs to fight British policies, to unite in the face of growing dangers and to renew their drive to attain freedom and independence. This anti-British agitation was prelude to the emergence of the Arab Independence (*Istiqlal*) Party, of which Darwaza and al-Khadra were founding members. [see also >379] ... In their first manifesto the *Istiqlalists* attributed the lamentable disarray in the ranks of the national movement to the egocentric and self-interested political notables who were subservient to the imperialist rulers. The party founders vowed to struggle against imperialism face-to-face and fight against Jewish immigration and land sales and to endeavour to achieve a parliamentary Arab government and work for the attainment of complete Arab unity.¹⁹⁸⁵

The *Istiqlal* manifesto also contained one of the last calls for the goal of the unity of Greater Syria.¹⁹⁸⁶

By mid-1932 political parties would form, taking over the function of mouthpieces, audible to the British, that had been fulfilled by the Moslem-Christian Associations [>29; >30; >44; >47; >67; >68; >75; >82; >95; >110; >149; >175-76; >189; >241; >243] and the Arab Executive Committees that had been elected by the seven Palestine Arab Congresses [>39; >82; >95; >110; >151; >164; >197].

Recall that already a decade earlier [>175], in opposition to the al-Husseini family and the Mufti's Supreme Moslem Council the

moderate Palestine Arab National Party was founded in November 1923 at a meeting in Jerusalem. ... Among those who attended were Aref Pasha Dajani, Sheikh Suleiman Taji al-Faruqi, Boulos Shehadeh, and Omar Saleh al-Barghuthi, as well as members of the Nashashibi family. ... The party's program differed little from the programme adhered to hitherto by the nationalist movement – an Arab Palestine, a representative government, and an end to Zionism.¹⁹⁸⁷ [also >175; >176; >184; 193]

In line with its desire to stick with the British as far as possible this party would only belatedly come to support the rebellion starting in late 1935 and spring 1936.¹⁹⁸⁸

According to H.A.R. Gibb, this conference was a reaction against Ramsay MacDonald's 'Black Letter' of 13 February 1931 [>246] and its participants comprised an unprecedentedly broad range of Moslem religious and political positions from the entire Moslem world, despite the refusal of Turkey and Egypt to officially attend, despite opposition from the Mufti's Palestinian enemies, and despite the High Commissioner's prohibiting the Congress from raising "questions... affecting the internal or external affairs of friendly pow-

¹⁹⁸⁵ Kayyali 1978, p 167, citing Kayyali 1968, pp 261-65; also Mattar 1988, pp 61-66.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Ayyad 1999, p 138.

¹⁹⁸⁷ Wasserstein 1978, p 220; also Kayyali 1978, pp 121-22.

¹⁹⁸⁸ Seikaly 1995, pp 187-93; Ayyad 1999, p 153.

ers”.¹⁹⁸⁹ Violating the Mandatory’s injunction, however, the Congress condemned not only Zionism but “French policy in Morocco, the anti-religious policy of the Soviet Government, and the activities of the Italian authorities in Libya”.¹⁹⁹⁰

On 13 December 1931, just before the World Congress ended, a group of 50 Arabs, mostly Palestinians, met at Awni Abdul Hadi’s house and wrote an “Arab Covenant” swearing to uphold the unity and independence of the Arab nation and condemning “colonization... in all its forms and manifestations”; it also made the older call for general Arab independence, and many of the attendees were forming the *Hizb Al-Istiqlal* political party.¹⁹⁹¹ [see >256; >259; >288]

¹⁹⁸⁹ Gibb 1934, pp 100-03.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Gibb 1934, p 103 note 1.

¹⁹⁹¹ Gibb 1934, p 107; see Gibb 1934, pp 99-109; also Kayyali 1978, pp 166-67, citing CO 733/215; Ayyad 1999, p 131; Qumsiyeh 2011, p 72.

255. Chancellor's final memo

16 December 1931

Shortly after he left office on 1 November 1931, namely on 16 December, outgoing High Commissioner **John Chancellor drafted his reaction**¹⁹⁹² to the Jews', Palestinians' and Arabs' criticism of the Passfield White Paper [^{>234}]. In his cover letter to the Colonial Office he claimed correctly there were no significant differences between the Churchill White Paper of 1922 [^{>142}], the Passfield White Paper of 1930 and MacDonald's letter of 13 February 1931 [^{>246}], which were all in fact "complementary". (p 11) Thus the Zionist "storm of indignation which greeted the White Paper" had taken both him and HMG "by surprise". (p 12)

I believe that the Jewish hostility to the White Paper was due... mainly to the fact that the White Paper made it clear that the social, political, and economic conditions of Palestine were such as to make it impossible for a Jewish National State to be established in Palestine within any period that can now be foreseen. (pp 12-13)

However, he continued, "when the Balfour Declaration was made, most Jews believed that it meant that Palestine would soon become a Jewish National State" although "attempts were resisted" to include the goal of a Jewish National State in the Mandate text. (pp 13 & 43) [^{>146}; also ^{>326}]

The Arabs demanded, so Chancellor further, that immigration not exceed economic capacity to absorb immigrants and that displaced Arabs should have land to settle on. (p 36) On constitutional development,

Reference has already been made to the demands of Arab leaders for a constitution which would be incompatible with the mandatory obligations of His Majesty's Government. It [should be], however, the considered opinion of H.M.G. that the time has now come when the important question of the establishment of a measure of self-government in Palestine must, in the interests of the community as a whole, be taken in hand without further delay. (p 24)

Chancellor was advising brand-new Colonial Secretary Philip Cunliffe-Lister to give up the "mandatory obligations" in favour of "self-government" by "the community as a whole". Without "the establishment of a National Government" Arab discontent would not disappear. (p 41) Almost two years after his secret Memorandum to the Colonial Office, he was still upholding the pro-Palestinian line he had therein supported.¹⁹⁹³ To repeat, not until the Malcolm MacDonald White Paper of 1939 would this counsel be heeded. [^{>386ff}; ^{>410}]

early 1930s *In the early 1930s [Izz ed-Din Al] Qassam formed the Black Hand Gang, a secret association through which he trained cells in paramilitary combat, organized the acqui-*

¹⁹⁹² CO 733/215/1, pp 10-44, all citations.

¹⁹⁹³ CO 733/183/1, §40, 41, 49-55, >218.

sition and distribution of arms, proselytized and forged political contacts. Initiates of the Black Hand Gang grew long, unkempt beards and their religious practices have been compared to those of ascetic Sufism.¹⁹⁹⁴

January 1932 The 1st Youth Congress convenes in Jaffa, headed by Issa Al-Bandak. It lays the basis for forming active committees on such subjects as national education, and adopts a nationalist charter rejecting colonization and calling for a unified effort by all Arab countries to achieve Arab independence. At the end of the convention a resolution is issued... launching the Arab Youth Congress as a political organization.

¹⁹⁹⁴ Ghandour 2010, pp 88-89.

256. Arab Youth Congress

4 January 1932

1932 would also see a Palestinian Youth Congress held in Yaffa which adopted a fresh 'Arab National Charter'.¹⁹⁹⁵ According to Ayyad, this Congress first met on 4 January 1932, chaired by Issa al-Bandak and attended by 200 of its 400 members; it took political resolutions for the unity of the Arab world and against colonialism in principle, and also formed a 38-member Executive Committee headed by Rasim al-Khalidi.¹⁹⁹⁶ According to Lesch, the Congress was chaired by Wajib al-Dajani of Jaffa, and soon "came under the control of Yaqub al-Ghusayn and Edmond Rock", both of whom would be arrested and sentenced after the Jaffa disturbances of October 1933 [268].¹⁹⁹⁷ I do not know if this is the same 'Arab National Charter' written at Awni Abdul Hadi's house in Jerusalem on 13 December 1931 [254] and am now seeking relevant documents.

¹⁹⁹⁵ Kayyali 1978, p 168. For the text of the charter search CO 733/215/12 or /13, p 5, 'Note on conversation with Professor Brodetsky', 9 September 1932.

¹⁹⁹⁶ Ayyad 1999, pp 136-37.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Lesch 1979, p 106, citing Israel State Archives, Chief Secretary's Papers, 6 December 1932, K/190/32.

The Executive Committee of the Arab Women's Congress addressed a **memorandum to the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC)** in Geneva,¹⁹⁹⁸ sending it through the High Commissioner, wherein they complained that the O'Donnell/Britain financial Commission report of 1931 was kept secret from the population (pp 39, 45) although it entailed the dismissal of many Arab civil servants and thereby weakened among other things the "tutelage" of the population on the way to self-government (pp 38-43). Within the civil services those Arabs still employed were moreover discriminated against. (pp 43-44) They deplored the "misery, eviction and various kinds of hardships" of the *fallah*, the increasing poverty of the rural population as a result of British policy (pp 45-50) and demanded an end to the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration:

We feel it incumbent upon us to give strong expression to the disappointment which is felt by the Arabs in general as a result of the policy adopted by His Majesty's Government as a Mandatory over Palestine in depriving the population from their Constitutional and National Rights as an Independent Nation. Iraq, which is [was in 1920 intended to be] of the same category of Mandates as Palestine has enjoyed its national rights for years and is now being recognised as a member of the League of Nations. ... [We take] this opportunity to confirm the various decisions and resolutions that were taken by the Palestine Arab Congresses and especially with regard to: (a) The Abrogation of the Balfour Declaration as being contradictory to the pledges given to the Arabs and prejudicial to their interests; (b) The abolition of the Mandate... (c) The establishment of a National Government responsible to an elected representative Council with a view to attaining its complete independence within an Arab Federation. The Executive Committee, in putting before the Permanent Mandates Commission this Memorandum which contains some of the grievances of the Arab Nation of Palestine ventures to hope that its observations will be given the consideration they deserve. [Signed] Wahide El Khalilly [and] Matiel E.T. Mogannam (pp 52-53)

The wording was similar to that of their appeal to High Commissioner Chancellor on 26 October 1929. [>210; also >269; >320; >356]

High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope, who had replaced Chancellor on 20 November 1931, in his "note" commenting on the women's memorandum dwelt almost exclusively on their financial, administrative and educational grievances, devoting only one sentence to their political demands:

[concerning] The Rights of the Arabs to a National Government. His Majesty's Government presumes that the Permanent Mandates Commission will not wish to consider the requests in this part of the petition, as being incompatible with the terms of the Mandate for Palestine. (p 37)

¹⁹⁹⁸ CO 733/221/9, pp 37-53, Executive Committee, First Palestine Arab Women Congress, Jerusalem, 28 January 1932, all citations; Kayyali 1978, p 168.

Again, since “the terms of the Mandate” had been written by His Majesty’s Government, Wauchope’s argument reduces to: ‘The PMC should not even consider this because we don’t want it to.’ The PMC of course did not need this advice, as it had routinely declined to consider petitions which shook the Mandate’s premises. [>178; >182-83; >191] The memorandum reached the London desk of Cosmo Parkinson – who had taken over as head of the Middle East Department on 1 August 1931 from John Shuckburgh and who in 1937 would become Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies – and after ample time for intra-office commentary it was duly forwarded to the PMC – *five months later* on 22 June 1932.

According to British officials, in commentaries as to the identity of this women’s political organisation approved by High Commissioner Wauchope, 150-200 women had attended the large congress back in late October 1929 [>210], and the Executive Committee then elected had nine members; upon registration with the District Commissioner’s Office the Society had stated its purposes:

The object of the Society is to promote the Arab Women’s affairs, socially and economically, and to endeavour for the education of the young women and to work in every legal way for the uplift of the dignity of the women and to put all the national goods and industry under a good demand and to promote the affairs of the country and to participate with every society in any work pertaining to the welfare of the country, economical, social and political. (pp 19, 25)

According to Susan Pedersen,

in 1932 the Commission refused – against precedent – to welcome even the aspiration of self-government expressed in a petition from the Palestine Arab Women’s Congress, on the grounds that the petitioners only ‘wished to have autonomous government so as to rid themselves, among other things, of the Balfour Declaration’...¹⁹⁹⁹

I am not aware of any reply to the women either from the PMC or the Palestine Administration, and do not know what “precedents” Pedersen is referring to. On the evidence of the PMC’s rejection of the Palestine Arab Congress’s Petition #1 of 8/12 April 1925, where it held that

In view of the fact that in the first petition the very principle of the Palestine Mandate is contested, the Commission has decided not to take it into consideration,²⁰⁰⁰

this decision was fully *with precedent*.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Pedersen 2010, p 53.

²⁰⁰⁰ PMC 1925, p 219, also >182; >183; >191.

258. Legislative Council?

20 April 1932

The various **proposals for a Legislative Council** (LC) are important because British and Palestinian attitudes towards them were a barometer of Palestinian chances of getting eventual self-determination. They were never much different from the often-existing Advisory Council because the powers of both were extremely limited. [*also* >111-12; >133-137; >142; >150; >161; >193; >196; >251; >279; >283; >289; >290] It would take a separate book to tediously record the ins and outs of the bickering over the composition of the mooted LCs, and this entry roughly sketches only **HMG's strategy of delay in 1932**. [*also* >247; >251; >255] In the end Britain never established any LC.

As of 1932 all three parties to LC discussions – the Palestinian leaders, the High Commissioner (HC), and the Colonial Office (CO) in London – were being or had been renewed: The Arab Executive Committee was losing power, Arthur Wauchope replaced John Chancellor as HC, and Philip Cunliffe-Lister replaced Sidney Webb (Passfield) as Colonial Secretary. On 23 March 1932 Wauchope laid out for Cunliffe-Lister the alternatives:²⁰⁰¹

The first is to say that, in order to redeem our pledges [for “self-governing institutions”], the Government has decided on the establishment of a Legislative Council [and] that no opposition will deter the Government from forming a Legislative Council, partly by election, but, if necessary, by nomination. The second alternative is for me to say quietly to the leaders to whom I have spoken that the Government has given a pledge, and is determined to redeem it. But, before forming a Legislative Council, we consider that it is advisable to do three things for the good of the country and for the training of responsible people for responsible work...

These three things “for the good of the country” were appointing locals to the Agricultural Council, to Local Councils and to the Advisory Council. What he was sure of was that

to make any sort of offer of a Legislative Council now, and withdraw it on the ground that the Jews would not participate, would have a deplorable effect on all Arab leaders in the country. It would be much less injurious to the prestige of this Government to make no offer at present, rather than risk such an eventuality.

The new Colonial Secretary in a memo to the Cabinet of 5 April agreed: Wauchope's second option should be adopted,

But we should be prepared to face the fact that, while the declared intention of His Majesty's Government to establish a Legislative Council at a fitting time will stand, the High Commissioner's proposal means definitely going back for the present on the statements made in 1930 in the White Paper and to the Permanent Mandates Commission last year.

Remember, this was fourteen years after Wilson promised self-determination [>20], thirteen years after writing into the Covenant the pledge to soon let the Palestinian people

²⁰⁰¹ CAB 24/229/24.

“stand alone” [246], twelve years after drafting a Mandate which included the promise of “self-governing institutions” [278; 285; 246], and ten years after the British refused to listen to the Palestinians’ cogent argument that their proposed LC was undemocratic [233-37; 242; 250; 258]. These politicians were moreover saying with a straight face that more time was needed to “train” the Palestinians.

Since the Passfield White Paper, although it had never officially come into force, promised some self-government, the Colonial and Foreign Offices scrambled during 1932 to come up with some new Legislative Council formula, producing several papers on the history of such proposals, from Churchill in 1922 and from John Chancellor at various times, as well as their own ideas.²⁰⁰² Wauchope agreed with Cunliffe-Lister on 26 March that

it is not for the good of the country to offer to establish a Legislative Council at present [and] inadvisable to make the offer now because 1/5th of the population (i.e. the Jews) will not participate... We made the promise 1½ years ago. I see no dishonesty in postponing its fulfilment for another 1½ years... I do not advocate enforcing the establishment of a Legislative Council now against strenuous Jewish opposition.²⁰⁰³

In the running were “cantonisation” and other parity-based proposals as well.²⁰⁰⁴

A six-member ‘Cabinet Committee’ decided on 13 April that unless “acceptable to both Jews and Arabs” no LC should be proposed – but maybe in “1½ years”.²⁰⁰⁵ Porath is correct that Wauchope and Cunliffe-Lister, “bowing to Jewish pressure”, put the topic at the bottom of their agenda, HMG writing on 20 April, as he notes, merely that “the Government favour the establishment of a Legislative Council as soon as the conditions permit”.²⁰⁰⁶ The conditions would never permit, because time was needed for Jews to become a majority and the Jewish side would until then settle for no less than parity, whatever the powers of the L.C. might be; yet such a 50/50 composition was prohibitively far from what the Palestinians would accept.²⁰⁰⁷ [see also 261]

Porath’s opinion that Jamal al-Husseini [262] could nevertheless, in the fall of 1932, publicly (“without causing any uproar”) support the idea of a Legislative Council²⁰⁰⁸ is however misleading: in his 1932 article in a US-American journal Jamal very publicly opposed any Council which presupposed adherence to the Jewish national home:

To find themselves in a position to accept legally and execute actually the terms of the Balfour Declaration is a thing the Arabs of Palestine – Moslems and Christians – could not countenance.²⁰⁰⁹

²⁰⁰² CO 733/219/4, pp 2-73, 96-123, 128-51.

²⁰⁰³ CO 733/219/4, pp 143-46.

²⁰⁰⁴ See CO 733/219/2, pp 1-5, 8, 12, 20, 23-24.

²⁰⁰⁵ CAB 24/229/32, p 218.

²⁰⁰⁶ Porath 1977, pp 145-46, citing CO 733/219/97105/2; see also Robson 2011, pp 106-08, 115-19.

²⁰⁰⁷ CO 733/219/4, pp 69-72, Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister 16 September 1932; Porath 1977, p 146.

²⁰⁰⁸ Porath 1977, p 147, citing *Mir’at al-Sharq*, 17 December 1932.

²⁰⁰⁹ al-Husseini 1932, p 24.

It was only within this broader rejection that Jamal objected as well to the specific 1932 proposal:

With this restricted representation in this council of restricted powers, the Arabs of Palestine were far from being satisfied.²⁰¹⁰

Jamal was stating the unwavering, unanimous Palestinian position. [>262]

2 August 1932 Awni Abdul Hadi founds the Palestinian Istiqlal (Independence) Party, the first regularly constituted Palestinian political party. ... Its goals focus on the full independence of all Arab countries. ... Among the members are Akram Zuaiter, Izzat Darwaza, Muin Al-Madi, Rashid Hajj Ibrahim and Subhi Al-Khadra. [also >263]

²⁰¹⁰ al-Husseini 1932, p 24.

Many Palestinians had apparently concluded that nothing more was to be gained by ethical or legal argument, or even appeal to an obvious British interest in not having to expend money, thought and lives controlling a population experiencing land loss, injustice and humiliation. Great Britain, fixated on the Jewish home/state, had become the enemy. Further evidence of this was the manifesto of the Istiqlal Party (*Hizb al-Istiqlal al-Arabi*), founded in 1932 [^{>254}] by Awni Abdul Hadi and allies such as Akram Zuaiter, Izzat Darwaza, Muin Al-Madi, Rashid Hajj Ibrahim and Subhi Al-Khadra,²⁰¹¹ which not only contained the usual rejection of land sales and immigration, but re-emphasised total independence from Britain; in addition, in Kayyali's words, they gave a

reply to a speech delivered by the High Commissioner [Wauchope] before the [Permanent] Mandates Commission in Geneva. In it they reiterated their rejection of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate and exposed the basic aspects of the alliance between Zionism and British Imperialism. They alleged that one-third of the budget had to be allocated to defence and security expenses because of the Mandate's attempt to build an alien national home against the will of the Palestinians. ... Furthermore, the Mandatory Government had deliberately failed to live up to its duty towards the Arabs, 'the legitimate owners of the country', in the crucial fields of education, land legislation and immigration. ... In September 1932, they [the Istiqlal Party] induced the Arab Executive to pass a resolution declaring that no Arab should serve on any Government Board or in any way cooperate with the Government.²⁰¹²

While not abandoning the goals of a free Palestine free of Zionism, some Palestinians, including the Mufti and the Nashashibis, continued nevertheless to work with, and thus to some degree to cooperate with, the British.

²⁰¹¹ See also Lesch 1973, p 23.

²⁰¹² Kayyali 1978, pp 167-69, citing Kayyali (ed.) 1968, *Watha'iq al-Muqawam al-Falastiniyya al-'Arabiyya dida al-Ihtilal al-Baritani wa al-Sahyuniyya* (Documents of the Palestinian Arab Resistance against British Occupation and Zionism), pp 261-65 & 284-98.

Zeina Ghandour reports on the contents of an 'Arab Who's Who' compiled by Christopher Eastwood, a Private Secretary to High Commissioner Wauchope, revealing his impressions of 100 of the Palestinians with whom the British were over the years in 'dialogue':²⁰¹³

Abderrahman Salim, a member of the Arab Executive (AE), is 'a notorious agitator of the most unpleasant type'; Awni Abdul Hadi, the General Secretary of the Pan-Arab Istiqlal, is said to care only about 'his own prestige, position and pocket'; Haj Shafi Abdul Hadi, who opposes the Grand Mufti, is 'the biggest liar in the country'; George Antonius, whilst 'the cleverest Arab in Palestine', 'like all Arabs has personal piques and jealousies and is quick to take offence'...; Izzat Darwaza, a member of the Istiqlal party, for his suggestion that Arabs 'embrace the spirit and faith of Gandhi', is branded an 'extremist'; Hassan Dajani, a member of the Opposition which associated itself closely with the authorities, 'has many of the qualities of a Jew: business capacity, self-assurance, bounce, a thin skin. But he also has the Arab gift for intrigue ... said to smuggle drugs'; Yacoub Bey Ghussein, who formed the Youth Congress, and became a member of the AHC [Arab Higher Committee] is 'a fat unpleasant creature'; Fahmi Bey Husseini, the Mayor of Gaza, is 'fond of the ladies, even those of Tel Aviv', 'unscrupulous and immoral' and yet, startlingly, it was judged 'difficult to find in Gaza a better Mayor'; Jamal Husseini, the Grand Mufti's nephew and protégé, is 'rather slow witted, inclined to be pig-headed'; the bouncy Sheikh Muzaffar [Muzzafar], on whom the authorities kept a watchful eye from the earliest days of the Mandate for his energetic activism, is 'a notorious agitator and firebrand', 'one of the most dangerous men in Palestine', 'a first class stump orator who in 5 minutes can make his audience do anything he wants'...; Suleiman Bey Toukan, a member of the Opposition, is 'given to the methods of intrigue'; Omar Bittar, a member of the AE [Arab Executive] and President of the Jaffa Muslim Christian Association, is a 'drunkard' whose involvement in politics 'does not improve their tone'; Haj Amin Husseini, President of the Supreme Muslim Council and Grand Mufti, who owed both positions to HMG, is 'affable, courteous, dignified and close. A dangerous enemy and not a very trusty friend'.

Eastwood sent this to Frederick Downie at the Colonial Office, commenting:

I should say, however, that the opinions expressed are purely my own, that I have not shown it to the High Commissioner or the Chief Secretary. It has been prepared during the course of my two years here chiefly for my own guidance. ... I can't vouch that it is absolutely correct in every particular... but I don't think there are many inaccuracies of fact.

3 October 1932 *The British Mandate [sic.] in Iraq officially terminates. Iraq joins the League of Nations and is recognized as an independent sovereign state.*

²⁰¹³ CO 733/248/22, pp 2-99, 'Arab Who's Who'; Ghandour 2010, pp 132-33.

This entry shows how ridiculous the British colonial power was in handling the placatory warhorse of a Legislative Council sometime in the future. Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister in a memorandum to the Cabinet dated 3 November 1932²⁰¹⁴ reported that despite efforts to get “Jews and Arabs” to co-operate, none would join the Advisory Council, but he made the claim that “Until recently... Sir Arthur Wauchope gained the increasing confidence of both parties, and... secured their co-operation on the [lower-ranking] advisory boards”; but now,

The Arab extremists have gained the upper hand in Arab counsels, and forced all members of the Arab executive to withdraw from the Boards... [T]he Arabs are becoming so suspicious, that it is necessary to reaffirm in Palestine our intentions of proceeding with the establishment of the Legislative Council. ... [T]he wise and honest course is to state the position plainly [that] HMG have every intention of establishing such a Council.

There was a misunderstanding or rather lack of comprehension: The Palestinians did not want just any Legislative Council, so stating this intention without meeting the Palestinian conditions conveyed to HMG consistently for ten years *could not work*; it was an illusion to believe that offering a warmed-up version would do anything to reduce “suspicions” or weaken the “extremists”.

Of course both Wauchope and Cunliffe-Lister knew that

The Arabs have always maintained that they must have a clear majority and, in fact, govern the country. The Jews have lately raised a claim to parity. We are satisfied that neither of these is possible. The Arabs, of course, cannot be given the power to defeat the Mandate...

Whatever emerged, “HMG will see that they [Britain] have full and adequate representation on any Council”.

To extricate themselves now,

If both parties refused and rejected our proposals, we may find ourselves in a position in which we have done our best to fulfil our pledge [for ‘self-governing institutions’], but in which fulfilment is practically impossible. That may discharge us for the time being from our obligation and throw us back on continuing to govern the country as at present. But I think one thing is clear – we must not allow one party alone to prevent indefinitely the establishment of a Legislative Council by refusal to co-operate.

With this same quandry over whether to in effect give each side a veto in such matters HMG would wrestle in writing its 1939 White Paper, whose ambiguity on this issue of a veto for the Jewish minority would at that time mean ‘Arab’ refusal to embrace that White Paper. In any case now, so Cunliffe-Lister, HMG had “done their best”; their task was “impossible”; one side or the other was “preventing” and “refusing” co-operation; HMG was not to blame.

²⁰¹⁴ CAB 24/234/24, pp 206-07.

The British intended to implement a Constitution and Legislative Council very similar to that proposed in 1922, prompting Jamal al-Husseini to argue against the current proposal in a **November 1932 article** in the US academic journal *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.²⁰¹⁵ It restated in detail the Palestinians' reasons for rejecting the earlier version. First, the journal's description of the author:

Jamal Bey Husseini is honorary secretary of the Arab Executive. He was formerly general secretary of the Palestine Arab Executive and of the Supreme Moslem Council. He was Assistant Governor of Nablus in 1919, was a member of the Arab delegation to London, and represented the Arabs of Palestine in England in 1930 [222; 226]. (p 26)

Husseini began:

It has been announced in the [1930] Statement of Policy of the British Government with regard to Palestine [234, Passfield White Paper] that the Palestinian Constitution will generally follow the lines of the Constitution of 1922 [133ff], that has been duly rejected by the Arab inhabitants who form the overwhelming majority of the population. (p 22)

He criticised the Legislative Council contained in the draft constitution for having “restricted powers” and “restricted representation”; not only had it no teeth, but instead of proportional representation it had a built-in pro-Zionist majority of 13 out of 23 seats, because the eleven government officials on the Legislative Council, “all all of whom are Britishers, Christians, or Jews”, would be legally bound to uphold the Jewish-home part of the Mandate, something the holders of the two Jewish elected seats would do anyway. (pp 22-24) “His Majesty the King”, moreover, held legislative powers in important domains, and the High Commissioner could dissolve the Council at any time. (p 23) [also 255] (Wasserstein states correctly that “No British Cabinet would have sanctioned the establishment in Palestine of a government really representative of the Arab majority and possessing effective powers.”²⁰¹⁶)

Jamal described the political system in Palestine in detail. The Colonial Secretary, the High Commissioner and an “Executive Council” with 3 British members hold virtually all the power in Palestine, unlike the limited Executives in Syria, Trans-Jordan and Iraq (which was just then even being admitted to the League of Nations); judicial power, as well, was in British hands. (pp 22-23)

He went on to more general grounds for rejection:

The inhabitants of Palestine have had long experience in the management of self-governing institutions. ... During the Turkish régime the inhabitants of Palestine enjoyed wide measures of self-government. Palestinians, therefore, find in the proposed Constitution, with all its restrictions and deprivations in its different institutions, a very poor substitute for

²⁰¹⁵ al-Husseini 1932, all quotations.

²⁰¹⁶ Wasserstein 1978, p 178.

all that they possessed before they were 'liberated' by the great democratic nations of this world. ... Syria and Iraq... are now enjoying much wider measures of self-government than this Constitution gives to Palestinians. ... The Constitution of Palestine ... was cooked and canned in London and dispatched to Palestine for consumption. (pp 26, 24)

Writing for a democratically-minded international English-speaking audience, he accused HMG:

It is obvious that the British Government evaded the usual procedure in laying down the Palestinian Constitution in order to give full protection to the Balfour Declaration, which would be very roughly handled and finally abrogated by a democratic government. The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Churchill) in 1922 stated that 'the Balfour Declaration precludes, at this stage, the establishment of a National Democratic Government.' (p 24) [136]

The British were arguably even violating their own Balfour Declaration:

It may be argued... that if the creation of a democratic government in this age of democracy falls within the sphere of the meaning of the term 'civil rights,' then these rights must preclude the execution of the Balfour Declaration, which lays down the condition that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.' (pp 24-25) [16]

The vagueness of "civil" rights makes Jamal's interpretation as good as any other.

Legalistically, as well:

In this combination [HMG 'directs' and the Mandatory Govt 'executes' all policy] the people of Palestine have no political existence other than that of a very low-grade colony. They are not the pupils to learn until 'such time as they are able to stand alone,' [46] because they have no responsibility; and they are not the minors to gain experience, because according to this Constitution they are offered no real opportunities to do so. (p 25)

The entire stated rationale of the Mandates system, that is, was being ignored, and while Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant "is based on the principle of self-determination", the Balfour Declaration "is based on the old right of conquest." (p 25) Participation in a Council in this context would be granting legitimacy to British-Zionist rule:

To find themselves in a position to accept legally and execute actually the terms of the Balfour Declaration is a thing the Arabs of Palestine – Moslems and Christians – could not countenance. ... The Arabs will not agree to anything short of independence that will be realized sooner or later... (pp 24, 25)

Jamal's prescient conclusion:

The two conflicting principles that are laid down in the preamble of this Constitution as well as the Mandate, are bound to make of Palestine a battlefield, real or political, until the policy based on one of these two principles is radically altered. (p 26)

In sum, the Arabs could only participate in the various British-proposed councils if this did not imply accepting the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, something that was however deemed impossible, as described by Shira Robinson:

The central impediment to Palestinian state building during the interwar years was the Mandate's recognition trap. The Arab Executive, for instance,... refused to participate in any forum that would signal consent to their inferior legal status or recognition of a regime that refused even to mention them by name.²⁰¹⁷

The term “recognition trap” is apt if “recognition” is being used in the normative sense of ‘approval’ or ‘legitimation’ – as opposed to merely recognising *the fact that* certain political power relations indeed do obtain.

²⁰¹⁷ Robinson 2013, p 16; also Lesch 1973, p 21.

In the same Special Issue of *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* in which appeared the article by Jamal al-Husseini covered in the previous entry, Awni Abdul Hadi presented an overview of the history of the Palestinian and broader Arab struggle for self-determination.²⁰¹⁸ Born in 1889 in Nablus, Awni Abdul Hadi had experienced first-hand what he was writing about, as the journal's description of the author indicated:

Awni Bey Abdul Hadi is president of the Jerusalem Bar Association; secretary to the Palestine Arab Executive; and ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs with King Faisal at Damascus. He represented the Arabs before the Shaw Commission [>220]; was Arab delegate to London in 1930 [>222; >226]; was the leader of the Arab Representatives before the Wailing Wall Commission sent to Jerusalem by the League of Nations [>245]; and was the Hejaz representative at the Versailles Conference [>10; >64; >386]. (p 21)

The article described late Ottoman times in the Arab Near East, reviewing for instance the Arab Congress in Paris in 1913, "with delegates from all parts of the Arab world" and "attended by Frenchmen who were eminent in public life, whose discussions were reported in the foremost journals in Europe and America"; these nationalist Arabs moreover had representation in Ottoman political bodies, from the Parliament on down, but that wasn't enough: "What the Arabs desired was political independence and complete freedom from Turkish control." (pp 12-13) [>1; >2; >4; >5; >6]

When after the outbreak of World War I efforts for independence were "redoubled",

the Turks... dispatched the 'butcher' Jamal Pasha to Syria in order to nip the revolt in the bud and keep Arab lands within the Empire. He inaugurated his infamous regime as General of the Fourth Army Corps and dictator in Syria and Palestine by proclaiming martial law, by sending Arab leaders to the gallows set up for them in the public squares of Beirut and Damascus, and by deporting their families to the interior of Anatolia. (p 13) [>9]

Awni Bey would witness martial law, gallows and exile again in 1936-39 and 1948.

After an analysis of the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, "that no British Cabinet of any party since the War has dared to publish" [>10; >400], and "the Sykes-Picot treaty, which excluded Palestine from the proposed Arab State and placed it under an international administration" [>12], he got to the Balfour Declaration, which contradicted the principles of self-determination laid out by President Wilson [>20], Article 22 of the Covenant [>46], and Article 94 of the Treaty of Sèvres [>92]. (pp 16-17)

As for the Mandate system itself, it was "a sort of legal guardianship,... the function of which is the carrying out of duties on behalf of a minor":

There is nothing in the principle of the mandate to justify the political domination of one country over another. It is only a question of guidance and advice in matters of administra-

²⁰¹⁸ Abdul Hadi 1932, all quotations.

tion; and even that is of a temporary nature. ... [T]he mandatory power is not supposed to do anything to jeopardize the national interest and aspirations of a mandated people. On the contrary, its main business is to develop and ensure national consciousness. (p 16)

He then ridiculed the notion propagated by Zionists such as Stoyanovsky who attempted to render the Jewish national home compatible with the stated purposes of the Mandate system by re-defining the term “communities” in the Mandate’s Preamble; for Stoyanovsky the Jewish “community” which Britain as Mandatory had to look after in Palestine included the “absent people”, or “virtual population” of all Jews worldwide “whose connection with Palestine has been internationally recognized”:

Thus, in [Stoyanovsky’s] opinion, the real aim of Article 2 of the Mandate [p.146] is to make it possible for the Jews to return to their national home. And in case they did return and constitute the majority of the population, then the British Government would be obliged to enforce the terms of Article 22 [declaring Palestine “able to stand alone”]. (p 18)

According to Tibawi, already in April 1918 Qadi Raghīb Dajani had pointed out to Weizmann and Ormsby-Gore that the Jews worldwide, whose claim to privileged treatment by the Mandatory was the felt sacredness of their historical connection to Palestine, were vastly outnumbered by both Christians and Moslems worldwide, to whom Palestine was equally sacred and meaningful historically.²⁰¹⁹ [see also >45; >143]

Other Zionists, so Awni Bey, justified the Jewish national home within the Mandate system because it brought material prosperity to the locals, but

According to this curious logic we may well say that the bringing of Armenians to crowd out Syrians in Syria and Persians to jostle Iraqians in Iraq and thus make the former a national home for the Armenians and the latter a national home for the Persians is not inconsistent with Article 22 so long as Armenian and Persian immigration adds to the prosperity of those countries. (p 19)

Finally, after noting that Article 1 of the Palestine Mandate gives Britain absolute “power of legislation and administration” [p.146] and showing that the High Commissioner in Palestine in fact wielded this power without consulting the inhabitants, (pp 19, 20)²⁰²⁰ Awni challenged the entire Mandate system:

Surely Paragraph 4 of Article 22 [p.46] was never intended to deprive the Arabs of their rights in Palestine and to subject the country to the absolute authority of the mandated power, which is now Great Britain. It is said that such authority was granted to the mandated power by the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers. *But who gave those powers the right to dispose of Palestine as they pleased and turn it over to Great Britain?* (p 20, *emphasis added*)

This was the deepest rhetorical question that a colonised Palestinian could ask.

²⁰¹⁹ Tibawi 1977, p 271.

²⁰²⁰ See Antonius 1932 for a detailed description of the mechanics of the Palestine Government giving virtually all power to the Mandatory.

24 February 1933 *The Arab community of Manchester, England, sends 30 pounds in financial support for Palestinians wounded and the families of martyrs. ... September The Arab community in Mexico sends 98 pounds, 18 shillings and 10p as financial support for the Palestinians.*

1930s *'By the 1930s, December 9, the anniversary of Britain's 'liberation' of Jerusalem in 1917, was also declared a day of mourning.'*²⁰²¹

²⁰²¹ Lesch 1973, p 26.

XV. “This land, my sister, is a woman.”

The **summary minutes of the Arab Executive Committee meeting** of 21 March 1933, signed by Musa Kazem al-Husseini, comprise a brief history of the previous three years of interaction with the Mandatory, i.e. since the Shaw Commission report of 19 March 1930 [^{>220}], and they record the need to hold a “bigger meeting” on 26 March in Yaffa.²⁰²² According to the AEC the Shaw and Hope Simpson [^{>233}] investigations as well as the experience on the spot of High Commissioner John Chancellor [^{>218; >240; >251; >255}] had in fairly clear terms confirmed the justice of the Palestinian claims concerning politics, land and immigration; the report of Hope Simpson, the expert who “acquainted himself with great facts,... was in its entirety a comprehensive explanation [confirmation?]” of the Shaw group’s findings. The White Paper based on those two reports [^{>234}] “implicitly, not candidly” showed determination to “stand in the face of” the revealed injustices; but “the Jews rose up” [in Britain] and were strong enough

that the British Government recoiled and yielded [^{>246}]; and so, the report of Sir John Hope Simpson, the White Paper and other detailed reports submitted to this Government by heads of Departments were neglected.

In February 1933 the AEC representatives had met with Chancellor’s successor as High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, seeking from him signs of

a desire to do them justice or a tendency to remove such an oppression. They were, however, alarmed when they heard from him utterances denoting that he was determined to indulge in executing that policy [of the Black Letter] contrary to the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry [Shaw] and the British experts [Hope Simpson]. Such a behaviour prompts those assembled to make it clear to Government and its Representative [Wauchope] that this country is fully aware of its intentions and realises the object of this policy which Government follows in order to pave the road for driving the nation away from its homeland for foreigners to supersede it, that [the country] will not expect any good from this Government and its oppression and that it will be looked upon as the true enemy whom it must get rid of through every legal means.

The leaders ended their 4-page summing-up by requesting those invited to the 26 March Assembly to

get ready for the serious acts which will be imposed by the resolutions of this assembly. The country calls its sons for action and sacrifice in these hard times. Anyone who disregards its call, is a deserter, and he [who] does not work with his nation, is not one of it.

Apparently the months of February–April 1933 were when the last drops of hope of changing British minds by argument ran out. Indeed, as Abdelaziz Ayyad records concerning one of the meetings preceding the visit to Wauchope:

²⁰²² CO 733/239/4, pp 40–43, all citations.

In early 1933 a meeting was held and attended by both Amin Al-Husseini and Ragheb An-Nashashibi and others. The attendees demanded to abandon the policy of collaboration with the government altogether. The attendees also agreed that a delegation be sent to the British High Commissioner to ask the commissioner to put an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine and the sale of Palestinian land to Jewish hands. However, unlike previous calls, this one came as an ultimatum. ... The British did not positively respond to the delegation's demand.²⁰²³

Kayyali's overview of these crucial couple of months:

The initiative of the *Istiqlalists* [>259] and the increase of Jewish immigration compelled the Arab Executive to invite a number of political leaders including those of the *Istiqlal* and the Youth Congress to an Assembly on 24 February 1933, under the presidency of Musa Kazem. Discouraged by Wauchope's reply, the Arab leaders finally decided to call a general assembly on 26 March in Jaffa to lay down the basis of non-cooperation with the Government. ... The Jaffa meeting was attended by five to six hundred persons, townsmen and villagers of all classes and parties, including the Arab Executive, Hajj Amin and most of the mayors of the principal towns of Palestine.²⁰²⁴

According to the 10-page British **report of this large “general assembly”** on 26 March 1933 in Yaffa²⁰²⁵ Jamal al-Husseini and Fakhri Nashashibi – who had after all been aide-de-camp of Herbert Samuel in the early 1920s²⁰²⁶ – explained that the main business was discussion of “non-cooperation, Jewish immigration and sale of lands.” After

two minutes silence were observed for the Arab ‘martyrs’,... Abdel Ghani Sinan addressed the audience as slaves and not gentlemen, as they were not free and independent. He asked that Haj Amin el Husseini [head of Supreme Moslem Council] and Ragheb Bey Nashashibi [Mayor of Jerusalem] should commence this campaign by tendering their resignation from their respective posts.

Such resignations from Mandatory employment and the advisability of the many forms of non-cooperation were debated back and forth; voices of caution said that “certain of the officials were in need of their jobs”, and Salim Shihab el Din, for instance, said “that non payment of taxes was impracticable as Arab property would be offered by auction for sale and only the Jews could offer to lay hands on it.” There was consensus, though, on “boycott of English and Jewish products, and the refusal to attend public functions” as well as “non-payment of *werko* and tithes as affecting townsmen and villagers”.

Two speakers, including Ahmad al-Shukayri, thought that study of what Mahatma Gandhi was doing by way of non-cooperation at that time in India would help them decide exactly what to do.²⁰²⁷ Gandhi by the way also explicitly supported the Palestinian battle for liberation, writing

²⁰²³ Ayyad 1999, pp 144-45.

²⁰²⁴ Kayyali 1978, pp 169-70; Peel 1937, III §77; Shaw 1946, p 31; Lesch 1973, p 32.

²⁰²⁵ CO 733/239/4, pp 45-54 (Enclosure III), *all further citations*; Kayyali 1978, pp 169-70.

²⁰²⁶ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 131.

²⁰²⁷ Also Peel 1937, III §77; also Porath 1977, pp 40-41; Tannous 1988, pp 167-68.

My sympathy [to the persecuted Jews] does not blind me to the requirements of justice. ... Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct.²⁰²⁸

Shukayri also “pointed out the inactivity of the leaders and their lack of sacrifice” and supported the call for Amin’s and Ragheb’s stepping down. Tumultuous scenes greeted Ragheb’s (by telephone) and Amin’s offers to resign if the Assembly so wished. “No taxation without representation” was seen as the basis for the political protest, and resignations would be effective against the Government “to paralyze its functions”. Jamal argued by contrast that those “at the head of national institutions and [those who] were elected by the nation” should by no means resign, but Hannah Asfour countered that resignation of “the Mukhtars and Municipal Council in Shefa Amer [had] forced Government to accede to their demands”. Awni Abdul Hadi, speaking for *Istiqlal*, “divided non-cooperation into political, social and economic, giving examples of each” and supported all three types.

“Yousef el Eisa (al-Issa) of Damascus” was then running the Damascus newspaper *Alef Ba’* in partnership with his cousin Issa al-Issa, who ran *Falastin* in Yaffa.²⁰²⁹ He pointed out that they had already decided on non-cooperation back in 1923, but postponed it in hopes the British would by other means be moved to change policies, but as this hadn’t happened it was high time to “execute” it and thus “the assembly should notify Government that it has cut off its relations.” Sheik Sabri Abdin spoke against those who sold land and proposed “that commissioners of lands should be boycotted and when they died they should not be prayed over or buried in Moslem cemeteries”, while Hashem Jayousi asked that land-sellers “be exposed” to the public so they could be “purged”. The report noted that many of “the Opposition” (the “anti-Mufti faction”) had stayed away from the afternoon session and that the *Istiqlalists* had largely stayed silent. The Husseini faction proposed an 8th Palestine Arab Congress, but the author of the British report deemed that unlikely, as the “breach between them and their opponents has greatly widened as a result of this assembly.” A modicum of unity would not reappear until April 1936. [->294ff] While the disunity was over tactics, not goals, it was still crippling political disunity.

The newspaper *Jami’a Al Islamiya* on 28 March printed the resolutions of this “Grand National Meeting”²⁰³⁰ which

- adopted “the principle of non-cooperation” including a boycott, not only of goods but of the “exchange of courteous relations with Government”,
- formed “a Committee of the members of the Office of the Arab Executive including a member representing each of the parties in the country” which would work out how to effect non-cooperation,
- pledged that “a Greater Committee of the National Fund” would work for the “rescue of lands” from sale, and

²⁰²⁸ Khalidi 1987, p 367 (Mahatma K. Gandhi, ‘The Jews in Palestine 1938’).

²⁰²⁹ Khalaf 2011, p 46.

²⁰³⁰ CO 733/239/4, p 44 (Enclosure II).

- held that “the weapons of the inhabitants against Jewish immigration should be complete boycott.”

A follow-up Manifesto from the Arab Executive dated 23 April 1933, which appeared in three Arab daily newspapers, rejoiced in the successful boycott of Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister during his visit in April, which had been resolved at the Grand Yaffa Assembly in March, recalling that Cunliffe-Lister “declared... to open the door of immigration for the pariah Jews whom civilized Germany has cast out in punishment for what their hands have committed.” All of “the noble Arab nation individually, men and women, old and young, [should] encourage the Arab products [and] boycott foreign goods whether Jewish or British” so as not to put money into the hands of “usurpers who work for their destruction, scattering and eviction from the lands of their fathers and the Home of their forefathers.” It ended on a desperate note: “It should be borne in mind that the nation who has neither wealth nor economics cannot resist this sweeping tide which has suffocated it and blocked up the means of its living.”²⁰³¹

Kayyali concluded from his study of these documents that “The lukewarm attitude of the leadership notwithstanding, the general Palestinian mood was becoming increasingly militant.”²⁰³² John and Hadawi wrote that because the Palestine press was becoming more militant a new press ordinance was passed to protect “the public peace”, but was only weakly enforced;²⁰³³ as of 1936 a Press Ordinance enabled much stronger censorship.

15 April 1933 *Arab women march to holy sites to protest Lord Allenby’s visit. Tarab Abdul Hadi speaks in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Matiyeh Mogannam in the Dome of the Rock Mosque, each warning that Jewish immigrants wish to displace the Arab population of Palestine.*

7 July 1933 [*The First Arab Exhibition, showing Palestinian and other Arab products in an effort to become independent of Zionist ones, is sabotaged, but not prevented, by the mandate government.*]²⁰³⁴

22 August 1933 *Germany signs the Haavara (transfer) Agreement with the Zionists, facilitating Jewish emigration from Germany to Palestine and giving the Zionists a monopoly over German-Palestinian trade.*

²⁰³¹ CO 733/239/4, p 34.

²⁰³² Kayyali 1978, p 170, citing *Falastin* of 24 April 1933.

²⁰³³ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 247, citing ‘Palestine Annual Report 1930’, p 5; also Khalaf 2011.

²⁰³⁴ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 219-20

The Palestine Government's Criminal Investigation Department's H.P. Rice **gave a detailed account** on 8 September 1933 of the political and economic grievances of the Palestinians:²⁰³⁵

The Arabs who have all this time hoped that the British would realise the justness of their cause, have become despondent. ... Extreme Zionists such as the Revisionists [speak so that] the Arabs feel with British help the Jews are surely Judaizing the country, to set up on Arab ruins a Jewish Kingdom. ... Politicians consider that should Jewish activity continue unhampered for a few years, the Arabs would be outnumbered and they would lose all fertile lands.

The Arabs moreover complained about "illegal immigration, illegal importation of arms, etc." and "cannot forget the [Passfield] White Paper [or] the unfulfilled promises to the late King Hussein and, which is important, the non-establishment of the Legislative Council on account of Jewish opposition." And of course "There is amongst the Arabs a genuine natural desire for independence." As for the future, "The feeling which is being engendered into the minds of those now attaining manhood must be expected to find expression within the near future, although probably not within a year;..." It would indeed take another two-and-a-half years for the rebellion to start.

1933 *The new [education] ordinance [of 1933] empowered the director of education to dismiss teachers who "imparted teaching of seditious, disloyal, immoral or otherwise harmful character".*²⁰³⁶

13 September 1933 *'A very large Friday demonstration took place in Jerusalem which was unique in uniting all factions and classes in a more radical anti-British and anti-Zionist stance.'*²⁰³⁷

²⁰³⁵ CO 733/257/11, pp 19-26.

²⁰³⁶ Matthews 2006, p 166.

²⁰³⁷ Ayyad 1999, pp 145-46.

In September 1933 Musa Kazem al-Husseini, as President of the Arab Executive, “at the Moslem festival of Nebi Rubin made a violent speech against Jewish immigration.”²⁰³⁸ He was then well-on in age, and would die the following 26 March (1934), perhaps in connection with his physical maltreatment by British police the preceding October.²⁰³⁹ [^{>268}] The absence of this unifying leader perhaps contributed to the formation of five or six separate political parties.²⁰⁴⁰ [^{>288}] Elections for a new President (and a new Congress) were foreseen, the rules for which would grant suffrage to anybody paying a small fee rather than only people of property (as wished by the Nashashibi faction); but these elections never took place.²⁰⁴¹ The fall of 1933 brought both polarisation and an attempt by Musa Alami to depolarise the Palestinian-British side of the political triangle.

As usual acting independently of political groupings, Alami tried to solve the Legislative Council conundrum.²⁰⁴² A Cambridge-educated lawyer, he had for several years, with the backing of Herbert Samuel, Norman Bentwich, Leo Amery, Chief Justice Michael McDonnell and High Commissioner John Chancellor, held various Palestine Government positions. Joining the legal service in 1925, he became Junior Crown Counsel (or ‘Legal Advisor’) and, as of 1928, Assistant Solicitor, Acting Government Advocate and in 1934 Acting Solicitor General; he had become the main local Arab advisor of High Commissioner Wauchope, who promoted him to Private Secretary and Government Advocate.²⁰⁴³

One of Alami’s secret reports to Wauchope, dated September 1933 and 20 pages in length, bears the title **‘Present state of mind and feelings of the Arabs in Palestine.’**²⁰⁴⁴ The British, through Wauchope, were thus well-informed, albeit from Musa Alami’s elite, nationalistic and democratic perspective, about the thinking and feeling of virtually all Palestinians. In similar fashion to the Arab Executive Committee’s 1921 ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ [^{>99}], the report began by summoning fond memories of the love and trust of the Arabs for the British before their Anglo-Zionist policy: “The best attribute or quality the Arabs would give each other was to say: ‘he is an Englishman.’” (p 74) Rumours of the Balfour Declaration arrived only in late 1918 [sic.] and “they heard definitively of it” only in early 1919. (pp 74-75)

When the King-Crane Commission was in Syria later in 1919 the French had tried to buy pro-French testimony, arguing that as Mandatory they would have no Balfour Declaration to uphold, yet still, the Palestinians preferred a British Mandatory “because in the Military Administration of those days there were persons of the highest personal char-

²⁰³⁸ Shaw 1946, p 31.

²⁰³⁹ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 218-19.

²⁰⁴⁰ Nakhleh 1991, p 35.

²⁰⁴¹ Porath 1977, p 48.

²⁰⁴² See ^{>110}; ^{>133-137}; ^{>142}; ^{>149-50}; ¹⁹³; ^{>208}; ^{>225}; ^{>228}; ^{>258}.

²⁰⁴³ Furlonge 1969, pp 86-87, 99-103; Wasserstein 1978, pp 192-93.

²⁰⁴⁴ CO 733/257/11, pp 74-93, all citations; also Porath 1977, p 148.

acter who had won the respect of the Arabs and who made it clear to the Arabs that British sense of justice and fairness will prevail.” (p 75) Figures from those days included Chief Administrators Money, Watson and Bols, Generals Allenby, Congreve and Clayton, high officials such as Richmond, Deedes and Storrs, and investigators Palin and Haycraft. Wasif Jawhariyyeh saves special praise for Major J.E. Campbell, who had until his resignation in disagreement with British Black-Letter policy in 1931 been assistant to the governors of Jerusalem (including Storrs) and Jaffa.²⁰⁴⁵

British commitments to Zionism made at San Remo [>78] had “opened their eyes” and “they started to doubt the good faith of the British Government.” After Lloyd George’s Liberal regime, successive Conservative and Labour ones continued to disappoint. (p 75)

Until 1930... the antagonism of the Arabs was directed against the Zionists (not the Jews), and their leaders were convinced that if only the British Government were informed of the true facts of the case and if only the British public opinion were given an antidote against Zionist propaganda, then justice would take its course. (p 76)

Joyfully, they saw that the Palin, Haycraft, Shaw and Hope Simpson reports [>88: >122; >220; >233], as well as the Passfield White Paper of 1930 [>234], were much in their favour, but Ramsay MacDonald then in February 1931 wrote his Black Letter to Chaim Weizmann [>246];

From that day the bitterness of the Arabs was directed against the British. They were, contrary to what they believed before the war, a treacherous and unreliable people; opportunists who, having got everything out of you, would throw you away;... Had Britain not done the same thing with King Hussein?²⁰⁴⁶ ... What fools they were to have prayed for Britain to win the war; what fools they were to have helped as much as possible towards the defeat of the Turk! With the Turk they had shared the government of an immense Empire; they were practically autonomous in their internal affairs; their future was completely safe; all they wanted in their fight against the Turk was a free and separate Arab State. Today, with the British, not only have they lost hope of that, but their share in the Government is non-existent; their future as a national entity is in definite danger;... (pp 76-78)

Now, “there are no Arabs who believe... in the justice and fairness of the British” and “The feeling is that pressure must be brought to bear upon Britain to change its policy either: (a) positively: by using force; or (b) negatively: by the Jews exasperating the British, or alternatively by Britain finding themselves in need of the Arab and the Moslem worlds.” (p 78)

The Palestine Government was hated, so Musa, just as strongly as His Majesty’s Government in London, as its officials “have Zionist tendencies be they Jews or Gentiles;... [and/or] they are afraid of the Jews who might break their career for them; several such cases have happened before;...” (p 79) [>112; >124] As for Arab feelings towards Jews,

No one but the pre-war residents of Palestine can conceive the true friendship which existed then between the Moslems and the Jews. ... There was no festival, no occasion of hap-

²⁰⁴⁵ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 185-86.

²⁰⁴⁶ He abdicated-under-pressure in late 1924 in favour of the Saudis.

pinness or distress, at which the members of one community did not rush to the house of the other to share the fortune or misfortune of each other. Among the old families of both communities it was customary for mothers of one race to foster the babies of the other. ... [E]verything was in common, [the Jews] had no political ambitions and motives, they were religious Jews. (p 80)²⁰⁴⁷

(During his student years Musa saw many of his Jewish friends from Jerusalem turn against him due to their Zionism.²⁰⁴⁸)

In the period 1921-29

the Jews acquired more land and their numbers were increasing through immigration. The Arabs saw that such acquisition of land meant a permanent alienation of the most fertile lands and the creation of [a] class of landless people. They could foresee that if such sales were to continue indefinitely then all the Arabs would become landless. [p.233] From a policy of continuous immigration they saw that they were in danger of being outnumbered and being forced to leave the country in which they have no land, no say in the Government and in which they were economically at a disadvantage. (p 81)

Land acquisition, immigration and the belief “that all the Jews, all their parties are aiming at one thing: the creation in Palestine of a Jewish State” meant that “the Arabs have no hope of a better understanding with the Jews”. (p 82) In sum,

Briefly: The Arabs believe that His Majesty’s Government is following a policy which is bound to end by completely destroying their national aspirations and by inflicting individual hardship on each and all of them to such an extent that the day will come when the Arab will have to either leave the country or accept the misfortune of remaining here to do menial service for the Jews. (p 83)

As for the ‘Growth of feeling of Arab Nationality’,

This feeling is growing daily. The interest of the Palestine Arab in politics, even the *fellah* in a distant and lonely village, is striking. There is at least one literate person in each village who reads the papers to the others; Palestine, Syrian and Egyptian papers are read with interest and discussed. The papers are frequently passed from village to village. [Among the Arab Youth the] feeling is not that if the British will go we will kill the Jews; the feeling is if the British go the Jews will be less arrogant and less grabbing and we will be able to live with them. ... [W]inning over the younger generation [to the British] appears now to be getting more and more difficult. (p 84)

The British had moreover practiced divide-and-rule by trying to split the effendi and the *fellah*.

As for ‘The Future’, “The future that I see, so long as the present policy is adhered to, is in black.”

[T]he different white papers of 1922 and 1930 as well as the reports of the British experts on land and immigration problems, were all turned down whenever their recommendations

²⁰⁴⁷ Also Lesch 1973, p 17.

²⁰⁴⁸ Furlonge 1969, pp 76-79.

were favourable to the Arabs. This the Arabs say is proof of the subordination of His Majesty's Government to the Jewish will. ... The result is, in the Arab mind, that if the Jews can bring so much pressure to bear upon the British why cannot we do the same? It is true we have not the money of the Jews; but we have the Moslem and Arab worlds; and above all we risk to lose nothing because nationally and individually we are done for, and therefore why should we fear death? (pp 86-87)

Musa then went on to recall that having had no say in the Balfour Declaration the Arabs were not in any respect bound by it. He then listed the often-declaimed complaints about unwanted immigration, unfair economic treatment, land sales which destroy the peasant, and British lack of respect for democratic, majority rule. (pp 87-90) "The Legislative Council which was promised in 1930 is nothing compared to what constitutional changes the Arabs demand. What the Arabs want is a complete autonomous government for Palestine within an Arab Federation;..." (p 90)

The start of a remedy now would be HMG's "declaring the National Home to be actually established and their obligations fulfilled".²⁰⁴⁹ [also >222; >232; >242; >271; >327; >373; >392; >406; >450; >452] With its quarter of a million residents in Palestine, the JNH should be declared a done thing; Britain had done the job described in the Mandate text as "placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home" and fulfilled the Mandate's various Articles' demands for Jewish immigration, close settlement, etc. [->146] (In fact, the British during this time at least contemplated, using the concept of "crystallisation", declaring the Jewish national home as established, as done and dusted.²⁰⁵⁰)

The next step after that was "to create the National Government contemplated by the Mandate and by the Covenant of the League." Then:

Split that part of Palestine lying between Tel-Aviv and Athlit with a depth covering the Jewish colonies in that area, and establish there an independent Jewish Canton. The Jews may then bring any number of immigrants they like to that canton and may pass any legislation which they consider suits them best. Simultaneously with that establish a national Government all over Palestine. The Jews will then have the double benefit – of having their own independent canton without any Arabs; and of being represented in the remaining part of Palestine in proportion to their numbers. (pp 90-91)

Falling short of bi-nationalism or parity between the two *groups*, because the Jewish 'nation' would have national power only in relation to their proportion of the population, this proposed solution offered "independence" for Jews only within the "Jewish Canton", and presumably precluded secession.

In closing he advised Wauchope to suspend immigration for a year, stop the "transfer of land from Arabs to Jews for a period of ten years", and after all set up a Legislative Council election "in proportion to their numbers" but with considerable veto powers remaining with the High Commissioner. (p 92) Funds would thus be saved that are now spent on

²⁰⁴⁹ Also CO 733/257/12, Part 2, p 73.

²⁰⁵⁰ E.g. CO 733/257/12, Part 2, pp 2, 4-6, Downie to Williams, 31 January 1934; Porath 1977, p 148.

“public security”, and Arabs could be hired for Government posts now closed to them, in “the spirit of the mandate... to train the people of the country towards self-government.” (p 93)

On 31 January 1934, a summary of ‘The Situation in Palestine’ was written for the Colonial Office (and presumably Cabinet) which stated concerning Musa Alami:²⁰⁵¹

The High Commissioner [Wauchope] has the highest opinion of Musa’s integrity, and of his knowledge of the state of Arab opinion in Palestine, and, making due allowance for the rhetorical exaggerations and inaccuracies which it contains, the memorandum of September 1933 must be regarded as a reliable indication of the Arab view of the main issues. [to wit:] (a) The Arabs, who formerly trusted the British, now hate and distrust them. (b) The reason for this hate and distrust is the belief of the Arabs that the British are responsible for thwarting Arab national aspirations... in the interests of the Jewish National Home, the indefinite expansion of which is permitted by His Majesty’s Government to the detriment of the Arab population.

At this point it was probably Downie who wrote in the margin, “in spite of the findings of the Shaw Comm, Hope-Simpson and French”.

Continuing,

(c) The Jewish National Home is hated (1) because of its exclusiveness (non-employment of Arabs and inalienability of Jewish land), and (2) because of the irreligion and distasteful social ideals (Communism) of the modern Jewish settlers. (d) ... The findings of the Hope Simpson and French Reports are quite clear, and His Majesty’s Government is now justified in declaring the Jewish National Home to be actually established and their obligations fulfilled.

Musa, so this report, doubted the ability of HMG to “ascertain what is the absorptive capacity of the country”, called for an end to “[t]ransfer of land from Arabs to Jews”, and demanded that a “Legislative council should be set up with complete powers of legislation and representing all Palestinians in proportion to their numbers”.

Musa’s proposals, including even veto powers for the High Commissioner, were not the clean break with Britain wished by many others [²⁶⁴], but stopping immigration and land transfer and declaring the Jewish national home as now established would remove both practical and legal (Mandate-determined) barriers to self-determination. His analysis was most likely shared by Wauchope, but his advice was not heeded, and under pressure from Zionists in Britain he was soon demoted by Wauchope back to the legal department “on categorical orders from London”.²⁰⁵² Nevertheless it would be in summer 1936 that Alami, with Wauchope’s approval, wrote the strongly pro-independence ‘Civil-Servant Memorial’ to try to solve the dilemma of the nationalistic Palestinians who still needed their jobs in the Palestine Government. [³⁰⁶]

This was an example of an articulate and thorough paper from an Arab, but also relevant to our topic of the British–Palestinian dialogue is what Geoffrey Furlonge relates as Musa’s description, from close quarters, of material usually reaching Wauchope’s desk:

²⁰⁵¹ CO 733/257/12, Part 2, pp 72-74.

²⁰⁵² Furlonge 1969, pp 101-03; Khalidi 2005, p 63.

[Wauchope] soon realised that while the highly intelligent Jewish leaders were masters of the art of public relations and could be relied upon at any time to produce a clear, reasoned, and completely documented statement of their community's case on any issue, no such statement would be forthcoming from the Arabs, who were not only relatively inarticulate but were always liable to spoil their case by exaggeration and wild accusations.²⁰⁵³

Public relations was not the Palestinians' strong point, likely because they saw their case as unassailable.

²⁰⁵³ Furlonge 1969, p 98.

A memorandum from activists in Nablus on 30 September 1933 “accused the Government of Palestine of working for the destruction of the Palestinian Arabs and their replacement by Jews...”²⁰⁵⁴ As the previous entry showed, Musa Alami, independent politician and brother-in-law of Jamal al-Husseini, working as High Commissioner Wauchope’s Private Secretary during most of 1933²⁰⁵⁵, told Wauchope that the beef was with Britain, not with the Jews. Kayyali adds that on 6 November “Wauchope did not hesitate to inform [Colonial Secretary] Cunliffe-Lister that the disturbances of October 1933 [->268] were ‘anti-British and anti-Government in character. ... No Jews were molested.’”²⁰⁵⁶ On 23 December Wauchope was able to summarise for Cunliffe-Lister the root problems:

The political hostility towards Government is due to three main causes: (i) The fear that as the years pass not only the lands but the Arab people of Palestine will be more and more dominated by the Jewish invaders. (ii) The growth of national feeling in Palestine and other Arab countries which causes any foreign rule to grow more and more distasteful. (iii) The action of political leaders who for their own political existence are bound to outvie each other in denunciation of a foreign government which supports the Balfour Declaration.²⁰⁵⁷

He saw that “failure to give some form of local self government at an early date will certainly increase and perpetuate the present mistrust.”²⁰⁵⁸

As for non-verbal ‘messages’, although forbidden by Wauchope, several thousand people, including many Christians, demonstrated in Jerusalem on 13 October, a day of general strike as well.²⁰⁵⁹ An article in *al-Jamia al-Arabiyya* on 17 October 1933 urged:

Kick this Zionism with your feet and stand face to face with Great Britain. ... Zionism is nothing but a criminal enterprise encouraged by Britain and protected by its bayonets, aimed at oppressing the Arabs and bringing them under its control.²⁰⁶⁰

It was moreover nowhere doubted that Christians were no less anti-Zionist than Moslems.²⁰⁶¹

The nature of Palestinian-British exchanges at the local level during this period, verbal and non-verbal, was well-described in the *Police Journal*, Vol. 7, Issue 3, which carried a quotation from *The Times* of 8 November:

²⁰⁵⁴ Kayyali 1978, p 171.

²⁰⁵⁵ Also Furlonge 1969, p 100.

²⁰⁵⁶ CO 733/239/5, Part 2, p 37, Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, 6 November 1933; Kayyali 1978, p 174; also CO 733/257/11, pp 43, 45.

²⁰⁵⁷ CO 733/257/11, p 41.

²⁰⁵⁸ CO 733/257/11, p 44.

²⁰⁵⁹ Shaw 1946, p 31; Porath 1977, pp 43-44; Kayyali 1978, p 171.

²⁰⁶⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 172.

²⁰⁶¹ E.g. CO 733/332/12, p 38.

On October 8 the Palestine Arab Executive Committee passed a resolution in favour of a general strike to take place on October 13... to protest against Jewish immigration and the sale of land to Jews. The officer administering the Government very properly warned the Executive, in the interests of public order, that any such demonstration would be prohibited. ... Despite the Government's prohibition, however, which had been publicly announced, a persistent attempt at a demonstration was made in Jerusalem which had to be dispersed by the police, who behaved with great judgment and forbearance. The Arab Executive then announced their intention of holding a similar political demonstration at Jaffa on October 27. On October 25 the High Commissioner... informed them that no political procession or demonstration would be allowed in Jaffa... Despite the High Commissioner's prohibition the Arab Executive persisted in holding a demonstration at Jaffa. This took place about midday on October 27 and was followed later by disturbances in Haifa and Nablus.²⁰⁶²

Similar Arab intentions and British prohibitions had been played out in March 1933. [->264]

On 25 October 1933 His Excellency the High Commissioner and Chief Secretary Hathorn Hall "granted" an interview with Musa Kazem, Yacoub Farraj, Jamal al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi and Mogannam Mogannam.²⁰⁶³ Wauchope's message to them was that "I cannot allow a procession of a political character", but that he was always ready "to receive Arab leaders and discuss any questions or any grievances". (pp 44, 52) Musa Kazem's message to Wauchope was that "you are anxious to maintain law and order, but there is something greater than this, the maintenance of the rights or interests of the people". (p 45) No peace without justice, that is. He made his often-repeated statement that Britain had listened neither to the Palestinian people nor to its own investigative-commission reports (Palin, Haycraft, Shaw, Hope Simpson, French) over the last fifteen years. (p 46) To Wauchope's face Jamal then said that "We believe that Sir Arthur Wauchope has torn up the Reports of these commissions. All these Reports have been thrown to the four winds..."; the leadership had urged peaceful protest, but the people wanted something stronger. He added that Jewish immigration had far exceeded the economic absorptive capacity of the country. (pp 48-49) To this Wauchope pleaded for understanding – his job of balancing HMG's obligations was difficult and sure, he'd made mistakes; but "I do not wish to enter into any arguments about Government policy today..." (p 51) Musa said, "You tell us to do nothing, to wait as we have waited in the past, to wait to be slaughtered." (p 52) There would not even be discussion.

On 28 October Wauchope received Musa Kazem, Mahmoud Dajani, Rashid Haj Ibrahim, Zaki Nuseibi, Dr. Freij and Dr. [Izzat] Tannous,²⁰⁶⁴ focussing on the logistics of the political demonstration and ending with Musa Kazem's saying,

When I was in England a few years ago I asked the Secretary of State to grant us representative Government. I asked him: was Iraq more advanced than we were? and he said No, but that it was because of the Balfour Declaration that representative Government had been delayed. I replied that the Balfour Declaration consisted of two parts: the establishment of a

²⁰⁶² See on Jaffa protests Hatuka 2008.

²⁰⁶³ CO 239/5, Part 2, pp 44-53, all citations.

²⁰⁶⁴ CO 733/239/5, Part 2, pp 55-63.

Jewish National Home in Palestine and the proviso that the rights of the existing inhabitants should be respected. I would like to remind Your Excellency of the second part of this Declaration. (pp 62-63)

13 October 1933 *Protest riots against Jewish immigration and British pro-Zionist policies break out in [Jerusalem]; dispersed by force, organizers decide to call for a similar protest two weeks later in Jaffa to be organized by the Youth Congress and Jaffa's Moslem-Christian Association.*

27 October 1933 *In Jaffa, over 7,000 Palestinian demonstrators and several Syrian and Transjordanian delegates protest Zionist immigration. During the ensuing clashes with British police, 12 demonstrators are killed, 78 wounded.*

27 October / 2 November 1933 *'Those who were regarded by the police as the organisers of the demonstration [in Jaffa on 27 October] were arrested... [A]ll of them were required to sign bail for good behaviour which they did, except for Abd al-Qadir al-Muzaffar [Muzaffar], who preferred six months imprisonment to signing bail. ... The public reaction was furious and a strike and demonstrations were spontaneously held throughout the Arab parts of Palestine. ...'*²⁰⁶⁵

²⁰⁶⁵ Porath 1977, p 45.

In addition to the **street protests and strike** of 13 October 1933 in Jerusalem, other public protests took place on 27 October in Yaffa, Haifa, Safad, Nazareth, Tulkarem and again Jerusalem, with Yaffa experiencing the most violent clashes, British forces killing up to 38 Palestinian protesters.²⁰⁶⁶ Accompanied by closure of shops, there was also sniping by Palestinians at the British (and at Jerusalem Mayor Ragheb al-Nashashibi's house); the police kept crowds moving and in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron "successfully discouraged" such demonstrations, as a report by Sergeant J.E.F. Campbell dated 7 November detailed.²⁰⁶⁷ The protesters demonstrated Moslem-Christian unity by visiting both the Haram and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.²⁰⁶⁸

In Jaffa on 27 October, an 81-year-old demonstrator by the name of Musa Kazem al-Husseini was clubbed to the ground by police. The man had been Mayor of Jerusalem and the pre-eminent political leader in Palestine during the Mandate's first twelve years. He was co-author and signee of the unsurpassed 'Report on the State of Palestine' [-99], given personally to Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill and High Commissioner Herbert Samuel on 27 or 28 March 1921. He died on 27 March 1934, and his funeral was the same day at Damascus Gate, Jerusalem. RIP.

The report²⁰⁶⁹ of the Murison-Trusted Commission of Enquiry "into the events immediately preceding the disturbances which took place in Palestine between the 13th October and the 3rd November, 1933" was dated 4 January 1934. It counted one policeman and 26 Arabs killed and 56 policemen and 187 Arabs wounded. In December 1933 High Commissioner Wauchope would write to Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister that the Arabs were boycotting the Murison-Trusted Commission, but this new investigative group nevertheless looked into the disturbances in Jerusalem (13 October), Yaffa (27 October), Haifa (27 & 28 October), Nablus (27 October), and again Jerusalem (28 & 29 October). It exonerated the police and gave as background that the Arab Executive had on 8 October called for a general strike on 13 October and for

protest(s) against the policy of Government, the ground for which was prepared by a general feeling of apprehension amongst the Arabs engendered by the purchase of land by the Jews and by Jewish immigration.²⁰⁷⁰ ... It is clear than an Arab crowd in Palestine is mercurial and excitable and when excited dangerous. These disturbances were aimed against the government and not against the Jews... In these circumstances, the police of all ranks are placed in a particularly difficult situation when disturbances occur in Palestine.

²⁰⁶⁶ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 73; Cronin 2017, p 36; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 82-83.

²⁰⁶⁷ CO 733/239/5, Part 3, pp 18-53; Kayyali 1978, pp 172-74.

²⁰⁶⁸ Boyle 2001, p 200.

²⁰⁶⁹ CO 733/346/8, pp 9-19 (= *The Palestine Gazette* No. 420, Wednesday, 7th February 1934) and CO 733/239/6, pp 10-52; also further un-footnoted citations; Kayyali 1978, p 174; also Porath 1977, p 45; Tannous 1988, p 168.

²⁰⁷⁰ Also Abboushi 1977, p 28.

In Jerusalem

At about 12:20 p.m. the people left the Mosque. The crowd was then estimated by one witness at between 6 and 7 thousand and according to him was in a somewhat excited condition and was chanting and shouting 'Allah el Akbar'. Musa Kazim Pasha was in the crowd and a party of veiled women brought up the rear of the crowd.

In Jaffa "the date originally fixed for [the demonstration] was... altered to the 27th because the Jaffa Lawn Tennis Tournament was fixed for the 20th, and one of the leaders was much interested in the Tournament". Two "volleys" of live fire were released into the Jaffa crowd. In Nablus, "crowds were parading the streets... and throwing stones".

Britain did not react to these protests with a token suspension of immigration for Jewish workers – as it had in June 1930 [^{>234}] – although the British understood immigration's key, and visible, importance. Wauchope for instance telegraphed Cunliffe-Lister that in addition to the 25,000 Jewish immigrants for whom he had given permits for the year 1933, a further 12,000 "illicit immigrants" had come, and

the fact that so large a number of Jews had entered afforded the Arab leaders an excellent opportunity to make many believe that unlimited numbers of German Jews would swamp Palestine and that Jews would soon outnumber Arab population. It would be a mistake however to imagine that sole cause of riot was Jewish National Home immigration. A genuine national feeling is growing constantly more powerful in Palestine...²⁰⁷¹

"Jewish National Home immigration" captured the political, even *conquering* nature of the immigration.

A bit later Cunliffe-Lister supported Wauchope's position about the immigration word-for-word:

A genuine national feeling is growing constantly more powerful in Palestine and more bitter against British Government and moreover reflected in other parts of the Arab world. ... [T]he Arab national feeling... is really the root of the trouble: all the information I had in Palestine goes to show that this is not limited to Arab leaders or to Arab townsfolk, but is pretty well general among the Arab population.²⁰⁷²

While the British could, if they wished, do something about immigration, for Cunliffe-Lister, in London, they had no recipe against "national feeling" – perhaps justifying their relative inactivity in the face of the growing "trouble".

Colonial Office official Cosmo Parkinson, who had replaced John Shuckburgh as head of the Middle East Department on 1 August 1931, did however write to both Cunliffe-Lister and Wauchope saying he "did not see how the Government could go on bottling up for ever the expression of feeling on the part of Arabs", and thus he would permit "demonstrations" but not "processions", moreover in the interests of "freedom of speech"; Cunliffe-Lister however cared only whether prohibitions of either would catch criticism in Parliament – and since he thought not, hinted to Wauchope that he should prohibit

²⁰⁷¹ CO 733/239/5/Part 2, p 38, Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, 6 November 1933.

²⁰⁷² CO 733/239/5/Part 3, p 8; Kayyali 1978, p 174.

all manifestations in the near future.²⁰⁷³ As the Colonial Office wrote, “Since the disturbances of last October the feeling in the country has become more bitter” and the locals, as announced by Musa Kazem al-Husseini and Ruhi Abdul Hadi, planned large demonstrations during the coming Bairam in January.²⁰⁷⁴ Of course the well-known, long-standing political goal was independence, and agitation for it would not soon abate. As Kayyali observes, “The disturbances revealed that the Arabs were disposed towards the use of violence to deflect the Mandatory from its policy, and that the real aim of the Palestinians was national independence.”²⁰⁷⁵

In the immediate aftermath of this unrest, a delegation went to see Wauchope personally. According to Tannous:

It was so pathetic to see Musa Kazem, that venerable old man, cry in rage, bitterly protesting the brutality and the inhumanity of the Government. I remember telling the High Commissioner, being one of the delegates, that no civilized Government would disperse peaceful demonstrations by bullets. The demonstrations were an expression of the Arab people’s feelings against the despotic laws promulgated in Palestine which had as a goal their displacement and their subjugation to a foreign people.²⁰⁷⁶

While Kayyali believed that one consequence of the militancy was that the British now leaned towards shelving “the question of a Legislative Council indefinitely”²⁰⁷⁷, Wauchope himself, writing to Cunliffe-Lister on 16 August 1934, confided that “there is no question but that a Legislative Council will be established”²⁰⁷⁸. Of course both Wauchope and Cunliffe-Lister, and according to the latter the entire Cabinet as of autumn 1934, “would... be glad if the Legislative Council never came into being”.²⁰⁷⁹

²⁰⁷³ CO 733/239/7, pp 1-4.

²⁰⁷⁴ CO 733/257/11, pp 31-36.

²⁰⁷⁵ Kayyali 1978, p 174.

²⁰⁷⁶ Tannous 1988, p 170; also Sykes 1965, p 176 and Lesch 1979, pp 214-15.

²⁰⁷⁷ Kayyali 1978, p 175, citing CO 733/265, Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, 16 August 1934.

²⁰⁷⁸ CO 733/265/1, p 144.

²⁰⁷⁹ CO 733/262/2, p 19.

269. Women's protest and visit

27/30 October 1933

Some of the demonstrators in Jerusalem on 27 October 1933 were women, as a Palestine Government police report recorded: "A crowd of over a thousand persons rapidly gathered in front of the offices" where a women's deputation had arrived, and "Madame Mogannam appeared on the balcony and made a speech, which has since been reported to have excited the crowd."²⁰⁸⁰ HC Wauchope wrote to Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister that

A new and disquieting feature of this demonstration was the prominent part taken by women of good family as well as others. ... They did not hesitate to join in assaults on the Police and were conspicuous in urging their menfolk to further efforts.²⁰⁸¹

A few days later, on 30 October 1933, Wauchope then received a "deputation of Arab Ladies", namely (Palestine Government spellings) Mrs. Faiz Bey Haddad, Mrs. Dr. Hussein [Wahide El] Khalidi, Mrs. Taher Bey Hussein, Mrs. [Matul E.S.] Mogannam (Christian), Miss E. Abdulhadi, Mrs. N. Abdulhadi, Miss Sh. Duzdar, Miss Z. Shihabi, Miss M. Sakakini (Christian), Miss Z. Nashashibi and Miss J. Alami. The Arab Women's Congress, with many of the same members, had similarly visited High Commissioner Chancellor in late October 1929 [^{>210}; also ^{>320}; ^{>356}], had petitioned the Permanent Mandates Commission for Palestinian independence on 28 January 1932 [^{>257}], and would for instance attend the large Arab Women's Congress in Cairo on 15-18 October 1938 [^{>374}].

The minutes of this reception²⁰⁸² recorded that "These ladies were mostly members of the Arab Ladies Association with the addition of representatives of certain of the leading Arab families." One lady recalled that

the traditions of Arab women especially the Moslems among them... would normally prevent them from calling on Your Excellency or any officer of Government. We did, however, make one such call in 1929 after the riots of that year. Now again we call upon Your Excellency...

They protested the "brutal murder" of "some of our men", demanded the release from jail of "our menfolk" and warned that if this didn't happen "demonstrations will continue and we will not be afraid to face the bullets of the Police." In the usual nutshell: "Stop the sale of lands. Stop immigration. Then there will be peace. But we are not afraid of death. Our country is our own and we will always be prepared to die for it." (pp 21-22)

The women were eyewitnesses in both Jerusalem and Yaffa to the fact that the demonstrators were peaceable and that the police fired first, sometimes fatally, "some sixty wounded and 7 killed":

²⁰⁸⁰ CO 733/239/5, Part 3, pp 33-34, Campbell to Chief Secretary, 'Summary of Events in Jerusalem Districts 27th October, 4 November 1933'.

²⁰⁸¹ CO 733/239/5, Part 1, p 32.

²⁰⁸² CO 733/239/5, Part 2, pp 21-29, *all quotations*.

The proof is that not one policeman was touched. ... We can assure Your Excellency that these atrocities have been entirely without justification. ... [In Yaffa] the people decided to proceed from the Mosque to the offices of the Moslem-Christian Association and when they saw the ladies [from our group] on the balcony they greeted them. There and then the police fired. ... [However] we did not come to ask for mercy but only to lodge a protest with Your Excellency. If we have any request to ask of you it would be that you should open the doors of the prison for us to go and join our men. ... [But] it is the police who have committed murder. Should they not be put in jail? (pp 23-24)

More generally,

We are not concerned with economics only. We are concerned also with the moral well-being of the Arab people. We are afraid that the flow of Jewish immigrants and Jewish money will break down our traditions, traditions which are of long standing and highly valued by us. ... We have lost the confidence that we once had in the British Government. The policy of the British Government has been disastrous for the Arabs. (pp 23-24)

To Wauchope personally:

Your Excellency says that you are the friend of the people and of the *fellah*. But Your Excellency should know what people have been saying. They say that you go about the country and you meet the *fellah* and give him ten shillings here and a pound there but you come back to your office and give decisions and issue proclamations and laws of such a kind that you take away with one hand what you give with the other. ... In the past the Arabs have always been friendly to the British. Now our enemy is the British Government and no one else, because the British Government has been responsible for these events and their consequences. (pp 24-25)

Wauchope in reply:

Ladies, with great sorrow I have heard the strong expressions of feeling that you have thought right to make today. I cannot enter into arguments or discussions but it is my honest opinion that great misunderstandings exist. ... It is just because I am a friend of the Arabs that I so deeply deplore the events of the last few days. As regards what happened at Jaffa: it is exactly because I feel that if I allowed processions the same results will occur as occurred at Jaffa that I feel it is my duty to prohibit processions. A procession may begin in good order but the bad elements will cause disorder before it ends. (pp 25-26)

His version of the demonstrations he had “vetoed” on 25 October was that “the bad elements” started the violence and it was “the police who were compelled to fire,... forced to fire.”²⁰⁸³ The actual content of his words was that he would not allow marches because he allowed his police to kill and wound marchers. To my knowledge, moreover, he did not explain to the Palestinian women *why* he was unable to “enter into arguments or discussions” – especially needed as there were “misunderstandings” to clear up.

²⁰⁸³ CO 733/239/5/Part 2, pp 36-39.

After the 'disturbances' of 27 October 1933 **one Arab newspaper wrote** on 2 November 'A word to the British nation':²⁰⁸⁴

The British nation is a highly cultured and civilized one. ... It is distinguished by special characteristics and character which enabled it to establish an Empire upon the territories of which the sun never sets. The history of this nation is full of honourable deeds and great construction of which it has the right to boast. The English nation boasts of being the mother of the parliamentary regime, the castle of personal liberty, the supporter of justice and fair play and the strong adherent of intellectual development. It also boasts of being a helper to the weak and oppressed. And Palestine is a small country which was severed from the body of Syria for political purpose and handed over as a trust to this great nation to which we have given a short description. Now we ask this question: has this great nation really and truly sympathised with this small country and its inhabitants both of whom are trusts as far as she is concerned?

If so, went the reasoning, there would not have been the disturbances of 1929 or today.

[W]hat difference is there between [the Mandate] and the colonization based on iron and fire? Palestine is a small country like Ireland but despite this Ireland gave a great deal of trouble to Great Britain. ... The original and essential wrong lies in the issue by Britain of the two contradicting promises at the time when she was aware of the contradiction and in the attempt to compromise between them, not by argument but by oppression and force of arms which is the worst kind of all arguments especially in this century when the principles of Britain herself have spread and are taken up by the people. The Palestinians are to-day judging Britain according to its own principles...

The quarrel was not with the Jews:

The Palestinians... have given a strong proof testifying to the fairness of their case and that is by restricting their struggle and directing it against the English only, avoiding the Jews, many of whom were misled by the Balfour Declaration to leave his own country to come and live in Palestine...

It was easy for Britain to put down a rebellion by force, but

what is necessary and essential for the maintenance of British reputation and British dignity is the facing of the Palestine problem with the spirit of justice [and] otherwise all [that] the English boast of will become meaningless and the Near East will have to prepare itself for a long and continuous struggle between its legal hopes and aspirations and [the] material force of the West. This is a word which we direct to the conscience of the British nation.

Several themes recur in this editorial: the initial friendship and respect for the British; Palestine is part of Syria; the dual obligations were contradictory; Britain knew this; the conflict is Palestine-Britain, not Palestine-Jews; the West had only "material force", not

²⁰⁸⁴ CO 733/239/5/Part 2, pp 11-13.

moral force; and Britain, judged by its own standards, must feel guilty and loses face. The editorial's author was likely to have been its owner, George Antonius's father-in-law Faris Nimr, whose own father had been killed in the Maronite-Druze civil war of 1860, whereupon the family fled first to Beirut then to Cairo.

“Friend of the Arabs” [^{>269}] High Commissioner Wauchope on 23 December 1933 again wrote to Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister, saying that

if no change takes place, we must be prepared to face more serious disturbances... than anything that took place this autumn. Even so I remain confident we shall suppress any riots that may occur, but it seems to me possible that the number of killed and wounded on both sides may greatly exceed the casualties that occurred this year.²⁰⁸⁵

Which two “sides” he meant is not stated, but one, for sure, was the Palestinians. Thus the conscious, deliberate British argument for violent suppression, here expressed by its High Commissioner, was that, relying on its ‘obligation’ under the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, the national home simply had to be established – even if the price to pay was a very high “number of killed and wounded”. Cunliffe-Lister, in passing, gave free hand to Wauchope on banning demonstrations:

I doubt if anyone here [in London] would criticise prohibition of demonstrations. If there were such criticism, I should have no difficulty in defending prohibition.²⁰⁸⁶

The logical question again arose as to when the establishment of the Jewish national home was fact. At what size of ‘home’, at what point in time, would the British have done what they had said they would do, namely put the Balfour-Declaration into effect as their main ‘duty’ as Mandatory?²⁰⁸⁷ [*also e.g. >222; >242; >266*] As the Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, on 3 December 1933 explained in talks with Wauchope:

The word ‘establishment’ means building, or construction; and therefore implies that an end will at one time be reached for such a construction. ... His Majesty’s Government... must contemplate that the establishment of the Jewish National Home must of necessity come to an end at some stage or another. ... The criterion in determining the end is the prejudice caused to the Arabs as a result of the continuous process of ‘establishment’. The Arabs now say we have reached this point and the Government says we have not.²⁰⁸⁸

Wauchope then went on to actually agree with the “educated Arabs” that the national home policy meant “replacing a landlord who employed the cultivators of the soil with a landlord who refuses all employment to Arabs”, a reduction overall in land Arabs could till, and increases in the number of “landless Arabs, and of unemployed Arabs”, writing: “These three evils exist.”²⁰⁸⁹ What can be inferred about Wauchope’s emotional state? He said clearly that he knew, but did he not care?

But on the larger issue raised by Hajj Amin he replied:

²⁰⁸⁵ CO 733/257/11, pp 8-9, *also* 38-46.

²⁰⁸⁶ CO 733/239/7, p 10; Cronin 2017, pp 37-38.

²⁰⁸⁷ *Also* FO 492/20, p 505, >327.

²⁰⁸⁸ CO 733/257/11, p 11.

²⁰⁸⁹ CO 733/257/11, p 11; *but see* Stein 1984.

With regard to a declaration by His Majesty's Government that a National Home has been established and that the process of building it up must now cease, he did not see the likelihood of HMG doing so at present, but he will certainly put forward the views of the Mufti on this matter to the Secretary of State.²⁰⁹⁰

And indeed some minutes in Colonial Office correspondence show that the question was being debated within the Government bureaucracy, if not the Cabinet: Was the *Yishuv* now big enough and strong enough to count as an established National Jewish Home? Downie for the Colonial Office, for instance, argued for the "crystallization" of the JNH, implying abandonment of the "economic absorptive capacity" criterion for immigration.²⁰⁹¹ Williams and Parkinson noted that Downie was probably right, but that if HMG did "crystallise" the *yishuv* it would have consequences for both the Palestine Government's tax revenue and the state of mind of Dr. Weizmann, who had just proposed an as-yet unclear "cantonisation".²⁰⁹² (Yezid Sayigh describes the *yishuv* as the "state-in-the-making".²⁰⁹³) Should the answer be that the JNH was now sufficiently built, continuing the whole exercise would be stripped of its legalistic justification and the Palestinians, given that the appeal to this internationally-enshrined 'obligation' was Britain's rock-bottom, fall-back argument, would have an unanswerable case.

Wauchope was correctly conveying Palestinian views to Cunliffe-Lister:

It is also noteworthy and symptomatic of a new orientation of Arab nationalism in Palestine that the cries of the demonstrators were 'Down with the English' and 'Down with the colonisers'. Arab feeling in Palestine is definitely becoming anti-British and anti-government. Without the British government, the Arabs think, they would have nothing to fear from the Jews.²⁰⁹⁴

1933 *Immigration was rapidly increasing.*²⁰⁹⁵

February [or 4 January] 1934 *A special commission of inquiry reports on causes of the 1933 disturbances.* [>268]

²⁰⁹⁰ CO 733/257/11, pp 49, 54.

²⁰⁹¹ CO 733/257/12, Part 2, p 2, note of 31 January 1934; Porath 1977, p 148. See also CO 733/372/1, Downie, Shuckburgh and Bushe memos.

²⁰⁹² CO 733/257/12, Part 2, pp 4, 5.

²⁰⁹³ Sayigh 1997, p 1.

²⁰⁹⁴ CO 733/239/5, Part 1, pp 32-33; Cronin 2017, pp 35-36.

²⁰⁹⁵ >Appendices 7 & 8.

In light of High Commissioner Wauchope's and Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister's taking the death of many of their subjects (and some of their own policemen and soldiers) into the bargain in fulfilment of the "sacred trust of civilization" undertaken by Britain on behalf of the League of Nations [>46; >271], the pain of the dead and their friends and relatives deserves more than an abstract set of numbers of "killed and wounded".²⁰⁹⁶ Although written after 1948, this poem by Fadwa Tuqan,²⁰⁹⁷ born in Nablus in 1917 [*also* >229], could be about legions of resisting Palestinians, including those in the 1930s under the rule of Wauchope, the High Commissioner who had pledged to his superior in London to "suppress any riots" [*see* >271]:

Hamza

Hamza was just an ordinary man
like others in my hometown
who work only with their hands for bread.

When I met him the other day,
this land was wearing a cloak of mourning
in windless silence. And I felt defeated.
But Hamza-the-ordinary said:
'My sister, our land has a throbbing heart,
it doesn't cease to beat, and it endures
the unendurable. It keeps the secrets
of hills and wombs. This land sprouting
with spikes and palms is also the land
that gives birth to a freedom-fighter.
This land, my sister, is a woman.'

Days rolled by. I saw Hamza nowhere.
Yet I felt the belly of the land
was heaving in pain.

Hamza — sixty-five — weighs
heavy like a rock on his own back.
'Burn, burn his house',
a command screamed,
'and tie his son in a cell.'
The military ruler of our town later explained:
it was necessary for law and order,
that is, for love and peace!

²⁰⁹⁶ CO 733/257/11, pp 8-9.

²⁰⁹⁷ Taken from The Hypertexts website, translator unknown. [http://www.thehypertexts.com/Fadwa Tuqan Palestinian Poet Poetry Picture Bio.htm](http://www.thehypertexts.com/Fadwa_Tuqan_Palestinian_Poet_Poetry_Picture_Bio.htm)

Armed soldiers *gherraoed* his house:
the serpent's coil came full circle.
The bang at the door was but an order –
'evacuate, damn it!'
And generous as they were with time, they could say:
'in an hour, yes!'

Hamza opened the window.
Face to face with the sun blazing outside,
he cried: 'in this house my children
and I will live and die
for Palestine.'
Hamza's voice echoed clean
across the bleeding silence of the town.

An hour later, impeccably,
the house came crumbling down,
the rooms were blown to pieces in the sky,
and the bricks and the stones all burst forth,
burying dreams and memories of a lifetime
of labor, tears, and some happy moments.

Yesterday I saw Hamza
walking down a street in our town –
Hamza the ordinary man as he always was:
always secure in his determination.

According to Laila Parsons, in the summer of 1936 Fadwa "wrote one of her earliest poems", one praising Commander Fawzi al-Qawuqji as he arrived in Palestine.²⁰⁹⁸ Samar Attar has written an analysis of the life and works of Fadwa Tuqan, focusing on her relationship with the British colonizer and including a chronology of the lives of her and her brother Ibrahim.²⁰⁹⁹ [>351] Addressing the love-hate attitude of many colonized to their colonizers, she looks as well into the works and dilemmas of Sahar Khalifah, Ghassan Kanafani and Emile Habibi with occasional quotations from Edward Said.²¹⁰⁰

²⁰⁹⁸ Parsons 2016, p 123.

²⁰⁹⁹ Attar 2010, pp 38-67, 179-84, 204-09, 229-34

²¹⁰⁰ Attar 2010, pp 4-6, 26-27, 155-78, 209-10, 221-26; see also Fanon 1961, pp 170-71, 179ff.

The next two entries (like several others, >24; >62; >64; >274; >278) are exceptions in that they concern the Arab-Palestinian/Jewish-Zionist side of the triangle.²¹⁰¹ The views of David Ben-Gurion, the most important Jewish-immigrant politician, were influential with the British. In such conversations the Palestinians apparently said nothing that contradicted their other statements. For more on these dialogues with Musa Alami, Awni Abdul Hadi, George Antonius, Hussein Khalidi, Izzat Tannous et al. see Ben Gurion (1968) and Caplan (1983 & 1986).

In his rendering of **this dialogue with Musa al-Alami**²¹⁰², who then worked directly under High Commissioner Wauchope in the Palestine Government [>266], Mahdi (not Awni) Abduldhadi first quoted David Ben-Gurion's version of the conversation. He (Ben-Gurion) had heard of

a certain Arab, who had a reputation as a nationalist and a man not to be bought by money or by office, but who was not a Jew-hater either. The man was Musa Alami. ... The prevailing assumption in the Zionist movement then was that we were bringing a blessing of the Arabs of the country... [However,] Musa Alami told me that he would prefer the land to remain poor and desolate even for another hundred years, until the Arabs themselves were capable of developing it and making it flower, and I felt that as a patriotic Arab he had every right to this view.

Alami had told him that

the best parts of the country were passing into Jewish hands,... the Jews had acquired the large [infrastructure] concessions, the national budget was expended on defense, for which the Arabs had no need, there was an abundance of high-salaried British officials – all for the sake of a Jewish national home; an Arab Palestine had no need for this officialdom.

Ben-Gurion then agreed with the standard Palestinian position that “the main difficulty was in the political field”, not issues like land and economics:

We wanted immigration unrestricted by political considerations; we did not wish to remain a minority. ... Musa Alami [also] spoke with bitter mockery about the Legislative Council proposal. It was a mere deception. All the power would remain in the hands of the English. I asked him whether the Arabs would agree to parity. His answer, as I had expected, was absolutely negative. Why should they? he asked. Did the Arabs not constitute four-fifths of the country's population?

Then Ben-Gurion

put to him the crucial question: ‘Is there any possibility at all of reaching an understanding with regard to the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, including Transjordan?’ He replied with a question. Why should the Arabs agree? I answered that in return we would agree to support the establishment [against the will of the French and British] of an Arab

²¹⁰¹ See Svirsky & Ben-Arie 2018, Ch. 2 & *passim*.

²¹⁰² Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 77-79, all quotations. See also Ben-Gurion 1968, Chs. 5, 8, 12, 15, 16, & 19.

Federation in the neighbouring countries... so that the Arabs in Palestine, even if they constituted a minority in that country, would not hold a minority position, since they would be linked with millions of Arabs in the neighbouring countries.

According to Ben-Gurion, Alami said “the proposal could be discussed...”

For his part, Musa Alami noted that the meeting took place at his home in Jerusalem, and that Moshe Shertok, an immigrant from Ukraine, was also present. In Musa’s version of the conversation, Shertok “opened the talk with a long discourse in familiarly soothing terms, in which he likened Palestine to ‘a crowded hall in which there is always room for more people...’” Ben-Gurion however “brushed Shertok aside” and, implying that it didn’t matter whether there was room in Palestine for both the natives and the immigrants, said that

The Jews had nowhere to go but Palestine, whereas the Arabs had at their disposal the broad and undeveloped lands of the Arab world. Musa [*here referring to himself in the 3rd person*] listened in silence, and when they had done contented himself with a reminder that he was a Government servant and not a politician, and [with] a reference to the numerous Zionist publications which betrayed both expansionist designs and hatred of the Arabs.

This meeting “marked the final stage in his [Musa’s] education on the nature and aims of Zionism”:

Despite all that he had seen and read during the previous ten years [since his graduation from Trinity Hall, Cambridge], he had remained, as he says, ‘incredibly naïve’ about the ultimate intentions of the Zionist²¹⁰³, who had always been careful in their official pronouncements to keep their desiderata within the limits of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, i.e., a National Home in Palestine. But now he had heard these leaders, who were not reckoned extremists, making crystal clear that they were aiming at nothing less than the complete control of the country.

This idea of making conceptual space for the Jewish colony in the Near East by diluting its presence through the creation of a much larger Arab “federation” made repeated appearances during the Mandate.²¹⁰⁴

²¹⁰³ Also Furlonge 1969, pp 102-03.

²¹⁰⁴ Also Sykes 1965, p 209.

Awni Abdul Hadi, after his education in Beirut, Istanbul and at the Sorbonne, had served under Faisal in Damascus, had been a leader of the Palestine Arab Congress and a member of the Delegation to London in 1930 [^{>222}], and had co-founded the Istiqlal Party [^{>264; >288}]. **At this meeting** Judah Magnes, President of the Hebrew University, introduced Abdul Hadi and Ben-Gurion [^{see also >333}] and, as related by Mahdi Abdul Hadi,²¹⁰⁵ the meeting began with Ben-Gurion's remark that (Awni) Abdul Hadi, "speaking in broken English", said that

Weizmann and others were always proclaiming goodwill towards the Arabs - where was this goodwill? ... The settlement of the Jews undermines the existence of the Arabs. ... They pay exaggerated prices for land... Who can resist the insane prices paid by the Jews? The English are helping to dispossess the Arabs [of] the land, contrary to the Mandate. ... Both Dr. Magnes and I tried to prove to him that the settlement of the Jews was a blessing to the Arab fellahin ... Awni disputed this. He maintained that in any case the land was being transferred to the Jews, and even though the Arabs might not need it at the moment they would require it in a generation or two, when their numbers would be greater.

Ben-Gurion continued:

We had been compelled to come and settle without the consent of the Arabs, and we would continue to do so in the future, but we would prefer to act on the basis of an understanding and mutual agreement. This was conceivable if the Arabs recognized our rights to return to our land... The central issue was: is it possible to reconcile the ultimate goals of the Jewish people and the Arab people? Our ultimate goal was the independence of the Jewish people in Palestine, on both sides of the Jordan, not as a minority...

Asking for Arab recognition of their "rights to return" echoed of course the tenet of the Churchill White Paper that Jews came to and were in Palestine "as of right and not on sufferance". [^{>142}] Come they must and would, that is, even though it would feel better if the Arabs would give some "understanding and mutual agreement". Ben-Gurion was arguing both that their coming and settling was a "blessing" for Awni's people and that, however that may be, it was anyway their "right"; in 1948 he would 'argue' more simply with brute force²¹⁰⁶.

Ben-Gurion then perhaps missed Awni's sarcasm when the latter

became enthusiastic... and said that if with our help the Arabs could achieve unity he would agree not to four million, but to five or six million, Jews in Palestine. He would go and shout in the streets, he would tell everyone he knew, in Palestine, in Syria, in Iraq, in Damascus and Baghdad: Let's give the Jews as many [immigrants] as they want, as long as we achieve our unity. [He then] reverted to his mocking and sceptical tone...

²¹⁰⁵ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 79-81, *all quotations*.

²¹⁰⁶ Shavit 2013, Ch. 'Lydda, 1948'; = <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/10/21/lydda-1948>

Pledging to render “all possible assistance to the Arab people”,

Dr. Magnes framed the question as follows: Were the Arabs willing to sacrifice Palestine in order to attain the broader goals in the other Arab countries? I [Ben-Gurion] commented... that even politically [the Arabs] would not be dependent on us, even after we came to constitute a vast majority of the population...

In this conversation Ben-Gurion straightforwardly said that

Our end goal is the sovereignty of the Jewish people on the lands on both sides of the Jordan, not as a minority, but as a population of many millions.²¹⁰⁷

But Awni Bey had knowingly “asked what guarantees the Arabs would obtain” of Jewish help in the broader Middle East; even if they wanted such a deal, could the Jews do it?

Abdul Hadi took immediate notes of this three-hour meeting. He knew Magnes [*also* >463] as a man

who was often making approaches to the Arabs on the pretext that he did not believe in the Zionist policy. ... Ben-Gurion said: We recognise the right of the Arabs to remain on their lands, if they recognise our right to settle in Palestine. Here I was unable to listen to the lies he was telling. I interrupted him, saying: Palestine, Mr. Ben-Gurion, is an Arab country and not a Jewish country. The right of the Arabs to remain on their lands and in their country does not require your recognition. ... As for the Palestinian Jews who have lived with the Arabs in peace, they enjoy the same rights as the Arabs enjoy, without discrimination.²¹⁰⁸ As for the Balfour Declaration, a foreigner who did not rule (Palestine) issued it to a foreigner who was not entitled (to it).

Here two themes recur: The Arab Jews would have full individual rights [*also* >99; >217; >218], and settler-colonialism under the Zionist Mandate was unique in that the colonialists and settlers came from different places [*also* >182].

Ben-Gurion said frankly that should the Palestinians refuse to give in to the Zionist plan and “try to prevent it”, there would be a “tragedy and the shedding of innocent blood by both parties.” Abdul Hadi told him “fervently and in a severe tone”:

You speak, Mr. Ben-Gurion, about money, and about helping us with our independence and unity, in exchange for the Arabs conceding Palestine to the Jews on both West and East Banks (of the Jordan). I am talking about the homeland and its sanctity. The homeland is not sold for a price, and therefore it is not possible... for us to come together.

Just as for High Commissioner Wauchope [*>271*], for Ben-Gurion the Jewish national home-state was worth plenty of bloodshed, with the difference that Ben-Gurion acknowledged he was the aggressor.

²¹⁰⁷ Ben-Gurion 1968, p 41 (my translation from the German edition); *also* p 44.

²¹⁰⁸ See *also* FO 492/20, p 497.

275. Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi's Compromise Proposal July 1934

The Principal of the Government Arab College, Ahmad Samih (Salih?) al-Khalidi, favoured a proposal²¹⁰⁹ offering the Zionists and Great Britain a Jewish canton covering 250,000 hectares (2,500,000 dunums) of Palestine's "best lands" to which Jewish immigration would be unlimited; Bethlehem and Nazareth would remain in an Arab canton, while Jerusalem, Hebron and Safad would be "neutral". "The present proposals should not be taken as a temporary settlement, but as a final solution" and were justified on grounds of "peace and security": "Jews and Arabs will enjoy forever the element of security which we cannot admit they now enjoy." (Compare Musa Alami's proposal, in his secret letter to Wauchope, for a "Jewish Canton" along the coast from Tel Aviv to just south of Haifa, which seems to be a smaller concession to the Jewish Zionists. [>266])

"Some transfer of property and population is bound to take place", so al-Khalidi, resulting in "two independent and widely autonomous governments" replacing the Balfour Declaration and Mandate, with the later merging of "Trans-Jordan to the Arab canton under Amir Abdallah [to] compensate [the Arabs'] loss of what was lately their lands." The cantons would become "members of the League of Nations". Cosmo Parkinson while visiting Palestine discussed this plan over dinner with al-Khalidi,²¹¹⁰ perhaps in the presence of his wife Anbara.

A "central... Executive Council ... with Arabs, Jews and British on it", headed by Emir Abdallah, would take care of "Religious sites, the Supreme and Mixed Courts, Posts and Telegraphs, Customs, Railways, Currency and Defence in both cantons"; all other powers being cantonal. Finally, al-Khalidi explained the advantages for Great Britain, whose "prestige... will be immensely enhanced", and for the Jews, who will "take into consideration that the friendship of the Arabs... is far better than relying on force." Perhaps this was the earliest effort to conceptualise bi-national/federal and unity-with-Jordan solutions, as opposed to either strict partition or representative democracy in Palestine as a unit.²¹¹¹ That said, the partition schemes proposed by the Peel Commission in 1937 [>336] or recommended by the UN General Assembly in 1947 [>481], including as they would various forms of "economic union", were not all that different from al-Khalidi's scheme.

²¹⁰⁹ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 81-83, *all quotations*. Abdul Hadi writes 'Salih' instead of 'Samih'.

²¹¹⁰ Sinanoglou 2019, p 52.

²¹¹¹ See Hattis 1970 on Jewish-Zionist bi-national proposals.

Zionist writer Susan Hattis quotes a message from Mr. Downie, who worked at the Colonial Office, to his superiors as well as the High Commissioner:

Irrespective of the numbers of the Jewish and non Jewish communities His Majesty's Government have undertaken obligations to both sections, which have been declared to be of *equal weight*. [²³⁴] Apart from this consideration, it can hardly be disputed that the deficiency in mere numbers of the Jewish population is at least counter-balanced by their superior resources, enterprise and ability. By its very definition, the Jewish National Home can never merge itself with the non Jewish population and, if it survives and develops, will always retain its own social organisation and outlook.²¹²

Aside from its philo-semitic racism, this small message is interesting as evidence that solutions involving separation of the two "communities", rather than their reconciliation and political unity, were coming into vogue.

²¹² Hattis 1970, p 108.

According to Porath, since late 1933 it was known that Wauchope favoured a Legislative Council (LC) with only 4 Government-official members, 11 elected non-official members (7 Moslems, 3 Jews and 1 Christian), and 3 appointed non-official members (religion not specified). Though its legislative power would be weak in comparison to that of the High Commissioner, the percentage of non-Jewish indigenous members would be considerably greater than in the LCs proposed by Churchill and Samuel in 1922 [¹³³] or by Chancellor in 1930-31 [²²⁵; ²²⁸; ²³¹; ²⁵¹]. The Cabinet on 11 April 1934 gave Wauchope the green light to finalise such a plan, which had been discussed at length by the whole team (Shuckburgh, Parkinson, Williams, Downie, Wilson, and of course Wauchope, but... no Arabs) and had Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister's general approval.²¹¹³

Whatever the exact numbers of his previous LC proposals, on 20 August 1934 His Excellency Wauchope received Hajj Amin Eff. al-Husseini²¹¹⁴ and told him that in light of the Mufti's and "the Arab community's" opposition he'd decided to "decrease the number of official members" (evidently to 4). His Eminence the Mufti answered that he appreciated the consideration given to his views, but that "the Arabs, however, looked forward towards a Parliament with full powers and not to a Legislative Council with limited powers." Wauchope gave the usual reply that the Arabs were still inexperienced and that anyway, the land sales and immigration which followed from the Balfour Declaration "could not come within the powers of a Legislative Council."

Wauchope then changed the subject away from the powerlessness of the mooted LC, asking whether the Mufti preferred a nominated or elected LC, with the Mufti answering that he "preferred direct election" to either indirect election or nomination; "rightly or wrongly, nominated members would be looked on as members subservient to Government influence." Wauchope said that the LC would number about 28 members and "there should be no official majority."

Around this time, Wauchope wrote privately to Cunliffe-Lister in favour of the immediate creation of the LC, as anything else would be a "breach of faith"; his

unofficial discussions with various notables in Palestine... have proceeded on the assumption that [in] the Legislative Council... subject to the necessity for special arrangements in order to secure the rights of minorities, the numbers of Moslem, Jewish and Christian elected members shall be roughly proportionate to the numbers of the respective communities in the country. ... [I]t will also be necessary to temper the elective principle by nominating a certain number of non-official members.

He added, "On the whole I prefer direct elections" and "The numbers should... not be limited to 22 as previously proposed [and] I prefer something in the neighbourhood of 30".

²¹¹³ CO 733/257/12, Part 2, pp 34, 38-39; CO 733/235/5, pp 34-36 & *passim*; Porath 1977, p 149, also citing CO 733/235/17305 [= CO 733/235/5] of 22 April 1934.

²¹¹⁴ CO 733/265/1, pp 77-81, 84-88, 128, 131, 144, *all citations*.

Despite the danger that a “perfectly free election, uninfluenced by Government, would almost certainly lead to the election of a number of irresponsible extremists,... my present view is that the greater proportion of the members should be elected” – proportionate to the size of the three main “communities”.

Wauchope’s words here are astounding: *within the Colonial Office* he was propounding elections based on proportional representation, something in accordance with rudimentary democratic principles which had been demanded *ad infinitum* by the Palestinians but hitherto rejected by all British Governments because it would have meant the death of Zionism. This had always been true, ever since the mandate text was drafted, as captured in general terms by historian of partition Penny Sinanoglou:

If Britain were to develop self-government for the entire country, as directed by the mandate, the nascent Jewish nation home would almost certainly [sic.] be destroyed.

To be sure, this LC, the best to date, would have only limited powers, a considerable number of Government-delegated members and Government veto power. A year and a half later Palestine started to blow up in Wauchope’s face, and perhaps it was because he felt this coming – by means of his close dialogue with locals and in particular his close relationship with Musa al-Alami [^{>266; >306}] – that he went so far in the direction of a normal democracy for Palestine.

One detail of Wauchope’s proposal was that all resident Jews who accepted Palestinian citizenship could vote and be elected; however the official Jewish position, so Wauchope, was for

‘parity’, which means equality of numbers for the Arab and Jewish communities. Since the promises of the Mandate were given to the ‘Jewish People’, not to the Jewish population of Palestine, they claim that the Jews of the Diaspora should be brought into the calculation of proportions. In my view the grant of equal representation to two Palestinian communities, one of which is approximately three times as large as the other, cannot be justified on grounds either of justice, of custom, or even of expediency.²¹¹⁵

I wonder whether Wauchope had denounced parity so clearly in his talks with Amin or Musa. In addition, the requirement of Palestinian citizenship was significant, because a large percentage of the immigrants had not applied for it.

To Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister Wauchope offered, as an example only, that

the number of elected members [should be] 17 Moslems, 3 Arab Christians and 6 Jews [and] the country should be divided into 17 (‘territorial, not communal’) constituencies where a majority of the population is Arab Moslem, 3 constituencies where a majority is Arab Christian, and 6 constituencies where a majority is Jewish.²¹¹⁶

Why, then, did Wauchope also tell Cunliffe-Lister that even without parity, i.e. with a non-Jewish majority, “no real danger will be caused to the National Home by such a con-

²¹¹⁵ CO 733/265/1, p 89.

²¹¹⁶ CO 733/265/1, p 132.

stitutional change as here proposed”²¹¹⁷ The answer could only lie in the limited remit of the LC and the power of the High Commissioner, the Cabinet, or, if needed, the King himself, to override any really anti-Zionist, pro-independence acts of the LC. In the event, the “proposed constitutional change” was not made, and only a few municipal elections were allowed.²¹¹⁸ On 6 December 1934 Cunliffe-Lister would approve a 29-member body which also fell short of proportional representation.²¹¹⁹ [>279]

²¹¹⁷ CO 733/265/1, p 89; also pp 89-101.

²¹¹⁸ Kayyali 1978, p 177, citing CO 733/265, Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, Enclosure A, 25 August 1934.

²¹¹⁹ CO 733/293/6, p 50.

Two members of the Syro-Palestine Committee who worked together in Geneva, Ihsan al-Jabiri and Amir Shakib Arslan, met after some hesitation with Ben-Gurion to “learn the real aim of Zionism from an authorised source.”²¹²⁰ [also >273; >274] Their own anti-Zionist views were those repeatedly expressed to the British by Palestinians and their Arab friends.

In Al-Jabiri’s version, Ben-Gurion told them that “a Jewish State” in Palestine and Transjordan with six to eight million Jews was inevitable, but that “Arabs who did not wish to emigrate from their country would be free to remain and their land would not be stolen from them”. He wondered what the Palestinians would accept as compensation. Ihsan al-Jabiri and Amir Shakib Arslan responded:

We felt it our duty to ask him whether he was talking seriously, for we could not keep from smiling when we heard such nonsense. ... [Y]ou are proposing to us the evacuation of a country... in return for some vague political assistance and economic aid of which these Arab countries have no urgent need. ... Indeed, very little is being offered in return for driving a million and a half Arabs to abandon their birthplace, the holy land of their fathers, and wander into the desert, in return for the Arab nation of twenty million souls accepting this humiliation of countersigning the evacuation of the land, every grain of which is saturated with the blood of their fathers, and which is so holy from the religious aspect.

Because “such grandiose and impudent ideas” would not attain the consent of Zionism’s adversaries, Ben-Gurion should

continue with reliance on British bayonets, and to create the Jewish Kingdom, but at least he should not contemplate an agreement with the Arabs, an agreement that the English and the Jews do not cease talking about in order to deceive the world public in continuing this fantastic conversation. ... [But] Mr. Ben-Gurion had good reason for his boldness in making such childish and illogical proposals, for the tremendous backing of the British Government [and] the inaction of the Arab forces in the face of the growing dangers and the assaults of the Jewish enterprise have made it possible for the Zionist representatives to take up the most daring notions.

Talk of Zionist-Arab “agreement” was a further British public-relations “deception”.

Ben-Gurion’s version related that the “talk in Arslan’s home lasted until one in the morning. I went over the main points I had discussed with Musa Alami.” [>273]

Arslan immediately adopted an extreme position. Without a promise from us that the Arabs in Palestine would remain a majority he was not prepared for any negotiations. As to our assistance in achieving the unity of the Arab countries outside Palestine – unity of that kind was nothing but a dream. Before that came about, a hundred or who knew how many years would pass. Meanwhile, the Jews would be the majority in Palestine while the Arabs would

²¹²⁰ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 83-85; also Seikaly 1995, pp 153 ff.

become an insignificant factor. ... England wanted a Jewish community in Palestine in order to make it easier for her to dominate the Arabs, but she had no interest in creating a Jewish Palestine. Even if such a Palestine should be created, the Arabs would never acquiesce. ... He [Arslan] asked me, by the way, whether the English agreed to our settling in Transjordan. I said that the exclusion of Transjordan from the Jewish national home was temporary and had been introduced a few years after the Balfour Declaration, which applied to all Erez Israel, eastern as well as western. [>98]

In Arslan's version:

The danger to Palestine has become a settled issue. The Jews, in the past, had concealed a little bit, but now they have made it clear and disclosed that they are coming to Palestine, five or six million souls, whether we agree or refuse. England herself, if she wanted to stop this thing, doesn't have the power to do so. ... Indeed, the question of the existence of the majority of the country did arise: the Jews (Ben-Gurion explained) would indisputably become (the majority).

Zionist confidence was undoubtedly boosted by the fact that legal immigration had recently increased from on average 11,885 per year in 1929, 1930 and 1931 to on average 54,340 in 1932, 1933 and 1934. [>Appendices 7 & 8] (So "England" *did* "have the power" to "stop this thing" – and to start it and keep it going.)

After telling Ben-Gurion that the Arabs would have to "reach (a stage of) idiocy" to believe that in return for a Jewish Palestine the Jews "would expel France from Syria, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria", Arslan ended his minutes thus:

I'm telling you this not out of consideration of the import of the proposals which the Zionist leader put forth, but because they are a reflection of the degree of impertinence which these groups have reached this year, especially while the Arabs of Palestine are concerned only with municipal elections and nonsense... Our misfortune with the Jews is not as (bad as) our misfortune with ourselves...

The accounts by all three men have in common an insistence that their own group have a majority in Palestine.

autumn 1934 *[The Arab] Executive Committee came out with a formal letter to the High Commissioner in which they gave it as their opinion that the safeguards for Arab rights enshrined in the Mandate had broken down...*²¹²¹

2 December 1934 *The establishment of the National Defence Party (Al-Hizb Ad-Difaa Al-Watani) in the Apollo Cinema Hall is chaired by Ragheb Nashashibi, and attended by over 600, including members Sheikh Asad Shuqeiri, Hasan Sidqi Ad-Dajani, Abdul Rahman At-Taji Al-Faruqi, and Issa Al-Issa. [>288]*

²¹²¹ Furlonge 1969, p 104.

1934-35 [As Zionists bought more and more land,] "The British execution offices started to employ British armed police in enforcing orders to eviction, and in one of these cases in 1934-35 a peasant of Arab Zbeidat was killed by British police during the eviction operation. The martyr was Sa'ad Mohammad Ati-Ahmad of Hartiyeh village..."²¹²²

²¹²² Nakhleh 1991, p 939.

279. 29-member Legislative Council

6 December 1934

Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister on 6 December 1934 approved a Legislative Council with 29 seats with the usual severely limited competence.²¹²³ It was almost identical to the one that would be proposed officially by High Commissioner Wauchope on 21 December 1935²¹²⁴ [^{>283; also >277}] and would be the basis of bickering for the next 15 months, up until HMG let the idea die at the end of March 1936 after it failed to get support in Parliament [^{>289; >290}]. Its foreseen composition, agreed after several months of writing and re-writing throughout autumn 1934²¹²⁵:

- the High Commissioner
- 5 other (appointed) 'official' members (British officials of the Palestine Government);
- 23 'non-official' members from the populace:
 - 12 elected members – 8 Moslems, 3 Jews, 1 Christian
 - 11 appointed members – 5 Jews, 2 Moslems, 1 Bedouin, 2 Christians, 1 "commercial"

Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister and the Cabinet were less than lukewarm about the whole idea, as the former wrote to "My dear Arthur [Wauchope]":

I explained to the Cabinet very confidentially your own view and mine that we should on the whole be glad if the Legislative Council never came into being. As you know, the Cabinet have already agreed that we are bound to go forward with our negotiations and ultimately to make our proposals. Equally, they fully appreciated our point of view and, I think, share our unexpressed desire.²¹²⁶

Consciously or subconsciously, HMG since winter 1922 [^{>132ff}] had presented to the Palestinians only what they certainly would reject as unjust.

In computing the percentages, in order to judge how far this was from proportional representation, let's not forget that the Palestinian position had always been that the Mandate was illegitimate, whatever LCs it proposed; and even if Moslem and Christian representation were proportionate to its 76% of the population (e.g. in 1934), the LC would not fulfil their demand that it have real legislative powers; and it would violate the principle that thank you, the indigenous people could very well construct their own Parliament.

Doing the maths nevertheless: the 'non-Jews' would have 61% (not 76%) of the seats of the 23 non-official members and 48% (not 76%) of the 29 total members. This is a slight improvement over the LC proposed by Churchill and Samuel in 1922 [^{>133}]. But the 5 or 6 appointed non-Jewish non-official members would certainly be 'moderates' or collaborators. Also, roughly half the Jewish inhabitants counted were not even Palestinian citizens. The proposal a year later, of 21 December 1935, would have one fewer elected

²¹²³ CO 733/293/6, p 50; also Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 13 November 1934, <https://www.jta.org/1934/11/13/archive/the-legislative-council>

²¹²⁴ CO 733/293/3, p 33.

²¹²⁵ CO 733/265/2, pp 2-132.

²¹²⁶ CO 733/262/2, p 19, 6 December 1934; Porath 1977, p 150.

Jewish (4) and one more appointed “commercial” (2) member, but common to both was near-balance of the Palestinian and pro-Zionist sides, i.e. parity, not between non-Jews and Jews but anti-Zionists and Zionists.

1935 *‘In 1935,... Jewish capital controlled 90% of the concessions granted by the British mandatory government, which accounted for a total investment of PL 5,789,000 and provided labour for 2,619 workers. An official census in 1937 indicated that an average Jewish worker received 145% more in wages than his Palestinian Arab counterpart...’*²¹²⁷

15 January 1935 [Mosul-Haifa oil pipeline opens.]

²¹²⁷ Kanafani 1972, p 13.

Both Susan Hattis and Penny Sinanoglou discuss the plan for cantons extending across the Jordan put forward to the Colonial Office by a former employee of the Palestine government, Archer Cust, on 18 January 1935.²¹²⁸ Roughly, it foresaw a Jewish canton from Tel Aviv up the coastal plain to beyond Haifa, then south-easterly to Beisan, then north to the Huleh Basin, with room for new Jewish areas in the Negev if enough water became available. The rest would be Arab or mixed, with some (international, British, Jewish?) enclaves. [see also >266; >275] Each canton – the whole scheme being compared to the Swiss Federation (inaccurately, for the Swiss constitution makes no mention whatsoever of ethnic or religious groups²¹²⁹) – would presumably independently decide immigration policy. In Cust’s opinion,

An evolution such as has been sketched... could hardly fail to be acceptable to the Arabs. Feeling at last secure that they would not be exposed any more to the danger of being bought out of the remainder of their country, it should be possible to prevail upon them to accept the fact, on which there can be no going back, of the Jewish National Home...

The scheme seems to have proposed freezing the extent of Jewish land possession, but at the same time ensuring the national home’s living in peace and security with its neighbour on the “remainder of” its country. Like a Mafia ‘protection’ racket, the logic was to turn over what you didn’t need for bare survival so as to be allowed to keep the “remainder”.

Cust would later, in late June 1936, meet in London with Jamal al-Husseini, Shibly Jamal, Izzat Tannous and Emil Ghoury to discuss his plan, which had found some sympathy within the Colonial Office, but the minutes of the meeting say “It is not clear whether any of the four Arabs are likely to report the matter to the Arab Supreme [sic.] Committee”.²¹³⁰ During these years there would be ongoing debates over partition as opposed to cantonization²¹³¹, and on 25 September 1935 in Jerusalem, for instance, at a meeting of the ‘Executive Council’ (a British, Palestine-Government body), Wauchope “envisaged the division of Palestine into an Arab, a Jewish and a mixed canton with enclaves for Haifa and for Jerusalem-Bethlehem” – with the minutes noting that concerning “a federation of cantons”

in Palestine the problem was one of breaking up a single whole into cantonal parts on the basis of an arbitrary and largely theoretical principle of dissection. The present plan [fore-saw] the confines of the cantons being to a great extent determined by existing aggregates of Jewish land holdings. ... In purely Arab or purely Jewish cantons there might be an elected

²¹²⁸ CO 733/283/12, pp 42-62; Hattis 1970, pp 126-30; Sinanoglou 2019, pp 53-58; also Parsons 2020, p 11.

²¹²⁹ See PDF at <https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/>

²¹³⁰ CO 733/302/9; also Lesch 1979, p 172.

²¹³¹ Sinanoglou 2019, Ch. 2 & *passim*.

assembly of some kind. ... The question of immigration was next discussed from the point of view of the possibility of or justification for restricting Jewish immigration into exclusively Jewish cantons.²¹³²

Yes, in contrast to Palestine the Swiss cantons, for instance, had been polities *before* their federation. Cust had written an article in the journal *The Near East and India* in which he gave the philosophy behind his proposals, which he sent to Wauchope, who sent it on to Cosmo Parkinson and even to John Chancellor, under the title 'The Future of Palestine'.²¹³³ Reading for connoisseurs only.

Somewhat later, pinpointing the general problem of ethno-religious cantons, a memo dated 28 October 1936 would remark that

Wherever the boundary [of the Jewish canton] is drawn, a considerable percentage of its area will be Arab land... the result will be that a very large number of Arabs, whose villages fell within the boundaries of the Jewish canton, will be placed under the government of the Jews in respect of the matters which affect most nearly their daily lives...²¹³⁴

Only the tiniest of possible Jewish cantons – perhaps Tel Aviv only – would not have large Arab minorities. If we fast-forward to UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 [481] we see that within the boundaries recommended therein for the Jewish 'State' (not 'canton') the "considerable percentage" was even a very slight Arab majority!

25 January 1935 *In Jerusalem, an all-Palestine Islamic meeting is held, called for by the Mufti and attended by Muslim dignitaries, who, at the end, issue a fatwa, prohibiting the sale of land to Jews and condemning land dealers as renouncers of Islam.*

6 February 1935 *A High Court ruling orders the removal of Bedouin from land on which they have settled. During the violent eviction by police, one Bedouin is killed.*

27 March 1935 *The formative conference for Al-Arabi (the Arab Party) takes place in Jerusalem; among the founders are Jamal Al-Husseini,... Alfred Rock, Farid Anabtawi, Ibrahim Darwish, Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Jabari, and Yusef Dia Ad-Dajani. [288]*

²¹³² Hattis 1970, pp 129–31, quoting CO 733/302/75288 [new file number CO 733/283/12, 'Suggested division of Palestine into Jewish and Arab cantons, 1935 Jan 18–1935 Dec 12' and CO 733/302/9, 'Cantonisation of Palestine: proposals, 1936 Feb.–Nov' and CO 733/813/32 [?]].

²¹³³ CO 733/283/12, pp 16–17, 42–62.

²¹³⁴ Hattis 1970, pp 131–32, quoting CO 733/302/75288, p 8.

Ragheb Nashashibi, leader of the Defense Party [>288], appealed to High Commissioner Wauchope in a statement dated 14 May 1935 to respect the basic Arab demands.²¹³⁵ He aired and updated the well-known grievances concerning land sales, immigration, and the still-lacking Legislative Council (p 20), gave a detailed review of Hope Simpson's treatise on the land problem and Land Transfer Ordinances, including information on the eviction of cultivators (pp 21-27), laid out the injustice of unwanted immigration (pp 27-32), expressed the fear "within ten years, if not before, of a Jewish majority in the country", and pleaded for self-government (praising the Turkish constitution of 1908) (pp 32-36). He concluded:

If... Government fails to restrict the sale of land in such a manner as will retain to the Arabs the remaining land now available or to stop immigration which is beyond the economic capacity of the country and continues to administer the country under the present direct rule on the lines of the lowest grade of colonies, the Arab people will be justified in entertaining the belief that the policy of the government has as its object the extermination of the Arab people in the country.

Some Arabs will then become dangerous, and his party "will adopt every possible political means" to "protect their country" from Zionism. (p 37) Lesch reports that the Nashashibi-dominated National Defence Party had already in January 1935 petitioned the HC emphasising that the "inalienability clauses" in leases with Zionist-agencies meant the Arabs were losing "their country" permanently²¹³⁶, recalling John Hope Simpson's observation that such clauses amounted to an "extraterritorialisation" of part of Palestine²¹³⁷.

23 June 1935 *Hussein Fakhri Khalidi founds the Reform Party (Hizb Al-Islah) in Jerusalem.* [>288]

²¹³⁵ CO 733/278/13, Part 1, pp 19-37, *all citations*.

²¹³⁶ Lesch 1979, p 72.

²¹³⁷ Hope Simpson 1930, pp 54-55, >233.

Malcolm MacDonald, Colonial Secretary from 7 June – 22 November 1935 and again 16 May 1938 – 12 May 1940, got Cabinet approval on 16 July to authorise High Commissioner Wauchope to start negotiations with both the Palestinians and the Jews over a Legislative Council similar to Cunliffe-Lister's [^{>279}] except that there would be only 4, not 5, appointed Jews and 2, not 1, 'commercial' persons – as if this made any difference. On 22 July Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Jamal al-Husseini, talking with Wauchope, returned to their underlying objection to the great power held by the High Commissioner over the foreseen parliament, and also objected to Wauchope's basing the Moslem-Jew-Christian formula on inhabitants rather than citizens: since many Jewish immigrants had not become citizens, Wauchope's method showed a relatively high percentage of Jews to be represented.²¹³⁸ Also talking at this time with Wauchope were Ragheb Nashashibi, Yacoub al-Farraj and Francis Khayyat, and at Farraj's interview with Wauchope on 26 July 1935 Farraj, a Christian, addressed the hoary concept of *parity* between Jews and Palestinians:

He would like to say that he did not claim Parity on behalf of his community, but that if Government allotted members of the Legislative council on the principle of Parity, then he would remind me [Wauchope] that there are three communities in Palestine each with a claim of its own, historic and otherwise, and if the principle of Parity is adopted for one, then he felt sure, Government in all fairness would apply the same principle to all three communities even as it used to be the practice in former years for the Municipality of Jerusalem.²¹³⁹

To each religion, that is, one-third of the seats. Amongst the British themselves, July and August 1935 witnessed a high volume of correspondence covering ground by now familiar to us concerning the constitution, land and immigration questions.²¹⁴⁰

²¹³⁸ CO 733/275/1, pp 68-69, 'Interview with Haj Amin El Husseini and Jamal Effendi El Husseini, 22.7.35'; Porath 1977, p 151.

²¹³⁹ CO 733/275/1, p 78; Lesch 1979, p 195.

²¹⁴⁰ See Porath 1977, p 151, citing CO 733/275/75102/Part 1 (= CO 733/275/1), Colonial Secretary to HC 22.6.35, HC to Col Secr 28.6.35 & 6.7.35, Wauchope to MacDonald 16.7.35, MacDonald to Wauchope 17.7.35, Wauchope to Parkinson 22.7.35, MacDonald to Wauchope 29.7.35, 'points raised in the talk with Amin and Jamal 22.7.35', Wauchope to MacDonald 25.7.35 & 9.8.35, same to same 5.8.35.

The official announcement of the composition of this last proposed Legislative Council occurred on 8 October, and on 21 and 22 December 1935 the Government, through High Commissioner Wauchope, officially *proposed* it “to the Arab and Jewish leaders”; the details are contained in Cmd. 5119, ‘Proposed New Constitution for Palestine’, signed by Colonial Secretary J.H. Thomas on 12 March 1936.²¹⁴¹ Wauchope first wrote that the various “Municipal Councils are now in my judgment working satisfactorily”, auguring well for a Legislative Council for the whole colony which would give “advice and assistance” to the Palestine Government. This would

throw open... a wide field for debate [and HMG would] impose on its deliberations such restrictions only as are essential to enable the High Commissioner to discharge his responsibilities and to fulfil the international obligations of His Majesty’s Government.

“International obligations” was of course code for the Balfour Declaration. He then placed responsibility for the welfare of the people of Palestine not on HMG but on the shoulders of “you leaders”, who must show “goodwill”, “statesmanship and [a] sense of responsibility”.

The composition of the LC: 5 official members, 11 nominated unofficial members (3 Moslems including 1 Bedouin, 4 Jews, 2 Christians and 2 ‘Commercial’), and 12 elected members (8 Moslems, 3 Jews and 1 Christian). That gave a total of 28, and exactly half would be neither officials nor Jews. If 1 of the ‘Commercial’ members were a Moslem or Christian and 1 a Jew, the 8 Jews together with the 5 official members would be in a slight minority (13 out of 28). This proposal differed from the one of 6 December 1934 [>279] in that amongst the appointed non-officials there would be one less Jew and one more ‘commercial’ member. Wauchope, that is, had within the year shifted away from equal numbers of Moslems + Christians and Government officials + Jews. The LC could moreover “debate” a somewhat wider range of topics and “ask questions of the Executive relative to the administration of government”. The High Commissioner’s “assent” was required before any Law passed by the LC could come into effect, the HC would write the LC’s standing orders (rules of procedure) and he had the power to “prorogue or dissolve the Council”.

Aside from a supposedly wider remit, the only important political point was that now a slight non-Jewish, anti-Zionist majority was a real possibility – meaning the High Commissioner would be repeatedly required to veto legislation not consistent with the Zionist Mandate. This LC thus crossed a red line. It would therefore be rejected not only by the Jewish Zionists but also by the pro-Zionist U.K. Parliament: by the Lords on 26 February 1936 and by the Commons on 24 March [>289; >290], the message to the Palestinians being that even this slight shift to more Palestinian representation was too much. As Porath’s overview shows, the proposal ran counter to well-known Zionist wishes, and

²¹⁴¹ Cmd. 5119 1936, *all citations*.

the Colonial Office continued to be in no hurry²¹⁴²; moreover, in late 1935 the Arabs grew both more divided and more dissatisfied with the proposed LC and the slow pace of action on the topic²¹⁴³.

The National Defence Party and the Reform Party accepted the proposals, and Tannous ascribes whatever Palestinian openness there was to this particular LC to the fact that while questioning the Mandate and the Jewish national home were not within its remit – the “restrictions” referred to by Wauchope – co-determining levels of immigration and the conditions of land sales were.²¹⁴⁴ Laura Robson reports that Christians such as Alfred Rok and Yacoub Farraj wrote to Wauchope supporting the LC:

Although the proposals made do not fully satisfy the desires and wishes of the Arab population of whom the Christians form an integral and indivisible part and are not adequate to protect their interests, nevertheless the Christian consensus of opinion is unanimously in favour of accepting the Legislative Council, it being understood that the Arab population shall have the right to claim wider powers for the Council and stronger Arab representation.²¹⁴⁵

There were clearly communicated caveats, but the LC could be improved over time.

Ronald Storrs’s characterisation of the political context of this latest and last LC, in his 1937 memoirs, is valuable even if the LC wasn’t as democratic as he made it out to be:

At this point it was apparently felt that something must be done to placate the ‘non-Jewish’ population; and the establishment of the Legislative Council (promised in the White Paper of 1930) on a basis of numerically proportionate representation [sic.] was put forward by the High Commissioner in Council; approved by the Secretary of State for the Colonies; announced by the High Commissioner in December 1935; and published to the world. The proposal was welcomed by the Arabs as a whole ... though a few hesitated lest its acceptance should involve or imply their acceptance of the Mandate. It was immediately boycotted by the Jews. Dr. Weizmann hurried back from Palestine, just in time for the Commons Debate [on 24 March]. ‘The heavy brigades of Press, platform and Parliament’, I wrote [at the time, in 1936], ‘are being wheeled into action against the proposal for a Legislative Council, though this is implicit in the Mandate and explicitly promised to the people as well as to the League of Nations, besides being recommended by a High Commissioner [Wauchope] whom the Jews have good cause to trust. ... The chief or original objection of the Zionists [is] because the Jews are to be allotted seats in proportion to their actual population; going so far as to postulate that there should be no sort of constitution until Jews are in parity or a majority and so able to safeguard the key provisions of the Mandate...’²¹⁴⁶

Storrs is correct that the 8 Jews on the 28-member LC, about 28%, exactly reflected their percentage of the population (though a higher percentage of the citizenry, because per-

²¹⁴² Porath 1977, pp 152-54.

²¹⁴³ Porath 1977, pp 151-52, citing CO 733/275/75102/Part I, ‘A Note on the meeting’ [no date] and ‘Colonial Secretary to HC’, 21 November 1935 and CO 733/293/75102/Part I, Secret, of 24 December 1935.

²¹⁴⁴ Tannous 1988, p 172; also Khalidi 1984, p 87.

²¹⁴⁵ Robson 2011, p 118, citing CO 733/293/4.

²¹⁴⁶ Storrs 1937, p 373; Furlonge 1969, p 106.

haps half the Jews were not citizens); due to the 5 official members, however, the Arabs would be under-represented, their 72% of the population being represented by only 53% of the seats. Democracy in the here-and-now was once again postponed until the preferred group had the numerical majority.

For connoisseurs: Dated 19 September 1936 – almost a year after this last proposal, half a year after its rejection by Parliament and the consequent outbreak of ‘disturbances’, and a few months after the creation of the Royal Palestine (‘Peel’) Commission to investigate the disturbances – Wauchope sent to Ormsby-Gore and Lord Peel a 24-page “Secret memorandum” he’d drawn up in July²¹⁴⁷

summarising or quoting in chronological order all the more important points relating to the history of the proposals for a Legislative Council in the personal letters between the Secretary of State and the High Commissioner, in the personal telegrams and, where necessary as a logical link, in the official dispatches.²¹⁴⁸

The document covered twenty-one separate communications dating from 2 June 1933 to 31 March 1936 (all during his reign). To it he appended a “Note”²¹⁴⁹ written by Malcolm MacDonald on 22 June 1935, two weeks into his first, short stint as Colonial Secretary. Therein MacDonald said that new “Legislative Council discussions” could not now be delayed “for more than a few weeks at the most...”; a pledge for an LC had been made to the Permanent Mandates Commission, and “though I myself, and probably everybody else, would have preferred an indefinite postponement of Legislative Council negotiations”, it was now or never.

Ormsby-Gore reluctantly accepted Wauchope’s proposals of summer 1935, but greatly preferred “a Council in which the principle of ‘parity’ between Arabs and Jews was recognised and effected in practice”, and thought the Jews would be willing to negotiate plans which conceded ‘parity’ to them. The proposed rule of representation more or less according to numerical strength

will grossly offend the Jews by placing them in a minority status in Palestine, for the time being at any rate. I do not mind offending the Jews if I believe they are wrong, but in this case I think there is justice in their contention that the status and authority of the two races in Palestine should not be determined by counting heads...

To sell parity as an “ultimate solution”, rather than proportional representation,

It would be presented to the Arabs, who are to get an elected majority on the present proposed Council, as a guarantee that, though they will always have an elected majority as long as they have a considerable population majority, if they ever lose that population majority they will not be subjected to a Jewish elected majority.

The Arabs were to be told both that they now would get a proportional majority of the seats, but the “ultimate goal” would be that they would have to share 50% of them with

²¹⁴⁷ CO 733/320/5, pp 9-32.

²¹⁴⁸ CO 733/320/5, p 8.

²¹⁴⁹ CO 733/320/5, pp 33-37, all further citations.

the Jews even if they had become a minority. Whether or not this could possibly be attractively packaged, there would be no trace of such nonsense in MacDonald's White Paper of 17 May 1939.

5 October 1935 Formation of the National Bloc (*Al-Kutlah Al-Wataniyah*) in Nablus, a moderate party calling for the independence of Palestine; led by elected Abdul Latif Salah. [288]

16 October 1935 A large shipment of arms and ammunition, smuggled by Zionists but seized at Jaffa port, raises Arab-Jewish tensions throughout Palestine.

October/November 1935 'The failure of the Government to get hold of those responsible for the smuggling of the arms [in Jaffa] further aggravated the feelings of anger, resentment and fear of the Palestine Arabs...'²¹⁵⁰

2 November 1935 In support of Palestinian mass anger against Zionist immigration parallel demonstrations are staged in Amman, Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad.

19 November 1935 Sheikh Izz ed-Din Al-Qassam, a Muslim Brotherhood member who preached Jihad (holy war) and revolution against both the British and the Zionists, is killed in action against British forces near Jenin.

²¹⁵⁰ Porath 1977, p 141, citing CO 733/290/75072.

This entry contains several dates during the fall of 1935. A good history of these turbulent months is in the U.K.'s 1936 'Report to the Permanent Mandates Commission'.²¹⁵¹

The few years before 1935 saw an increase in Arab unemployment²¹⁵² accompanied by increases in immigration – 17,531 in 1931, 42,830 in 1932, 48,008 in 1933, and 72,182 in 1934 [Appendices 7 & 8]. According to Kayyali, High Commissioner Wauchope himself had said that immigration had exceeded the “absorptive capacity of the country”.²¹⁵³ During the strike of April–October 1936, to be sure, a veritable immigration bureaucracy in Jerusalem and London debated intensively whether immigration should be suspended to fulfil an Arab demand, whether the criterion of economic absorptive capacity was clear, whether it was being exceeded, whether *political* criteria were more important, and whether in any case order had to be first restored; Wauchope always stood against suspending immigration, as did short-term Colonial Secretary Thomas.²¹⁵⁴

Sometime shortly before **26 October 1935**, in the knowledge that the local Zionists were arming themselves, “At the joint meeting of representatives of all the parties (except *Is-tiqalal*) it was decided to call for a national strike on 26th October and to submit a first memorandum to the Government. ... The strike was fully observed...”²¹⁵⁵

Sheikh Izz ed-Din al-Qassam had become a nationalist leader in and around Haifa as of 1920, and by autumn 1935 he led armed resistance squads; a British squad under Orde Wingate killed Qassam and three other rebels near Yabad on **19 November 1935**, whereupon Qassam's fame grew even larger and he became a timeless martyred hero.²¹⁵⁶ [also 330]

On **25 November 1935** the five main parties [288] – represented by “Mohammad Ishaq Budeiri (Islah), Ragheb Nashashibi (National Defence), Abdullatif Salah (National Block), Jamal Husseini (Palestine Arab), and Yacoub Ghussain (Arab Youngmen Congress)” – confronted the High Commissioner with the usual Palestinian demands²¹⁵⁷, accurately summarised by Barbour thus:

- 1) The establishment of democratic government in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations and Article II of the Palestine Mandate.
- 2) Prohibition of the transfer of Arab lands to Jews, and the enactment of a law similar to the Five Feddan Law in Egypt.

²¹⁵¹ <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/FD4D250AF882632B052565D2005012C3>

²¹⁵² CO 733/257/11, pp 55–58.

²¹⁵³ Kayyali 1978, p 181, citing CO 733/294, Wauchope to J.H. Thomas 7 December 1935.

²¹⁵⁴ CO 733/294/6, e.g. pp 23–24, 37–38, 43, 84, 102, 108–09, 153, 178; CO 733/294/7, *passim*.

²¹⁵⁵ Porath 1977, p 142.

²¹⁵⁶ Zuaytir 1958, pp 86–87; Kanafani 1972, pp 37–39; Ayyad 1999, p 151; Mattar 2000, pp 336–37.

²¹⁵⁷ CO 733/278/13, Part 2, pp 27–41; also CO 733/294/6, pp 179–82.

- 3) a) The immediate cessation of Jewish immigration and the formation of a competent committee to determine the absorptive capacity of the country and lay down a principle for immigration. b) Legislation to require all lawful residents to obtain and carry identity cards. c) Immediate and effective investigation into illicit immigration.²¹⁵⁸ [*also >290*]

In Porath's version,

they reiterated their national demands. These demands were three: a) immediate stoppage of Jewish immigration; b) prohibition of the transfer of Arab lands to the Jews; and c) 'the establishment of a democratic government in the country in accordance with the terms of the covenant of the League of Nations and in execution of the second part of Article 2 of the Palestine mandate' (requiring 'the development of self-governing institutions'), although, it was stressed, the Mandate itself was not recognised by the Arabs.²¹⁵⁹

Porath is correct to point to the Palestinians' non-recognition of the Mandate. This memorandum, given to the High Commissioner, was the same one which Colonial Secretary Thomas circulated to the Cabinet on **10 January 1936**.²¹⁶⁰

Wauchope demanded of Thomas that he send

at the earliest possible moment... a reply as will enable me to give some satisfaction to the Arab leaders, since... otherwise they will lose such influence as they now possess and... the possibility of alleviating the present situation by means of the moderate means suggested by me will disappear.²¹⁶¹

The Five Parties' memorandum called out the hypocrisy of HMG in expressing

its eagerness before the public opinion to protect the independence of Abyssinia... in furtherance of the cause of right and justice. ... But in Palestine, the contrary has been the case. Here the British Government disregarded the pledges which were made to the Arabs, did not take the Covenant of the League of Nations into account and overlooked the principles of humanity which are based on justice and equity. It exceeds every limit in depriving the Arabs of Palestine of the right of independence and trespasses upon their economic and administrative rights in order to facilitate the establishment of a National Home for the Jews. ... In these circumstances, while not recognizing the Mandate which was imposed upon us, we demand the establishment of a democratic Government in the country in accordance with the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations and in execution of the second part of Article 2 of the Palestine Mandate.²¹⁶²

They went on in much detail about the land problem, citing John Hope Simpson, about immigration's violation of the 'economic absorptive capacity' principle, and observed that

²¹⁵⁸ Barbour 1946, pp 163-64; also Peel 1937, Ch III §90; Furlonge 1969, p 106; John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 253-54; Kattan 2009, p 93.

²¹⁵⁹ Porath 1977, pp 142-43, citing CO 733/278/75156/Part II (= CO 733/278/13, Part 2, pp 27-41), Enclosure of 25 November in HC to Colonial Secretary, Secret, 7 December 1935.

²¹⁶⁰ CO 733/297/3, p 28.

²¹⁶¹ CO 733/278/13, Part 2, p 25; also Kayyali 1978, p 182, citing CO 733/294, Wauchope to J.H. Thomas 7 December 1935.

²¹⁶² CO 733/278/13, Part 2, pp 27, 30.

“His Excellency [Wauchope, their addressee] continually spoke of self-government but never fulfilled anything.”²¹⁶³ On all of these issues and more the National Defence Party had on 14 May 1935 submitted an impressive and thorough catalogue of grievances to Wauchope, who however only subsequently received a delegation from the Party because “I did not feel that it was necessary for me to attempt to deal with the representations of this party in detail.”²¹⁶⁴ [^{>281}]

On 7 December 1935 Wauchope had suggested to new Colonial Secretary J.H. Thomas (in office from 22 November 1935 til 22 May 1936), but not to the Palestinians, that the 60,000 Jewish immigrants in 1935 were beyond economic absorptive capacity, that subsistence land should not be sold, and that a Legislative Council should be established immediately; as Porath goes on to show, the latter was an undertaking strongly supported by former HC Chancellor [^{>225; >247; >250; >255}] and promised – albeit in principle only – by the Passfield White Paper,²¹⁶⁵ yet since then repeatedly postponed [^{>258; >277; >279; >282; >283}].²¹⁶⁶ Wauchope knew the score, writing to Thomas:

To this sense of injustice [over the Balfour Declaration's denial of independence] must now be added a genuine fear that the Jews will succeed in establishing themselves in such great numbers that in the not distant future, they will gain economic and political control over the country.²¹⁶⁷

Then, according to John & Hadawi,

The Arabs were waiting for their answer when, on **21 and 22 December 1935**, the High Commissioner communicated to Arab and Jewish leaders proposals for the establishment of a legislative council with a non-official majority. ... The lines [of this policy] had been drawn and specified in 1933 by... Wauchope: the introduction of self-government by stages, ‘first the introduction of non-official members to administrative committees, next the holding of elections for municipal councils under the Municipal Councils Ordinance, and then the establishment of a legislative council.’²¹⁶⁸ [^{>283}]

The parties, who on 25 April 1936 would form the Higher Arab Committee, finally on **29 January 1936** received from Wauchope a reply to their demands of 25 November 1935 consisting of a set of promises for tighter restrictions on land sales and immigration and a legislative council along the lines of the message just mentioned of 21 and 22 December.²¹⁶⁹ [^{>283}]

At the same time British counter-intelligence reported that taken together, the more radical political groups intended

²¹⁶³ CO 733/278/13, Part 2, p 41.

²¹⁶⁴ CO 733/278/13, Part 1, pp 18-37.

²¹⁶⁵ Passfield, §11.

²¹⁶⁶ Porath 1977, pp 143-52.

²¹⁶⁷ CO 733/278/13, Part 2, p 19; Lesch 1973, p 16.

²¹⁶⁸ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 254, citing Colonial Office (London) No. 94 for 1933.

²¹⁶⁹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 255, citing *A Survey of Palestine*, 1945-46 (= Shaw 1946), p 34.

(a) To direct political agitation against the British authorities, and not against Zionism. This is clear from their writings and speeches. (b) To force the Party leaders to adopt some firm decision at the Nablus meeting on the 15th January [1936], such as non-cooperation, non-payment of taxes, demonstrations, etc. (c) To stimulate agitation and public feeling until the meeting on the 15th January. (d) Subsequently to create disorders.²¹⁷⁰

The weight was shifting from dialogue to violent confrontation. Something that had been taken for granted for some decades or even centuries in Britain – a democratic government – had to be argued, fought and died for in Palestine.

²¹⁷⁰ CO 733/297/1, pp 144-48; Kayyali 1978, p 183, Rice to Chief Secretary, 14 December 1935.

XVI. Both al-Qassam and the legislature dead

The Arab Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress had ceased to exist as of about August 1934.²¹⁷¹ Jewish immigration in 1935 was five times higher than in 1932, and land continued to be sold to Zionists. In this atmosphere, according to Ayyad,

The leaders in Palestine in search for alternatives decided to form a commission called *Lajnit Al-Ahzab* (a Committee of the Parties). It was designed to replace the disappearing Executive Committee, creating a political body, which would represent the Palestinians domestically and before regional and international representatives and institutions. The Istiqlal Party did not join this commission. ... On 9 November 1935, there was a call on all party leaders to join a general strike which would take place upon the arrival of the British High Commissioner at Jaffa, after he had ended a visit to Europe. On 10 November, the representatives of various political parties, with the exception of the Istiqlalists, met at the headquarters of *Ad-Difa*. ... [T]hey decided the on the issues concerning the High Commissioner's return to Palestine and the delivery of the memo containing all national demands by the Palestinian national parties.

For many younger activists this approach was too timid, and many were advocating violent rebellion; while the traditional leaders waited, they organised a strike in Nablus on 13 November, with Akram Zuaytir telegraphing Wauchope expressing the extreme dissatisfaction of the people with “the British Government's established Zionist policy”.²¹⁷²

²¹⁷¹ Kanafani 1972, p 41.

²¹⁷² Ayyad 1999, pp 149-50; Khalidi 1984, p 283.

The newspaper *Al-Awqat al-Arabiyya* on 15 May 1935 had reported that at the second congress of what is usually in English called **the Palestine Youth Party** [^{>288}], in Haifa on 10 May, 2,000 youths had been present.²¹⁷³ The daily newspaper *Al-Kifah* carried a longer article on Sunday, 15 December 1935, about another gathering, titled ‘The Branches of the Youth Conference’.²¹⁷⁴

[headline:] A big national celebration at the branch of the youth conference in Lod honoring the person who provided the conference with consultation. [byline:] Lod—our special correspondent – The sub-committee of the youth conference in Lod invited the honorable son of Palestine Mr. Mohammed Ali El-Taher to a big celebration it organized at its headquarters last night. The committee made use of the event to invite the president and members of the youth conference, Mr. Yacoub Bek Al-Ghusein, Salim Bek Abdelrahman, Mr. Selbia Aridah and Mr. Said Almahleel. At 7:30, the rooms and spaces of the club [were occupied].

“Mohammad Ali Taher”, by the way, was described by High Commissioner Wauchope on 21 December 1935 as “a notorious agitator of Egyptian antecedents”.²¹⁷⁵

Al-Kifah referred to a “Charter” declaring primarily that the “Arab countries are one unity and whatever division took place is not recognized or approved by the Arab nation.” Under the heading “The promise of the struggle”, the “president of the executive committee of the Arab-Palestinian youth conference” wrote:

This newspaper is issued during troubled times and a cloudy atmosphere, in which all over the country a spirit of rebellion can be seen that is strong and impactful and of great importance, which causes anger over the current situation and worry over the terrible future. There are locks on the doors of national bodies that prevent us from accessing or working with them, or away from them, as the space to work is actually open for everyone. But those who don’t do well and don’t master something are good at talking and causing troubles to others.

This Party was evidently adopting a radical stance critical of the older politicians. Recall that on 19 November 1935 the British had murdered Sheikh Izz ed-Din Al-Qassam, a beacon for many Palestinians.

Winter 1935–36 *The winter of 1935–36 witnessed a new tide of nationalist agitation in Egypt and in Syria. ... At the time of the riots in Cairo, one [Palestinian] newspaper called upon its readers to follow the Egyptian example: “Rise to rid yourselves from Jewish and British slavery. ... The leaders in Egypt have awakened. Where are our leaders hiding?”*²¹⁷⁶ [^{>330}]

²¹⁷³ *Al-Awqat al-Arabiyya*, 15 May 1935.

²¹⁷⁴ *Al-Kifah*, 15 December 1935, translated by Yousef M. Aljamal.

²¹⁷⁵ CO 733/294/6, p 185. See El-Taher current.

²¹⁷⁶ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 258.

287. Palestinians, Wauchope, Thomas 24 Dec 1935–25 Jan 1936

Under the latest Government led by Stanley Baldwin, High Commissioner Wauchope had been told by new Colonial Secretary J.H. Thomas to offer the locals a legislative council (LC) and some limitation of land sales.²¹⁷⁷ In a Secret dispatch showing that he meant business with setting up an LC whose specifics had been pondered over since July 1935 [^{>279; >283}], Wauchope reported on 24 December²¹⁷⁸ to former railway worker Thomas that on 21 December 1935 he had met with “Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, Jamal Eff. al-Husseini, Ishaq Bey al-Budeiri, Abdul Latif Bey Salah, Yakub Eff. Farraj, [and] Alfred Eff. Rok”; the latter two were Christians, Christian presence having been (unnecessarily) insisted upon by Wauchope. The meeting covered the usual questions of the powers over the LC of the office of High Commissioner, election as opposed to appointment of members, the ratio of Arabs to Jews among the non-official members, whether Jews who had refused the offer of Palestinian citizenship could nevertheless participate, and whether women should have the vote. He had also met with “the Jewish leaders” on 22 December although they were firmly rejecting any LC.

In late January, in answer to a query from Thomas, Wauchope wrote:

It will be recalled that at the end of November the leader of the Arab political party submitted a memorandum to the High Commissioner setting out their main demands namely;- (a) that a democratic Government should be established in Palestine (b) that Jewish immigration should cease completely (c) that all sales of land to Jews should be prohibited. The answer was that a legislative council would be offered and that ‘there can be no question of total stoppage of Jewish immigration into Palestine.’²¹⁷⁹ [^{>284}]

Perhaps Wauchope was educating Thomas on how far apart the British and locals’ positions were. Thomas, a supporter of increasing self-government in Palestine, would resign in May 1936 under dubious charges of leaking budget information and be replaced by unreconstructed Zionist William Ormsby-Gore.

The 29-member LC on offer was made up of:

- 5 “official” members appointed by the HC, i.e. British civil servants
- 11 “unofficial” *nominated* members appointed by the HC: 3 Moslems (one of them Bedouin), 4 Jews, 2 Christians, 2 “commercial” [?]
- 12 “unofficial” *elected* members: 8 Moslems, 3 Jews, 1 Christian²¹⁸⁰ [^{>279; >283}]

Anti-Zionists could on paper have filled half the seats, but only in a council with limited powers, not in a Palestine *government*.

²¹⁷⁷ CO 733/293/6, pp 32-33, Cabinet meeting 15 January 1936; Kayyali 1978, p 187, ‘Palestine. Legislative Council, 10 January 1936’. See CO 733/293/3, /5 and /6 for the long correspondence concerning Legislative Council proposals in the years 1934-36.

²¹⁷⁸ CO 733/293/3, pp 26-44.

²¹⁷⁹ CO 733/293/3, p 19.

²¹⁸⁰ CO 733/293/3, p 33; also Ghandour 2010, p 137.

Wauchope told Thomas on 11 February that:

Actually Municipal Corporations exist in 15 Arab towns all of which are working with tolerable efficiency. Not only are Arabs and Jews working in harmony for common good in Municipal Councils in larger towns but also in many Administrative Councils such as industry and commerce, agriculture and citrus, roads and rail. ... I shall forward to you later the remarks of the 5 Arab parties regarding our proposals for Legislative Council. None refuses our proposals but greater powers for Legislative Council have been asked for by all leaders. I have informed them that increased powers will not be given [by] H.M. Government. I am informed by my District Commissioners that there is a general feeling in the country in favour of acceptance.²¹⁸¹

The debate was the usual one: Within the colonial ('Mandate') set-up, and within an LC with no real power, parity between Arabs and Jews was supported by the Zionists – if there indeed had to be an LC at all – but generally rejected by High Commissioners and the Colonial Office.²¹⁸² Other questions – elected or appointed, veto powers of the HC – as well as the deeper one of whether to co-operate with the colonialists at all, led some political parties to accept or reject various aspects of the proposals, with even the Palestine Arab Party, according to Porath, ending up in general support.²¹⁸³

The summary by Wasif Abboushi differs somewhat from those of Wauchope and Porath, indicating instead that the discussion was no different than in 1922:

The Zionists rejected the proposals on the grounds that an Arab majority on the council 'precluded the establishment of the promised National Home ...' The British disagreed, arguing that the Council would not have the authority 'to discuss the Mandate or the Jewish Agency or to interfere with immigration.' As to why there should be an Arab majority on the Council, the British believed that the representation proposed... was fair in proportion to the population of 825,000 Muslims, 100,000 Christians, and 320,000 Jews. ... On the other hand,... the Arabs... would accept no scheme that did not recognize their majority status, that did not give the Legislative Council sufficient powers, or that did not allow representation on the basis of population.²¹⁸⁴

I am not informed enough to judge the Palestinians' stances more accurately.

Weldon Matthews reports of a meeting between Hajj Amin & Wauchope in early 1936 which supports the view that the Palestinian leadership was willing to co-operate on a Legislative Council even if its remit was narrow:

While emphasizing that he 'did not accept the mandate,' Hajj Amin argued that there were remedies the government 'could and should find within the mandate'. He asked it to define at what point the Jewish national home would be regarded as complete, noting that Arabs believe it had in fact been achieved.²¹⁸⁵

²¹⁸¹ CO 733/293/3, pp 9-10.

²¹⁸² CO 733/265/2, p 46, CO 733/265/1, p 89; but see Porath 1977, p 155.

²¹⁸³ Porath 1977, pp 152-54.

²¹⁸⁴ Abboushi 1977, p 30.

²¹⁸⁵ Matthews 2006, p 220. See inter alia >222; >232; >242.

That is, the Mandate was still rejected, and if the task taken on by HMG of establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine was finished, then the Mandate could be retired.

Objectively, the Arab demands of a Legislative Council were not met, but they did not answer this last proposal with strikes, protests or rebellion. Thus I believe Jeffries' rendering is plausible:

The Arabs, despite the intrinsic worthlessness of the proposed Council, were disposed to accept it without enthusiasm as a first instalment towards a first instalment of justice. In Mr. Churchill's [1922] 'Legislative Council' they would not have been allowed to speak of immigration. In the new 'Legislative Council' they at least would be allowed to speak of it, though no heed would be paid to what they would say. ... [P]ossibly their acquiescence sprang chiefly from the fresh outlook in the Council scheme. For the first time they were recognized as men who had to be allowed to open their mouths, however vainly, upon the fate of their country.²¹⁸⁶

The various shadings of all the misnamed 'legislative' councils require separate and focussed study; but this one was a slight improvement, written at a time when the High Commissioner's main Palestinian advisor, Musa Alami, was not yet entirely sidelined [*also* >386]. In the event, neither house of Parliament would support the scheme, itself an indication that the scheme was closer to Arab wishes than usual, and HMG dropped it. [>289; >290] As the Peel Report said, in the Parliamentary debates

the case stated against the scheme was partly based on the likelihood that it would operate to the disadvantage of the Jewish National Home, [and] it was also based on... the unwisdom of committing Palestine to a form of constitution which would naturally lead, and elsewhere had led, to Responsible Government. (III §96) [>336]

Parliament, that is, saw it as *wise* to oppose "responsible government".

²¹⁸⁶ Jeffries 1939, p 686.

I rely on secondary literature to give a rough account of the various Palestinian political parties of the 1930s [see also >254; >259; >264], whose growth against a background of increasing European-Jewish immigration seems to have been spurred on by the Black Letter's [>246] dousing of hopes that HMG might dilute the Zionism of the Balfour Declaration. According to Zeina Ghandour's summary,

By the late 1920s, a new political vocabulary emerged with the pan-Arab Istiqlal (Independence) party. Awni Abdul Hadi, founder of the Istiqlal and Secretary of the AE [Arab Executive Committee], sought support among young professionals and government officials in and around the cities. They were anti-imperialist pan-Arabists. Between 1934 and 1935, four additional political parties were founded. The National Defence Party and the Palestine Arab Party were founded in 1934 and 1935 by a Nashashibi and a Husseini respectively. ... Hussein Fakhri Khalidi founded the Reform Party. ... Finally, Latif Abdel Saleh founded the National Bloc. ... The Arab Higher Committee consisted of a coalition of all the major political parties.²¹⁸⁷

According to Ayyad, the Palestine Arab Party had been founded secretly as a break-off from the Supreme Moslem Council already in the summer of 1929.²¹⁸⁸ [>201]

A short description of the positions of these five parties appears in *A Survey of Palestine*, written by J.V.W. Shaw in 1946 as background information for the Anglo-American Committee [>438]:²¹⁸⁹

The **Palestine Arab Party** [*al-Hizb al-Arabi al-Filastini*] was founded in May, 1935, under the presidency of Jamal Eff. al-Husseini, a distant cousin of Haj Amin Eff. al-Husseini. Its objects are the independence of Palestine and the termination of the Mandate; the preservation of the Arab character of the country; opposition to Zionism; and the establishment of closer relations between Palestine and other Arab countries. [It] has always been the largest and most important of the Arab political parties... [also >336]

The **National Defence Party** [*Hizb ad-Difa al-Watani*] was formed in December, 1934, under the presidency of Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, C.B.E. In general it is less extreme than the Palestine Arab party. Its object is to work for the independence of Palestine in such a manner as to ensure Arab supremacy. ... Through the influence of Suleiman Bey Toukan, C.B.E., Mayor of Nablus, it commands wide support in Samaria.²¹⁹⁰

The **Arab Reform Party** [*Hizb al-Islah*] was formed in August, 1935. Its objects are the attainment of freedom for Palestine; the establishment of self-government; the welfare

²¹⁸⁷ Ghandour 2010, pp 153-54.

²¹⁸⁸ Ayyad 1999, p 123.

²¹⁸⁹ Shaw 1946, pp 947-49; also Nakhleh 1991, pp 35-37; Ayyad 1999, pp 138-40.

²¹⁹⁰ Probably a descendant of the Arab National Party. [>175; >193; >254]

of farmers and workers; the encouragement of education; and opposition to the Jewish National Home. [Its founder] Dr. Hussein Fakhri el Khalidi, personally, has considerable influence in Jerusalem and his views are given wide publicity in the local Arab press.

The **National Bloc Party** [*Al-Kutla al-Wataniyya*] was formed in Nablus in July, 1935, under the presidency of Abdul Latif Bey Salah, a lawyer and former official of the Ottoman Senate in Istanbul. Its declared objects are: to work for the independence and preservation of the Arab character of Palestine; to unify all political efforts of the Palestine Arabs; and to disseminate propaganda for this purpose.

The **Istiqlalist (Independence) Party** [*Hizb al-Istiqlal*], properly speaking, is the Palestine branch of the Pan-Arab Independence Party founded by the followers of the Emir Faisal in Damascus in 1920. The general secretary of this branch is Awni Bey Abdul Hadi. Its declared aim is the independence of Arab countries; it bases itself upon the principle that Arab countries are an indivisible entity, and that Palestine is an Arab country, historically and geographically an integral part of Syria.²¹⁹¹

The **Palestine Youth Party**... [*Mutamar Al-Shabab* or 'Youth Congress Party'] is not strictly speaking a party. [I]ts more correct title is the Arab Young Men's Congress Executive. The first... congress was held at Jaffa in 1932, with the object of organising the Arab youth to serve the Palestine Arab cause. This congress elected an executive under the presidency of Ya'coub Eff. el Ghussein. Its second congress, held on 10 May 1935, was attended by over 1000 people.²¹⁹²

The above list coincides well with that given by Kanafani²¹⁹³ and Qumsiyeh²¹⁹⁴, who also mentions *Hizb Al-Shuyui Al-Falastini* (the Communist Party) and *Jamiyyet Al-Omal Al-Arab* (organised labourers). Bernard Regan devotes some attention to the Party of Farmers (*Hizb al-Zurra*), which was supported by Zionists.²¹⁹⁵

The Peel Commission [p.336] would in 1937 give this summary:

An Arab party, entitled the National Defence Party, was formed in December, 1934, and three more parties, namely, the Palestine Arab Party, the Arab Reform Party, and the National Bloc Party, were formed in the following year. Previous to this, the Istiqlal Party (Independence Party) as well as the Arab Young Men's Congress Executive had been formed in 1932. Upon the formation of these parties, the Arab Executive Committee of Arab Congresses, which formerly represented all the parties, ceased to function.²¹⁹⁶

On the aims of the National Defence Party, Nasser Eddin Nashashibi writes:

Clause 3 of its constitution defined its aim as follows: 'To fight for the full independence of Palestine with guaranteed sovereignty over all of Palestine and without acknowledgement of any international guarantees that might lessen, influence or damage that Arab sovereignty.'

²¹⁹¹ Also Khalidi 2006, pp 82-85.

²¹⁹² See Ayyad 1999, p 137.

²¹⁹³ Kanafani 1972, p 41.

²¹⁹⁴ Qumsiyeh 2011, pp 74-75.

²¹⁹⁵ Regan 2017, pp 150, 167.

²¹⁹⁶ Peel 1937, VI §85; also Lesch 1973, p 15, Kayyali 1978, pp 177-78; Haiduc-Dale 2013, pp 113-19.

It also stated that the party would take all necessary action to form a national government in Palestine deriving its authority from the will of the people [and] that the party would strive for progress in all fields including the economic, social and agricultural sectors, and improve the condition of Arab farmers and workers.²¹⁹⁷

According to Kayyali, other more local and radical groups emerged: in Nablus around Istiqlalist Akram Zuaytir, in Yaffa around Hamdi Hussein, in Qalqilya around a Revolutionary Youth Committee, in Tulkarem around Salim Abdul Rahman, and in Haifa around Arif Nuralla; they were “supported by [Izzat] Darwaza and Ajaj Nweihed, both of them founding members of the *Istiqlal* Party. Hamdi Hussein and Akram Zu’ayter contributed regular articles to Jamal al-Hussein’s newspaper *al-Liwa* (The Standard).”²¹⁹⁸

This book deals with Palestinians’ treatment of Britain and vice versa. In occasionally noting some differences among Palestinian groups with regard to the *tactics* of reaching full independence, the book thus perhaps conveys an exaggerated picture of Palestinian unity. Yet the documents show that there *was* unbroken unity on the strategic goals of self-determination and its corollary, defeating the British and Jewish Zionist project for political domination, in turn depending on large numbers of immigrants and land purchases.²¹⁹⁹ As Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald would attest on 18 January 1939, “there are different factions within the Arab movement [but] they do not represent any fundamental differences amongst the Arabs regarding political policy.”²²⁰⁰ Again and again and again, these demands were publicly uttered, with no dissenting voices, to the colonial power and the wider world. According to Ghandour, the Arab Women’s Committee in 1937 told the Officer Administering the Government that concerning independence “There is not one Arab in Palestine ... who is an extremist or a moderate as all Arabs are alike in this respect.”²²⁰¹ Regarding Zionism, Palestinian supporters of it in the Mandate decades have yet to be found.

I for one have found only one hint of pro-Zionist, or Zionism-neutral, sentiment among indigenous Palestinians, in a report by a Britisher, not a Palestinian, way back in March 1921 in a private and confidential letter written by Political Officer Wyndam Deedes to Hubert Young at the Colonial Office in London. [*see also* >126] He said that the recent visit to Palestine by Churchill had had

the effect of hardening the hearts of some [the “irreconcilables”]... [yet] I have come across traces of a desire to form a ‘Moderate Party’ whose programme would be: Cessation of opposition to the Balfour Declaration. Co-operation with the Government in the general administration, and A Watching Brief for the protection of their own (Christian and Moslem) interests as specified in the Mandate.²²⁰²

²¹⁹⁷ Nashashibi 1992, p 137.

²¹⁹⁸ Kayyali 1978, pp 182–83.

²¹⁹⁹ See also Lesch 1973, pp 16, 18–21.

²²⁰⁰ CAB 24/282/4, p 36/\$15, >383.

²²⁰¹ Ghandour 2010, p 133.

²²⁰² CO 733/17B, ‘Situation’ 15 April 1921, p 281.

I have no further knowledge of this “Moderate Party” or of what “cessation of opposition to the Balfour Declaration” amounted to in Deedes’ mind. The question of *collaboration* with local Jewish Zionists in business or municipal matters is of course a different thing, and for certain journalists, for instance, it was often done for money and “abetted by the [Zionist] United Bureau”.²²⁰³

There were to be sure strategic or ideological, rather than merely tactical, differences over the question of the political unit for which freedom was being sought: Palestine? Greater Syria? An Arabic union? The idea of a unified Arab commonwealth was seen by some as a way to water down the Zionist presence, or political Judaization, in the Near East by creating a much larger polity.²²⁰⁴ In the Palestinian–British dialogue, though, this played little role after British possession of Palestine and French possession of Syria and Lebanon had been cemented.

The *tactical* divergences were mostly over the advisability of strikes, the balance between dialogue and militant action, how Palestinian nationalism related to Islam, relations with the *yishuv* and, most relevant to this study, how closely to work with the British Administration in Palestine.²²⁰⁵ This last issue was muddied by the need for many to earn a living, or the desire to contribute something to the welfare of the people, or to gain personal or family political power.

An alleged example of divergence from an uncompromising stand for independence, to be sure, is Ayyad’s claim that Amin al-Husseini was walking a fine line:

In 1930, Amin Al-Husseini was preoccupied with consolidating his leading position. This leadership was in harmony with the British colonial interests. He did not criticize the British colonial role or policy in Palestine. Al-Husseini rather limited his condemnation to the British-Zionist politics. He also proposed the formation of parliamentary government in which both Arabs and Jews were represented [e.g. >277]. In a letter [High Commissioner John] Chancellor sent to the British Minster of Colonial Affairs dated 12 October 1930,... [the Mufti] committed himself to the maintenance of order and the collaboration with the British.²²⁰⁶

To be sure, some documents reveal a willingness to remain for a while under British tutelage; usually, however, they formulate willingness to enter, as an independent nation, into a treaty relationship with Great Britain in military and economic matters. Perhaps Ayyad has more evidence for his opinion that Amin at least tacitly accepted Britain’s “colonial role or policy”, somehow defined, but I am not aware of any statement of agreement that Palestine should be a *long-term* British colony. If so, and if it were shared by large numbers of mandate subjects, it would have been sensational news, contradicting hundreds of Palestinian expressions of opposition to Palestine’s status as a colony as such – not only to the Zionist content of the colonialist’s policies. In Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, In-

²²⁰³ Cohen 2008, p 53 & *passim*.

²²⁰⁴ Hurewitz 1976, p 237.

²²⁰⁵ On these issues during the 1930s see Barbour 1946, p 195; Furlonge 1969; Lesch 1973; Porath 1977; Kayyali 1978; Muslih 1988; Mattar 1988; Nashashibi 1990; Swedenburg 1994; Seikaly 1995, pp 151-58; Smith 1996, pp 90-115; Ayyad 1999; Boyle 2001; Matthews 2006.

²²⁰⁶ Ayyad 1999, p 140.

dia, Egypt – where not? – subjects were fighting to the death against foreign occupations that were free of Zionist intent. In the case of the Mufti, in addition to being a paid British employee as head of the Supreme Moslem Council, he was at the same time in close contact with rebels and “established a military organization... under the name of Al-Jihad Al-Muqaddas.”²²⁰⁷

This example, though, usefully raises a question that can be asked about any of the Palestinian statements in this chronology, namely if and how they were influenced by desires to profit from the British, stay on the good side of the British, or at least keep talking to the British – or the need to stay out of jail. My impression is that most statements and manifestos, not to mention the frequent illegal street actions, could hardly have been more boldly formulated. That is, there was little verbal sacrifice of principle. From the ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ of December-March 1920-21 to the St. James Conference talks of February and March 1939, I have found only polite introductory words followed by brave outspokenness. [>99; >387ff]

In any case it is a fact for Ayyad that the wealthy “traditional leadership” was close with the British Administration and that at “receptions and dinner parties... they sat side by side with Zionist leaders.”²²⁰⁸ He nevertheless concludes that

Regardless of existing differences among various factions within the national movement, the issue of Zionist drift into Palestine usually united them.²²⁰⁹

Robert John and Sami Hadawi similarly, regarding possible social-economic reasons for political rivalries, maintain that if it was a British and a Zionist tactic to divide the notables from the peasantry, or the notables amongst themselves, the tactic “failed almost completely.”²²¹⁰ The anti-Zionist, pro-independence *cantus firmus* remained firm.

In February 1936, ‘the Government awarded a contract to build three Arab schools in Jaffa to a Jewish contractor who refused to employ a single Arab labourer.’²²¹¹ ‘The Arab Labourers Federation thereupon address [another polite] letter to the District Commissioner.’²²¹²

1936 Musa Al-Alami becomes Secretary-General of the Legal Department in Jerusalem.

March 1936-1948 ‘The Palestine Broadcasting Service..., which divided airtime between the perceived cultural interests of Arabic, English, and Hebrew speakers, normalized, naturalized, and indeed amplified the boundaries between categories, cementing fault lines between people who had frequently interacted fluidly.’²²¹³

²²⁰⁷ Ayyad 1999, p 141.

²²⁰⁸ Ayyad 1999, p 141.

²²⁰⁹ Ayyad 1999, p 145.

²²¹⁰ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 239.

²²¹¹ Kayyali 1978, p 189; also Jeffries 1939, p 685.

²²¹² Barbour 1946, p 162.

²²¹³ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p XII.

In terms of proportional representation the latest and last idea for a Legislative Council was better for the Arabs than previous proposed councils. [^{>279;} ^{>283}] This in retrospect surprising initiative, which moved the British Government closer to the Arab position than ever (yet still lightyears away), was however defeated in both houses of Parliament, both dead set against any step towards standard majoritarian democracy.²²¹⁴ The reasons given were that the Arabs were incapable of governing anything, that more time was needed to train the trainable ones, that the roughly 50% of seats held by Moslems and Christians just might prevent further construction of the Jewish national home, and that the LC sincerely wanted by Wauchope would deepen an intangible racial antagonism in the country.

Going through the Lords debate is tedious, and our only consolation is that the Palestinians at the time also had to read the fine print, register the decisions and digest the anti-Palestinian arguments for those decisions. Those arguments, however, like those of the House of Commons debate on 17 November 1930 over the Passfield White Paper, shine essential light on the attitudes of British politicians.

The House of Lords discussion on 26 February 1936²²¹⁵ was initiated by Lord Snell, formerly Henry Snell, the dissenting member of the Shaw Commission [^{>220}] who in the Commons as Leader of the Labour Party had on 17 November 1930 [^{>242}] argued for correcting the Passfield White Paper [^{>234}] back to a more pro-Zionist position. He now said that

[H]e would ask His Majesty's Government what is their intention in regard to the proposed Legislative Council for Palestine; whether they have fully considered the widespread objections which have been raised to the inauguration of such a Council; and whether they will consider the advisability of deferring the proposal until greater experience of local government in Palestine has been obtained... (c750)

Snell's mind saw the problem as one between the two "peoples" rather than one between Britain and its subjects, asserting that the LC would "exacerbate racial feeling" and interfere with

an increase in friendly contacts between the Arab and the Jewish peoples. Fate has thrown these two peoples together on soil which is very dear to them both, and it would be a great privilege to any of us, in any Party, to be able to bring an understanding peace to a land which is precious to Jew and to Christian, and to the Mohamedan people. (c750)

²²¹⁴ CO 733/307/10, pp 62-63; Jeffries 1939, pp 685-88; Furlonge 1969, p 107; John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 255-56; Porath 1977, p 155.

²²¹⁵ Hansard 1936, *all quotations*.

Snell was ignorant of the fact that the two “peoples” had gotten along quite well for centuries or even millennia – depending on how one defines “Arab”. He also distorted the question of responsibility, saying it was “fate”, not Britain, which “threw” European immigrants onto Palestinian “soil”.

He then quoted an anonymous person who had just been in Palestine for “nearly two months” who welcomed the news he had read in the local *Palestine Post* that HMG was considering postponing the LC, attesting near-universal local opposition to it. That, so Snell, was good, because “there is no established demand for it”; “such a Council in 1922... was refused by the Arabs” [>133ff] and now “in 1936,... the Jews on their part object”. (c751) He ignored or was not aware of the Arabs’ more positive attitude towards this latest LC, and mentioned only the one fourteen years earlier.

His proximate argument was that the Arabs had proven incapable of the “self-government” mandated by the Mandate’s Article 2 [>146]:

If the Arabs are not ready for local government in areas in which they more or less predominate, why is it that the Government propose to impose upon them the responsibility for central government, which is a much more difficult matter? Why place them in the position, through inexperience or lack of understanding or whatever it may be, to arrest development in Palestine? (cc751-52)

Snell’s oriental Other was “inexperienced” and “lacked understanding”.

But his central argument, central because it was legal(istic), was that the Balfour Declaration and Mandate themselves placed the establishment of the Jewish national home above the secondary job of establishing “self-governing institutions”. In this he was correct: The JNH

is the very purpose of the Mandate itself. It is not something supplementary to other duties; it is the very *raison d’être* of the Mandate itself. It was proclaimed before the enactment of the Mandate, even before the occupation of the country itself. Therefore it is not open to us, I submit, to say that the conditions of the Mandate are irksome to us. The fact is that we accepted them, and the terms were of our drafting. We knew exactly what we were doing. We assumed, with full knowledge of what was required of us on behalf of the civilised world, a specific duty, and that duty was the placing of the country under such political, administrative, and economic conditions as would secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home, as laid down in the Preamble. (cc753-54; also 766)

If one has oneself “drafted” a statement of what should be done, then it is at best tautologous to say that one also “accepted” doing it. But Snell was speaking the truth: the Balfour Declaration was a letter written by the Zionist Federation of Britain to itself; the Mandate text was a set of rules for running Palestine that Britain wrote for itself.

He then appealed to the authority of Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister who sent the ‘Black Letter’ to Chaim Weizmann on 13 February 1931 [>246] – saying that “The undertaking of the Mandate is an undertaking to the Jewish people, and not only to the Jewish people in Palestine.” (c754)

He then lauded the economic progress of Palestine alongside the burgeoning JNH; he said “the English people” were providing “an historic, splendid illustration in the great art of nation-building” and asked, “In face of all these possibilities, why do the Government want to spoil everything at this time?” If such an LC were instituted, the Jews correctly

fear a reduction in Jewish status, that in future they will not be able to go to Palestine as of right but only on the sufferance of a hostile majority existing in the country. They would be in a permanent minority. Their development would be thwarted. ... The anxiety of Jews throughout the world on this matter is very grave and urgent. They fear that all the effort, love, devotion, and social idealism which they have poured into that historic land will be continuously frustrated. ... So I plead for delay. Let there be a ten years’ plan for the development of local government in Palestine. (cc755, 756)

There was no attempt to at least weigh the immigrants’ “effort, love, devotion and social idealism” against any love and devotion felt by the indigenous.

As with the House of Commons debate on the 1930 Passfield White Paper [^{>242;} ^{>234}], this debate reveals an enormous amount about who the Palestinians had to argue with whenever they were allowed an audience. Not a single Lord other than Plymouth, speaking for the Government, defended the Palestinians or High Commissioner Wauchope’s proposal. (cc782-90)

Lord **Lytton**: (cc757-61)

[T]o establish sham self-government prematurely, and in a form which cannot commend itself to any section of the population, is a very dangerous experiment. ... [S]uch a proposal is not calculated to improve the relations between the two communities in Palestine but rather still further to embitter them. [It is to be sure] difficult to reconcile... a gradual and controlled but nevertheless a continuous migration of Jews from other countries [with] the first overriding obligation of the Mandate to administer the country in the interests of all the population.

Such immigration had to take place, he said in something of a *non sequitur*, but without qualms about “the interests of all the population” because “the conditions were known to us when we accepted the Mandate. We drafted it and we undertook to accept the Mandate with a full knowledge of the conditions and difficulties inherent in it.”

In the end, self-government was impossible because

self-government in Palestine could only mean procuring the co-operation of the inhabitants through their elected representatives in administering the country under the terms of the Mandate. That presupposes acceptance of those terms. That is just what the Arabs in Palestine have never been willing to do.

HMG, so the Lord further, must either introduce some such LC in which discussion of immigration was out-of-bounds or wait until “the benefits of this [immigration] policy have become more generally recognised by the inhabitants.” Another commission of enquiry was needed:

It is a very difficult problem, and I submit that there is real need for the fullest examination of it by people who have knowledge and experience of constitutional matters [although] it would involve some delay... [T]he Government [should] appoint a Commission...

Really, another commission? Yes – the Royal Palestine Commission would soon come into being. [309] But it was inconceivable that any of the Commissioners or constitutional experts would be Palestinians.

Speaking of experience, Lord **Lothian** said: (cc762-64)

My little experience of Palestine was gained in not much more than a few hours which I spent there, but I drew from that experience one very vivid impression, and that was the extraordinary transforming effect of life in Palestine on the Jewish youth in that country. ... I feel that civilisation does owe some redress to a people which for nearly two thousand years has been without a home, to a people which, wherever it is, is in a perpetual minority, and a people whose sufferings are so forcibly brought home to everybody by what is going on in Europe to-day.

At best, the Palestinians were on the blurry periphery of the Lord's vision. This erasure was also the condition for Lord **Marley's** later explicit suggestion that Palestine was the place to solve Europe's anti-semitism problem. (c779-80)

A good fifteen years after British "tutelage" began [46], however, so Lothian further,

you should not introduce the full function of responsible government into a country where the conditions are not ready and are quite inappropriate for it at the present time. ... Until there is a sufficient community feeling between the Arab and the Jewish populations, until the principles of the Mandate are reasonably well accepted by both sides of the population, I do not think we ought to lay any foundation at all which can reasonably be called a system of responsible government... because the system of responsible government itself inflames and exaggerates [racial and religious] differences.

If an LC is set up at all, he added, the key was "not basing the functioning of the Council on anything like a majority vote..."

Lord **Jessel**: "It is true that the Arabs are in a vast majority; that is to say, they are three-quarters of the population compared with a quarter composed of Jews. On the other hand, the Jewish population contribute not less than 65 or 70 per cent. of the revenue of the country. So that there is something to be said on both sides,..." (c765)

Lord **Elibank** was uncomfortable with democracy: The proposed LC

will... create Arab supremacy... which will not give a square deal to the Jews. ... The High Commissioner may have the last word, but it still remains a fact that the Jewish people on this Council will be placed in a permanent minority. They will all the time be overwhelmed by the numbers against them, and instead of being able to approach any subject from a detached point of view they will always feel that they have to struggle against the more numerous arguments which the very much larger number of Arabs who will sit upon this Council will be able to provide. (cc767-68)

He was portraying the normal democratic interaction between majority and minority views as something frightening and outrageous. His undemocratic alternative: an appointed Council “five Arabs, five Jews, and six officials.” (c769) This issue of “safeguards” for the Jewish minority in any constitutional scheme, incidentally, would become one of the two or three overriding issues in the Palestinian–British talks leading up to the 1939 MacDonald White Paper [>386ff; >410]. (cc792–93)

Cultural relativist Lord **Mansfield** had a low opinion of Arabs:

I submit to your Lordships that, whether we think the original Balfour Declaration a good thing or not, we are all bound to realise that the honour of this country is involved and that we have pledged ourselves to do our utmost to make Palestine a National Home for the Jews. ... I submit that we are at present rather indulging in a tendency to hasten too much in forcing upon Oriental peoples a form of government which has proved satisfactory to Occidental peoples. (cc769–71)

This last sentence flew in the face of the fact that, whether Oriental or Occidental, the actual indigenous inhabitants of Palestine had been pleading to be allowed to institute a pure form of human rights-based, representative democracy very explicitly ever since even before 1921.²²¹⁶ It was rule by a Zionist minority, not such a purportedly “Occidental” democracy, that was still being “forced upon” them.

Staunch British–Jewish Zionist Lord **Melchett** (Henry Mond, a business partner of Herbert Samuel and Rufus Isaacs, formerly Lord Reading [>232]) continued this somewhat un–hinged colonialism, and moreover knew what was best for the Arabs: (cc772–78)

I should just like to say a word in this matter on behalf of the Arab population. I do not think anything could be more mistaken than the view that the Government, in pressing this matter forward, are doing something to better the Arab population as a whole.

Speaking for the “Jewish Agency” and “all representative Jewish organisations in this country”, he said that in Palestine the will of the majority of the people could not prevail:

We take the view that we cannot put ourselves in a minority in a National Home. ... [I]f ‘National Home’ is to have a real meaning we cannot of our own volition and free will accept a minority status there. ... It is the Jewish population of Palestine that has built that country up, the Jewish population of Palestine has given you a surplus on the Budget at a time when practically no other country in the world had a surplus.

In so many words: Jewish “home” meant a Jewish majority, and democracy was bad until that majority was achieved.

The Jewish immigrants had brought not only money:

I ask your Lordships to consider – I do not say this in any way as hostile to the Arab population... – is there an Arab University in Palestine? Is there an Arab theatre? Is there an Arab symphony orchestra? All these things have been created by the Jewish population. There is a magnificent University. ... There is a symphony orchestra which would do credit to any of

²²¹⁶ See *Theme Index and e.g.* >2; >27; >39; >52; >53; >59; >99; >111; >117; >123; >135; >137; >143; >152; >169; >178; >182; >193; >197; >200; >209; >217; >222; >243; >257.

the great capitals of the civilised world. I mention this as showing that it is not only on the industrial side and it is not only by immigration, but it is in the fundamental culture of civilisation that we are bringing something to that country which we alone can bring, and we do not feel we can subject all this to the whim of the population to whom it is extremely novel but who in the long run will benefit enormously from it. There is a job to be done. There is a new country to be created. We can do that job, the Arabs cannot, and we want to be allowed to do it. But I think it is a matter of common sense that the Arab population will benefit enormously from the result of all that. ... [T]he Tel-Aviv of to-day... is a glowing testimony to the creative genius of the Hebrew race.

The claim was of a Western monopoly on “civilisation”, defined as the possession of a symphony orchestra.²²¹⁷ The views of the inferior Arabs were “whims”. Melchett’s racist philo-Semitism, like that of Herbert Samuel [8], and his view that the Arabs, due to their lack of culture, did not deserve political rights, had the backing of the House of Lords. Incapable of democratic government, the only thing Arabs would be doing on a Council would be “obstructing our work”. There was no qualitative equality between “both sides” (also c789) and therefore one

cannot settle the matter merely by setting up a Legislative Council and enfranchising an enormous electorate who have never used a vote in their lives and have not the remotest idea of how to use it [and thus] in reality the Government are going to impose upon the population of Palestine a franchise which is totally unsuited to the people and in which they have never been instructed.

Melchett was not only a racist, but embodied a new low in terms of ignorance. Of course the Palestinians, like all human beings, knew how to “use a vote”, had elected leaders within their own political groups and had voted as citizens of the Ottoman Empire, to mention only recent times.

As the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on 13 March 1936 reported,

Postponement of the proposed legislative council for Palestine was today urged upon Colonial Secretary J. H. Thomas by Lord Melchett, British-Jewish leader, speaking in the name of a joint group representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.²²¹⁸

This wish of Melchett and the organisations he represented would be fulfilled.

Lord **Plymouth**, speaking for Government, (cc782-90) asked the Lords to trust High Commissioner Wauchope’s opinion and criticised them by saying that “if one dislikes a proposal it is always easy to argue that the present time is not the fitting and best time to put it into operation”. He then however bent over backwards to assure them that the LC would in no way prevent the establishment of the Jewish national home or “call into question... the validity of the Mandate”, would in no way interfere with the High Com-

²²¹⁷ See also Peel 1937, III §15, V §7-8, >336.

²²¹⁸ <https://www.jta.org/1936/03/13/archive/lord-melchett-urges-postponement-of-palestine-council>

missioner's power to set levels of immigration, and would in no way affect "the position of the Jewish Agency in relation to the Palestine Government". If this was true, it is fair to say that the Palestinians would have gotten nothing at all from this LC.

He also reaffirmed what had been inaccurately said by HMG to the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1930, namely that

the obligations laid down by the Mandate in regard to the two sections of the population are of equal weight [*also c777*] and, secondly, that the two obligations imposed on the Mandatory are in no sense irreconcilable. These two statements are still accepted by His Majesty's Government. [*also >231; >234; >242; >243; >276*]

He did at least reject the view that the LC's proportion of Jews should "take into account the Jewish people as a whole", i.e. in the whole world. (c786) He closed by saying, "Co-operation and good will are [Wauchope's] guiding stars,..." But it would be Wauchope who bloodily put down the Rebellion until he left Palestine on 1 March 1938.

Opposition to the Government's Legislative Council (at this time) was so overwhelming that Lord Snell could simply withdraw his motion without a vote. (cc794-95)

The technical reason for this **House of Commons debate of 24 March 1936**²²¹⁹ was the same as that for the House of Lords debate about a month earlier [^{>289}]. As Josiah Wedgwood said in launching the debate:

It is the question of the proposal of His Majesty's Government to grant the Constitution to the Mandated Territory of Palestine by Orders in Council. At the present time humanity is faced by two crises. One of these we discuss daily—the danger from dictators—and the other, which is allied thereto, is the awful fate of the Jews. (c1079)

No clearer conflation of the two issues – a constitution (with Legislative Council) for Palestine and the persecution of Jews *in Europe* – can be imagined. In any case, on that day anything could be said about either Palestine or the Jewish people. This entry fills in some details of the accurate rendering of the debate given by W.F. Abboushi²²²⁰, but first let us look at some other comments about the debate.

Porath notes that in the House of Commons Colonial Secretary J.H. Thomas was supported only by Douglas Clifton Brown (who worked with Izzat Tannous and the Arab Bureau [^{>359}; ^{>411}]) and Anthony Crossley, and points out that the previous month the Arabs had expected much more knowledge and engagement in the House of Lords, which had supported them in 1922 [^{>144}].²²²¹ The Palestinians had little voice in Parliament, while the Zionists were at home there; relatively pro-Arab Earl Winterton would later berate himself for not speaking out during this debate. [^{>328}]

The Peel Report's treatment of these two decisive Lords and Commons debates would in July 1937 note that Thomas, overwhelmed by opposing speeches and "whose speech was constantly interrupted", included the observations that

only two of the speakers in each House were Jews. ... But, if Parliament judged the scheme on its merits, it is none the less unfortunate that the Jewish side of the case was so much more fully stated than the Arab. The debate, indeed, was a striking illustration of the disadvantage which the Arabs suffer whenever the field of controversy shifts from Palestine to the United Kingdom. The Jews are perfectly entitled to make use of all the opportunities at their command for ensuring that their claims are fully understood; but we believe that their own ultimate interests would have been better served if British public opinion could have been confronted from the outset with a no less clear and cogent statement of the Arab case.²²²²

The claim about the "ultimate interests" of the Jewish Zionists notwithstanding, it is perhaps true that while the Arabs had all along stated their case clearly and cogently to many

²²¹⁹ Hansard 1936a, *all quotations*.

²²²⁰ Abboushi 1977, pp 30–33.

²²²¹ Porath 1977, p 158.

²²²² Peel 1937, III §95–97.

levels of the British Government, and sections of the press, it had not become rooted enough in “public opinion” to have any decisive effect on elections to or speeches in Parliament.

The Peel Report would continue:

It was, we assume, with a view to adjusting in some degree the one-sidedness of the position that after the debates an invitation was addressed to the Arab leaders to send a delegation to discuss the question of a Legislative Council at the Colonial Office. The ‘disturbances’ [beginning 13-25 April 1936, >296] broke out before this proposal could take effect: but it is difficult to suppose that it could in any case have done much to erase the impression made on Arab minds by the debates. Nobody in Palestine doubted that Parliament had killed the scheme. ... They were bound to think it an even more conclusive demonstration of Jewish power in London than the ‘Black Letter’ [13 February 1931, >246]. ... Inevitably their old hostility to the Mandate and all it stood for was reinforced.²²²³

It was also the case that in the debates many speakers were already “connecting Palestine with the problem of Jewish persecution.”²²²⁴

Colonel **Wedgwood** led off with sympathy for the “Jewish race” now being

starved out and robbed and none will give them shelter. ... We cannot do much here now, but at least we rule Palestine, and there is a chance, almost the only hope for the Jewish people. ... The size of a country does not necessarily limit the population of the country. (cc1079, 1081)

The ecological absurdity of that last statement aside, he continued by claiming that

so far from injuring the Arabs the access of British rule has been the salvation of the Arab *fellaheen* of Palestine. ... What is meant by this perpetual thought of the injustices to Arabs, from which they are suffering now and from which this new constitution is to save them? What is the injustice to the Arab? ... There is no doubt that every change in cultivation or in civilisation does injure some people, and these wandering Bedouin have suffered and must suffer as civilisation advances and as their tenure of land changes from a roving tenure over vast areas to a fixed tenure of fixed spots. (cc1083, 1084)

Dwarfing the general ignorance evidenced in the House of Lords debate, Wedgwood thought most Palestinians were “wandering Bedouin.”²²²⁵ It was also OK with him that they “must suffer”.

He did, however, surprisingly to me, somewhat later in his speech put forth a general and cogent case against framing constitutions not in terms of individuals but rather in terms of “communities” and “communal representation”. (c1089) Finally, in urging rejection of the proposed constitution-cum-legislative council he now, almost two decades into British rule, warned against haste: “Ought we not to say, ‘Give us a few more years?’” (c1090)

²²²³ Peel 1937, III §98.

²²²⁴ CO 733/293/6, p 12; also Kayyali 1978, p 188.

²²²⁵ Also Abboushi 1977, p 31.

Anthony **Crossley** (cc1091-95) made the opposite case, namely for Palestinian political ownership of Palestine:

My point is that the Palestinian – as I would prefer to call him rather than the Arab – has been settled in that country, whether he be Christian or whether he be Moslem, for something like 1,400 years [sic.]. He has continuously lived during that period in that land as a farmer and there is one axiom which I would ask the House to accept. It is that when he loses his land he becomes a rather inferior being. ... [Yet] the areas susceptible to intensive cultivation – the orange groves of Jaffa, the vale of Sharon, the plain of Acre, the valley of Esdraelon between Carmel and Nazareth, the valley between Nazareth and Beisan, the marshes of Hulah where they are drained, the district where formerly British residents in Jerusalem found their only recreation in duck shooting – all these have been completely taken away from the Arabs.

Politically,

The Mandate is really a contradiction in terms. You cannot make a small country a national home for a great world people without, at the same time, prejudicing the rights of the existing inhabitants. ... Nor is the Arab Palestinian a wholly ignorant person. He made some steps towards civilisation under the Turks.

After quoting from John Hope Simpson's report [^{>233}] he concluded:

The solution for which I am pleading is a system of cantonisation. I believe that you should schedule all those fertile lands from Jaffa to Acre, from Acre to Tiberias, and from Tiberias to Safed and say that they shall be Jewish cantons governed from Tel-Aviv. Conversely you should bring in Transjordan, transfer the Emir Abdulla to Nablus, and run an Arab kingdom of the hills and the Valley of the Jordan and the present country of Transjordan together.

[see also >328]

Even this Palestinian-friendliest of MPs accepted the political rights of those who had just taken over Palestinian land in the areas he named, and did not seem able to simply support the Palestinian majority in deciding things for themselves.

Archibald **Sinclair**, an old ally of David Lloyd George who replaced Herbert Samuel as Liberal Party leader in 1935, said that

the Jewish interest in and contribution towards the prosperity of Palestine entitles them to parity of representation on the council. ... The Palestine Mandate was a great experiment. As the right hon. and gallant Gentleman [Wedgwood] who opened the Debate said, it has so far been wonderfully successful, although it is very far from being complete. (cc1102-03)

Economic inequality justified political inequality.

Government spokesman Colonial Secretary **Thomas** was on the defensive, swearing that

so far as challenging the Mandate as a Mandate is concerned, no one in the legislative council will be allowed to debate it. The subject would be ruled out of order. The existing arrangement that the whole question of immigration is dealt with through the Jewish agency, the final word resting with the High Commissioner, will remain and will not be interfered with. ... [S]o far as adequate safeguards are concerned, the Mandate is ruled out,

the question of the Jewish agency is ruled out and every effort is made to prevent this being made a platform for sedition. Equally, it gives an opportunity for Jew and Arab working together in a legislative assembly and getting an insight into government and responsibility. In the considered judgment of the High Commissioner he believes that this will be in the best interests of both Jew and Arab. (cc1108, 1111)

The British, *pace* Thomas, were qualified to teach the subjects of “government and responsibility”, and Britain knew what was best for the people it ruled. But Thomas also revealed ignorance: most Palestinians were intimately acquainted with the theory and workings of the Palestine Government and government in general.

Winston **Churchill** took the floor, picking up the theme of tutelage by noting that trials in local government had only been going on for a year:

That is a very brief experiment, with a race like the Arabs and conditions so deplorable, as we have been told they are, in respect of the progress made by local government – that is a very short period, after which to hurry on to the second step. ... I cannot conceive that you will be able to reconcile, at this juncture and at this time, the development of the policy of the Balfour Declaration with an Arab majority on the Legislative Council. ... We are doing very fine work in Palestine at the present moment. ... Do not be in a hurry to overturn the existing system. It is working very well. ... I have no hostility for the Arabs. I think I made most of the settlements over 14 years ago governing the Palestine situation. The Emir Abdullah is in Transjordan, where I put him one Sunday afternoon at Jerusalem. (cc1112-14)

It is unsurprising, given what this chronology reveals about Winston Churchill, that he spoke of “a race like the Arabs”, but a bit surprising is the ignorance, or lack of judgment, or stupidity, behind his announcement that “the existing system... is working very well”; in a few weeks, the system he had “settled” 14 years ago would blow up.

Finally, added Churchill, given the “pogroms” against “the Jewish race” in Europe, “the House of Commons will not allow the one door which is open, the one door which allows some relief, some escape from these conditions, to be summarily closed, nor even allow it to be suggested that it may be obstructed by the course which we take now.” (cc1115-16) Why did not Britain open a second door, into its own island?

George **Mathers** seconded Churchill’s conflation of the European ‘Jewish problem’ with Palestine (c1123) and joined in the refrain that Arabs weren’t fit for self-government:

As I understand it, we are going to enfranchise some 250,000 [sic.] or more people, the large majority of whom are completely illiterate. They have had practically no experience whatever in representative Government or in the manner in which they should exercise the vote and, however you like to interpret the numbers of the proposed legislative council, as a matter of fact it will develop into an Arab majority. ... The Arabs themselves have on many occasions definitely stated that they are prepared to join the Legislative Council because they believe it will be the best means of defeating the objects of the Balfour Declaration [and] for exposing the policy of the Jewish national home and arraiging His Majesty’s Government before the Moslem and Christian world for upbuilding the national home. (c1119)

That is, they would do what parliamentarians always do. By the way, Colonial Secretary Thomas had plenty of experts at the Colonial Office who could have given him the wherewithal to counter some of the grossest exhibitions of ignorance in the House, but he offered no clarifications.

Douglas **Clifton Brown** (cc1123-24) challenged the Eurocentricity of the debate, reminding the House that the issue has “an Eastern background”. But his argument against solving the European Jewish problem in Palestine was not that Palestine had nothing to do with it, but that “Palestine is only a small country”. Further,

It is reasonable to understand how much the Arabs fear the invasion of the Jews. They find them going into a country which they regard as sacred, and taking their land – it may be by purchase – and they realise that, as far as the Western world goes, the Jew is able to pull the strings in this Parliament, and at Geneva or elsewhere more than they can ever hope to do.

Daniel **Hopkin** then claimed that “the entrance of the Jews into Palestine” had done the Arabs no injustice and helped them materially. (c1126) He was moreover “certain” that since “Palestine is for thousands and thousands of Jews a haven of rest”, Colonial Secretary Thomas “will do nothing to close the door if we decide to keep it open – for the people particularly of Germany and of Poland.” (c1129; also 1134)

Leo **Amery**, former Colonial Secretary and co-author of the Balfour Declaration²²²⁶ [also >214], gave the correct diagnosis: (cc1129-34)

The real question raised in connection with the setting up of this proposed constitution is whether we can possibly reconcile the fulfilment of our duty under the Mandate with any attempt to give concessions to, or try to curry favour with, Arab nationalism.

For him it gave rise to suspicion that “the actual decision to create this new constitution” was made

as an answer to the memorandum of an Arab political party, who demanded the immediate creation of democratic government, an immediate prohibition on further Jewish immigration and an immediate prohibition on further sales of land to Jews in Palestine. They were demanding the direct abandonment of the whole mandatory pledge that we had given internationally, and to which we are committed.

A “democratic government”? How outlandish. He was by the way referring to the demands made by five political parties of Wauchope on 25 November 1935.²²²⁷ [>284]

He was also worried about safeguards for “defending the minority” – about defending the *majority* from British mistreatment nobody said anything – and said that “if” an LC was set up, there should be “equal representation” (parity). His particular take:

Anything which makes it possible for the Arab to prevent the Jew going into Palestine is as intolerable from the point of view of the Mandate as anything which would make it possible for the Jew to expel the Arab.

²²²⁶ Huneidi 1998, p 33, >16.

²²²⁷ Barbour 1946, pp 163-64; Peel 1937, III §90; Furlonge 1969, p 106.

The Mandate, moreover, “has brought in happiness, comfort, wealth and education to the Arab population of Palestine”.

Sydney **Silverman** then argued that “some day there must be representative institutions in Palestine”, but “most decidedly not now”. (c1136) He then made two simultaneous assertions: that 1) “it would obviously be unreasonable and inequitable in a Legislative Council elected on democratic principles that there should be equal representation of unequal elements” and 2) “how inequitable and how unreasonable it would be if the numbers in the Legislative Council were not equal”. Evidently to reconcile these two “unreasonable inequities” he asked, “Are there not many Jews outside Palestine with a stake in this experiment and something more than a financial stake?” (cc1137-38) That is, numerical parity to match his preferred political parity could be achieved by counting Jews outside Palestine.

Marcus **Samuel** then claimed, “To weld into one political unit two peoples of different cultures is a task which only a nation skilled in the making of constitutions would dare to attempt.” (c1139) Tom **Williams** worried about “Jewish feeling not only in Palestine and in this country, but throughout the world” which “is hostile to this premature movement which may disturb the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and have a decided effect on the project for the establishment of a Jewish national home.” (c1140) Also, “the presence of the Jews has been of material value to the Arabs”. (c1142) HMG “ought to do nothing at all that is calculated to arouse passions, to retard economic and social progress, or to prevent that co-operation that is taking place. ... [T]his modern miracle ought to be allowed to go on for some little time...” (c1145)

Henry **Procter** (cc1147-50) first claimed that “we have promised to make Palestine a national home for the Jews”, which was incorrect because that wording had been changed by Balfour in November 1920 into remaking (“reconstituting”) the Jewish *national home* in Palestine, not remaking *Palestine* into a JNH.²²²⁸ [^{>146; also >16; >142}] However that may be, Procter concurred with Silverman in asserting that “the Jews who live throughout the world” have a right to take part in Palestine’s government. He went on in heroic vein:

The Jews have taken the desert that was Arab and life has burst forth in a myriad forms [and in general] the Jew going to Palestine has made tremendous advantages for the Arabs themselves. ... Why not delay the action five or 10 years to give the experiment a chance? Then with a more balanced population, a more educated Arab population, with a more deeply appreciative idea of the value of the Jews in Palestine we can go forward and say, ‘Now you are ready for it; carry on the work we have begun.’

The “more balanced population”, through increased Jewish immigration, was the only condition under which Britain could hope to square its anti-democratic policy with the principle of democracy.

A few months later, before the Permanent Mandates Commission on 12 June 1936, pro-Zionist Lord Frederick Lugard, Britain’s own representative on that Commission, was also minuted as weighing in with a justification for shelving the proposed LC:

²²²⁸ CAB 24/115/98, p 435.

Lord Lugard... enquired whether there was any likelihood of its reconsideration. ... Mr. Amery, late Secretary of State for the Colonies, had written to *The Times* in January last deprecating 'the attempt to introduce quasi-parliamentary institutions of the conventional type'. Lord Lugard thought that there was a fairly unanimous opinion that the system of secret ballot with a restricted franchise and government by debate and majority vote, which had not proved too successful even in some parts of Europe, were quite unsuited to Oriental peoples. ... Though power was reserved to the High Commissioner to pass a Bill over the heads of the Council, and to veto any Bill, there were no 'reserved subjects'. The Jews resented this assignment of seats on the ground that a party opposed to the mandate itself might at any time have a majority vote in the Council.²²²⁹

A "system of secret ballot... and government by debate and majority vote" must indeed be very hard to grasp, since even a non-Oriental like Lugard was having trouble applying it to Palestine. In operational terms, the "reserved subjects" he desired were immigration, land sales and the present democracy-free Palestine constitution necessary to realise the 'national home' – all of which trumped majority rule in the present.

Ernest **Bennett** would recapitulate this LC episode in the Commons debate of 24 November 1938 [^{>378}], soon after HMG had officially rejected the partition solution of the Peel Commission [^{>336}]:

In 1935 the National [i.e. many-Party] Government sent General Wauchope to Geneva to bring before the League of Nations [Permanent] Mandates Commission a plan for the creation of a legislative council, and I remember Mr. J. H. Thomas saying that, whatever happened, the Government intended to go through with that proposal. In another place Lord Plymouth was even more definite and said that, cost what it might, the Government intended to pass it into law. [^{>289}] Despite those two pronouncements the Government, in the face of Zionist opposition, capitulated and abandoned once more the considered and mature decision of a British Cabinet. The result of the last capitulation was the beginning of the present troubles in Palestine.²²³⁰

HMG's dropping of the LC initiative, which had been lukewarmly welcomed by many Palestinians [^{see >284ff}], amounted to rejection of even tentative, non-definitive and non-immediate self-government, and was an important proximate cause of the strike and rebellion beginning in April 1936 – the more so as, now that the theme of democracy had been brought to the political forefront through the prospect of a relatively democratic Legislative Council, a ream of Lords and MPs had had to stay true to democracy by saying that all 14,000,000 Jews in the world had voting rights in Palestine.

I assume many Palestinians, including journalists and those associated with the Arab Centre in London, followed this House debate. But what words were left with which to engage in dialogue with people who declared your country to be the property of millions of people who had never even visited it? One British document – apparently written by

²²²⁹ PMC 1936, p 145.

²²³⁰ Hansard 1938, c2043.

someone working in Palestine under Wauchope for the enlightenment of Britain's "accredited representative" at the Permanent Mandates Commission (the document is 'incomplete') – said simply that

In February and March 1936, the proposals for a Legislative Council were debated in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons respectively. Both bodies criticised them unfavourably... This outcome was hailed by the Jewish population and the Jewish press with jubilation as proof that their fears were groundless. The Arabs were correspondingly downcast and angry.²²³¹

George Antonius regarded this debate as a "striking example" of the "one-sidedness of [such Commons] debates" and a "remarkable exhibition of Zionist influence in Parliament..."; in Geneva as well, the PMC was serviced by "a well-equipped Zionist office" with no parallel lobby for the Arab case.²²³²

Despite Lords and Commons rejection, the Cabinet didn't bury the LC quite yet: According to Kayyali, at least the Nashashibi National Defence Party had seriously opted to accept this final LC offer, and Wauchope on behalf of the Cabinet on 2 April 1936 invited the Palestinians to London to talk it over again, an invitation the Palestine Arab Party accepted [>292]; yet on 1 April Ragheb Nashashibi's Defence Party wrote High Commissioner Wauchope to say the LC was insufficient [>191] and on 14 April Jamal al-Husseini's PAP definitively rejected the LC.²²³³ The outbreak of the rebellion, on 13–19 April, and British refusal to reduce Jewish immigration by even one person, cancelled all thoughts of such a nice visit to England.

1936 *'According to a survey of 322 Palestinian Arab villages conducted in 1936, 47% of the peasants owned less than seven dunums [0.7 ha.] and 65% less than 20 dunums (the minimum required to feed an average family was 130 dunums).'*²²³⁴

1936 [John M. Machover, Revisionist Zionist close to Jabotinsky in London, publishes the book *Governing Palestine: The Case against a Legislative Council*. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency had reported on 21 December 1935 that 'Jewish leaders of all groups throughout the world have long waged an energetic battle against the proposed semi-democratic assembly, charging that Palestine Jewry will be fixed permanently as a minority under such a legislative set-up.']

²²³¹ CO 733/317/7, p 19.

²²³² Antonius 1938, p 388, also pp 399–400.

²²³³ CO 733/293/5, p 50; Kayyali 1978, p 188, citing HC to Colonial Secretary, 22 February 1936, & *Falastin* of 15 April 1936

²²³⁴ Kanafani 1972, p 21.

291. Nashashibi to Wauchope

1 April 1936

Writing from the Defence Party's Head Office, P.O. Box 188, Jerusalem, in the name of its "General Committee", on 1 April 1936 Ragheb Nashashibi replied²²³⁵ to High Commissioner Wauchope's reply to an earlier message from the Party dated 9 March:

[T]he Arab Nation in Palestine has always been of the strong belief that the Palestine problem cannot be impartially and equitably settled unless the country is given self-Government and the promises and pledges which were given by His Majesty's Government to the Arabs and which include the recognition of the independence of this country and the extension to it of the same privileges as the neighbouring Arab countries which were severed from the Ottoman Empire and placed under the same category of Mandate as Palestine, are fulfilled.

"All our efforts were in vain," it continued, "to convince His Majesty's Government of the advisability of granting to the inhabitants of this Arab country their natural rights." Self-Government had been promised repeatedly since 1928, and more recently and specifically in Geneva "some three years ago" by Wauchope himself, who had done a praiseworthy job of getting to know the facts about the country and "embarked" on valuable schemes "promoting the welfare of the people". But the concrete proposed Legislative Council, or constitution, "will not enable [the Arabs] to safeguard their national entity" and it was unfair that HMG had granted "our brethren, the people of Iraq" what it was denying the Palestinians, "their complete independence".

"It is painful" to see "liberal statesmen" in HMG who tried to remove the "black stain" of the Balfour Declaration replaced by

some British statesmen [who] use the tribune of the House [of Commons] to ask for the confirmation of that Declaration and the deprivation of the Arabs from their right to live under the sun as a nation and from exercising their human, civil and religious rights in their own country [through] repeated campaigns made in the British Parliament against the Legislative Council...

Some of these "British statesmen" defended the Zionist Mandate in the debates just covered [289; 290] and the House of Lords had thwarted Wauchope's efforts in February.²²³⁶ [289] Yet, so Nashashibi, the National Defence Party (reputedly the most Britain-friendly or 'moderate' of the political parties)

has accepted the scheme of the Legislative Council after reading Your Excellency's reply dated the 9th March, 1936, although the party is aware that this scheme falls short of the aspirations of the country, and of the aims of the Arab people, hoping that this scheme will be the first step towards the attainment of the basic demands of the Arab nation, namely,

²²³⁵ CO 733/293/5, Enclosure I, pp 23-28, *all further quotations; also* Porath 1977, p 153, *citing* CO 733/293/75102/Part III, 'HC to Colonial Secretary (and enclosures), Secret, 22 April 1936' and Kayyali, *Watha'iq*, pp 371-73.

²²³⁶ See also CO 733/307/10, pp 58-63.

full self-Government. The National Defence Party fully hopes that His Majesty's Government will not retreat before the campaign of the Jews and their supporters and hesitate in restoring to the Arabs their rights.

(Despite Parliament's in effect defeating Wauchope's LC proposal, Wauchope himself evidently stuck to it.) The Party was "anxiously desirous of cooperating with Government in the administration of the country in the event of the establishment of a Legislative Council..." Given "the state of unrest and anxiety which now prevails in the country", however, the Party "absolves itself of any responsibility and of any movement of unrest" should Wauchope fail to "enact the necessary legislative act".

Also on 1 April 1936, Wauchope wrote to Colonial Secretary Thomas that the Mufti had come to see him and informed him "that recent debates [in Parliament] on Legislative Council and land sales had aroused much angry feeling."²²³⁷ The day before, Wauchope had written to Thomas that it seemed to be the case that "the Arabs have no effective access to Secretary of State [i.e. Thomas]" and:

The Arabs regard speeches in Parliament as outpourings of men who are forgetful of England's pledges or who through ignorance of the Arab case or as a result of frequent meetings with Jews are blind to the true state of affairs. The *Liwa*, which is the organ of the Palestine Arab Party [whose Secretary was Jamal al-Husseini], has been pressing for many months for proper Arab representation in London, and again on the 29th March urged the necessity of the presence of an Arab delegation in London at this juncture. On the same day the National Defence Party [headed by Nashashibi] publicly accepted Government proposals for Legislative Council and requested the High Commissioner to work for the immediate establishment of Legislative Council.²²³⁸

Whatever the final position on the LC of Nashashibi's Party, there was consensus amongst the Palestinians and Wauchope that the conditions for an effective dialogue with the British in London were lacking: The Palestinians had no strong or permanent or funded lobby. As Ragheb Bey said, in the realm of dialogue "All our efforts were in vain."

²²³⁷ CO 733/307/10, p 56.

²²³⁸ CO 733/307/10, p 58.

On 2 April 1936, with the (powerless, still unrepresentative) Legislative Council in tatters in London, **High Commissioner Wauchope met with** Ragheb Nashashibi (National Defence Party), Jamal al-Husseini (Palestine Arab Party), Mahmoud Abu Khadra (Reform Party), Abdul Latif Salah (National Block Party), and Yacoub Ghussein (Arab Youth Congress).²²³⁹ Wauchope led off by saying that London, not he, would decide on the constitutional proposals they [the Baldwin government] had made in November 1935 [>279; >283]. Knowing that both Parliament [>289; >290] and “the Jews” were firmly against the LC proposals,²²⁴⁰ he told them that in light of Jewish rejection their voice needed to be heard in London, and invited them, as HMG’s guests while in London, if they paid their own travel expenses, to sojourn in the capital.

Jamal immediately desired that any discussions with an Arab delegation include “not only the Legislative Council but... the whole Palestine problem.” Perhaps the five negotiators knew that there were differences of opinion on the British side whether land sales and immigration would also be on the agenda, with Colonial Secretary Thomas wanting to discuss only the LC but Wauchope wanting to discuss all three issues.²²⁴¹ On 1 April Ragheb Nashashibi, President of the National Defence Party had written [>291], and on 10 April Abdul Latif Salah, President of the National League, would write separately to Wauchope [>293] repeating the long-standing demands for “self-government” and their “natural rights”, reluctantly accepting still another LC proposal from Wauchope of 9 March, and regretting Parliament’s rejection even of proposals which “fall short of the aspirations of the country.”²²⁴²

²²³⁹ CO 733/307/10, pp 39-42.

²²⁴⁰ CO 733/307/10, p 62.

²²⁴¹ CO 733/307/10, pp 5, 41, 50, 57.

²²⁴² CO 733/293/5, pp 23-30.

The 'National League' (the 'National Bloc' based in Nablus [>288]), one of the parties whose presidents met with Wauchope on 21 December 1935 to discuss his Legislative Council proposal [>285], and more recently on 2 April [>292], **wrote to Wauchope** through its President, Abdul Latif Salah, on 10 April 1936.²²⁴³ He recounted all of the correspondence since December between the Arabs and the British, in particular the letter of alarm from the National League to Wauchope of 16 January 1936, Wauchope's reply of 19 January, the Administration Chief Secretary's reply of 29 January, and "the Chief Secretary's letter to the Presidents of the four Arab parties dated the 19th March" and concluded by pledging participation in the elections to said LC on the basis of the promise made that it can indeed discuss Jewish immigration and land sales – "irrespective of the fact that the scheme of the Legislative Council does not satisfy any of the demands of the Nation and on the understanding that our participation in the elections... is actuated by our desire to achieve the objects of the Nation."

I believe that Abdul Latif Salah here applied a formula which went some way to solving the dilemma of how to agree to co-operate at any level with a colonial power, in Palestine for instance by participating in country-wide councils without accepting, or appearing to accept, the principle of colonial rule and the Mandatory's Jewish-home policy: He put the explicit caveat that no national "demands", "aims" or "objects" were thereby being given up, and indeed were to be pursued by means of participation. Participating would thus be 'under protest', and would not cost giving up any principles. This was in effect an alternative to outright boycott.

15 April 1936 *The Ikhwan al-Qassam served as an important catalyst to the general strike of 1936. Shaykh al-Saadi's group stopped ten cars on the Tulkarm-Nablus road the night of April 15, robbed all the passengers, killed two Jewish travelers, and wounded a third.*²²⁴⁴

16-18 April 1936 *Arab-Jewish clashes all over Palestine quickly flare into a widespread uprising, marking the beginning of the 'Great Arab Revolt' (lasts until October).*

²²⁴³ CO 733/293/5, pp 23-30.

²²⁴⁴ Lesch 1979, p 217.

294. National Committee

19 April 1936

Meetings in these weeks were fast and furious, and my account in these entries likely makes some chronological mistakes. Ayyad reports that the first meeting of what was called the National Committee (*Al-Lajnah Al-Qawmiyyah*) took place on 19 April 1936, supported by the five political parties “Al-Arabi, Al-Falastini, Ad-Difa’, Al-Kutla and Al-Wataniyyah (National Block), and the Youth Congress (but not the Istiqlalists²²⁴⁵”); local National Committees were to be established all over Palestine, the core group would “meet daily before and after noon”, and Akram Zuaytir would be Secretary.²²⁴⁶ To my knowledge this Committee was essentially the same as the new Arab Higher Committee [>296]. Hundreds or thousands were organising at the same time as the traditional leadership, and many local branches of the National Committees acted autonomously.

20 April 1936 *‘An Arab National Committee was formed at Nablus.*²²⁴⁷

25 April *The Arab Higher Committee is established. Members are: Jamal Husseini, Hussein Fakhri Al-Khalidi, Yaqoub Al-Ghosein, Fuad Saba, Ragheb Nashashibi, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, Ahmed Hilmi Abdel Baqi, Ahmed Latif Saleh, Alfred Rock and Awni Abdul Hadi.*

²²⁴⁵ But see Porath 1977, pp 164-65, >296.

²²⁴⁶ Ayyad 1999, pp 153-54.

²²⁴⁷ Kayyali 1978, p 189.

295. Arab leaders to Wauchope and Hall

21 April 1936

As of 21 April 1936 the leaders of the 5 parties continued to meet with the High Commissioner [*also* >292] and release statements of their position; the House of Commons' rejection of the Legislative Council [>290] had been the latest disappointment leading to unrest.²²⁴⁸ The five party leaders wrote to Chief Administrator Hathorn Hall on 12 May declining HMG's invitation of 7 May to visit London; they had clearly presented their arguments to HMG for eighteen years, were now treading the path of striking rather than holding meetings, and

[I]n the opinion of the Committee, it will be impossible for the Arabs, in the present circumstances of the country, to send a deputation to London before the Government stops immigration... and manifests its preparedness to effect a fundamental change in the present dangerous policy.²²⁴⁹

The move from talking to striking was underway, and the non-negotiable condition that Britain stop immigration was firm and would remain so, except for some depositions before the Peel Commission, until the end of the Mandate. A general strike was begun on 19 April, initially called for by Hassan Sidky Dajany, President of the Owners and Drivers of Motor Cars Committee²²⁵⁰, while a tax strike was mooted and partially carried out.

The five parties now supported the general strike, also called for in Nablus by the Arab National Committee and immediately joined by the Youth Congress, plus the National Block as well as numerous scattered local groups and larger groups in Yaffa. [>292] On 21 April 1936 **they wrote a manifesto to High Commissioner Wauchope:**

The regrettable situation which has befallen this peaceful country, and which was the inevitable result of the oppressive policy which His Majesty's Government has tried and is trying to apply to this country in spite of several previous protests and bloody disturbances has driven the national political bodies in Haifa to meet and discuss methods that will prevent Arabs from being oppressed and deprived of their livelihood, which is given to a nation [the Jews] that has been cast out by all civilized countries in order to get rid of them. After discussion the delegates came to the conclusion that the cause of the disturbances which had occurred [over the years], and which will not be the last of their kind, is the carrying out by Government of this hated and destructive policy.

Signed by Muhammed Ali Tamimi, Rashid Haj Ibrahim and Hannah Asfour, the manifesto closed with the usual three demands: a stop to both immigration and land sales, and "the formation of a National and Parliamentary Government".²²⁵¹

On the same day, 21 April 1936, Wauchope received the same leaders as at the earlier interview on 2 April [>292], but with Shibly Jamal instead of Mahmoud Abu Khadra for the

²²⁴⁸ CO 733/310/1, pp 79-84 & CO 733/310/2, pp 64-76.

²²⁴⁹ CO 733/307/10, pp 10-12; also Robson 2011, p 121.

²²⁵⁰ CO 733/310/1, pp 54-55; CO 733/307/10, p 30.

²²⁵¹ CO 733/310/1, p 28; Kayyali 1978, pp 189-90.

Reform Party.²²⁵² The High Commissioner led off with an appeal for them to “check all forms of disorder” but to expect that “the Police will not hesitate to quell any disorder.” Ragheb Bey replied that

these disturbances were quite unexpected but that feelings were embittered by excessive immigration and sale of lands. He stated that one thousand immigrants had entered Palestine in two ships which arrived at Haifa two days ago. He said that in conversations with His Excellency in the past they had brought to his notice that the peace prevailing in the country was superficial and that an explosion was expected at any moment. Although the losses of lives and property were regrettable, there was something superior to them and that is their fatherland. Disorder was caused by the anxiety felt by the people to secure their existence in this country; this was a natural feeling which was stronger than anything else and could not be stopped by any means.

Abdul Latif Salah agreed with Ragheb, saying that only an immediate, temporary halt to immigration could brake rebellion, adding “that Sir Herbert Samuel who himself was a Jew and an ardent Zionist had stopped immigration after the riots in 1921 for six months”. Jamal supported this demand as the *sine qua non* of restoration of order, which in turn was the Arabs’ precondition for accepting the British proposal that they send a delegation to London. [>291; >292; >297] Yacoub Ghussein said that the disappointment over Parliament’s rejection of the latest and last Legislative Council proposal [>289; >290] was an equally large grievance.

The Government’s detailed military report of the “disturbances” between 19 April and 14 September 1936 noted again and again that the Arabs were fighting simply for their independence, blocked by Britain’s adherence to Zionism.²²⁵³ Wauchope, looking back on the first six months of the Great Revolt, would on 17 November 1936 send a message to Thomas’s replacement as Colonial Secretary, William Ormsby-Gore:

Briefly my view is that we are dealing with a widespread national movement inspired by a genuine fear of Zionism and of imminent Jewish domination in Palestine. This fear is felt by all from the highest to the lowest and is the mainspring of the present disturbances. ... [The Arab] Committee of Ten are a feeble and disunited crew... The security of the country is not dependent on their presence or absence. Such organisations as existed during the disturbances sprang up locally and spontaneously. The fundamental causes of the disturbances continue to exist and will continue as long as bitterness and ill will exist between the two communities.

The last sentence, with its picture of “two communities” whose mutual hate was the basic problem, inexplicably reverted to the false view that the Arabs were primarily fighting the Jews, not the British. However that may be, London had by that time decided to send another investigative commission to Palestine – the Royal or ‘Peel’ Commission

²²⁵² CO 733/307/10, pp 28-33.

²²⁵³ CO 733/317/1, pp 55-171, also pp 25-26, 60, 62, 78, 89, 105, 208, 242-43, 251-52, 258-62, 265-66, 284-87.

[>309; >336] – and Wauchope did finish by saying, “Much will depend in the future on the decisions of His Majesty’s Government following the labours of the Royal Commission, and their application with consistency and firmness.”²²⁵⁴

²²⁵⁴ CO 733/317/1, p 287.

XVII. Strike, rebellion

Except for the **events** strewn amongst its entries this book by design does not contain much about happenings on the ground, and I'll accordingly write little about the Great Revolt even though it made up over three years of non-verbal messages from the Palestinians to the British. The literature on the Revolt is large. A succinct chronology of events between 16 April 1936 and October 1939 is given by Walid Khalidi.²²⁵⁵ This entry conveys merely a general picture of what happened during those three years, relying almost entirely on secondary sources.

Roughly twenty years after Britain had established its colony-cum-settlers the indigenes had nothing to show for their petitions, manifestos, rallies, resolutions, discussions, delegations or newspaper and academic articles. The year-and-a-half before 25 April 1936 had seen both political organising and a lot of correspondence with High Commissioner Wauchope, if not much directly with Colonial Secretary Thomas (who at any rate was replaced by staunch Zionist Ormsby-Gore on 22 April):

National Committees (NCs) were formed in all the major towns and villages, with the aim of resisting the Mandatory and Zionist colonizers. These NCs declared a unified, general strike. The Arab Higher Committee (AHC) was established on 25 April 1936, ostensibly as the strike's national coordinating body although the NCs were autonomous and financially independent.²²⁵⁶

Between 20 and 25 April 1936, the date of the foundation of the Arab Higher Committee, the leadership came to officially support the general strike which had originated in the grassroots, and demanded as usual "the establishment of a National Government".²²⁵⁷ They did not, however, go ahead and establish such a Government themselves.

Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti, presided over the AHC, whose other members were Awni Abdul Hadi (Secretary), Ahmed Hilmi Pasha (Treasurer), Ragheb Nashashibi, Jamal al-Husseini, Abdul Latif Salah, Dr Hussein Khalidi, Yaqub al-Ghussein, Yacoub Farraj and Alfred Rock. According to Porath, it was the *Istiqlalists*, for instance Subhi al-Khadra, Muin al-Madi, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim and Ahmad al-Shuqairi from Haifa, who most strongly urged unity amongst all the parties.²²⁵⁸ In what has been called a Palestinian Manifesto²²⁵⁹ they on 25 April officially resolved "to continue the General Strike until the British Government changes its present policy in a fundamental manner, the beginning of which is the stoppage of Jewish immigration."²²⁶⁰ They renewed the three Palestinian demands [>254; >256]:

²²⁵⁵ Khalidi 1984, pp 193-95.

²²⁵⁶ Ghandour 2010, p 89.

²²⁵⁷ Peel 1937, IV §4.

²²⁵⁸ Porath 1977, pp 164-65, citing Arab-language sources.

²²⁵⁹ CO 733/297/75156/II/32, 'Manifesto to the Arab Nation' in Wauchope dispatch of April 27, 1936 replying to CO 733/297/75156/1/55, 'Mufti to Wauchope', April 27, 1936; also Mattar 1988, pp 71-72.

²²⁶⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 191, citing Kayyali 1968, pp 377-78.

1. The prohibition of Jewish immigration.
2. The prohibition of the transfer of Arab land to Jews.
3. The establishment of a National Government responsible to a Representative Council.

Things were finalised on the Arab side on 7-8 May 1936 in Jerusalem at the Conference of the National Committees, some of whom had already formed in the fall of 1935: striking won clearly over cooperation and the desire for self-government took the form of refusing “taxation without representation”.²²⁶¹ The strategic national goal was confirmed: immediate independence for all the current citizens of Palestine “within an Arab commonwealth”, entailing an end to British/Zionist colonialism.²²⁶² At another meeting between the Arab Higher Committee and High Commissioner Wauchope on 5 May the Palestinians insisted on at least a temporary halt to European-Jewish immigration.²²⁶³ The Arab Higher Committee (AHC) had now assumed functions very similar to the Arab Executive Committee (AEC) of the years 1920-1935, but with a rebellion to keep up with and/or manage. There were some anti-strike voices, though; according to Mustafa Kabha the newspaper *Falastin*, for instance, being owned by large citrus farmers, came out against it.²²⁶⁴ In the other direction, some leaders, such as Akram Zuaytir, Hamdi al-Husseini and Ibrahim al-Shanti, as well as the Istiqlal-affiliated newspaper *Al-Arab*, moved to advocacy of blanket boycott of Britain.²²⁶⁵

The Mandate-disrupting actions of the broad populace – strike, violence in self-defence, cheekiness, civil disobedience – requires broadening or even abandoning the concepts of dialogue or debate between ruled and ruler, and actions were speaking louder than words:

In the hills, a word-weary rural population prepared to communicate their own demands with fewer syllables. Bands of armed peasants began to spring from villages, mainly in the central massif and in Galilee, and accompanied the strike with guerrilla attacks on both British and Jewish targets. One Kawakji [Fawzi al-Qawuqji] was in command, a man with a wide span of military experience. ... On 22 August 1936, he crossed the Jordan River with a couple of hundred volunteers. He issued his first communiqué a few days later, which he signed [as] Commander of the General Arab Revolt in Southern Syria.²²⁶⁶

The view of one Palestinian eyewitness:

²²⁶¹ Kayyali 1978, pp 191-92, citing *Falastin*, 9 May 1936; also Barbour 1946, p 166; Porath 1977, pp 168-69, citing Zionist Archives S/25, 9350; Abu Sitta 2016, p 47 & note 29, citing Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hout, ed., *The Palestine National Movement – Diaries of Akram Zu'aytir, 1935-1939* (Arabic), p 428; Seikaly 1995, pp 156-57; Haiduc-Dale 2013, pp 132-38.

²²⁶² Ayyad 1999, pp 101, 139, 155-56.

²²⁶³ Porath 1977, pp 169-70, citing CO 733/310/75528/Part I, 'HC to Colonial Secretary', Cables No. 184 and 185, 5 May 1936 and CO 733/310/75528/Part II, 'Confidential despatch (and enclosures)', 13 May 1936. CO 733/310/75528 = CO 733/310/1, /2, /3, /4 and /5.

²²⁶⁴ Kabha 2007, p 2.

²²⁶⁵ Kabha 2007, pp 126-31.

²²⁶⁶ Ghandour 2010, pp 89-90; also Fanon 1961, pp 47, 53, 63-64, 66-74, 91-92, 192, 208; Khalidi 1984, p 214; Parsons 2016, pp 118-34.

Palestine was in revolt for the sixth time within fifteen years because the British were actively pushing the Palestinians out of their country in order to settle the Jews in their place.... The 1936 Revolt was against British colonial rule, and was triggered by national pride, the need for self defence, [to] ensure their existence and love for one's homeland.²²⁶⁷

I have excluded from this chronology the many verbal exchanges that did undoubtedly take place between, say, Palestinian and British fighters, but this account by Fawaz Turki of a raid by British soldiers in search of *mujahedeen* in Haifa, in Britain's last year of rule (1947/48) when Turki was seven years old, is too eloquent to pass up. It describes a real interaction which could have happened at *any time* during the Mandate and captures its most brutal and reprehensible, but also absurd, sides:

When the British soldiers arrive in their tanks and army vehicles, my uncle and his men hurry back to their homes with their weapons. ... Soon more soldiers arrived. Hundreds of them. With their blonde hair, freckled noses and tattoos. We hear them climbing up the stairs. My grandfather's part of the house is on the second floor of a two-storey building. We hear foreign voices. It is always foreign voices. Foreign people telling us what to do. They order us to open the door. They shout something about the authority invested in them by the King of England. That is how it was in those days – the King of England invested his people with authority to issue orders in Palestine. And in India. And Africa. And Singapore. And Hong Kong. Of course, no Englishman would ever have allowed us to send people over to England and invest in them the authority to push around Englishmen, English women and English children. The soldiers rush into our house. Six or seven of them. And we are herded into one room. They ask my grandparents if they have guns around the house. We are all standing with our arms up. Only my mother looks funny. With her prayer beads over her head, uttering meaningless incantations to scare away the evil spirits. The soldiers open wardrobes, smash the dressing table, throw my grandmother's sewing machine against the wall. They wreck the place. The two soldiers who are doing most of the ransacking are shouting abuse at the top of their voices. 'Filthy wogs,' they keep repeating. 'Filthy wogs.' All this time I am feeling nonchalant. For I had seen that, and more, done in the village. They would grab people by the hair and drag them to the center of the square and kick them till they became unconscious. Often they took suspects with them who never returned. In the 1936-1939 Revolt, before I was born, the British hanged three men from our village. Three *Mujahideen*. ... My father never went away. He was a small shop-keeper. One day three British soldiers get off their Jeep outside his shop and talk to him. They are drunk. One of them proceeds to abuse my father because there are flies on the goods displayed in the open. How do you expect anyone to eat your rubbish with flies on it, they want to know. The other soldier takes his rifle and knocks over the bags of olives, cheese, oranges, whatever is nearest him right on the ground and jumps on it, roaring with laughter. The third soldier grabs my father by the neck, throws his *hatta* off his head and slaps him across the chest. And my brother became a *Mujahid* at the age of 17.²²⁶⁸

²²⁶⁷ Eltaher, current, http://www.eltaher.org/index_en.html p 29.

²²⁶⁸ Turki 1977, pp 71-72; see also Turki 1972.

Especially from autumn 1937 on, the British went all-out putting down the revolt in the villages. Frantz Fanon captures this phase of any liberation battle thus:

The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs.²²⁶⁹

As “filthy wogs”, the natives deserved British violence.

Jacob Norris covers²²⁷⁰ the violent, physical interactions between the Palestinian populace and British police and soldiers, arguing that during the first phase from April 1936 until late September 1937 the British acted with relative constraint, but that because the High Commissioner and the Colonial Office decided to put down the revolt militarily once and for all, the second phase, well into 1939, was far more brutal. (pp 28, 31) In October 1938 an “extra division was dispatched to Palestine and the military’s rule was extended to the whole of Palestine”; this raised the number of troops to 20,000, not counting “a strong RAF deployment” and “was accompanied... by a further strengthening of military powers at the expense of civilian government”. (pp 35, 29, 31)

Norris mentions infractions such as: disarming the Arab population; in Galilee and Samaria the “occupation of as many as twenty-five villages at any one time”; the “wholesale destruction of property, as stipulated in regulation nine of the 1937 Defence Orders”, including “around 2,000 houses” and, wherever found, Singer sewing machines; “collective fines”; “often... the confiscation of a village’s entire livestock”; the “ransacking of store cupboards”, emptying grains etc. on the floor and mixing them with oil; “robbery and looting”; “placing villagers in open-air pens... including women and elderly men”, sometimes naked; curfews; “restrictions on freedom of movement”; and “fire-hosing”, “killing” and “humiliation”. (pp 33–36) “By 1939 over 9,000 Arab detainees were being held in Palestinian prisons and detention centres, some ten times the figure of 1937.” (p 40) Norris believes the evidence points to the strength of British repression, rather than the weakness of or internal strife among the rebels, as the main cause of the rebellion’s failure to oust the Mandatory; the “home-grown, rurally based rebel movement had little or no chance of succeeding”. (pp 40, 39)

Further documentation of brutish British behaviour during the Revolt has been achieved by Matthew Hughes,²²⁷¹ whose research using Arabic, English and Hebrew sources uncovers many forms of brutality and humiliation, including: legalised and codified collective punishment already in 1924–25 (p 317); torture (pp 331–32, 335); property and food destruction (pp 323–25); lack of due process (pp 318, 348); exorbitant fines (pp 325, 346); gauntlets (p 330); random shootings (pp 327–28, 331, 336); Nazi sympathies (p 333); the caging of entire village populations (pp 339–41); Royal Air Force incendiary bombing (p 343); molesting women by fondling or exposing their breasts (pp 343–45); “suspects

²²⁶⁹ Fanon 1961, p 30.

²²⁷⁰ Norris 2008, also further citations.

²²⁷¹ Hughes 2009, also further citations unless otherwise stated; also Bethell 1979, e.g. pp 35–37, 53–55; Swedenburg 1994, *passim*; Boyle 2001, p 259; Parsons 2016, e.g. p 131–33.

shot while ‘trying to escape’” (p 347); and soldiers’ immunity from prosecution (pp 317-18). This was mostly done as “official policies”. (pp 329, 353) [*also >365*] About 20,000 Palestinians were killed or wounded during the Revolt.²²⁷² [*see also >381*]

Communication was difficult anyway. According to Hughes, for the British,

On the receiving end, Palestinians made repeated complaints to the authorities. (p 334) ... One Arab claimed that soldier ‘number 65’ had beaten him, unaware that all the men from that unit, the York and Lancaster Regiment, formerly the 65th Foot, carried this number on the left side of their helmets. (p 317) ... A letter in Arabic of 8 September 1938 giving the Palestinian side of events extends the atrocity [at al-Bassa] to include premeditated torture. (p 338)

Press censorship and suspensions of publication were widespread. (p 336) According to Hughes, writing elsewhere,

Abuses usually went unreported as the British heavily censored Palestinian Arabic-language newspapers, while commanders such as Major-General Bernard Montgomery in northern Palestine banished newspaper reporters so that his men could carry on their work untroubled by the media. Indeed, the Jewish press, such as the *Palestine Post*, *Ha’aretz* and *Davar*, has more comment on the revolt than the tightly circumscribed Arabic-language Palestine press.²²⁷³

The BBC, for example, in the last week of September 1936 was told it could not air a discussion or debate on Palestine between Arab and Jewish spokesmen; Cosmo Parkinson and underlings thought such broadcasts too controversial in light of the Royal Commission’s imminent trip to Palestine, and Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore took “the very strongest objection to any discussion about Palestine on the B.B.C. at this juncture”.²²⁷⁴

Returning to Hughes’s account: Soldiers spoke of Palestinians routinely as “wogs” (pp 325, 329, 332, 352), as would be experienced a decade later by Turki (*see just above*), and treated them as such:

There is also the question of the methods used by Orde Wingate’s ‘Special Night Squads’ that mixed British servicemen with Zionist fighters and pitted them against the Arabs in Galilee – ‘extreme and cruel’ noted one colonial official, Sir Hugh Foot, a force that tortured, whipped, executed and abused Arabs according to another source – but is a subject beyond the scope of this article. (p 331) ... Lawlessness was the law. (p 353)

Writing elsewhere, Hughes has pointed out that soldiers’ behaviour was governed by the 1929 *Manual of Military Law*, a Manual which, as supplemented in 1934 and 1937,

provided a legal framework for... ‘collective punishments’ and ‘retribution’... [but] provided [no] concrete definition as to what constituted collective punishment and reprisals, thereby giving field commanders considerable leeway when it came to interpreting the rules. ...

²²⁷² Khalidi 1971, pp 848-49; also Swedenburg 1994, pp xix-xxiii.

²²⁷³ Hughes 2010, p 147; Kabha 2007, pp 227ff.

²²⁷⁴ CO 733/316/8, pp 2-4; Cronin 2017, p 55; also Hughes 2010, p 143.

[T]he 1929 law clearly stated that where coercion was required or where terrorism needed to be checked, collective punishment and reprisals, which will 'inflict suffering upon innocent individuals' were 'indispensable as a last resource'.²²⁷⁵

He also writes:

This author has found only one successful prosecution of servicemen in Palestine – of four British police officers who blatantly executed a prisoner in the street – witnessed by a number of non-British European residents, not Arabs, whose complaints never led to prosecution.²²⁷⁶

He also documents some cases of wanton destruction of cabinets, glasses, plates, furniture, windows, etc., on the orders of the soldiers' superior officers, adding that this "officially sanctioned policy of destruction, punishment, reprisal and brutality [and] repression was legal to the letter of the military law and the emergency regulations in force in Palestine after 1936".²²⁷⁷

Hughes, again: The Palestinian rebels assassinated some "especially brutal or pro-Zionist" British officials, including Alan Sigrist, Lewis Andrews and W.S.S. Moffat. (p 343) As for the numbers of dead, maimed and wounded Palestinians:

Building on the British statistics, Walid Khalidi cites figures of 19,792 casualties for the Arabs, with 5,032 dead, broken down further into 3,832 killed by the British and 1,200 dead because of 'terrorism', and 14,760 wounded. (p 348)²²⁷⁸

Yezid Sayigh adds that 50,000 were detained, 2,000 received life sentences, 146 were hanged, 5,000 houses were destroyed, and 40,000 fled to neighboring countries.²²⁷⁹

David Cronin, as well, has researched British-Palestinian interaction during the Revolt, presenting evidence supporting the view that it was put down not only violently but disrespectfully, with instances of desecrating the Quran, imprisonment without trial, punitive home demolitions, torture at "Arab investigative centres" under Charles Tegart, covering up killings of children, human 'minesweepers', public whippings, and orders to shoot to kill.²²⁸⁰ One policeman wrote home that "Any Johnny Arab who is caught by us in suspicious circumstances is shot out of hand", and Bernard Montgomery ordered that the rebels

must be hunted down relentlessly; when engaged in battle with them we must shoot to kill. ... We must put forward our maximum effort now and concentrate on killing armed rebels in battle;... [If non-combatants] assist the rebels in any way they must expect to be treated as rebels; and anyone who takes up arms against us will certainly lose his life.²²⁸¹

²²⁷⁵ Hughes 2010, p 143.

²²⁷⁶ Hughes 2010, pp 145, 154.

²²⁷⁷ Hughes 2010, pp 148, 156.

²²⁷⁸ Also Khalidi 1987, pp 846-49.

²²⁷⁹ Sayigh 1997, p 2; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 107-08.

²²⁸⁰ Cronin 2017, pp 39, 44, 46, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56.

²²⁸¹ WO 216/111, letter dated 4 December 1938, p 2; Cronin 2017, pp 52, 56.

It was in order to establish a ‘national home for the Jewish people’ that any given Palestinian had to “lose his life” as well as his land and country. [*see also* >327] Montgomery inadvertently put his finger on the one thing that would stop the violence in Palestine at that time:

The bulk of the Arab population of the country are ‘fed up’ with the whole thing; ... they would like to see law and order restored; they would be quite content to live under the British Mandate so long as Jewish immigration is limited to a fixed total (say of 500,000).²²⁸²

So simple it would have been! But no, the mistake made against the Sinn Fein in 1920/21 of creating a good “atmosphere” for talks should not, in Montgomery’s opinion, be repeated.²²⁸³

Akram Zuaytir, himself banned to the countryside by the authorities [>298; >299], offers a further eyewitness summary of the 1936 rebellion consistent with the accounts given in this entry.²²⁸⁴ Many of those who were merely arrested were put into “concentration camps” such as the one at Sarafand where “466 agitators were confined for months... without trial”, including Izzat Darwaza and Awni Abdul Hadi, “the Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee and a leading Istiqlalist.”²²⁸⁵ “61 Arabs responsible for organising the strike (the middle cadre) were arrested on 23 May.”²²⁸⁶ As late as May 1939 Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald revealed to the House of Commons that there were “13 detention camps” in Palestine holding 4,816 people, 2,690 of them *fallahin*.²²⁸⁷ A new book by Caroline Elkins evidently covers and analyses British brutality in Palestine in relation to similar behaviour in other colonies.²²⁸⁸

²²⁸² WO 216/111, letter dated 4 December 1938, p 2.

²²⁸³ WO 216/111, letter dated 1 January 1939, p 3.

²²⁸⁴ Zuaytir 1958, pp 87-91.

²²⁸⁵ CO 733/317/7, p 60; *see also* Cronin 2017, pp 42-44; Lesch 1979, p 116, citing CO 733/310/75528. CO 733/310/75528 = CO 733/310/1, /2, /3, /4 and /5.

²²⁸⁶ Kanafani 1972, p 43.

²²⁸⁷ Hansard 1939b.

²²⁸⁸ Elkins 2022; Khilnani 2022.

297. Mufti and Transport Subcommittee to HC

4 May 1936

On 4 May 1936 Hajj Amin al-Husseini told High Commissioner Wauchope, as the latter reported to Colonial Secretary Thomas,²²⁸⁹

that there was a possibility that illegal measures such as non-payment of taxes might be supported by the Supreme Arab Council of ten Arab leaders. ... The Committee of Ten... state however that unless I stop immigration during the period of their discussions with you they cannot call off strike or send deputation to London. [also >292; >295]

Wauchope had opined that

It would show weakness on the part of the Government if we refrained indefinitely from granting [Jewish] Labour Schedule. Consequently I cannot recommend that this course should be adopted; but I see no bridge which would assist [Arab] leaders to withdraw from the impossible position in which they are now placed.

(“Labour Schedule” was the Mandatory’s euphemism for *number and type of immigration permits* over a given period of several months, drawn up for its approval by the Jewish Agency.)

Also on 4 May, the Arab Transport Strike Committee, which had been formed by the Car Owners and Drivers Committee, published a Manifesto “in which Government Officials are urged to cease work” and “urging non payment of taxes.” In Wauchope’s opinion

The hands of the leaders are being forced by extremists and by the fact that the whole of the Arab population is behind the general strike, which is in reality a protest against immigration etc. Arab Government officials have been induced to contribute 10% of their salaries and for the first time much money has been subscribed in villages. I am informed by the Inspector General of Police that the strike is greatly strengthening.

His solution was that a delegation go to London but, he said, the Arabs would refuse to go unless immigration were first, albeit temporarily, stopped – and Jamal al-Husseini and the others indeed refused to go if that condition were not met²²⁹⁰. The Arab Committee did not in the end go to London for these “discussions”, but a smaller group did go to England in June. [see >303]

6 May 1936 The Arab Higher Committee issues a statement proclaiming that the Arabs “will under no circumstances consent to ‘Judaize’ the Holy Land.”

²²⁸⁹ CO 733/307/10, pp 22-25, all quotations.

²²⁹⁰ Ayyad 1999, p 156.

The British reacted in three ways to the growing Arab resistance.

- 1) They gave Wauchope the green light to promise the Arabs, on condition that the 'disorders' cease, a Royal Commission of Enquiry into the causes of the problems; this eventually bore the Peel Commission [^{>309; >336}].²²⁹¹
- 2) In mid-May they banned leaders such as Akram Zuaytir, Salim Abdulrahman al-Hajj Ibrahim, Fakhri al-Nashashibi, Faiz al-Haddad and Sidqi al-Dajani from the cities, sending them to remote places in the countryside.²²⁹²
- 3) In early May Colonial Secretary Thomas and High Commissioner Wauchope had in principle both opposed any suspension of immigration (as Wauchope would again do on 2 June), and on 18 May 1936 Wauchope "announced his approval of a labour schedule for the current half year of 4,500 certificates."²²⁹³

Instead of dialogue, the 4,500 new certificates was a provocation eliciting a response.²²⁹⁴ Stopping immigration, even temporarily, was the *sine qua non* of even a minimal revival of Palestinians' hope that the British would compromise.²²⁹⁵ Wauchope told the Arab Higher Committee on 5 May that HMG would tolerate no tax strikes, but two days later a meeting in Jerusalem of 150 representatives decided to stick with that and other such protests.²²⁹⁶

²²⁹¹ CO 733/310/3, pp 57-58.

²²⁹² Porath 1977, p 180; see also CO 733/297/3, p 31 on Arab leaders' powerlessness.

²²⁹³ CO 733/310/3, pp 52-58; CO 733/297/3, p 33 (§24), Ormsby-Gore to Cabinet, July 1936; Shaw 1946, Ch.2, pp 35-36; Kayyali 1978, pp 192-93.

²²⁹⁴ See Zuaytir 1958, p 88.

²²⁹⁵ Kayyali 1978, p 201.

²²⁹⁶ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 80; Ayyad 1999, p 156.

Pro-rebellion younger Palestinians in the *Jihad al-Muqaddas* decided on 1 May 1936 that their leader, Abdulqadir al-Husseini, son of Musa Kazem, would leave Jerusalem for the surrounding countryside and lead violent acts of resistance.²²⁹⁷ The announcement of the new Jewish Labour Schedule [[>]298] and a new Government-built wharf in Tel Aviv drove the more rebellious Palestinians, for instance in Nablus led by Akram Zuaytir, to publicly call for going beyond the general strike towards meeting British force with Palestinian force.²²⁹⁸ Zuaytir had previously led the move to focus resistance against the British, not the Jews.²²⁹⁹ The Palestinians were demanding unconditional cessation of immigration, while the British were demanding unconditional cessation of violent self-defense.

Sometime in May a delegation of the Arab Higher Committee went to Amman to confer with Emir Abdullah, who in turn informed Wauchope by letter that

It became sure, Your Excellency, that the delegation was owned rather than being owner, controlled rather than being free in leading the country to what it was known as before. Some of them received letters of threats on their lives, in case they showed weakness or did not well serve their people. ... When I advised them not to use violence, they rejected it saying it was proper to conduct these acts. They know the British power. Their movement is peaceful and comprehensive through which they have intended to express their oppressed feelings for the last eighteen years.²³⁰⁰

Britain's loyal ally Abdullah was conveying the message that the traditional leaders could not resist the grassroots resistance, but whatever their motives, those leaders supported the rebellion.

15 May 1936 '[A]fter Friday prayers [at] one large demonstration in Jaffa, British forces opened fire, killing and injuring many protesters.'²³⁰¹

²²⁹⁷ Khalidi 1984, p 208.

²²⁹⁸ Porath 1977, p 179, citing *Filastin and Haaretz* in May 1936; Matthews 2006, p 252.

²²⁹⁹ Matthews 2006, pp 70-71, 85-86, 252.

²³⁰⁰ Ayyad 1999, p 157, citing Al-Hout 1981, pp 346-47.

²³⁰¹ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 80.

300. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore

late May 1936

William Ormsby-Gore, the longstanding pro-Zionist who as one of the Secretaries of the War Cabinet in 1917 co-drafted the Balfour Declaration [^{>16}] and who officially accompanied the Zionist Commission to Palestine in 1918 [^{>23}], became Colonial Secretary on 28 May 1936 [*also >17*]. High Commissioner Wauchope soon informed him that

the subject that fills the minds of all Arabs today is the problem of immigration, the dread that in time to come they will become a subject race living on sufferance in Palestine, with the Jews dominant in every sphere, land, trade and political life.²³⁰²

The Churchill White Paper had elevated collective Jewish presence in Palestine from “sufferance” to a “right”, but here it was seen by both the Palestinians and Wauchope that the tables were turning, or had turned; the indigenous would be or already were there only on sufferance.

As for Ormsby-Gore’s sentiments, he said in the House of Commons on 19 June:

The Arabs demand a complete stoppage of all Jewish immigration, a complete stoppage of all sales of land, and the transfer of the Government of Palestine...to what they call a National Government responsible to an elected democratic assembly. Those are their three demands, and quite frankly, those demands cannot possibly be conceded.²³⁰³

30 May 1936 *‘The mayor of Jaffa, Asem Bek Al-Sae’ed, called for a meeting of the mayors of many cities. Held in Ramallah..., the mayors resolved to endorse and support the strikes, the first time in Palestinian history where municipalities engaged in collective action.’*²³⁰⁴

²³⁰² CO 733/297/3, p ?; Cronin 2017, p 42.

²³⁰³ Hansard 1936b, c1324; *also* Khalidi 2020, p 31.

²³⁰⁴ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 82.

301. Mayors with Wauchope

31 May 1936

On 31 May 1936 High Commissioner **Wauchope met with eight mayors**, namely Dr. Hussein Fakhri Khalidi (Jerusalem), Assem Bey Said (Yaffa), Suleiman Bey Toukan (Nablus), Sheikh Mustafa Eff. Kheiry (Ramle), Fahmi Eff. el Hussein (Gaza), Saleem Eff. Bishara (Nazareth), Easa Eff. Bandak (Bethlehem), and Dr. Sa'dullah Qassis (Ramallah), the Mayors of Haifa and Hebron being absent due to illness.²³⁰⁵ Instead of quibbling over whether the announced Royal (Peel) Commission should come immediately, or after the “disorders and violence” [>302], Dr. Khalidi asserted that

all the Arabs asked for was frankness as to whether the Jews were going to become a majority in this country or the Arabs to remain in the majority. ... Two words [‘stop immigration’] from Government would be enough to restore order and to put an end to acts of lawlessness. The remedy was in the hands of Government, who were the tutor. (pp 63-64)

All the mayors agreed: stoppage of immigration would preserve the Arab majority and achieve peace, with Fahmi el Hussein adding that

during the last 18 years several governmental enquiries had been held. Moreover, His Excellency had now been for more than four years in this country and no commission could add anything to His Excellency’s own knowledge of the problem of Palestine ... The Arabs wanted some sign that the British meant to do something... (p 65)

“The Arabs wanted some sign...” but Wauchope said nothing, and in closing “His Excellency emphasised that Government must employ force when murder, arson, etc. were going on and that the Mayors should use all their influence to stop disorder; as soon as disorder was stopped, force would also stop.” (p 67) Even a temporary stoppage of immigration was for Britain too high a price to pay for peace on the ground. [also >306; >307]

²³⁰⁵ CO 733/310/3, pp 61-67, all citations.

Wauchope and his Assistant Secretary Ruhi Abdul Hadi met on 1 June 1936 with a “**delegation of Ulema**” consisting of Sheikhs Ismail Eff. al-Hafez, Tawfiq Eff. Tibi, Amin Eff. U’ri, Hassan Eff. Abu Saud, Salim Eff. Ghussein (Qadi of Jerusalem), Said al-Khatib and Sa’d Ed Din al-Khatib.²³⁰⁶ Ismail al-Hafez remarked,

[T]he policy followed by His Majesty’s Government in Palestine, which has always formed an integral part of Arab countries, has caused great disappointment and resentment. Your Excellency should excuse the Arabs if they were committing any act of violence. The Arabs are aware that any conflict between them and the authorities means suicide... but, as Your Excellency is aware, a desperate man often commits suicide. The Arabs have applied peacefully to HMG by means of petitions and delegations to England, for the alteration of the policy and the protection of Arab rights, but no effect was given to their applications and to the recommendations of the Commissions of Enquiry sent as a result of the riots which took place from time to time in Palestine during the last 16 years. [>88; >122; >220; >233] The Arabs think they should manifest their resentment of the policy by stronger means, and if shooting and bombing is being done now, it is not with the object of committing murder or because the Arabs like disorders, but simply with the object of letting their voice reach England and induce the British people to help them in considering their desperate position. (p 54)

Hassan Abu Saud added,

The continual statements of menaces made in England and Palestine were not of a nature to restore confidence and peace but, on the contrary, they increased the irritation of the Arab population and widened the scope of the disorder. The Arabs, being now extremely desperate, did not follow the advice of *Ulema*, as life and death are equal for a desperate nation. (p 55)

Tawfiq Tibi

stated that Palestine had been governed about 400 years by the Turks, and if His Excellency read the history of this country during the last four centuries, he would realise that there never was a rising as at present of the whole population of Palestine. ... Great Britain, for the sake of the Jewish policy, should not alienate the friendship of the Arabs and of the Moslem world which is sympathising with the Arabs of Palestine. (pp 55-56)

“For the sake of the Jewish policy” – not even for the sake of Britain.

Sa’d Ed Din al-Khatib

said that he was one of those who had deserted the Ottoman Army as a result of pamphlets thrown by British aeroplanes during the war on camps of the Turkish Army²³⁰⁷; he fought with the British Army under the command of the late Lord Allenby from Akaba to Aleppo. He thought that at the end of the war the legitimate aspirations of the Arabs in Palestine would

²³⁰⁶ CO 733/310/3, pp 52-58; Kayyali 1978, pp 194-95.

²³⁰⁷ Palin 1920, Section A §5; Shaw 1930, p 126; Tannous 1988, pp 90, 71.

be given due consideration, but now... he regretted the bloodshed for the cause of victory of Great Britain, if this victory would result in the elimination of the Arabs from Palestine. (p 56)

Wauchope in reply completely ignored what his visitors had said, changing the subject to specific Palestinian complaints about British military behaviour, for instance about “the interference with women and the profanation of the Holy Quran” and “shots being fired and innocent people killed” [296], and closed by saying that Jamal al-Husseini, Shibly Jamal and Izzat Tannous had missed an opportunity to put the Arab case in London²³⁰⁸ but that he himself had “obtained His Majesty’s Government’s consent to send a Royal Commission, the highest form of enquiry which can be made in the British Empire”; however, Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore had agreed to send it only when “law and order are re-established”. (pp 57-58; also p 62) [also >301]

Hajj Amin and the Supreme Moslem *Sharia* Council throughout the summer worried about the danger to the Holy Places coming both from British soldiers and Zionists, Zionism being “fundamentally and principally a religious case” of claim to Jerusalem and environs (otherwise they would have taken the other places that had been offered them for their national home).²³⁰⁹ [also >308] Ormsby-Gore, for his part, answered a question in Parliament by defending Wauchope’s military actions, making the Royal Commission conditional on restoration of “order”, and recalling “the Mandate with its dual [equal] obligations”.²³¹⁰ And in mid-July he told Parliament that HMG would decide on “temporary suspension of immigration... in due course...”²³¹¹

1936 *‘Tax exemptions were meanwhile granted to Jewish immigrants, as well as exemptions covering the imports related to Jewish industries, such as certain raw materials, unfinished products, coal...etc. Customs duty on imported consumer goods rose. The average import tax rose from 11% at the beginning of the Mandate to more than 26% by 1936;...’*²³¹²

summer 1936 *‘Prince Abdullah of Transjordan... deterred Syrian and Iraqi fighters from crossing Jordanian soil on their way to join their Palestinian brothers in the struggle with the Zionists and British. ... [T]he Jordanian army... shot and wounded tens of those volunteers, especially in Ajlun in March of 1936 and in Al-Yarmouk in March of 1939.’*²³¹³

²³⁰⁸ See also Bethell 1979, p 29.

²³⁰⁹ CO 733/310/4, p 84; see pp 29-34, 83-90.

²³¹⁰ CO 733/310/3, p 101.

²³¹¹ CO 733/310/4, p 23.

²³¹² Kanafani 1972, p 23.

²³¹³ Ayyad 1999, p 157.

Debate over a possible end to the strike and violent resistance, in return for suspension of immigration, provided some back-and-forth during June, with Wauchope and Ormsby-Gore on one side and the Arab Higher Committee on the other to all appearances trying to find some common ground. A small delegation of the AHC made up of Jamal al-Husseini, Shibly Jamal, Izzat Tannous and Emil Ghoury and perhaps Abdul Latif Salah left on 10 June for London, where either Ormsby-Gore or Lord Plymouth did receive Ghoury as AHC Secretary.²³¹⁴ The delegates also met with older friends of Palestine like Lord Islington [>144; >161], Colonel Stewart Newcombe [>347; >412; >417] and J.M.N. Jeffries [>23; >37; >46; >59; >71; >78; >147; >155], who were joined by others such as Miss Margaret Milne Farquharson, Douglas Clifton Brown [>290; >342; >359; >428], Mrs. Stewart Erskine, Malcolm MacDonald (!) [>223; >244; >282; >408ff], Mr. & Mrs. H.V. Morton and Edward Turnour (Earl Winterton) [>79; >314; >328], the latter an MP from 1904 until 1951 and close friend of Emir Faisal who now led a 60-strong pro-Palestinian group in Parliament.²³¹⁵ It was in the offices of the British Women's League where most meetings of the Arab Centre and its supporters were held until new offices were found at 554 Grand Building, Trafalgar Square, that

we wrote a statement of eleven pages and called it 'The Palestine Case - Statement by the Palestine Arab Delegation.' It was published on July 1, 1936. We included in our statement the following points: 1. Our natural rights 2. Promise of independence in the McMahon/Hussein Correspondence 3. Promise of independence in the Anglo-French Declaration of November 7, 1918 4. Provision in the Covenant of the League of Nations stipulating the self-determination of people 5. The illegality and the contradictions found in the Balfour Declaration 6. The unjust government policy with regard to Jewish immigration and as reported by the Shaw Commission, Sir John Hope Simpson and Lewis French 7. The landless Arabs 8. Arab demands.²³¹⁶ [>10; >29; >46; >16; >220; >233; >218]

About the pamphlet Tannous later wrote:

Our case is a straightforward case and we did not have to refer to a two-thousand-year-old connection to Palestine. We were in Palestine, and for thousands of years we had been deeply rooted in Palestine. We needed no promise from Balfour or from any other 'tyrant'. ... [However] I must admit again that it was wrong of the Arab people of Palestine to depend only on their indisputable natural rights to their country and on the Covenant of the League of Nations which decreed their self-determination.²³¹⁷ (*emphasis added*)

²³¹⁴ Tannous 1988, p 179; CO 733/312/1, pp 2, 6, 10; also Robson 2011, p 121.

²³¹⁵ Tannous 1988, pp 86-87, 181-87, 218.

²³¹⁶ Tannous 1988, pp 218, 184; John & Hadawi 1970a, p 322.

²³¹⁷ Tannous 1988, pp 186, 183; Robson 2011, pp 122-23.

It was also decided to publish a weekly, *The Arab Centre Bulletin*, with an initial printing of 5,000 copies.²³¹⁸ (To my knowledge no similar lobby had yet emerged in the United States, which would soon slowly begin replacing the U.K. as Zionism's main supporter.)

Paul Kelemen however, who mainly investigated Labour Party Zionist policy during the Mandate years, is correct that

There was no organization on the Arab side which approximated, even remotely, to Paole Zion's [the labour branch of international Zionism] capacity to reach Labour party members and supporters. Arab nationalist leaders relied very largely on traditional diplomatic channels. Occasional appeals from Arab organizations were sent to Labour party headquarters but it was not until 1936 that an Arab lobbying organization was set up. This was the Arab Centre, which was run mainly by George Mansour [see >344], a middle-class Palestinian who made representations to the Labour party as the former secretary of the Arab Labour Federation. He gave evidence to the Peel Commission, but his efforts to get a hearing from a policy advisory committee of the Labour party took nine months to come to fruition.²³¹⁹

The Palestinians had not even a small fraction of the political clout wielded in London by the Zionists. Kelemen adds that "After the war, Bevin, as [Labour] Foreign Secretary, also noted that the Arab case tended to be ignored."²³²⁰ Ann Lesch, who incidentally writes that the Arab Centre was actually launched already in 1935, by wealthy citrus merchant Alfred Rock, and run initially by Colonel S.F. Newcombe with a largely British staff, also draws attention to the fact that the Arab case could not be well-heard because "few Arab political leaders ever traveled to London..."²³²¹

On the ground in Palestine, meanwhile, despite further signs of readiness to end the strike and violence which were so costly economically and in terms of death and injury²³²², the British decided to increase military repression by "boosting the number of British troops in the country to over 20,000 and extensive operations were immediately undertaken to crush the rebels", especially in the last week of September and first ten days of October²³²³.

12 June – 31 July 1936 [The Spectator of London prints an eight-letter dialogue between Emil Ghoury, Norman Bentwich, J.M.N. Jeffries and Blanche Dugdale, Balfour's niece, in which many of this books' themes were batted back and forth.]²³²⁴

²³¹⁸ Tannous 1988, p 202.

²³¹⁹ Kelemen 1996, p 86.

²³²⁰ Kelemen 1996, p 87.

²³²¹ Lesch 1979, pp 171-72.

²³²² Kayyali 1978, pp 198-99, citing 'Record of an interview with the Secretary of State' 14 July 1936 CO 733/321 & Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 22 August 1936 CO 733/297, p 97. See CO 733/297/3, *passim*.

²³²³ Kayyali 1978, pp 200-01.

²³²⁴ Andersen 2017, pp 272-85.

summer 1936 *'The Syrian guerrilla leader Fawzi al-Qawuqji came to Palestine in August at the head of a band of Syrians, Iraqis, and Palestinians, which conducted operations in northern Palestine against the British military and helped train Palestinian youths in guerrilla warfare.'*²³²⁵

summer 1936 *'After nearly four years as head of the Arabic section of the Voice of Palestine radio station, Ibrahim Tuqan was fired for broadcasting programs that supported self-determination.'*²³²⁶

²³²⁵ Lesch 1973, pp 35-36; also Ayyad 1999, p 161; Parsons 2016, pp 118-34; Regan 2017, pp 171-72.

²³²⁶ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 85; also Attar 2010, p 42.

304. Yaffa brutalised

16 June 1936

The **infamous destruction of much of Yaffa** on 16 June 1936 is related by Matthew Hughes²³²⁷ in a way which includes the Palestinian reaction as well, and thus a sort of dialogue:

[T]he British blew up between 220 and 240 buildings, ostensibly to improve health and sanitation, cutting pathways through Jaffa's old city with 200-300 lbs gelignite charges that allowed military access and control. By this act – headlined in *Difa* as 'goodbye, goodbye, old Jaffa, the army has exploded you' – the British made homeless up to 6,000 Palestinians. ... Some families were left with nothing, not even a change of clothes. Such callous vandalism shocked the British Chief Justice in Palestine, Sir Michael McDonnell, who frankly condemned the action, for which he was dismissed; the Arabs with glee printed up 10,000 copies of the court's [i.e. McDonnell's] critical conclusions for public distribution.

In the aftermath,

Unable to express their opposition to the destruction of Jaffa, the Palestinian press resorted to sarcasm, reporting how the 'operation of making the city more beautiful is carried out through boxes of dynamite. Particularly recalcitrant villages would be entirely demolished, reduced to "mangled masonry".'

Supreme Court Chief Justice Sir Michael McDonnell criticised from the bench the procedure of the Administration, and although he did not declare it illegal, the Cabinet in London was sufficiently upset with him that some voices advocated Martial Law which would circumvent the Supreme Court; although in the end the Cabinet agreed with High Commissioner Wauchope, who had authorised and supervised the destruction of Jaffa, not to declare Martial Law, the Colonial Secretary wrote to McDonnell "suggesting that he should either resign or accept transfer to another colony".²³²⁸

Jeffries quotes the anonymous but official circular giving the public two days to leave their dwellings:

"The Government was about to initiate a scheme for opening up and improving the Old City of Jaffa by the construction of two roads. The first steps necessary will be the demolition and clearance of certain existing buildings which are congested and insanitary, and advantage is being taken of the presence in Palestine of Royal Engineers to begin these operations."²³²⁹

The circular carried a "footnote" saying that it had been printed at the Government printing-press.

One thing absent from the 'dialogue' during the summer of 1936 was that "since the disturbances began" High Commissioner Wauchope had hired or authorised the hiring of

²³²⁷ Hughes 2009, pp 322-23, next two quotations.

²³²⁸ CAB 23/85/4, p 87.

²³²⁹ Jeffries 1939, pp 692-94; also Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 229.

over 1,300 “Jewish Special Constables” and “Jewish supernumerary police”, and that Wauchope felt “that it would be advisable that there should be no mention of the numbers of Jewish police enlisted... as the situation in Palestine might be detrimentally affected by this information becoming publicly known.”²³³⁰ When Musa Alami and George Antonius wrote the First Civil Servant Memorial on 30 June 1936, did they know of this secret activity of Wauchope? [see >306]

1936 *‘During the early phase of the revolt, Arabic newspapers were suspended thirty-four times, while the Jewish press was suspended thirteen.’*²³³¹

²³³⁰ CO 733/297/3, p 106, 19 June 1936 for Secretary of State’s signature.

²³³¹ Palestinian Journeys <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/story/9184/no-laughing-matter>

The Newspaper *Falastin* printed a drawing on 17 June 1936 showing Balfour as the overall designer of the takeover of Palestine. The picture, at the link below, and the explanatory text in English, just below, are courtesy of Khazaan.²³³²



This caricature, published by the newspaper “Palestine” at the height of the 1936 revolt, perfectly sums up the Palestinian consciousness and vision at that time. The British Foreign Secretary [in 1917], Balfour, appears as a puppet master and catalyst of the Zionist institutions and projects, such as the factories in Haifa, the Rottenberg [Rutenberg] Electricity Project which had its privileges granted to the Zionist Organization by the mandate gov-

²³³² Khazaan 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/khazaan/photos/a.1775891526020437/2468786316730951/?type=3&theater>

ernment, as well as the Jewish immigration and public and private works. Everything begins and ends with Balfour, who serves, along with Britain, as the bedrock of the prosperity of the Zionist project and as the basis of the catastrophe of the Palestinians. However, the newspaper "Palestine" did not forget to self-criticize. In this caricature, Palestinian politicians are portrayed, as seen on the [lower-]right of the picture, as irresponsible figures who are so preoccupied with their debates and intrigues that they lost the country after it leaked out of their hands. Nearby, poor Palestinian farmers are depicted driven out of their lands after being displaced. This picture summarizes exactly one hundred years of the Balfour Declaration, and of Britain's disgrace as the latter shamelessly prepares to celebrate the declaration's centennial today [2 November 2017]. The British colonialism has handed Palestine to the Zionist movement; however, the act of colonialism and its legitimacy are still cemented in the minds of the British politicians.

18-21 June 1936 The British demolish the Arab Hourani Quarter of Jaffa, and much of the old city.

18-21 June 1936 'An order was issued by the High Commissioner to the Royal Engineers' Corps in Palestine to demolish the old quarter of the city of Jaffa. Two hundred and twenty homes were demolished and 6,000 people were made homeless. Another 825 wooden barracks were also demolished with 4,000 more people left homeless.'²³³³

19 June 1936 A Palestinian delegation arrives in London, comprising Jamal Husseini, Shibly Jamal, Izzat Tannous and Emil Ghoury, to follow up negotiations with the British Government on Jewish immigration.

26 June 1936 Death of Fatmeh Ghazzal, the first Palestinian woman known to have died in combat.

²³³³ Tannous 1988, p 191; also Barbour 1946, p 168.

As part of the general strike, rebels and the Arab Higher Committee pressured Palestinian employees of the colonial government to resign. The background of this dilemma for the Palestinian Palestine-Government employees was the price of political inactivity they paid for their jobs.²³³⁴ According to Rashid Khalidi,

There was a clear bargain involved in accepting positions within this and other British-devised structures in mandatory Palestine. In exchange for official recognition and status, well remunerated quasi-official positions, the possibility of considerable patronage, and a certain restricted level of communal autonomy, those leading Palestinian figures who accepted such posts were obliged to refrain from openly opposing the Mandate, its commitment to support a Jewish national home, and the concomitant denial of Palestinian self-determination.²³³⁵

According to Musa Alami²³³⁶, who was then High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope's Private Secretary but was under attack by British Zionists and the Jewish Agency for having Wauchope's ear [*also >386*], he was being consulted by the HC one evening after dark during the beginnings of the rebellion. In a largely successful attempt to prevent too many employees from resigning, and with the conviction that Palestinian influence within the administration was for the good, the two came up with the idea of a "memorial" from Arab civil servants to Wauchope, written by Alami, which Wauchope would demonstratively receive and demonstratively seriously consider. A secret intelligence report on Alami in early 1939 said he "is believed to have acted with the knowledge and consent of the powers that be in that matter".²³³⁷ [*also >380; >386*] Part of the social background of Alami's work with Wauchope is that during this period Weizmann would sometimes stay with Wauchope when in Jerusalem.²³³⁸

The resulting document, submitted to Wauchope on 30 June 1936,²³³⁹ was actually co-written by George Antonius and Musa el Alami O.B.E.²³⁴⁰ and signed as well by Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, M.F. Abcarius, Ruhi Bey Abdul Hadi O.B.E., Khalil Sakakini, Aref al-Aref M.B.E. and 144 others.²³⁴¹ Roughly a half-year later it was also submitted to the Peel Commission which attached it to its Report.²³⁴² It contained 12 points [partly quoting, partly paraphrasing]:

²³³⁴ CO 733/313/9, p 63.

²³³⁵ Khalidi 2006, p 58; *also* Matthews 2006, pp 166-67.

²³³⁶ Furlonge 1969, pp 107-09.

²³³⁷ FO 371/23227, p 405.

²³³⁸ CO 733/297/5, p 17.

²³³⁹ CO 733/313/9, pp 53-58.

²³⁴⁰ Khalidi 2005, p 64; Furlonge 1969, pp 109-10.

²³⁴¹ Khalidi 1984, pp 204-06 (title page and full list including job titles and place of work).

²³⁴² Peel 1937, Appendix 2 (pp 401-03).

1. "We, the undersigned, Arab officers in the first division of the Service", feel duty-bound "to bring the following matters to Your Excellency's notice", viz.:
2. "Especially in view of the non-existence of representative institutions" their collective job as a "link" to the indigenous Arab people had been "an essential one."
3. The entire "Arab population" felt a "profound sense of injustice done to them"; the British, despite the corroborating findings of their "qualified and impartial official investigations" [>88; >122; >220; >233] had given "insufficient regard... to their legitimate grievances", and this was the cause of the present "discontent" and "despair".
4. That despair itself came from the fact that all "official pledges and assurances" to them had been reversed by "Zionist pressure", e.g. "when the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann was issued" [>246] reversing the 1930 White Paper and "when the projects regarding the Legislative Council and the restriction of sales of land were hotly challenged in Parliament" [>289; 290].
5. We tried to bring about "a return to normal [peaceful] conditions" by pointing out to the Arab population that "a Royal Commission" would investigate, but we "met everywhere with a sceptical disbelief in the sincerity of the Government's offer, and our endeavours at peace-making have only earned us odium and suspicion." [They knew that the Royal Commission would be announced in July. (>309)]
6. We make the "apparently presumptuous" claim that Government does not understand the feelings of the population, in particular: "that the present feeling is not one that can be crushed by force"; HMG has the force requisite to "deal with the insurrection" but since the "causes which have brought it about... remain", British force is futile.
7. While the Royal Commission may very well settle "ultimate policy", it is the "immediate situation in which lives and property are being destroyed every day" which can be stopped only if "Arab confidence" in Britain is restored by some "initiative... with the least possible delay."
8. "The deadlock in its present phase turns exclusively on the issue of immigration. In other words, the choice between an immediate return to normal conditions and an indefinite continuation of the present disorders and bloodshed depends not on a matter of policy or principle, but solely on a matter of provisional regulation, namely that of whether or not immigration is to be stopped." There was moreover precedent for temporary stoppage of immigration, in 1921 and 1929.
9. We recommend such stoppage.
10. While the counter-argument will be brought that British "prestige" depends on "not yielding to violence", in this case "the prestige and authority of Government [here in Palestine] would not only not lose, but would gain by a timely act of conciliation."
11. Despite losing "fellow-countrymen and perhaps relatives" to the violence, we have worked to restore peace. "But alongside of our obligations as civil servants are the dictates of our consciences." As long as "there exists a fair and honourable way of immediately ending the present unrest" which lies unused by Government, we "must conscientiously raise a protest against the present policy of repression..."
12. "We are forwarding this memorial in quadruplicate so that it may be duly transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies [Ormsby-Gore]." But out of urgency we "request Your Excellency [Wauchope] to cable the substance" of it immediately "and favour us with a reply at your earliest possible convenience."

The petition asked for one small thing in return for ending the “disorders” – a *temporary* halt to immigration – but for the British this small thing was too much. It was not granted. [see next entry] In addition to the usual demands for policy change, the memorial expressed Arab heartbreak at repeated British violation of trust and, towards them personally, lack of gratitude.²³⁴³ While it is unthinkable that Wauchope, under whom immigration increased drastically and the *yishuv* strode forward in terms of arming itself and establishing industries, supported any of these twelve points, he did send the memorial to London by air mail.²³⁴⁴

Writing of a similar situation in the fall of 1938, but pertinent to this situation at the end of June 1936, Ghandour relates from a policeman’s report:

The report identifies Abdul Razzak [*also >370*] as the organizer of the rebel courts, and as the one who banned the Turkish *tarbush* (*fez*) from the streets in favour of the peasant’s *hatta* (or *keffiye*, the traditional checkered scarf). He issued ultimatums off his own back and requested all Arab officials to resign from their posts with the British administration within forty-eight hours.²³⁴⁵

In a position of structural weakness, Palestinians who did not resign were faced with accusations of collaboration.

²³⁴³ Furlonge 1969, pp 109-10; Wasserstein 1978, pp 194-95.

²³⁴⁴ CAB 23/85/4, p 83.

²³⁴⁵ Ghandour 2010, p 99, citing Palestine Police Old Comrades Association Collection, Intelligence Report Sept. 1938.

On 4 July Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore announced his definitive position on “**a temporary suspension of permanent immigration**” – suspension perhaps until the coming Royal Commission had done its work. With Wauchope’s “warm” approval, he now asked the Cabinet to decide that

all permanent immigration of all races into Palestine should be permanently suspended from the date when the Royal Commission leaves for Palestine until its report has been considered by the Government.

However, there was a condition: He wanted to meet the Arab demand for immediate suspension of immigration as a means of quelling the disorders, but, circularly, made it contingent on the cessation of the disturbances; any hint of such suspension would “be treated as another surrender to [Arab-Palestinian] force”.²³⁴⁶ The Royal ‘Peel’ Commission had been announced and would be set up by the King’s command on 7 August 1936, but would leave for Palestine only on 5 November, having found it necessary to wait until the general strike was over on 10 October, and then some.

Perhaps the ‘Arabs’ would have accepted this deal, however locally autonomous the organisation and actions of the ‘disturbers’, but the Cabinet on 2 & 9 July declined to go along with Wauchope and Ormsby-Gore; they decided not to appear to “surrender to [Arab] force” and “make no statement as to their future intentions with regard to Jewish immigration until order is restored” – even despite support within the Cabinet from both the Foreign and Indian Offices for an announcement of suspension once the Commission was formed.²³⁴⁷ Order was not restored until October, and thus no suspension of European immigration was effected during the summer of 1936 – or anytime thereafter.

At Cabinet meetings on 9 and 15 July it was decided that “the Royal Commission will not proceed to Palestine until law and order have been restored” and that HMG “can make no statement as to their future intentions with regard to Jewish immigration until order is restored”.²³⁴⁸ The ‘dialogue’ between the Palestinians and British was thus a debate over who had to make the first move, the former wanting to see suspension of immigration before a call for cessation of disturbances would be put out, the latter wanting the reverse order.²³⁴⁹ The latter won, although the Cabinet included many who at various times trenchantly argued for the Palestinians, such as Thomas Inskip, Walter Elliot, Anthony Eden, John Simon, Malcolm MacDonald, Viscount Halifax and the Marquess of Zetland. Convinced Zionists such as Ormsby-Gore, Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin and Oliver Stanley were stronger.

²³⁴⁶ CO 733/297/3, pp 31-35, 44-49, 69-70, 81-83; CAB 23/85/4, pp 88, 84.

²³⁴⁷ CO 733/297/4, pp 206-07, 224-229; CAB 23/85/4, p 88; CAB 23/85/5, p 103; Porath 1977, pp 196-97.

²³⁴⁸ CAB 23/85/4, p 88, also pp 83-88; CAB 23/85/5, pp 102-03; see also CAB 23/85/1, pp 20-21.

²³⁴⁹ CO 733/297/3 & /4, *passim*.

9 July 1936 [*The Secretary of State for India reported to the Cabinet that] the Moslems' League had passed a resolution supporting the cause of the Arabs and warning the Government against the pro-Jewish policy of the British Government. He had received a fresh appreciation from the Viceroy which showed that agitation was now being organised by Moslem leaders and that a "Palestine Day" had been observed by Moslems throughout India.*²³⁵⁰

²³⁵⁰ CAB 23/85/4, p 85.

308. Memorandum from *Qadis*

mid-July 1936

We have seen that on 30 June 1936 about 138 top-level civil servants, including judges, sent a memorandum through High Commissioner Wauchope to HMG politely stating Palestinian demands. [2306] On 25 August another memo, this time from lower-level civil servants, would follow. [2312] In between these two 'memorials', according to the Peel Commission Report of 7 July 1937 [2336], about two weeks after the first memo another came from the *Qadis* (judges):

In the middle of July the *Qadis* of the Moslem *Shari'a* Courts presented yet another memorandum. These judges, it will be remembered, are not Government officers, but they are appointed by and responsible to the President of the Supreme Moslem Council [Hajj Amin al-Husseini], who receives a salary from Government. The tone of this document was more mutinous than that of the others. It described the Government's policy as 'detestable'; it charged the police and military with 'unimaginable acts' [2296]; and it warned 'the British authorities of the revenge of God the Almighty'. It demanded, in conclusion, 'the grant of all demands of the Arabs and the enforcement of the pledges given to them.'²³⁵¹

²³⁵¹ Peel 1937, IV §12.

309. Peel Commission announced

29 July 1936

To accompany the violent British reaction to the violent revolt against Britain's violent colonisation, and to look for a solution to Britain's problem, on 29 July Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore **read out the terms of reference and personnel** of the group which would study the situation for almost a year. It was made up of William Robert Wellesley (Peel), Horace Rumbold, Laurie Hammond, Morris Carter, Harold Morris and Reginald Coupland (one Viscount, four Knights and a Professor or, in Penny Sinanoglou's opinion, "a group... of distinguished politicians and academics".²³⁵²). On 7 August 1936 this 'Palestine Royal Commission' was officially set up²³⁵³ by command of Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs Malcolm MacDonald, son of the author of the Black Letter re-affirming the Balfour Declaration [>246] and author of the 1939 White Paper which would renounce the Balfour Declaration [>410]. Its chairman, Peel, would die three months after the submission of its 400-page Report on 7 July 1937 [>336], a Report largely written by Coupland, Professor of Colonial History at the University of Oxford. HMG put huge effort into getting the terms of reference just right, debating for instance what testimony should be held in camera, at what point any Arab testimony would be going too far in adumbrating their claimed rights under the text of the Mandate, and what might constitute "legitimate grievances" on either side.²³⁵⁴

As stated in His Majesty's 'Command' dated 7 August 1936, its job was:

To ascertain the underlying causes of the disturbances which broke out in Palestine in the middle of April [1936]; to inquire into the manner in which the Mandate for Palestine is being implemented in relation to the obligations of the Mandatory towards the Arabs and the Jews respectively; and to ascertain whether, upon a proper construction of the terms of the Mandate, either the Arabs or the Jews have any legitimate grievances upon account of the way in which the Mandate has been, or is being implemented; and if the Commission is satisfied that any such grievances are well founded, to make recommendations for their removal and for the prevention of their recurrence.²³⁵⁵

According to the Colonial Office, "Weizmann... and his friends" in early July 1936 had submitted "draft terms [of reference] which they themselves have prepared".²³⁵⁶ And indeed, compare the above with the wording of the draft of the terms of reference dated 9 July which, at Ormsby-Gore's personal request, Weizmann had sent to Ormsby-Gore's private address:

²³⁵² Sinanoglou 2019, p 1.

²³⁵³ CO 733/297/4; CO 733/318/12, pp 101, 105 (terms of reference); Peel 1937 (Cmd. 5479); see also Summary Report at Palestinian Journeys, > 'Peel Commission' and <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/History/peel1.html>

²³⁵⁴ CO 733/318/12, *passim*; Parsons 2019, p 24 endnote 23.

²³⁵⁵ Peel 1937, p ix.

²³⁵⁶ CO 733/297/3, p 40; also Parsons 2019, p 24 endnote 23, citing CO 733/318/12.

Draft terms of reference: (1) To investigate the origin and underlying causes of the disturbances; (2) To examine the grievances of the Jews and the Arabs in light of the dual obligation contained in the Mandate (including the Preamble thereto) towards the Jewish people and towards the Arabs and other non-Jewish sections of the population of Palestine; (3) To make recommendations for effectually implementing the Mandate, while preventing the recurrence of disturbances and promoting more harmonious relations between Jews and Arabs.²³⁵⁷

Ben-Gurion and Shertok likewise wrote expressing the Jewish Agency's keen interest in the task of the Commission.²³⁵⁸

The "Arabs", who made up the great majority of the people affected by the Mandate, knew that the "underlying cause" was, as the Peel Report of 7 July 1937 would put it, "the existence of the Mandate itself"²³⁵⁹; or, more specifically, "i) The desire of the Arabs for national independence" and "ii) Their hatred and fear of the establishment of the Jewish National Home"²³⁶⁰. The insistence of *the British* to deny self-determination would not be identified in the Peel Report as an "underlying cause". And the "Arab" position was largely not couched in terms of rational disagreement with British policy or in terms of political theory or justice, but in terms of feelings: "hate" and "fear".

²³⁵⁷ CO 733/318/12, p 105.

²³⁵⁸ CO 733/318/12, pp 87, 95.

²³⁵⁹ Peel 1937, IV §33.

²³⁶⁰ Peel 1937, IV §43, XIX §1.

310. Koussa and Ormsby-Gore

2 August 1936

After some Jewish advocates protested against the Arab judges who had signed the Memorial dated 30 June 1936 [^{>306}], Haifa advocate **Elias N. Koussa** [^{also >422}] **wrote separately to Wauchope** on 2 August asserting that the Arab judges were expressing their opinions as loyal civil servants.²³⁶¹ He also listed several transgressions of the British, who had allowed Jewish magistrates and prosecutors who do not know Arabic to handle litigation in Jewish settlements, putting Arab litigants in those courts at a disadvantage psychologically as well as requiring them to travel long distances. During the foregoing dispute between the Jewish advocates and Koussa over the secular judges' taking a political stand, the Palestine Government Chief Secretary, on behalf of Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore, had told Supreme Court Judge Mustafa Bey el Khalidi, C.B.E., to tell his fellow signees of the Memorial that their "first duty is to assist Government in the preservation of law and order" and that a "temporary suspension of immigration" is impossible before "order is restored" and unlikely until the Royal Commission's report had been "received and considered."²³⁶²

7 August 1936 [*Malcolm MacDonald as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs signs King Edward's order setting up the Palestine Royal Commission, including its membership and remit.*]²³⁶³

²³⁶¹ CO 733/313/9, pp 20-22; also Robson 2011, p 120.

²³⁶² CO 733/313/9, pp 23-26; also CAB 23/85/4, pp 85, 88.

²³⁶³ Peel 1937, p vi.

311. AHC and Abdullah

7 August 1936

According to Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, at a meeting with the Arab Higher Committee on 7 August 1936 the “moderate” Palestinian leaders said they would actually be moderate only if: Sarafand prisoners were released; collective punishment of villages ended; armed Palestinians were pardoned; and immigration was stopped during the Royal Commission’s sojourn in Palestine.²³⁶⁴

²³⁶⁴ Ayyad 1999, p 158, citing Khillih 1974, p 637.

312. 2nd civil-servant Memorial

25 August 1936

As with the Memorial of “Arab officers in the first division of the Service”, dated 30 June 1936 [^{>306}], a **similar one dated 25 August 1936**, submitted by “some 1,200 Arab officials serving in the Second Division of the Public Service”, went unheeded. This Memorandum²³⁶⁵ seconded the first one: “We... do not hesitate to associate ourselves with the spirit revealed by its contents”, namely, that they find themselves “between the horns of a dilemma” as both “Government officials and conscientious citizens”, but despite the rule that they should not “identify ourselves with any political movement” they speak out because of the “loss of life and the destruction of property” of the last four months and the “great economic and political injustices hitherto suffered by the Arab population.” HMG evidently thought military repression and the “Emergency Regulations” will solve the problem but it won’t, for “the feelings animating the Arabs will persist.” Neither will the appointment of the Royal Commission [^{>309}; ^{>336}] solve it, for the Arabs have seen that the [more or less anti-Zionist] “recommendations of the previous Commissions of Enquiry and Experts [^{>88}; ^{>122}; ^{>220}; ^{>233}] were not carried out.” Only “the complete stoppage of immigration at the earliest possible time [will] put an end to further outbreaks.”

Cosmo Parkinson, the second-ranking member of the Colonial Office, who drafted Ormsby-Gore’s reply to these 1,200 administrators²³⁶⁶, noted that he was

much struck by the moderation of this memorial. It is surprising, I think, how well the Arab Civil Servants in Palestine have behaved up till now, and I hope that they will still keep loyal, despite the very natural desire which they must all have to back their own people, not to mention the intimidation to which they are subjected. ... The circumstances are so exceptional that it is difficult, I think, to object to the memorial. ... The crucial point raised by the memorial is the temporary suspension of immigration.

On this point of suspension of immigration, Parkinson said that if H.M.G. does this before the Royal Commission is finished enquiring, it should be “announced at an early date as the decision of H.M.G., taken on the merits of the case, and in no way as a concession of the present violence.” High Commissioner Wauchope, his friendliness to Musa Alami notwithstanding, was against such a “preliminary announcement [as a] concession to violence”, yet Parkinson insisted that “We cannot... ignore this important point in [our] reply” and that the reply should be in the hands of the Arab Memorialists by the time Ormsby-Gore addressed the immigration issue in Parliament.

3 September 1936 *“The first military clash between al-Qayyuji’s [Qawuqji’s] forces and the British Army took place on 3rd September near the village Bal’a on the Tulkarm-Nablus road.”*²³⁶⁷

²³⁶⁵ CO 733/313/9, pp 17-18, High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 12 September 1936; Porath 1977, p 171; also Tannous 1988, pp 190-91; Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 222.

²³⁶⁶ CO 733/313/9, pp 2-4.

²³⁶⁷ Porath 1977, p 190.

early September 1936 [T]he September issue of the monthly newsletter of the Second Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment describes Qawuqji's presence in the Tubas area a few weeks after his arrival [as the leader of] a band of about 200-300 armed bandits from Syria and Trans-Jordania;... Fawzi, who is well-educated... is now the recognized leader of an Arab "Army" consisting of the... bandits above mentioned and local armed Palestinian Arabs who are reputed to have joined him in fairly large numbers.²³⁶⁸

fall 1936 'By the fall of 1936 the British army had twenty thousand troops in Palestine. Qawuqji was little more than a thorn in the flank of British military power.'²³⁶⁹

September 1936 [High Commissioner] Wauchope noted the "unweakened determination of the Arabs of Palestine during the past four months of resistance to our troops despite loss of 1,000 killed and wounded and economic distress." That determination signalled "what we must expect if we start on ruthless measures when necessarily the innocent cannot be separated from the guilty."²³⁷⁰

²³⁶⁸ Parsons 2016, p 120.

²³⁶⁹ Parsons 2016, p 138.

²³⁷⁰ Cronin 2017, p 47.

313. Emil Ghoury to Ormsby-Gore

8 September 1936

Emil Ghoury, a Christian who during most of 1936 was Secretary to the Arab Higher Committee, and was Secretary as well of the Palestine Arab Party from 1935 to 1948, sent **a letter to Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore** dated 8 September 1936²³⁷¹ in response to that day's newspapers' carrying a 'Government Statement'; according to the Peel Commission, writing a year later, this Statement had referred to the "situation" caused by the "disturbances" as a "direct challenge to the authority of the British Government in Palestine"²³⁷². Ghoury:

The Arab general strike was, in the first place, a spontaneous peaceful strike to further the Arab demands. These were: A) The Stoppage of Jewish Immigration to Palestine. B) The Stoppage of Land Sales to Jews. C) The Establishment of a National Representative Government. ... Jewish immigration, particularly at the yearly average of over fifty thousand, and the rapid acquisition of land by Jews, definitely prejudice the **position and status** of the Arabs, professed to be safeguarded by the Mandate, particularly article 6 thereof [^{>146}]. As regards the demand for self-government, this is warranted and supported not only by articles 2 and 3 of the Mandate, but also by the series of promises and declarations made to that effect, particularly the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 [^{>28}]. All this is apart from the natural right of the indigenous population of any country to demand whatever steps may procure for it a safe and peaceful life, for the present and future, in its own country. (pp 38-39)

There were two lines of argument: British and French promises, and their natural rights. So far so familiar. More specifically,

[T]he Palestine Government granted to the Jewish Agency, at the height of the Arab strike, 4500 labour certificates (at a time when the previous quota of immigration certificates had not been exhausted, and when, according to the Government report, there were more than 5000 Jews unemployed). This provocative action had its immediate repercussions. ... The Arabs are confident of the righteousness of their cause, and are always prepared to place their case before any impartial tribunal, such, as we believe, is the proposed Royal Commission. (pp 39-40)

As we will see, notwithstanding its partiality in supporting the Zionist Mandate itself, the Royal 'Peel' Commission would indeed be remarkably perceptive and impartial in most of its analysis, forcing it to declare impossible maintaining the *status quo* of trying to 'balance' Zionism and democracy under one hat. [^{>336}] "The Arabs", however, would until the very last week boycott the Commission, thus not "placing their case" before it. [^{>319; >325}]

For the Arab Higher Committee, however, so Ghoury further, verbal and written words had reached exhaustion:

²³⁷¹ CO 733/297/5, pp 38-43, all quotations.

²³⁷² Peel 1937, IV §15.

But their bitter and disappointing experience with commissions and their reports, and even with White Papers, made the Arabs lose every confidence in promises and official declarations. For the last eighteen years not less than six reports on the Palestine case were presented to the Government by impartial British experts after scholarly investigations.²³⁷³ The findings and recommendations of those reports have, however, never been put into effect. Further a White Paper (1930) [²³⁴] which envisaged some steps to redress certain Arab grievances was, as the result of Zionist influence, rendered inoperative [²⁴⁶]. (pp 40-41)

Ghoury and the AHC knew their military weakness:

The Arabs have repeatedly asserted that their movement does not constitute, nor is it intended to constitute, a challenge to the authority of Great Britain. The 900,000 Arabs know fully well that it lies within the power of Great Britain to wipe out the whole of Palestine if she so desires. But the despair of the Arabs, who are under a strong and deep rooted belief that they have been betrayed over and over again, has driven them to the position they have now taken. In fact that position constitutes, not a challenge as has been unfortunately interpreted, but an appeal for justice and fair play. (p 41)

The key words seem to be “despair” and “justice”.

Returning then to first, partly legalistic, principles:

The mandate over Palestine is an illegal instrument. It violates the spirit of the Mandate System as set up in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations [⁴⁶]. One of the main prerequisites for a legal mandate is that the ‘wishes of the community’ (Article 22, para. 4) ‘must be the principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory’. The wishes of the population of Palestine, ever since 1919 when the Arabs constituted over 93% of the entire population, were never in favour of the mandate. The Arabs never recognized the mandate formally. Furthermore the interpretation of the mandate was unilateral, and as such it is not binding on the Arabs. (p 42)

Ghoury and Miss Frances Newton, who accompanied him to interviews with Wauchope’s assistants in the Palestine Government in Jerusalem, were also aware of their lack of funds to fight on the level of “disseminating facts” through establishing a “Palestine Information Centre”.²³⁷⁴

²³⁷³ He is most likely referring to: Palin >88; Haycraft >122; Shaw >220; Hope Simpson >233; French (*see*) >218; and Murison-Trusted >268.

²³⁷⁴ CO 733/297/5, p 36.

314. Samuel's Compromise

8 September 1936

Herbert Samuel, Leader of the Liberal Party and once again an MP, on 8 September 1936 presented a **“draft proposal” for the years up to 1950** that he had worked out together with Edward Turnour MP (6th Earl Winterton) [>79; >303; >328] and Nuri as-Said, Foreign Minister of Iraq.²³⁷⁵ As in 1914/15, Samuel was still moulding ‘the future of Palestine’ [>8]. The Jewish population, so this newest scheme, would be kept at a maximum of 40% of the total population and certain areas of the country would be closed to “land purchase or colonisation by the Jews”. (Later in September, however, “After further discussion with Weizmann and with the Colonial Office, Samuel amended his draft, deleting the reference to 1950 and to a 40 percent ceiling on the Jewish population.”²³⁷⁶) Government money would be put into better agriculture and better education for the Arabs, while Trans-Jordan should be opened up to Jewish as well as Arab immigration and a Legislative Council be established consisting of one-third Arabs, one-third Jews and one-third British-Government nominees – i.e. parity between Arabs and Jews, but not even parity between Arabs and Jews-plus-British. There should be a free-trade area comprising Iraq, Hejaz, Yemen, Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Syria.

Nuri as-Said, according to Wasserstein,

made it clear that he did not believe the draft scheme ‘would be acceptable to the Arabs of Palestine’. The proposal for a legislative council in which Jewish and Arab delegates were equal in numbers ‘would be quite unacceptable’. The projected colonization of Trans-Jordan ‘would be considered likely to work out very much in favour of the Jews, who would prove the real beneficiaries’.

Samuel's particular cocktail of demography, economic welfare, and union of some kind with the rest of the Near East still did not, however, offer either proportional representation in a still-colonised Palestine or straight-out independence; because it privileged the members of one ethno-religious group it fell short of a polity which was democratic and free, as demanded by the Arab majority. On 20 July 1937, speaking as Viscount Samuel in the House of Lords, he would offer a slightly different bi-national solution. [>340]

22 September 1936 *‘The Kirkuk-Haifa oil pipeline, not for the first time, is blown up by local rebels.’*²³⁷⁷

²³⁷⁵ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 96-97; Wasserstein 1990, p 6; FO 492/20, pp 493-94.

²³⁷⁶ Wasserstein 1990, p 7, citing ‘Third and final draft’, ISA 100/18.

²³⁷⁷ Abbasi 2015, p 212.

According to Jeremy Forman and Alexandre Kedar,

[Wadi] al-Boustany [Bustani] submitted a 166-page document to the High Commissioner in Jerusalem and the Colonial Secretary in London in 1936, entitled *The Palestine Mandate – Invalid and Impractical*. This document argued that a solution to the instability in Palestine at the time demanded a rethinking of the fundamental terms of the mandate.²³⁷⁸

According to Ghassan Kanafani,²³⁷⁹ Bustani had been “the first to warn against the Balfour Declaration and its challenges, the very month it was issued.” A few years after that, as editor of *Karmel*, Bustani had on January 1920 printed at British request “a poem by the celebrated Iraqi poet Maruf Risafi that was dedicated to the British High Commissioner [actually the Chief Administrator] and that praised and eulogised him...” but in the same issue wrote a “reply” in the form of a long poem that

not only made Risafi look like a fool but also asserted, even at that early date, political facts of great importance. It not only mentioned Jewish immigration and the danger it constituted, but also the role played by Britain in fragmenting the Palestinian Arabs...

Bustani also co-organised political rallies on the Prophet's birthday uniting Moslems and Christians, and the full title of his 1936 book was *The Palestine Mandate – Invalid and Impractical: A Contribution of Arguments and Documents towards the Solution of the Palestine Problem* (American Press, Beirut).²³⁸⁰ I don't know if High Commissioner Wauchope or Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore ever replied to al-Bustani's message, or if they themselves ever wrote a book. In addition to Bustani, in 1936 and 1937 a number of other writers wrote fundamental works in Arabic on Palestine's political situation, as reported by Lesch: Yusuf Haykal's *The Palestine Case: Analysis and Criticism*; Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani's *Explanation of the Palestine Injustice*; Muhammad Yunis al-Husayni's *Analysis of the Balfour Declaration*; and Sadi Basaysu's *Zionism*.²³⁸¹

²³⁷⁸ Forman & Kedar 2003, p 538.

²³⁷⁹ Kanafani 1972, pp 28, 33.

²³⁸⁰ al-Bustani 1936.

²³⁸¹ Lesch 1979, p 65, citing Adnan Mohammad Abu Ghazaleh, 'Arab Cultural Nationalism' (1972), pp 45-47.

316. Emil Ghoury's Observer letter

4 October 1936

The London *Observer* on 4 October 1936 **printed a letter from Arab Higher Committee Secretary Emil Ghoury** [*also* >313]:

Prosperity and economic improvement are not everything of worth in life. There are other phases of life which are more dear to the Arabs than money and gold. 'Man cannot live by bread alone,' said Jesus Christ. The Arabs appreciate and understand this golden saying. Their case could not and should not be discussed or argued as a case of 'bread and butter'. They desire to enjoy the right of every people to live in peace of mind as well as of body, now and in the future, in their own country, as seems best for them. They prefer to be destitute and poor, but independent and free, in their country, than prosperous and rich in a country which will in a few years' time be theirs no more.²³⁸²

This effort to get away from British and Zionist emphasis on alleged gains in material prosperity echoed the earlier and presaged the later views of countless Palestinians. [>144; >263; >269; >273; >274; *also* PMC 1937]

²³⁸² Quoted by Abboushi 1977, p 29.

317. Palestinians end strike

8-11 October 1936

After many consultations between the British, the Palestinians and other Arab countries, on 8 or 10 October 1936 the rulers of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Transjordan sent an appeal to the Palestinians to end the strike:

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 Amir Abdallah we appeal to you to restore tranquility in order to prevent further bloodshed, relying on the good intentions of our friend the British Government and their declared desire to see that justice is done. Be assured that we shall continue our endeavour to help you.²³⁸³

On 10 or 11 October the Palestinian political leaders, “in compliance with the wishes of your Majesty”, successfully advised their fellow-countrymen to end the strike.²³⁸⁴ It should not be forgotten that Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt were at that time heavily dependent on “our friend the British Government” politically and economically.

Eyewitness Wasif Jawhariyyeh wrote:

On October 11, 1936, the Higher Arab Committee held its famous meeting in Jerusalem, and following a call from Kings Saud, Abdullah and Ghazi, the decision was taken to halt the revolt and end the strike, which had been ongoing for one hundred and seventy-five days. As for the losses, there were twenty-five hundred martyrs, seven thousand wounded, eight thousand civilian deaths, and over nineteen hundred seventy arrests.²³⁸⁵

autumn 1936 *‘Just as the Arabs were debating whether to boycott the [Royal] Commission – they did boycott it until its last week in Palestine – Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore approved the immigration of 1,800 at a time of high Arab unemployment.’*²³⁸⁶

²³⁸³ Porath 1977, p 214, citing Kayyali, *Watha’iq*, p 454; Ayyad 1999, pp 161-62.

²³⁸⁴ Ayyad 1999, p 162.

²³⁸⁵ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 222.

²³⁸⁶ <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/FD4D250AF882632B052565D2005012C3> §71; see also Ayyad 1999, p 163; Mansour 2012 [1937].

XVIII. After the strike

By means of a **radio broadcast** on 7 July 1936 High Commissioner Wauchope had urged “the men and women of Palestine” to stop rebelling violently:

The forces at the disposal of Government have been greatly increased. If need be they will be further increased, so that law and order will once again reign throughout the whole country. ... I believe everyone knows that Government has the power and will use its power to put an end to these criminal acts and restore peace. ... If these disorders continue a direct result will be that hundreds of people with eye diseases will receive no treatment this summer, and many children whose eyes could be cured will be blind all their lives.

He then announced the supposedly good news that when the disorders stop, “a Royal Commission will come to Palestine in order to carry out a full and searching investigation into the causes of the present unrest...”²³⁸⁷

The strike over, Wauchope on 29 October 1936 again radioed to “the people of Palestine.”²³⁸⁸ Streets that were recently empty, he intoned, are now “full of people – men and women – with happy and contented faces.”

Tonight I am talking to you particularly because I want to speak of the Royal Commission. We expect the members to arrive in Palestine on November 11th. ... I look to the coming of this Royal Commission as an event of historical importance. During the last six months I have seen much suffering, misery and distress [but] now that there is once again peace in town and village and countryside I want to see that peace made real, deep-rooted and permanent. That is the great task which lies before you, the people of Palestine. If you do your share the Royal Commission will, I know, help you to achieve that end. And the Commission offers a great opportunity... to... put before it... grievances.

Consider this message: On the shoulders of the indigenous people fell the “task”. For “help” with it they could, if they were smart, turn to... a team of oppressors. Such was Wauchope’s perception of a colonial situation.

In the event, the announced Commission would demand of the Palestinians that they would have to pay about half their country for (some possibility of) “that end”, namely peace. For now, the reports of Palin [>88], Haycraft [122], Shaw [220], and Hope Simpson [233], as well as the memoranda of former High Commissioner John Chancellor [e.g. >218] and reports of a dozen Political Intelligence officers [e.g. >103] – not to mention eighteen years’ worth of disregarded statements from the Palestinians – had all given ‘the wrong answer’, namely that the Zionist Mandate was the single cause of the violent resistance, so another group of outsiders had to be called in.

The shoulders of the Jewish immigrants, to be sure, were also to bear the task:

²³⁸⁷ CO 733/310/4, pp 51-52.

²³⁸⁸ CO 733/317/2, pp 5-6.

I repeat this is a great opportunity for both Arabs and Jews to find a common agreement, neither forgetful of the lawful aspirations of the other. ... Our need to-day is to put aside rancour and recrimination and work for the common good of the future. ... Do not forget... that the proposals you put forward and the evidence you give will in some measure be a test of your political wisdom.

In these words a general political or ethical equality between the indigenous and the forced immigrants is assumed, and Britain, like a tutor, is equipped to judge others' "political wisdom". Less obviously, another theme was gaining in prominence: the whole mess was not primarily Britain's to solve. Rather, the Jews and Arabs should quit misbehaving. Wauchope repeated:

Now you have a clear task before you – the task of preparing the ground, of laying the foundations for a future of peace and prosperity. ... You who are farmers know the need of thorough preparation of the land if you are to reap a good harvest; you who are craftsmen or builders know that without a firm basis, without sound foundations, no work will endure.

It was necessary to 'explain down' the needed political "preparation" in the purportedly simple terms of the field and the workshop.

5 November 1936 *'Simultaneous with the departure of the Royal Commission of Enquiry to Palestine, the Colonial Secretary announced in the House of Commons the Government's decision that there would be no suspension of immigration during the course of the Royal Commission's investigation. On the following day the [Arab] Higher Committee denounced in vigorous terms the Colonial Secretary's statement which they viewed as a breach of faith...'*²³⁸⁹

²³⁸⁹ Kayyali 1978, p 202.

This entry quotes the Peel Report's description of **the decision by the Arab Higher Committee not to co-operate** with the Commission:²³⁹⁰

[begin quote] "On the 5th November the Secretary of State [Ormsby-Gore] had announced in the House of Commons the Government's decision that a suspension of immigration during the course of the Royal Commission's investigation "would not be justifiable on economic or on other grounds". [quoting Ormsby-Gore:] 'It is the view of His Majesty's Government that, if any drastic departure from the immigration policy hitherto pursued were now to be introduced in advance of the findings of the Royal Commission, this would involve an alteration in the existing situation and might be held to prejudice the inquiries of the Royal Commission, which will be directed, among other matters, to the very important question of immigration generally.'²³⁹¹

[The Peel Commission continues in its own words:] In view of this announcement the Arab Higher Committee [AHC] resolved on the 6th November to boycott the Commission; and next day, after an interview with the High Commissioner, who did his utmost to persuade them to change their minds, the decision was published in the following terms: [quoting the AHC:] 'The Arab Higher Committee has met and studied the statement made by the Colonial Secretary in the House of Commons on 5th November, 1936, in relation to the decision of the British Government not to stop Jewish immigration and consenting to issue fresh labour immigration certificates and to allow all other forms of immigration. This is contrary to what the Arabs had been expecting, i.e., a complete stoppage of all forms of immigration. The Committee finds the reasons given by the Colonial Secretary obviously inadequate. Whereas the strike which was declared by the Arabs and which continued for six months was nothing but a protest against the policy of the British Government, which deprives the Arabs of their political rights, and a demand for a fundamental change of policy which would have as its first aspect a suspension of immigration (Jewish), and whereas the statement of the Colonial Secretary is a strong insult to the Arabs and hostile to their interests and is an indication of an absence of good faith, in bringing about a just solution of the Arab case based on the realisation of the Arab demands and the safeguarding of their national existence: Therefore the Committee denounces with vigour this stand and decides not to co-operate with the Royal Commission and asks the honourable nation, which has proved to the world at large its political maturity and strong national faith, to abide by this decision; and may God arrange matters. - The Arab Higher Committee'

[the Commission continued:] The boycott was maintained until we had heard most of the Jewish and British evidence and had announced the date at which we intended to leave Palestine. But on the 6th January it [the boycott] was abandoned in similar circumstances to those in which the strike had been called off." [end quote]

As of 6 January some Palestinians did testify before the Peel Commission. [>319; >198; >325]

²³⁹⁰ Peel 1937, IV §20-22; see also FO 141/675/1.

²³⁹¹ Hansard 1936c, cc250-51.

The Peel Report then evaluated the boycott:

The announcement of the terms of reference and personnel of the Royal Commission at the end of July had no effect on Arab opinion. It was argued, first, that the result of previous enquiries had shown that no recommendations favourable to the Arab cause would be implemented and, secondly, that the terms of reference precluded the Arabs from attacking the Mandate itself on the ground that it had broken an antecedent pledge. [e.g. >10; >28] Throughout August and September, therefore, the ‘disturbances’ continued.²³⁹²

The Arab representatives “were conspicuous by their absence at the opening session at Government House” on 12 November 1936, and here is what Lord Peel himself said against the boycott after Wauchope’s speech of welcome:

One large section of this population, through its leaders, has declared that it will take no part in the work of the Royal Commission. It would be most unfortunate if without their advice and assistance we were compelled to arrive at conclusions and to make decisions. A Royal Commission is an entirely independent body with no responsibility for the policy of His Majesty’s Government in the present or in the past. Is it too much to ask that all those who love Palestine and hold her future dear will join with us and share our labours?²³⁹³

It is beyond my ken whether the Commissioners loved Palestine, but Yes – for reasons given for two decades, and not for lack of love of Palestine – dignifying the embarrassing charade was too much to ask.

Furthermore, was the Royal Commission “an entirely independent body”? Could it recommend anything it wanted? Of course not. Its terms of reference [>309] allowed no room at all for abandoning the Zionist Mandate as such, which was the only issue the Palestinians regarded as a legitimate topic of discussion with HMG. This premise – that the only real issue was independence versus the Zionist aspiration for a state – would again become central in spring 1947 when the UN was deciding whether to set up the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), with the Palestinians’ Arab allies in the General Assembly unsuccessfully putting forward the motion that Palestine’s freedom be explicitly and immediately voted upon. [>455; >458-460]

11 November 1936 *The Palestine Royal Commission, led by Lord Peel, arrives in Palestine to examine the working of the Mandate and make proposals for the future; hears testimonies until February 1937.*

autumn 1936 *‘After the general strike at the end of 1936 the AE was invited to London and encouraged by Wauchope, but they refused to go.’²³⁹⁴*

²³⁹² Peel 1937, IV §13; CO 733/318/2, e.g. pp 18-19.

²³⁹³ Peel 1937, Preface §4 (p x); see also Sinanoglou 2019, p 119.

²³⁹⁴ Ghandour 2010, p 165.

Matiel E.T. Mogannam, the wife of lawyer Mogannam Ilyas [Elias] Mogannam, published in London her book *The Arab Woman and the Palestine Problem* which covered the Arabs' political thought up through 1936.²³⁹⁵ She explained that until the bloodshed of August 1929 Arab women had remained politically in the background, but that those events “resulted in the greatest change in the life of the Arab women in Palestine and in the concentration of their forces”, for

Someone must remove the stain that has been added to the history of the Arab people, who were described in a proclamation issued by the British High Commissioner [Chancellor] soon after his return from leave on September 1st, 1929, as ‘ruthless and bloodthirsty’. [205] ... Someone must be held responsible, at least in the annals of history, for all such atrocities of the twentieth century. The defence by any person of the cause of his country, though perhaps it may be unintentionally accompanied by acts of violence, is considered under many laws a criminal act, although it may appear to the perpetrator as the highest degree of duty as a citizen. (p 69)

Mogannam told of the key Congress of women on 26 October 1929 [210] and the key national conference in Yaffa of 1933 [264], describing Arab women's support for the AEC's goals and the reasons for that support: “the protection of the rights of their nation.” (pp 67-102) [also >210; >257; >269; >356]

After presenting a political history of Palestine before the Mandate (pp 105-22), Mogannam offered an extensive chronology of many of the political conferences, manifestos and other documents covered in this book, plus some not covered here, up through the appointment in 1936 of the Peel Commission [309]. She paid particular attention to the Shaw Commission [220], the economic damage done to Arabs by the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration (pp 173-80), and the “Legislative Council Scheme 1936” (pp 279-91) before giving details of the recent general strike (pp 202-306) and “Political Divisions” amongst the Arabs (pp 232-46) – although

All Arab parties are united in their national demands and in resisting the British Mandate as embracing the Zionist policy. They strongly oppose Jewish immigration and alienation of Arab lands and, although they have as their object the independence of Palestine in an Arab Federation, they are all anxious that for the present at least some constitutional reform be introduced which will restore to the Arabs their constitutional rights and enable them to take full part in the administration of their country. (pp 244-45)

After asserting that “the Zionist experiment in Palestine has failed” (p 311), Mrs. Mogannam exposed the pretense that HMG was doing some international duty against its will:

²³⁹⁵ Mogannam 1937, all quotations; also <https://www.palquest.org/en/biography/30018/matiel-mogannam>.

It is no use arguing that the Mandate was entrusted by the League of Nations to Great Britain, and that the British Government was here to discharge an international obligation. It is no more [no longer] a denied fact that the Covenant [^{>46}] was used as an instrument by the victorious Powers at Versailles [e.g. Britain] to distribute territories conquered from Germany or Turkey amongst themselves under the disguise of a Mandate. In the case of Palestine, the Mandate has imposed the Jewish National Home on the Arabs in direct contradiction to their wishes and interests. ... In the light of such bitter experience the Arabs in Palestine do not look to the League for justice or support. They have always considered the League as an international instrument used to serve the interests of its powerful members. (p 310)

Her proposed “scheme” for Palestine followed the lines of the Iraqi solution:

It should be found possible to replace the Mandate, which was never accepted by the Arabs and which is the underlying cause of all trouble, by a Treaty with the British Government, fully guaranteeing the interests of all parties [and] rights of minorities. In the Executive as in the Legislative, the Jews would be represented... Special safeguards should be devised whereby the number of the Jewish population in Palestine will not be allowed at any time to exceed the ratio which existed at the beginning of the year 1936 [about 72:28], between the Arab and the Jewish population. ... The Jews should give up their extreme ideas and content themselves to live with the Arabs, abandoning their claims to Palestine as a Jewish National Home and their idea of establishing a Jewish State. (pp 307-08)

Since a “Treaty” is by definition between polities equal in status, the connection to Britain would no longer be the co-operation of a colonised people with a coloniser. She furthermore “appreciated”, but rejected, certain well-meant proposals for cantonisation of Palestine (p 308), regarded some interests of Britain in the region as legitimate (p 309), and wished re-unification with Trans-Jordan under His Highness Amir Abdullah, but her scheme was basically no different from that of the Palestine Arab Congresses and in fact all other Palestinian or Syrian conferences.

Anthony Crossley MP [*also* >290; >342; >411] wrote in his Foreword to the book:

We [Great Britain] have colonies in every stage of self-government, bound only to the Mother Country by common allegiance to and affection for the Crown. ... It is our proud boast to-day that the British Empire is the senior trustee of Democracy and Liberty in the world. In the whole of the British Empire there is just one exception. In Palestine, the native population can only hope to share in the rule of their own country if they consent to recognize the steady immigration of Zionist Jews. It is true that the Jews lived in Palestine at the same time that the ancestors of the Welsh inhabited the pasture lands of Northampton and the Hop Gardens of Kent. It is true that the plight of the Jews is tragic, that they are driven from Germany and are bitterly unpopular and impoverished in Poland. It is true that anti-Semitism has vastly increased in a world which in thinking of civilization lays its main stress on mechanized progress. That has never appeared to me justification or excuse for importing ever-increasing numbers of Jews into a land whose existing inhabitants had every right to expect on their own behalf the sympathetic tutelage of my country. (pp 9-10)

The Palestinians were boycotting the Peel Commission during its stay in Palestine from 11 November 1936 to early January 1937 [^{>319}], but stayed in touch with High Commissioner Wauchope. Awni Abdul Hadi wrote him a **3-page statement** dated 18 December 1936 covering the root issue.²³⁹⁶ [*also >263*] At Awni Bey's request Wauchope forwarded it to Peel, adding that "As you know Awni Bey is the leader of the Istiklal party and though an extremist is an intelligent person." Awni, for his part, after stating that he assumed the Palestinians and the British shared "two objects", namely "British-Arab friendship... and permanent peace in this Holy Land", expounded the axiomatic nature of the Palestinian demand:

I believe that the Arabs are not in need of presenting new proofs to substantiate their just demands, as these demands directly affect their national existence. ... [T]he human characteristics of the Arabs cannot be complete without the realization of these demands. This fact does not need any proof. Indeed, can a man who wishes to retain the faith of his fathers and ancestors be required to prove the right which entitles him to do so? Every human being loves, and will recklessly endeavour, to belong to a free and independent nation. Would it be logical, therefore, to require the Arabs of Palestine to submit proof which will substantiate the right inherent in them which entitles them to enjoy rights enjoyable by all other nations?

The Arabs of Palestine ask for the establishment of a national Government similar to the national Governments which are enjoyed by their brethren in Syria, Iraq and Trans-Jordan. Is it, therefore, fair that we, the Arabs of Palestine exclusively, be asked to prove the right which entitles us to have a national Government established for us? There is no difference, in my opinion, if we were asked to prove that we are human beings similarly to other human beings...

An axiom is not capable of "proof". And not even Awni's British listeners would uphold individual or collective slavery. And yet the Palestinians, unless they successfully proved that they were human, could not enjoy the national freedom enjoyed by Syrians, Iraqis, Trans-Jordanians, the British or the Jewish people.

Regarding a restriction, under discussion, on Jewish immigration, Awni added:

It is...neither logical nor fair that the Arabs be required to forego their right to remain the overwhelming majority in the country as they were in the early days of the British occupation. ... To recapitulate, what is more important with regard to the immigration question is not whether such immigration is beneficial or detrimental to the economic conditions of the country but whether such immigration is detrimental to the political position of the Arabs...

The issue was not economic, and if the indigenous did not want that immigration, on democratic principles that should be final.

²³⁹⁶ CO 733/343/10, pp 3-9, all quotations.

Peel himself replied to “My dear Sir Arthur” [Wauchope]:

After reading Awni Bey’s letter I am left in doubt as to whether it is to be regarded as evidence which may be used by the Royal Commission. I have consulted my colleagues and we would suggest that, if you see no objection, Awni Bey should be informed that if he wishes to offer evidence before the Royal Commission he may do so either in person (in camera, should he so prefer) or by submitting direct to the Commission a formal statement of his views.

A formal reason for inadmissability had been found: Going through the High Commissioner was not enough for this Palestinian’s thoughts to be counted as “evidence”.

December 1936 *‘Michel Mitri, leader of the Arab Workers Society, is assassinated by the British.’*²³⁹⁷

²³⁹⁷ Mansour 1937, p 190.

The Royal Commission heard testimony in Palestine from 12 November 1936 through 17 January 1937. On 6 January, just before it was to return to Britain, the Palestinians reversed their decision to boycott the Commission, a decision they had taken (1) out of unwillingness to imply, by testifying, acceptance of the legitimacy of the Mandatory, (2) because the Royal Commission's terms of reference were restricted merely to *how* the Mandate was run, and (3) out of deep disappointment that Britain had refused to suspend immigration even for the duration of Peel's inquiry.²³⁹⁸ [^{>319}] In the end twelve Palestinian witnesses, compared with almost 100 on the British and Jewish sides, testified.²³⁹⁹

Among others, Jamal al-Husseini, Izzat Darwaza, Awni Abdul Hadi and Hajj Amin al-Husseini²⁴⁰⁰, representing the Arab Higher Committee, on 11 January²⁴⁰¹ **presented their well-known positions** against the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate, colonial tutelage in general, and immigration and land sales in particular²⁴⁰². The Commission reported the "gist of their evidence" with these words:

They frankly stated that, though they considered that they have complaints as to the way in which the Mandate has been carried out, they do not rest their case upon these grievances but that their quarrel is with the existence of the Mandate itself. ... They deny the validity of the Balfour Declaration. They have never admitted the right of the Powers to entrust a Mandate to Great Britain. ... The Arabs were... indignant when Palestine, without any consultation of its inhabitants by the Allied Powers, was severed from Syria and placed under a British Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was enshrined. ... In actual fact, the Arab witnesses maintained, the rights and position of Arabs have been prejudiced by the fall in their numerical proportions in Palestine from about 90 per cent. in 1922 to 70 per cent. today. ...[T]heir aspirations to self-rule have been disappointed... The desire for the removal of the Mandate and the establishment of national independence was thus put forward by the Arab Higher Committee as the primary cause of the disturbances.²⁴⁰³

The Commissioners saw that the problem was not "grievances", as it had been framed by previous commissions of enquiry, but British presence as such, and noted, concretely concerning the mechanisms of British politics:

The Arab Higher Committee further maintained that... [i]n particular the substitution of Mr. MacDonald's letter [^{>246}] for the White Paper of 1930 [^{>234}] and the recent rejection by Parliament of the proposals for a Legislative Council [^{>289}; ^{>290}] had convinced them that Jewish influence was too powerful to permit justice to be done.²⁴⁰⁴

²³⁹⁸ Peel 1937, pp ix-xii, IV §22.

²³⁹⁹ Antonius 1938, p 400.

²⁴⁰⁰ Palestinian Journeys (1), >"The Peel Commission".

²⁴⁰¹ Mattar 2000, p 144; see >325.

²⁴⁰² Peel 1937, IV §31-39.

²⁴⁰³ Peel 1937, IV §33, 35, 36, 39; also Kayyali 1978, p 203.

²⁴⁰⁴ Peel 1937, IV §38.

In this vein Abdul Latif Salah as President of the National Bloc on 15 and 16 January 1937 submitted statements to the Peel Commission²⁴⁰⁵ in Arabic which attested British discrimination against Arabs in the realms of immigration, gaining Palestinian citizenship, separation of governmental powers, land transfers, education, and judicial procedures (pp 6-9, 22-27) but Salah mainly asserted that

the cause of the disturbances was due to the fact that the Arabs have lost the hopes which they had in Great Britain and that they failed to obtain their rights and to attain their independence. (p 17)

After relating, from personal experience, how the Palestinians had enjoyed political rights under the Ottomans, he said they had lost those rights under the British.

We were faced with a policy which would result in depriving us of a large part of our land, which was inherited from our fathers and ancestors, in favour of an alien people, as an outcome of "placing the country in such administrative, economic and political condition as will facilitate the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine". This factor is the permanent cause for anxiety which prompts persons to disorder from time to time, and unless these rights are safeguarded and secured for the Arabs that factor will continue to exist. (p 19)

The usual argument was brought forth that the Mandate's execution was in violation of the Covenant's Article 22, and Abdul Latif insisted that the Palestinians were not a "community" but a "nation". (pp 19-21)

Dated 'Gaza, 18th January, 1937, Mayor of Gaza Fahmi El Husseini submitted eight pages²⁴⁰⁶ pleading for "the independence which Iraq, Egypt and Syria secured" (p 13). He listed a full thirty-four concrete examples of discrimination in favour of Jews, against Arabs, covering virtually every area of life. (pp 9-12)

After all this bias for the foreign Jews, who are preferred to the natives of the country, can peace be expected to prevail in Palestine? Do you wish the Arabs to accept death without even murmuring or resisting? The Palestine Arabs much prefer death to a policy aiming at their annihilation. The events of the last eighteen years have offered proof after proof of the impossibility of enforcing the Balfour Declaration in this shameful manner, and that persistence in that dangerous experiment is an horrible human tragedy taking place in the century of civilisation and progress. (p 12)

Alas, it appeared that HMG

intend to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine by means of force and violence and at whatever cost – and in that case there is no need for us to approach your honourable Commission with statements of right because right is defeated by might as we have seen in the fates of the Craine [sic., >59] and Shaw Commissions who had wept with us on the right which is killed by might... (p 6)

²⁴⁰⁵ CO 733/343/24, also further quotations.

²⁴⁰⁶ CO 733/344/2, pp 6-13.

In short,

the policy which is adopted by the British Government in Palestine is the cause of Arab revolt as moreover Government itself has showed the Arabs how to revolt and how to seek death in resisting not only the Balfour Declaration but the Mandate itself which impedes our independence.

For “before the British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration [Palestine was] a peaceful country unexperienced in riots or revolution...” (pp 6-7)

This is a good place to quote Zeina Ghandour on the many British ‘enquiries’ in the context of colonialism:

Although commissions of inquiry are independent of government, although they gather evidence, hear opinions from all sides, comb through government policies and are dedicated to objective fact finding, nonetheless the exercise takes place within the same discursive framework of the politics of the colonial state. The terms of the discussion have been pre-prescribed and the proceedings are carefully ritualized. They are enshrined in the presupposition that the white man is good at finding solutions, but we [e.g. historians], so many years later, ought not be distracted from the notion that the ‘question’ might not have arisen without the white man. In other words, commissions of inquiry ingeniously boost the government’s claim to legitimacy and righteousness.²⁴⁰⁷

Their boycotts of commissions, another instance of which would happen in the summer of 1947 when the UN Special Committee on Palestine went on a trip to Palestine [>455; >462], were their means to exit the “discursive framework” forced upon them. Ironically, the material findings of such commissions, of which there were approximately a dozen²⁴⁰⁸ [>472], were usually more favourable to the native inhabitants than to either the Jerusalem or London Governments; it is fun to imagine an *indigenous* enquiry into the behaviour of *the British*, which the British would have boycotted.

On 1 or 2 February Bishop Hajjar of the Greek Catholic Patriarchate submitted twelve pages of evidence against the Mandate.²⁴⁰⁹ He ranged from the very specific grievance that, despite the plight of the “poor fellah”, the promise made in 1932 to establish, or rather re-open, an Agricultural Bank had never been fulfilled (pp 15-16), to the insight that

The National Home means that Palestine is to become a home for one religion and to those who belong to that religion. The consequence of this is that people of other religions are to become aliens or guests. ... Jews moreover are ambitious to own the Temple of Solomon. (pp 9, 10)

As for the competing historical claims to Palestine,

²⁴⁰⁷ Ghandour 2010, p 69.

²⁴⁰⁸ E.g. King-Crane [>59], Palin [>88], Haycraft [>122], Shaw [>220], Hope Simpson [>233], Peel [>336], Woodhead [>376], and in some respects Anglo-American [>438] and Morrison-Grady [>442].

²⁴⁰⁹ CO 733/343/6, pp 6-17.

The Jews never owned except a part of Palestine for a few centuries only. ... Their rule during this period was restless; in fact it hardly existed. (pp 7, 9) [By contrast] the Palestinian Arabs are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Palestine. They have inhabited the country since thousands of years and before the Jews. (p 7)

And as of the date of his submission, the claims of 10 million Jews world-wide had no chance against those of 400 million Moslems and 800 million Christians world-wide. (p 10)

Susan Boyle gives an account of the testimony “of a half dozen Palestinian witnesses” from “January 12 to 18”, including Awni Abdul Hadi, Izzat Darwazeh, Amin al-Husseini, Jamal al-Husseini and George Antonius.²⁴¹⁰ Jamal, for instance, turned around the well-worn British position that it could not allow an independent majority government in Palestine due to its obligations to the Jews under the Mandate, saying “it was time the Zionists were informed that their demands would not be met because they contradicted British obligations to the Palestinians”; also, because the obligations to the Arabs had not been fulfilled, the Mandate was “null and void”. (p 246)

Boyle devotes much space to the testimony of Antonius in Jerusalem on 18 January, the day before Peel was to leave Palestine. Since I have not found a record of his “two-hour presentation” at the National Archives, I rely here solely on Boyle, who herself cites “George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 18 January 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869”.²⁴¹¹ What the National Archives do reveal is Antonius’s request, on stationery of the Oxford and Cambridge University Club, dated 3 April 1937, to be allowed a one-hour presentation on 9 April. Commission Secretary Martin granted the request and set the time for 11:30. Antonius said he would not go into the “causes of the trouble, but shall confine myself to the subject of possible remedies for the future”.²⁴¹²

On 18 January Antonius began by denouncing the division of Greater Syria,²⁴¹³ which “placed the country under serious disabilities from the point of view of its social and economic development, to say nothing of the denial of its independence”; further, during the Mandate “No real contact was established between the people and the central administration...”. (p 247) That central administration moreover did not take seriously the job of quantifying “the country’s absorptive capacity or... unemployment”, and administration was hard on the administrators because “officials in this country are carrying out a policy which, in many cases, they can only carry out by doing violence to their consciences”. (p 248)

Very “little effort was made to understand [the Arabs’] point of view [and] their memoranda and petitions are dismissed summarily...”, and the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva, which he personally visited, was even worse:

[T]here was not a single Arab newspaper or a single instrument for translation by which memoranda in Arabic could be intelligibly translated and considered. And this, if you please,

²⁴¹⁰ Boyle 2001, pp 245-54, also further quotations.

²⁴¹¹ Boyle 2001, p 263.

²⁴¹² CO 733/344/9, pp 1-2 & CO 793/25, p 120.

²⁴¹³ Also Boyle 2001, pp 90-92.

was when the Mandates Commission were responsible for Iraq and Syria as well as for Palestine. When I expressed surprise at this, and pointed to the shelves which contained Jewish newspapers, Zionist literature, etc., everything properly sorted and arranged, I was told [by the Director] that for budgetary reasons it had not been possible to provide a translator for Arabic language. (pp 248-49; also p 199)

Then there was discrimination on the basis of race: For the Palestine Government,

A Zionist is a man who is perfectly all right and entitled to every kind of consideration. An Arab nationalist is the devil incarnate, a revolutionary, he is spied upon, he is watched with suspicion. ... The Arab has acquired the position of the man who is watched, defended against. He is the trouble. He is the man who is suspected of flaring up at any time. It is a psychological attitude.

He then sided with “the Shaw and Hope Simpson commission reports and recommendations” to remedy the unfair loss of Palestinians’ land. (pp 249-50) [>220; >233]

Then came a political and a moral problem: First there

was the continuous British resistance to popular elections. Government’s schemes for unrepresentative legislative councils, and its failure to conduct the 1925 elections to the Supreme Muslim Council as had previously been ruled in the Order of 1921, contributed to the growing sense of grievance. ... Quite apart from the material loss involved in the displacement of people from the land, there is the more important question of the moral loss. ... The fact that they are suddenly uprooted from [the agricultural] life and driven to seek their living elsewhere, in the towns, or on the roads, or in casual labor, is a very serious loss from the moral point of view. ... [I]n estimating the factors of discontent, some attention should be paid to this very important feature of the moral loss involved. (p 251)

In closing:

[T]he question of drawing up the Mandate was one which was carried out in secret negotiations between the British government and certain of the Powers, and representatives of the Zionist Organization, in which the people directly concerned, the inhabitants of this country, had absolutely no say and were never consulted; and that Mandate, which is inconsistent with the Covenant [>46], was foisted upon the Council of the League with all the might and power of Great Britain... (p 253)²⁴¹⁴

Finally, Boyle relates Antonius’s analysis of the Royal Commission itself: After the Arabs lifted their boycott, the Commission should have prolonged its stay in Palestine to achieve some balance between their testimony and that of “nearly one hundred government officials and Zionists”; and while it had examined in detail Zionist claims as to Britain’s promises to the Jews, it refused to even consider “the McMahon-Hussein correspondence”. (p 253) The Commission’s members had even “prejudged” the case, and besides that, they were an unqualified group lacking an “economist” and anybody with “any Orientalist background”; Reginald Coupland

²⁴¹⁴ See also Peel 1937, IV §35, V §39.

was a professor, but his specialty, colonial history, [directly quoting Antonius] ‘is inappropriate since one of the main underlying causes of the trouble in Palestine is precisely that its administration is wholly inspired by the rigid conceptions of the colonial system’. (p 254)

Rigid or not, by definition the “conception of the colonial system” was the denial of a voice or a vote for the ruled. Penny Sinanoglou, by the way, writes approvingly that Coupland “was fascinated by imperial attempts to contain nationalisms” and “had developed a close bond with Chaim Weizmann”.²⁴¹⁵

A bit earlier, on 21 December 1936, an article in *al-Difa* had stated that

The Arabs of Palestine are looking at the Government with an eye of hate. [The responsibility for all the trouble fell] first on the Government then on the Jews.²⁴¹⁶

Boycotting the British, that is, also fulfilled emotional needs.

On 12 January 1937 Hajj Amin al-Husseini broke his personal boycott of the proceedings, and according to Christopher Sykes

[The Mufti] came to argue that the terms of the Mandate were inconsistent with the Covenant of the League and he made effective use of the melancholy story of the King-Crane Commission sent in 1919 by President Wilson, after abortive agreement with the Allies, to report on the future of Syria and Palestine. The [Peel] Commissioners tried to show that the anti-Zionist King-Crane report was not acceptable as evidence and the Mufti, at advantage through being better briefed, countered with all his exquisite and quiet debating ability.²⁴¹⁷

Once again, it is difficult to overemphasise the fact that suppressing the crucial King-Crane report [p.59], however inevitable this was given Zionism’s strength in the Anglo-Saxon countries, was a necessary condition for the success of Britain’s pro-Zionist regime. It was too hot for even Lord Peel to handle.

On 16 February the ‘Executive Committee of the Second Arab Orthodox Congress, Jerusalem’ sent to London its 5-page written testimony signed by ‘Y. Farradj, President’.²⁴¹⁸ While the matter “does not involve any controversy between the Jews and Arabs”, the Mandatory was obliged to guard the rights of the Arab population, including approximately 45,000 Orthodox Christians. While the Palestine Government had regulated the affairs of the Moslems and Jews, its “laissez-faire” stance towards the Orthodox Christians meant that the rank-and-file members were helpless to counter the “hellenizing of the Orthodox Patriarchate”.²⁴¹⁹ This testimony dealt neither with the Mandate as such nor with Zionism.

²⁴¹⁵ Sinanoglou 2019, pp 78, 82.

²⁴¹⁶ Kayyali 1978, p 204.

²⁴¹⁷ Sykes 1965, p 198.

²⁴¹⁸ CO 733/346/7, pp 1-5.

²⁴¹⁹ See also Robson 2011, pp 80-86, 127-38, 141-57, *passim*; Haiduc-Dale 2013.

Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden on 20 January 1937 sent a “**memorandum**” to “**Billy**”, i.e. Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore.²⁴²⁰ Eden’s thoughts can stand in for the entire Whitehall tradition of trying to placate, with racist overtones, the indigenous Palestinians by not going too far in favour of the Jewish side and taking stock of the “problem of Palestine”. At the same time they give glimpses of the gradual shift which led to the relatively pro-Palestinian position that emerged two years later in the form of the MacDonald White Paper [410], and Eden as well takes clarifying positions on immigration and the so-called “dual obligations” of the Mandate. Given that Eden knew he was writing to a pro-Zionist supporter of Partition, I suggest that he biased his words somewhat away from his actual position against turning any part of Palestine into a Jewish state. Excerpts:

The nature of the problem of Palestine has been much obscured and confused by the activities and ambitions of the extremists on both sides. The Arabs [are] ill-schooled in the comprehension of western thought, bitterly resentful of what they regard as our betrayal of their interests during and after the war, prone to every kind of absurd over-statement partly by temperament and partly as a result of a long tradition of asking for twice what they might hope to get. ... On the other hand, the Jews – though with infinitely more skill and delicacy of touch, and with a close and intimate comprehension of our probable reactions – have in fact urged claims no less extreme and used threats of a no less sweeping character [and Weizmann] contemplates... a predominantly Jewish Palestine, in which Jews shall ultimately amount to 80, or 90, or even perhaps 100, per cent of the population. (pp 2-3)

After recounting the real and unjust Jewish suffering in Europe, he claimed:

But this is a world problem of the same type as that of the pressure of the surplus population of Japan and Italy, or of the redistribution of raw materials and the breaking down of trade barriers. ... However, even if Palestine were, as the Jews like to represent it, a practically empty place capable of absorbing an infinite number of Jewish refugees, it is neither practical nor just to regard the Palestine problem simply as a means of escape from a major world problem of such proportions. The Palestine problem is in fact essentially the problem of Palestine. (p 4)

Did he mean a problem to be solved by the Palestinians?

In any case, in resisting shifting the ‘problem’ from Europe to Palestine, Eden presaged the public debate starting at the Évian-Les-Bains refugee conference of 6-15 July 1938 – where the Dominican Republic was the only one of the 31 countries present willing to take in a large number of Jews (100,000).²⁴²¹ That debate continued at the **highest levels**

²⁴²⁰ CO 733/332/11, pp 200-08, also further quotations.

²⁴²¹ Sykes 1965, pp 223, 228.

of the U.K. and U.S. governments all through the early post-war years: Why should the Palestinians foot the bill for the *European* persecution of Jews? Eden called it “impracticable... in an already inhabited territory the size of Wales”. (p 5)

Let us remain with this theme a bit longer. According to Quigley, in 1946 and 1947

Morris Ernst, Roosevelt’s advisor, decried ‘the hypocrisy of closing our own doors while making sanctimonious demands on the Arabs’ [and] Pakistan’s UN delegate [Mohammed Zafarullah Khan – *see also* >478] commented, sarcastically: ‘Australia, an overpopulated small country with congested areas says no, no, no; Canada, equally congested and overpopulated, says no, the United States, a great humanitarian country, a small area, with small resources, says no ... they state: let them go to Palestine, where there are vast areas, a large economy and no trouble; they can easily be taken in there.’²⁴²²

At this stage the Palestinians repeatedly criticised British and general Western hypocrisy on this aspect of the immigration issue which had been burning for almost two decades. According to Kelemen, the supposedly humanitarian Labour Party, for its part, “even in 1938, with the Nazis forcing a still faster pace to Jewish emigration,... did not urge that greater numbers be permitted to enter Britain.”²⁴²³

Eden went on to discuss what the Passfield White Paper and Peel Commission, *inter alia*, called the “two” or “dual obligations” Britain had incurred, holding that British promises “in their present form” to the “two sets of people” are “incompatible”. (p 4) On this issue of logic he was disagreeing with the Passfield White Paper and agreeing with the Peel Commission, which soon would correctly observe that the Palestine Government had had to “discharge the contradictory obligations of the Mandatory”, that the “obligations” are not “mutually compatible”, that “the obligations... have proved irreconcilable”.²⁴²⁴ [*also* >242]

Of course, so Eden further, “if Palestine is turned, as the Zionists very naturally desire, into a Jewish state, or a state with a Jewish majority, [the Palestinians] will regard their ‘position’ as very definitely ‘prejudiced’...”, contrary to Balfour-Declaration promises. (p 5) To achieve “fair balance between the two conflicting obligations which our predecessors have imposed upon us” he saw either the probable Peel “geographic [two-state] solution” or what he seems to prefer, a “demographic” solution wherein the ratio of Jews to non-Jews would be kept fixed. (p 6) [*also* >314] Noteworthy is that Eden acknowledged that it was preceding British Governments, not the League of Nations, which had “imposed” – bequeathed – the situation on the present Government. Also, it had taken twenty years for the top of a British government – the Peel Commission, Foreign Minister Eden and Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore – to realise what the Palestinians had said all along, namely the incompatibility of the Balfour Declaration and the political rights of those already residing on the land.

²⁴²² Quigley 1990, pp 33-34.

²⁴²³ Kelemen 1996, p 83.

²⁴²⁴ Passfield 1930, *passim*; Peel 1937, XIX §3, XX §3 & 17; *also* XVIII §11, IX §1, 11-13, XIX §11, XX §3, 5, 6, 13.

Typical for many Anglo-Zionists, Christopher Sykes would later attribute the incompatibility of Britain's 'dual obligations' not to logic but to the incompatibility of the two peoples:

The whole notion of 'equality of obligation' was nonsensical. Such dichotomy is only possible where there is something like equality of circumstance, and there was none between the Zionist Jews and the indigenous people. In economic standard of life, in ability and enterprise, the great majority of the Jews were hundreds of years in advance of the great majority of the Arabs, and at the same time the title of the Arabs to political mastery in this Arabic-speaking land was infinitely stronger than that of the Jews, judged not only by historical precedent but by the basic policy declared by the victors in the First World War.²⁴²⁵

That is, the Jews were superior human beings, but the Arabs had an "infinitely stronger" claim to political ownership of Palestine. If the latter claim is true, then the "obligations" *should not be* "equal"; maybe the British had much less, or no, obligation to the Jews whatsoever. But in Sykes' formulation the unequal treatment could work the other way, with the inferior Arabs not quite deserving to enjoy the political rights they were conceded to possess.

²⁴²⁵ Sykes 1965, p 40.

Through the Jewish Agency organisation, the Jewish Zionists of the world had had Mandate-approved *de jure* access to the High Commissioners as well as *de facto* access to the Colonial Secretaries for almost twenty years. In an attempt to bring the Palestinians at least up to a parity position, perhaps balancing HMG's dual obligations, Hathorn Hall, Chief Secretary to the Palestine Government, on 23 January 1937 proposed to the Royal Commission a parallel Arab organisation.²⁴²⁶ Hall recounted the justification of the similar 1923 'Arab Agency' proposal of then Colonial Secretary Victor Cavendish [^{>167; >170; >172}], writing:

No solution could be durable if it were [sic.] imposed by force against the will of any large section of the Community. ... On the one hand there was an agency representing the Jews of all the Diaspora, a people of sixteen million, possessed of immense financial and political influence and containing men of the widest political, administrative and professional experience, men of world-wide reputation and of outstanding qualities of brain and character. On the other hand there was to be an Arab Agency representing only some 800,000 Arabs of Palestine, an impoverished and for the most part illiterate community, whose so-called leaders were, and remain, inexperienced, ignorant, corrupt and irresponsible. ... If agreement is ever to be reached between Arabs and Jews they must be placed on terms approaching equality... (pp 27, 28)

Let us ignore the racist Eurocentrism here. The Jews, so Hall further, should no longer feel they can pressure London to help achieve their Jewish state without counterpressure from an Arab agency, which HMG would hear before making any decisions. (pp 30-31) Unlike the one proposed in 1923, this "Arab Agency" would 1) be headquartered in London, thus obtaining, like the Jewish Agency, access to top officials in both Jerusalem and London, and 2) include the Arab states surrounding Palestine ("Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and eventually Syria") in a way similar to the Jewish Agency's inclusion of world Jewry. (pp 30, 32-34) Hall also wanted the Arab states' representatives, plus two Moslem and one Christian Palestinian ("appointed by a process of election [sic.]", to have "an Arab assembly comparable with the Vaad Leumi" (p 35) He also recommended that "Jewish immigration into Palestine be drastically and arbitrarily restricted over a period of years". (p 31)

In March, High Commissioner Wauchope supported Hall's proposals – aside from the one on immigration – in a note to Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore, saying it was not right that the Jewish Agency should have "the right of access not only to High Commissioner but also to the Secretary of State" while the Arabs did not; he regretted that there was no more Arab Executive as there had been from 1920 until around 1933.²⁴²⁷ Ormsby-Gore,

²⁴²⁶ CO 733/349/21, pp 26-37, 'A proposal to create an Arab Agency, Memorandum by the Chief Secretary', 23 January 1937, some following quotations; Porath 1977, p 227.

²⁴²⁷ CO 733/349/21, pp 16-20.

however, in the end rejected the entire scheme while Peel sat on the fence.²⁴²⁸ High officials such as Cosmo Parkinson, O.R.G. Williams and John Shuckburgh discussed the Hall/Wauchope proposal at length,²⁴²⁹ but so far as I know the views of the Palestinians were not accessed. They would have rejected it outright, as they had in 1923, because Palestine belonged to them and parity was unjust.

²⁴²⁸ CO 733/349/21, pp 8, 21-23, 11-12.

²⁴²⁹ CO 733/349/21, pp 2-7, 9-10.

The Arab Higher Committee on 8 February 1937 **made public their written statement**, dated 11 January 1937,²⁴³⁰ to the Peel Commission:

The Arab higher Committee makes public through this pamphlet the text of the Memorandum submitted by the Arabs of Palestine to the British Royal Commission, which came here to investigate the fundamental causes of the 1936 disturbances and the Palestine problem in general.

In making this statement, the Arab Higher Committee calls the attention of the whole world, and particularly the Moslem and Arab peoples, to the dangers of the tragedy that is being inflicted on the Arabs of Palestine to-day. The country is subjected to every aspect of imperialistic rule. Jews from the four corners of the earth are being crowded into it, and arriving, are given complete mastery over its original inhabitants. The Legislative, Administrative, and Political departments of our country's rule, contrary to all laws of logic and principles of justice and sane economy, are being exploited in the interests of the Zionist policy. All this is being forced upon us in utter disregard of the Arab right to a national existence, and carried out with terrorization and threats to our very means of life.

The Arabs have for the past eighteen years denounced this policy of despotism, and protested there-against by every peaceful method at their command. They demanded no more than justice. But the British Government has consistently and resolutely turned a deaf ear to their petitions, wholly ignoring their grievances and their rightful demands. It has unbrokenly pursued a policy in which ignorance and despotism are enshrined. This inevitably has led to the series of riots and disturbances which culminated in the widespread outbreak in the summer of 1936. Then it was that the Arabs of all ranks, in city and village alike, declared their remonstrance in a strike which lasted for half a year. Every sphere of activity was affected thereby, and the country was subjected to bloodshed, death, and imprisonment. The Arabs faced these tragedies bravely, with hearts full of faith and minds serene with patience. Nothing could better prove how deeply they felt the wounds of imperialism, how grievously they were aware of a danger which threatened not only their national life, but their bodily existence, even in the shadow of a ruthless despotism.

“Peaceful methods” were seen to not be enough based on eighteen years of daily dealings with the British, but in my opinion two events were conclusive proof of “despotism”: the Black Letter of 13 February 1931 and Parliament's rejection of the Legislative Council in February and March 1936.²⁴³¹ [>246; >289-290]

The Arabs of Palestine were made to face the mobilized forces of Imperial Britain and the insatiable ambitions of World Jewry. Nevertheless, though a mere handful, they have courageously stood their ground, and with unflinching hearts they have neither weakened nor let

²⁴³⁰ Mattar 2000, p 144, citing *The Jerusalem and the East Mission*, MEC, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, LXIV/2; see also >322.

²⁴³¹ Peel 1937, III §98 (*concurring*).

themselves be crushed. In spite of all this, however, being few in number and ill-equipped in the modern means of self-defense, they can never keep up their resistance if left to face these gigantic powers alone.

Therefore they send out anew their call for aid to the Arab people, and to the whole world of Moslems and Christians. They must defend their integrity against the imperialistic net set out for them, and save themselves from the harms and dangers that hang above their heads. They call upon their brethren to see that Great Britain desist from pursuing this inhuman encroachment and oppression which denies them all things; that Great Britain grant to the Arabs their natural and political rights; that World Jewry shall learn that Palestine is not friendless and alone in this world struggle, but is still the centre of hope and aspiration of Arabs, Moslems, and Christians from all the corners of the earth; that the Arab people and the Moslem world shall take no rest until they are assured that Palestine shall maintain for ever its Arab character and blood.²⁴³²

This call to international Christians as well as Moslems makes me aware of the fact that during the Mandate years there was precious little international *Christian* solidarity with the indigenous Palestinians.

²⁴³² Center for Online Judaic Studies: <http://cojs.org/february-8-1937-arab-higher-committee-peel-com-mission/> "Source: 82, pp. 317-320".

326. Chancellor to Royal Commission

12 February 1937

John Chancellor, 3rd High Commissioner of Palestine (6 December 1928 – 1 November 1931), **was one of the 62 witnesses speaking to the Peel Commission in secret** ('in camera')²⁴³³ – a group including: 1) such other former officials as Winston Churchill [*see >327*], Eric Mills, General John Dill, David Lloyd George, Hathorn Hall, Arthur Wauchope and Nevill Barbour; 2) twenty international-Jewish or British-Jewish Zionists including Herbert Samuel, Arthur Ruppin, Moshe Shertok, Colonel Kisch, Moshe Smelansky and Chaim Weizmann; 3) a half-dozen Christian Reverends; and 4) a single solitary Moslem Palestinian, Musa Effendi Nasir [*see >329*]. (Before the Commission Kisch described himself as Chairman of the Jewish Agency and head of its Political Department from 1923 to 1931, and prefaced his pro-Zionist testimony by saying, "I have a dual position as an Englishman and a Jew"²⁴³⁴ – once again highlighting the non-existence of a category 'an Englishman and a Palestinian Arab'. Albert Hourani would soon appear as a lone 'Englishman and Arab'.)

Chancellor first recommended that HMG 1) go back to the 1922 White Paper [*>142*], rather than to the 1930 Passfield White Paper [*>234*], as the basis of policy, 2) follow John Hope Simpson's recommendations on land and immigration [*>233*], 3) set up a Legislative Council whose "powers" are "reserved to the Government", 4) move the *Sharia* courts from the Supreme Moslem Council into a separate Government department, and 5) get a better objective grip on the actual economic absorptive capacity of the country. (p 457) Recommendations (1) and (3) were markedly anti-Palestinian.

He then told of the time in spring 1930 when he issued 3,300 immigration certificates for the coming quarter, unaware that Passfield had just ordered a suspension of immigration (which was soon rescinded due to Zionist pressure); he also re-asserted that the Mandate's Articles 2, 6 and 11 [*>146*] could be used for "the protection of the indigenous population" over against extreme Zionist demands, to end the alienation of Jewish-possessed lands from Arabs, to set up a co-operative credit bank for poor peasants, and to secure by law their *lot viable*. (pp 458-59; also p 465/§8198-8204)

While previous immigration policy had been in line with the Zionist wish that *economic* absorptive capacity be the only limiting criterion, the Passfield White Paper had added political criteria, with which Chancellor was in agreement, but, as Chairman Peel said, "Lord Passfield's Statement a short time later was over-ruled by the letter written by the Prime Minister of the day [Ramsay MacDonald] to Dr. Weizmann" [*>246*]. (p 458) Chancellor then told Peel that during his stint in Palestine the Government had never considered buying Arab land and selling it to Jews, as this "could not be done without causing hardship to the Arabs", but that yes, he had "in practice" not allowed political considerations

²⁴³³ FO 492/20, pp 457-70, all citations. The minutes of these secret sessions were opened to the public on 22 March 2017. CO 793/25 records numerous files 'destroyed under statute' or 'missing', e.g. pp 58, 63, 64, 76-79, 133, 139, 148, 189, 190,

²⁴³⁴ FO 492/20, pp 363 ff.

to lower the number of immigration permits; he however agreed “that the question of preventing the swamping of the Arabs by the Jewish immigrants should be taken into account”, the more so as the natural increase in the Arab population required land. (p 460; also p 465/§8206)

At about this time, namely on 19 January 1937, Eric Mills in his role as Commissioner for Migration and Statistics and the [Palestine] Government Statistician had compiled for the benefit of the Commission an 18-page “confidential” treatise consisting of “notes on the ‘economic considerations’ and some practical aspects of ‘absorptive capacity’”.²⁴³⁵ This document is for connoisseurs only.

On this question of reducing immigration on criteria of *political* absorptive capacity, Churchill on 12 March 1937 would give to the Royal Commission an ambiguous yet clearly more pro-Zionist answer. [p.327] Nevill Barbour, on the other hand, an Arabist who would serve in Palestine during World War II, stated unequivocally on 18 December 1936 before the Commission:

I consider the economic absorptive capacity to be an insufficient safeguard for the existing population, because the motives of the colonization are not economic but political, and the Jews are prepared to make great sacrifices in order to gain these ends.²⁴³⁶

Yes, Zionism had always financially been a losing proposition for international Jewish groups. But the main point was that native Palestinians resisted immigrants with an agenda of unfriendly takeover.

Chancellor maintained that HMG had never considered that the Jewish ‘National Home’ become a Jewish ‘State’; in line with his recommendations (2) and (5) he believed that the present political situation justified stopping all immigration “for the present”, but that “enormous” Zionist pressure, even “from America”, would have to be resisted; and when asked whether now, when the Jewish population was 400,000, the Jewish National Home was “established”, he answered: “Certainly. I think [it] would have been established with half that number”. (p 461; also p 462/§8124)

Commission member Horace Rumbold asked, “I suppose you would also say that since 1922, and indeed, since you were there, this national feeling among the Arabs had developed very strongly?” To which Chancellor replied, “Very much. I prophesied that nationalism would grow after the disturbances of 1929.” (p 461) [see >205; >207; >210] When Rumbold also stated, “The principle of economic absorptive capacity is based on the economic absorptive capacity of the Jews who are there, not on that of the Arabs”, Chancellor said “Yes, because the Jews employ only Jews.” (p 463) [see >230; >233; >246] He also recalled how “moderate” Palestinians such as Musa Kazem al-Husseini, Ragheb Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husseini had been willing to be *nominated* to a Legislative Council, but agreed that today, were they to accept such a nomination, they could very well be killed by Palestinian “extremists”. (pp 464-65; also pp 468-69/§8269-77)

²⁴³⁵ CO 733/346/14, pp 3-21.

²⁴³⁶ FO 492/20, p 180.

He found opportunity to mention that “I made suggestions for amending the clauses of the Mandate specially favouring the Jews in my despatch of the 17th January, 1930” [218], but the Government was unwilling to approach the League of Nations on the subject. (p 467/§8246) He also observed that since the Arabs had turned down the Cavendish Committee’s offer [172] of an Arab Agency to parallel the Jewish Agency, “they have no means of presenting their case.” He added, “Yes, they are practically inarticulate.” (p 467/§8255) However, “The Arabs resented the suggestion that they, like the Jews, should be represented by an Agency in their own country. They felt that their *amour propre* was involved.” (p 468/§8264) The Palestinians, in their own country, had always rejected both the crippling of their sovereignty and the collective political parity of the Jewish-Zionist immigrants, yet Chancellor ascribed this to “*amour propre*”.

Prompted by Rumbold concerning the troublesome Mufti, Chancellor said, “I think a change of air to the Seychelles would not be a bad thing.” Commissioner Laurie Hammond: “Dr. Weizmann suggested a holiday in Cyprus.” Rumbold: “That is much too close.” Chancellor: “Yes. Seychelles is the place.” (p 468) The decision to exile the Mufti and the rest of the leaders of the Arab Higher Committee to the Seychelles would be made seven months later. [339; 346; 366]

After discussing the great potential for recruiting moderate Jewish Zionists or non-Zionists to counter-balance the strength of the “extreme” Revisionist Zionists, and reminding themselves that the *al-Buraq*/Western Wall dispute still simmered “because the Jews have never admitted that the Wailing Wall is a Moslem Holy Place”, Chancellor rejected both “cantonization” and partition; he then answered a question from Peel, namely whether there was a “chance of these two sets of people working comfortably together in agreement and forming a Palestinian country with Palestinian citizens”, replying, “It is hopeless.” He added, “I think the negotiations with the Jewish Agency after the publication of the 1930 White Paper were a mistake. The Jews said they would not co-operate.” Hammond: “The Arabs called it the ‘White Paper’ and the Prime Minister’s letter the ‘Black Letter’”. [234; 246] Chancellor: “That letter to Weizmann caused consternation in Palestine.” (pp 469-70) [247] Early 1931 had indeed been for the Palestinians the turning point, after which the fruits of dialogue and co-operation were seen as illusory.

This 8-page entry covers the Peel Commission's interviews in camera (in secret sessions) with Winston Churchill, who with Herbert Samuel sits at the top of the rankings for the most important British Zionists. (To my knowledge, the transcripts of the secret sessions²⁴³⁷ were only opened to the public in 2017.)

On 12 March 1937 **Winston Churchill MP told the Royal Commission in secret session** what he thought, and had always thought, about Palestine.²⁴³⁸ The following passages from the 'Minutes of Evidence', secret as they were, were not read or heard by Palestinians in so many words, but they are relevant to any study of the attitudes towards the Palestinian Arabs felt by this man who from the very beginning, along with Herbert Samuel, contributed the most to the verbal, political and military mistreatment of the indigenous people. All italics in this entry are mine.

Commission Chairman Peel first asked about the numbers of European Jewish immigrants – whether “the principle of the economic absorptive capacity in the control of immigration should be an upper limit”. Churchill: “Yes, a limiting factor, but not the sole limiting factor.” How the other possible factor – namely *political* absorptive capacity – might be applied as a limit does not during his testimony become clear, but he did add the point that immigration “is always governed... by the [political] fact that we are trying to bring in as many [Jews] as we possibly can in accordance with the original Balfour Declaration.” Evidently attempting to clear this issue up, Peel and Commission Member Laurie Hammond then countered that present policy, as stated in MacDonald's 1931 Black Letter to Weizmann [246] was that “The considerations relevant to the limits of absorptive capacity are purely economic considerations.”²⁴³⁹ (pp 500-01) No political criteria, that is.

Questioned then on the stand on immigration of the 1922 White Paper, written by him, Samuel and Shuckburgh [142], Churchill tried to clarify:

The paper must be taken as a whole, but we undertook to try to bring them in as quickly as we could without upsetting the economic life of the country or throwing it into political confusion. I certainly never considered they were entitled no matter what other consequences arose, to bring in up to the limit of the economic absorptive capacity. That was not intended. On the other hand, it must be made clear that our loyalty is on the side of bringing in as many as we can. ... I insist upon the loyalty and upon the good faith of England to the Jews... [W]e are bound by honour, and I think upon the merits, to push this thing as far as we can. (p 501)

Out of initial muddlement emerged after all a relatively clear Churchillian stance: “push this thing”. As we have seen, the actions of the Mandatory show that the *political* immi-

²⁴³⁷ FO 492/20. (= FO 492/19 & FO 492/21)

²⁴³⁸ FO 492/20, pp 500-08/\$8626-8735, all quotations.

²⁴³⁹ MacDonald 1931, §15.

gration criterion of what was fair and acceptable to the country's majority never played any role, as immigration was not only not halted – as wished by the majority – but amounted to roughly 400,000 between 1917 and 1937. (>Appendices 6-8)²⁴⁴⁰

Peel continued:

Now we come to the meaning of the Jewish National Home. ... There is nothing laid down... in the Mandate itself as to the numbers of Jews who should come in or their [numerical] relation to the Arabs. ... [T]he fear is now very intense on the part of the Arabs that the Jews coming in, if they come in at the same rate – and 60,000 came in in the year 1935 – will, within a limited number of years, overtop the Arabs, and in that case, instead of being a Jewish Home, in Palestine, become a Jewish State. ... [N]obody really knows, and it is not defined in the Mandate as to whether you did contemplate that, in the course of immigration and so on, the Jews should be in a majority. That terrifies the Arabs, of course. They know *they are* – *I will call them* – *an inferior race* in many ways to the Jews. ... The point I am putting to you is, what is the conception you have formed yourself of the Jewish National Home? (p 502)

Churchill:

The conception undoubtedly was that, if the absorptive capacity over a number of years and the breeding over a number of years, *all guided by the British Government*, gave an increasing Jewish population, that population should not in any way be restricted from reaching a majority position. Certainly not. On the contrary, I think in the main that would be the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. As to what arrangement would be made to safeguard the rights of the new minority, that obviously remains open, but certainly we committed ourselves to the idea that some day, somehow, far off in the future, subject to justice and economic convenience, there might well be a great Jewish State there, numbered by millions, far exceeding the present inhabitants of the country and to cut them off from that would be a wrong. (p 502)

Churchill here inaugurated the third phase of talk of “safeguards” that any constitution for Palestine must have. During the first twenty or so years of the Mandate the talk had been of “safeguarding” the Arab population, a *majority*, within the wording of the pro-Zionist Balfour Declaration, Churchill White Paper and Mandate. [>16; >142; >146] Then, once the prospect of an Arab country with a Jewish minority loomed in anybody's imagination – already during the re-examination of 1930 but mainly later, within HMG during 1938-39 as culminated in the MacDonald White Paper [>410; >394ff] – the “safeguards” discussed were for the *Jewish* minority. [>52-53; >78; >289-90; >383; >389-396; >412; >446-447; >453; >458; >468; >488] Now Churchill was speaking of safeguards for a future *Palestinian* minority.

In any case, while the political status and welfare of the ‘Arabs’ “remains open”, the commitment to the Jews was “certain”. Churchill then spelled out his Palestine philosophy:

But, on this question, we never committed to making Palestine a Jewish Home. We said that there should be a Jewish Home in Palestine, but if more and more Jews gather to that Home and all is worked from age to age, from generation to generation, with justice and fair con-

²⁴⁴⁰ Also Peel 1937, Appendix 4.

sideration to those *displaced* and so forth, certainly it was contemplated and intended that they might in the course of time become an overwhelmingly Jewish State. ... No one has ever said what is to be the rate at which it is to be done. *The British Government is the judge and should keep the power to be the judge.* ... Naturally all the Jews in the world would not go and live there, but if it is a centre which will attract Jews from outside and if the attraction can be kept within the limits of the economic absorptive capacity, and also what I may call the management of the British Government, which is the responsible Government, there are no limits assigned at all. If more Jews rally to this Home, the Home will become *all Palestine eventually*, provided that at each stage there is no *harsh* injustice done to the other residents. (p 502)

That is: 1) foreign control would have to last from “age to age”, “from generation to generation”, with no more trace of a temporary ‘tutelage’; 2) non-Jews would be “displaced” (“and so forth”!); 3) the only question was the *rate at which* the increase in the Jewish population, respectively the displacement of Arabs, should proceed; 4) Britain would determine everything; 5) one limit was British ability to “manage” uprisings with force; 6) Palestine would – and should – “eventually” be a Zionist state; and 7) injustice was OK, just not “harsh” injustice.

Switching unabashedly to the a-political, a-moral level, Churchill asked:

Why is there *harsh* injustice done if people come in and make a livelihood for more and make the desert into palm groves and orange groves? Why is it injustice because there is more work and wealth for everybody? There is no injustice. The injustice is when those who live in the country leave it to be desert for thousands of years. (p 502)

The political and morally irrelevant questions of whether the Palestinians had in fact left their country a “desert” and whether, due to the JNH, they had become materially better off, were of course contested. But even if, from his high perch, he simply did not grasp that the Palestinians’ concerns were political rather than economic, that they would prefer hardship to slavery, if it came to that, this man knew that, lacking a moral or political argument, material economic growth was Zionism’s only politically-correct trump.

Member Rumbold then asked whether “All that has been strengthened by things like the policy of the Nazi Government in Germany and the economic pressure on the Jews in Poland”, to which Churchill replied, “That makes it more poignant, but it does not oblige us to do any active injustice to Arabs because of the injustice done to Jews in Europe. We have to see that they do not come in such numbers that they upset the country and create unfair conditions and *we are the judges of that, and the sole judges in my opinion.*” (p 502) Churchill was always good for a surprise: He here admitted, even if these words had no influence on his own or HMG’s behaviour over the years, that it was wrong to make Palestine pay for Europe’s sins. Since at this stage the policy of compulsory transfer of people was still in the running²⁴⁴¹, one of the things HMG would be the “sole judges” of would be such ethnic cleansing – which however would apparently not count as “active injustice to Arabs”.

²⁴⁴¹ Peel 1937, XXII §36, 42-43, IX §63-64, 87.

Rumbold then asked, “If this policy results in periodic disturbances, costing us the lives of our men and so on?” Churchill implied that this price must be paid, but switched back to the Jewish-majority-state theme:

I would have a good Gendarmerie out there to *get a good hold of the place*. In my opinion, all questions of self-government in Palestine are subordinate to the discharge of the Balfour Declaration – the idea of creating a National Home for the Jews and facing all the consequences which may ultimately in the slow passage of time result from that. ... I do not say that it should be a Jewish State necessarily. It might be a State in which there would be a great majority of Jews. ... It would, no doubt, be a Palestinian State. (p 502)

Another surprise: The phrase “Palestinian State” was, incidentally, as good as never used in HMG’s ruminations and statements of policy on Palestine.

Peel then raised the Zionists’ sealing off their land and economy to future ownership and labour participation by Arabs:

Land is being acquired from the Arabs by the Jews and when that land is acquired... it shall never be alienable to the Arabs again and Arabs are not, in fact, employed upon it. That frightens them? [Churchill:] I think the Mandatory Power should talk to the Jewish people about it and say how foolish they are to do it and how wrong. ‘If you cannot ease the situation in the way of employing more Arabs, if you cannot get on better terms with these Arabs, that is a reason for our reducing immigration in any given year.’ (p 503)

Out of character, Churchill was here siding with the arguments of the Shaw and Hope Simpson reports and the Passfield White Paper, as well as Palestinian demands since the beginning of the Mandate [>220; >233; >234; >243; >247]. His direct responsibility for Palestine policy had ended on 19 October 1922, and wouldn’t re-materialise until he took over as PM on 12 May 1940, but in between he had had plenty of (untaken) opportunities to lobby for “reducing immigration” on such grounds.

Hammond then repeated Rumbold’s question of the cost to Britain, asking whether, “If this policy provokes... periodical disturbances, is it right for the Mandatory Power to sacrifice the lives of its own subjects in order to fulfil its [Balfour Declaration] obligation”. Churchill replied obliquely and cowardly: “Either do that or give it [Palestine] up.” (p 503)

Member Reginald Coupland, an Oxford Professor who would be the main author of the Royal Commission’s Report [>336], registered an objection to Britain’s pro-Zionist policy:

I cannot help thinking there was a moral assumption from the outset, not expressed, and that was that sooner or later or somehow or other, the Arabs, recognizing the *economic* advantage which people expected to come from the Jewish immigration, recognizing that they have got that, would come to acquiesce even in the gradual development of the Jewish majority. That has not come about. Surely, the assumption was that, if you for any reason, such as pure pigheadedness, if you like, or still more, through the rise of Arab nationalism, they did not acquiesce, and even your policy could not persuade them to acquiesce – surely the moral assumption was that you could not go on *forcing* it, that you should not make it a *creeping invasion* and conquest of Palestine spread over half a century, which is a thing unheard of in history? (p 503)

Churchill dodged Coupland's question. Instead of answering the "moral" point, he said merely, "It is not a creeping conquest", to which Coupland rejoined, "If you are always hitting them on the head? ... Every few years – I am not suggesting this is my view; but I think it wants meeting – every few years you go on shooting Arabs down because they dislike the Jews coming in?" Churchill countered, "Have there not been many more Jews murdered than Arabs?" Coupland: "More Arabs get killed in the end." Laurie Hammond concurred: "More Arabs are killed than Jews." Churchill replied, "That follows because we are the stronger power." Sir Horace Rumbold then intervened, saying "It would logically follow that as we conquered Palestine we can dispose of it as we like? ... You conquer a nation: you have given certain pledges the result of which has been that the indigenous population is subject to the invasion of a foreign race." (p 503) (At times this interrogation reads as if the Palestinians' arguments had finally been accepted.)

Giving us an example of how British colonialists could combine erudition and good breeding with brute force ("we are the stronger power"), Churchill replied:

A foreign race? Not at all. [The Jews were t]he people who had it before that indigenous population came in and inhabited it. ... When the Mohammedan upset occurred in world history and the great hordes of Islam swept over these places they broke it all up, they smashed it all up. ... I have a great regard for the Arabs, but at the same time you find that where the Arab goes it is often desert. (p 503)

Aside from the historical inaccuracy of this historian's putting Jewish possession of Palestine immediately before the Moslem takeover, Churchill was making the basic point that because the Jews allegedly "had" Palestine before the present "indigenous" population, their claim was superior; all that counted was the dates of the two claims – without of course asking who was there before the ancient Jews. In any case Rumbold then interjected that "They [the Arabs] created a good deal of civilisation in Spain." Churchill's associative *non sequitur*: "I am glad they were thrown out." Rumbold: "They were there six or seven hundred years and they did a great deal there. It has gone back since they left Cordova." Churchill: "It is a lower manifestation, the Arab." (p 503)

On the issue of immigration again, Churchill was then led to reflect:

Are we going too fast [with immigration]? We want these races to live together and to *minister to their well-being*. Their well-being would be greatly enhanced if they did not quarrel. ... [I]f you go too fast and you have these furious outbreaks, then you must go a bit slower. But you must not give in to the furious outbreaks; you must quell them. (p 504)

The paternalism aside, this was what he had called the British "management" of the political situation. (p 502)

To Peel's suggestion that the Arabs' "great grievances" might warrant a re-examination of "the position between the two races", Churchill replied, "[I]n my opinion the Mandate overrides the self-governing institutions." Peel:

I should like your view on that. ... Article 2 of the Mandate ... [gives HMG] two parallel duties [to the JNH and to 'all the inhabitants of Palestine'; see >146]. [We] would also be responsible for the development of self-governing institutions, because *the argument of the Arabs* is that

they are prevented from having these because the Mandatory Power says, 'No, if you have them, you will use them in order to diminish the [JNH] obligation... and perhaps put the Jews out of the country.' A curious thing happens. I presume if the Jews get a majority, as soon as they have a majority you might establish self-governing institutions, because it would not then conflict with the establishment of a Jewish National Home. The Arabs say, '*That is very odd self-government: it is only when the Jews are in a majority that we can have it.*' (p 504)

Churchill then affirmed the Arabs' opinion as Peel had just paraphrased it:

I think that is inherent in the conditions under which the country fell under our charge, so quite definitely, in my opinion, the self-governing aspect, although important, is not superior but inferior to the *prime* obligation in the [Balfour] declaration under which we went into this country. ... It is a question of administrative capacity, one side to concede and the other side to forbear, but to do that you *have to have your force, your power, your control.* ... [Suppose] the Italians come in if they want to. ... They would use ruthless force: they would kill the whole lot of their opponents; kill them all off. ... Both races have to think of these things. We are a very gentle and kindly power. We have done nothing to hurt these people. We have every right to strike hard in support of our authority. (p 504)

I beg readers' pardon in confessing that the word that penetrates my mind when I read these words is 'lunatic'. To the extent that he is even coherent, the words literally boil down to the philosophy that authority, acquired through might, makes right if you "gently and kindly... strike hard".

Peel persisted:

The Arabs are so far right in saying that it is the entry of the Jews and the Jewish Home and so on which prevent them from having these self-governing institutions, to which they think, as the people of the country, they have a claim. (p 504)

Churchill's answer:

It limits the rate at which those [self-governing institutions] can be developed as long as they do not accept the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. The moment they accept that spirit, with all the pledges of their *civil* liberties, the question falls to the ground. (p 504)

The Catch-22 was that in order to get self-governing institutions, the Arabs had to give up literal and political possession of their country, i.e. give up the possibility of self-governing institutions. He then added the trope that "it is *for the good of the world* that the place should be cultivated and it will never be cultivated by the Arabs." (p 504)

A bit later Harold Morris similarly asked, "Knowing that the Arabs were opposed to [the JNH policy], how could you possibly get administrative government or self-government in Palestine, unless you had got a majority?" Churchill: "That is what I said. Self-government must yield to the obligations of the Mandate. You must not abandon the *prime* obligation of the Mandate for the sake of self-government... When you buy an estate it has certain charges upon it and you have to pay those charges." (p 506) This last sentence was hogwash: the British "bought" Palestine first and then self-imposed the "charge"

of establishing a national home for the Jewish people. But Churchill was right that the wording of both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate gave the “prime obligation” to the “Jewish Zionist aspirations”. [>16]

Rumbold asked a question implicit in the very concept of establishing, over time, this JN “Home”:

I was going to ask you when do you consider the Jewish Home to *be established*? You have no idea of numbers? When would you say we have implemented our undertaking and the Jewish National Home is established? At what point? [Churchill:] When it was quite clear the Jewish *preponderance* in Palestine was very marked, decisive, and when we were satisfied that we had no further duties to discharge to the Arab population, the Arab minority. (p 505)²⁴⁴²

Only when the Arabs were the “minority”, that is, “preponderance” being a euphemism. These were the conditions for, or definition of, a “State”; thus the “Home”, for Churchill, once built, would be a State.

After some guarded criticism of 1930s British policies of collective punishment and house or neighbourhood destruction, Peel became more general:

[I]f every two or three years there was a sort of campaign against the Arabs and we sent out troops and shot them down... [d]o you not think public opinion... would begin to enquire, ‘Why is it done?’ ‘What is the fault of these people?’ ‘Is it not simply because they want to live in what they say is their own country?’ Might not people say, ‘Why are you doing it? In order to get a Home for the Jews?’ (p 506)

Churchill did not deny this, saying merely that there is a Parliamentary majority for the Zionist policy. But I believe this and similar questions from the Commission show that its members knew perfectly well that the Palestinians had the moral argument on their side; yet they hadn’t the moral wherewithal to recommend not partition, but democracy.

Returning to the fundamental contradiction within the Zionist Mandate, Churchill reiterated that

Either we are to carry out our mandatory obligation to facilitate the establishment of the Jewish National Home, or we are to hand over the government of the country to the people who happen to live there at the moment. *You cannot do both.* (p 507)

Morris then suggested that “After seventeen years, or fifteen years, is it not about time we tried something else?” Churchill: “Not at all. What is seventeen years?” Morris: “Is it your view that it should go on until there is a Jewish majority?” Churchill: “I think it should go on as we are. ... The whole point is to keep a steady line.” Morris: “Then you are bound to delay self-government?” Churchill: “Certainly. I have said so. If it is the fact that the proper application of the British Mandate obliges us to *impinge upon* and restrict to some extent the desire which we have to associate the people of the country in the governing authority – yes, I have said so.” Hammond interjected: “And in the interval we have to go on as the Mandatory Power, governing the country against the wishes of the ma-

2442 Also >222; >242; >271; >373; >392; >450; >452.

jority of the people in the country?” Churchill: “Certainly...” (p 507) Given this testimony, it’s clear that as of 1939, either as MP or Prime Minister 1940-45, Churchill could only oppose, vehemently, the democratic 1939 MacDonald White Paper.

Hammond then wanted to know whether the Cabinet which approved the Churchill/Samuel White Paper knew what they were getting themselves into, or rather, that injustice sanctioned from on high was to be done to the indigenous people:

Hammond: The 1922 Cabinet had before them the findings of the Military Commission that sat in 1920 [Palin, >88 or Haycraft, >122] to consider the troubles in Jerusalem and they pointed out then everything, very much as we have placed it before you now – the difficulty about immigration, the transfer of land, and the Arab fear of Jewish domination. It was all placed before them, so that it was all before you when you drew up the Mandate? Churchill: Yes. The argument is that [was only whether] *England may not be strong enough* and she cannot do it; let us lay the burden down then, ... (p 507)

Peel objected: “Might I there say that it is not only a question of being strong enough, but she might have some compunction if she felt she was downing the Arabs year after year when they wanted to remain in their own country?”

To this ethical question Churchill replied:

I do not admit that the dog in a manger has the final right to the manger, even though he may have lain there for a very long time. I do not admit that right. I do not admit, for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the Black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to those people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race, or, at any rate, a more worldly-wise race, to put it that way, has come in and taken their place. (p 507)²⁴⁴³

How was this philosophy different from that of Churchill’s arch-enemy in World War II?

Professor Coupland, who according to Nur Masalha was the originator of the partition plan within the context of the Great Arab Rebellion,²⁴⁴⁴ would later second Churchill’s sentiment while explaining HMG’s approval of the Peel partition plan and its prevention of Palestinian possession of the whole manger, saying “one Jew is a match for several Arabs”.²⁴⁴⁵ Churchill’s “dog in a manger” sentiment is quoted by his biographer Martin Gilbert, a Zionist historian who was a member of the exclusively pro-Zionist ‘Anglo-Palestinian Archives Committee for the British Academy’, but he did not comment on its morality or propriety.²⁴⁴⁶ (Gilbert was evidently able to read Churchill’s secret testimony, perhaps as a member of this Archives Committee, before its release to the public in 2017.)

But the British were emotionally unable or unwilling, after the exchanges of words and documents had been made, to base their decisions on arguments which were above racial considerations.²⁴⁴⁷ Thus Lord Peel and the four Knights comprising the Royal Com-

²⁴⁴³ See also Attar 2010, pp 8-9 and CO 733/344/2, p 7, >322.

²⁴⁴⁴ Masalha 1992, p 55.

²⁴⁴⁵ CAB 24/270/11, p 11.

²⁴⁴⁶ Gilbert 2007, p 120; compare Fanon 1961, pp 32-33, 178, 238, 244.

²⁴⁴⁷ See Allen 2017.

mission raised no objection to Churchill's racist thoughts, with Peel towards the end of the testimony saying, "May I say we are very much obliged to you indeed?" What chance did the Palestinians ever have, as alleged sub-humans?

This perhaps overly-long entry consists of quotes from the testimony before the Peel Commission of an MP who was influential in Near East matters, Edward Turnour (Earl Winterton) [*also >303; >314*].²⁴⁴⁸ The only context or connecting material I'll mention is that Winterton had hosted Emir Faisal on his trip to London [*>91*], was relatively pro-Arab in the House of Commons, calling himself "friendly to the Arab cause", and that his mission on 12 March 1937 was to argue for the two-state solution – exact boundaries to be determined – which was in fact in the following few months adopted by the Peel Commission [*>336*]. From 6-15 July 1938 Winterton would also lead the British team at Évian where no country but the Dominican Republic would commit to admitting European Jews as political immigrants. [*also >323*]

Peel set the stage:

I am rather curious to know your impressions on this point, [*viz.*] the debates in March last year both in the House of Commons and the House of Lords [*>289; >290*], which very much affected Arab opinion. As you know, they consider the Government so entirely in the hands of the Jews that really nothing they can say makes much difference, or what Commissions say; but they had hopes of Parliament, and it was the very pro-Jewish colour of those debates and the fact the Arab case was hardly put at all in either House that was really one of the minor causes leading up to the outbreak [*the 1936-39 Revolt, >289-293*], I think. It rather broke their hearts.

Winterton:

The Legislative Council did not appeal to a good many members of the House, even some of them who were friendly to the Arab case. ... I, personally, did not like the proposal very much, but I at the same time did not want... to damn it, so I did not speak. The only person who spoke from the Arab point of view was Mr. Crossley, a very competent young man, and he was given... a rather 'rough house'; he was interrupted, and I understand that had some effect upon the public opinion in Palestine. They heard that the only man who has spoken for the Arabs had been subjected to interruption. Those of us, and there are a number of us in the House, who are friendly at any rate to the legitimate aspirations of the Arabs, were rather concerned about what had happened... [*see >303 and >290*]

[T]he Zionist influence in the House has always been much stronger than any influence friendly to the Arabs... That of course, is due to what you might call the obvious facts of the situation, namely, that the Zionists have influence over the Press here. ... [T]hose of us who are generally favourable to the Arab cause without being anti-Zionist, because a curious thing is that not a single Member certainly on our side amongst those who are friendly to the Arabs is opposed to Zionism, or to our conception of Zionism, and we are going to see

²⁴⁴⁸ FO 492/20, pp 489-95, *without page citations*.

to it, when your Report comes under review, that the Arab case is fairly presented. We all felt rather ashamed of what had occurred in that previous debate afterwards; a good many of us felt that we ought to have spoken, but we did not do so...

With Lawrence... during the War I campaigned over practically the whole of Palestine and over a great part of Arabia as well. I went on camel back or by car over vast areas of the country and came into touch with all sorts of people and, as a result of my experience then, I have warm friendships for a number of people in the Arab world. [e.g. *Emir Faisal*, >91]

The situation in Palestine... is... essentially... a clash between two Oriental races. ... I am in no sense anti-Zionist or anti-Jew. I have many Jewish friends. ... I was horrified to see in some newspaper the suggestion made by a sophisticated Zionist that it was legitimate and proper that the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine should be treated by the Zionists as we had treated the aboriginal people of Australia and the Red Indians in Canada. It seemed to me to be one of the most dangerous sentiments I had ever read in print...

One's Arab friends... say they have neither the money nor means to influence Members of Parliament and the Press, and they instance the debate [February and March 1936, >289, >290] to which you have made reference...

I do not know the name of Winterton's "sophisticated Zionist", but on the very same day that Winterton testified, Churchill had uttered exactly those "dangerous sentiments"²⁴⁴⁹ – and was thanked for them by Mr. Peel. [>327]

Winterton agreed with a prominent Arab expert (p 493) that

it was utterly impossible to try and form a composite Arab-Jewish State in Palestine, utterly and absolutely impossible, and... the only way it could be done would be by having two [army] divisions permanently in the country... [The expert] had... come reluctantly to the conclusion... of a complete partition and the formation of two States, one purely Jewish State and another Arab State, which he suggested should be an enlarged Trans-Jordan. He said he thought that, in order to give a fair chance to this enlarged Arab State and to sweeten the position of the Arabs in Palestine, who would be encouraged to migrate to this new Arab State, ... it would be necessary for the British taxpayer to find a large sum of money... [>314]

I have not and do not pretend to have sufficient knowledge to say where the boundaries should be. Personally, [and "having lived in that country for about four months during the War"] as one generally favourable to the Arabs, I would include a large portion of Palestine in the Jewish State.

A lot of land for Arabs, so Winterton, could be agriculturally developed in the Negev and Transjordan, but

The real difficulty, of course, is on the question of law and order. ... During the first period it is quite obvious that British Police Officers should be in charge of the Police. ... British Consular Officers... might exercise certain powers in respect of minorities;... I would exclude from these two states... Jerusalem... and the High Commissioner, as representing the

²⁴⁴⁹ FO 492/20, p 507.

Mandatory, should be in Jerusalem. ... We ought to make it abundantly clear that we intend to keep complete air control over both States... I would have a Gendarmerie Force. ... It need not be exclusively British. You could have some local people in;...

The scheme which I have outlined differs in many respects from cantonization. The only place where cantonization has really succeeded is in Switzerland. ... Nuri Pasha [as-Said and] Sir Herbert Samuel and I had a scheme of compromise, [^{>314}] not in any way in conflict with this Commission.

Peel: "In connection with the Zionist acquiescence in a [two-state] scheme of this kind, you have in your mind that we are tied down by our pledge to the United States, if we are altering the Mandate in this direction, that they shall be consulted and... their consent obtained." (p 494) Winterton:

We should have to develop this new [Arab] State with British money. ... [I]f the amount of care was taken that has been taken in Iraq to develop the country, if the same kind of care was taken to develop this purely Arab territory under British auspices, it would have much the same result as you have in Iraq [and] with all their defects the Iraqis have done a great deal in the way of developing their country under British instruction.

Tutelage had succeeded in Iraq, and "the Jews... could put up the finance in order to develop [their parts of] the country." One of the "big problems" was getting the nomadic "Bedouins" to become "agriculturalists", and

If the Jews had this Jewish State they would have to make their own arrangements to... buy out a certain number of Arabs in the plains. ... I think His Majesty's Government might come in and make it possible under some land settlement scheme for the people who were dispossessed of land - one must assume that the actual cultivator will be badly treated and the landlord will make the money - for settling these people in the developing Arab territory. That was my suggestion. It was on a mild scale based upon the transfer of population, such as took place after the Treaty of Trianon [setting the boundaries of Hungary in 1920]... which... has proved very successful.

Commissioner Laurie Hammond: "I would like to know from this map where you would draw the line [between the two states]. This map shows you the land in Jewish possession." Winterton:

I would cut off this lower part here. I am not sure where I would draw the line. I understand that Hebron is a very Arab town. I would draw the line somewhere there. I did not know there were Jewish colonies round the Beersheba district. The land I thought there were possibilities of developing, is here. ... I am afraid there is no possibility of making Gaza into a port. The trouble with Gaza and Khan Yunis is that the people are so terribly mixed in race: they have almost no race. They are the descendants of the Crusaders and of all the people who have gone through. In regard to the north I would certainly draw the line much more in the hills. I am not at all sure when you get up there whether I would not make the Jordan the line. I know the difficulty.

Commissioner Coupland: "There are no Jews in this area of land, none: they would have their throats cut. Tulkarm, Jenin and Nablus have no Jews at all. Galilee is the great difficulty." Winterton:

It is extremely difficult. An alternative plan would be to allow the Jews to develop this, excluding Hebron... You would have to take a block of land there. ... There is land here to the south-east end of the Dead Sea: there is a lot of good steppe land which I am sure should be cultivated. ... Of course, there is a lot of sand and desert in between.

Peel, ruminating:

[I]f the Arabs were cut off from some of their home they would feel it tremendously: but if they were free – ... either being independent or linked up with Trans-Jordan – and were free of this awful fear they have of being eaten out of house and home by the Jews.

The Palestinian Arabs' reputed friend Winterton replied:

I still have hopes... that the original dream so many people like Wingate and Lawrence had in the old days of something like a real Arab Confederation may one day be possible. ... I hope to see the day when Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Syria are in some sort of loose confederation. That is the great idea I have in mind. To some extent I would sacrifice the rights of the Palestinian Arabs if I could obtain the bigger conception.

Rights vs a “conception”.

Finally,

I would frankly advocate the stoppage for the time being of Jewish immigration until something can be done in the way of defining these boundaries, making it clear to the Jews that they would have the right to bring in as many people as they liked when the thing was completed; but with the ignorant Arab mind, if we were saying these things and the Jews were continuing to come into the country, I think the country would become ungovernable.

Hammond: “Here are all these Jewish settlements here, yet interspersed among them are a lot of Arabs. What Courts are you going to have to deal with disputes between Arab and Jew?” Winterton: “Under my scheme I should hope the greater portion of these people would go out, would sell their land and go out.”

Such was the testimony of a self-professed friend of the Arabs, of the indigenous with “ignorant... mind[s]”, whom he hoped would agree to transfer.

This entry is slightly out of chronological order in order to provide relief from the testimonies of Churchill and Winterton. On 9 January 1937 **Musa Effendi Nasir was interviewed in Palestine** – but by only two members of the Royal Commission, instead of the usual five or six, namely Laurie Hammond and Morris Carter.²⁴⁵⁰ He was the only Palestinian to take part in the secret sessions which otherwise interviewed sixty witnesses, all of them belonging in the pages of a Who's Who of British politics and British and international Zionism.²⁴⁵¹ [see >326] He was “District Officer at Ramle”, had earlier been an Officer in Nablus and Tiberias, and talked extensively about the village of al-Barriyya (“Barriye”) in the Jaffa–Jerusalem corridor, where he worked and which would be ethnically cleansed between 10 and 13 July 1948. I will quote some of the dialogue.

Asked about the approximately 400 residents (80 families) there, Musa Nasir said “They live entirely on agriculture and bee keeping.” Hammond:

‘You showed us they were making a road?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘The village supplied the labour?’ ‘The village supplied the unskilled labour and a certain amount of the stone for free.’ ‘And the Government gave the roller?’ ‘Government gave £500 for all possible improvements in that district, not necessarily for the road alone but for all that we can do, and we are trying to stretch that £500 as far as possible.’ ‘I think you told us you were going to have a clinic there.’ ‘Yes. ... We are still making a road inside the village, an internal road, so that the people can go from house to house without sinking in the mud. We have hired a room for the clinic, which will [cost] a small amount. I expect the village will pay for it annually.’ ‘A sort of medicine chest?’ ‘It is one room... Out of the £500 we may furnish the room.’

‘Any other money you are spending?’ ‘Any surplus we may have will be spent on improving the condition of the village generally, cleaning up the whole place and making drains for taking away the rain-water. We are also spending some money on making a small forest in the village, where we expect to have a school in the future.’ ‘Are [the villagers] in a position to contribute anything?’ ‘They usually contribute in the form of labour. They have a good deal of free time at certain periods of the year.’ ... ‘Do they make much out of their beehives?’ ‘They do. ... Probably they make in that village on their beehives as much as £1,000 a year.’ Carter: ‘Do they buy the hives...?’ ‘They do not buy the hives. They usually make the hives. They buy a box and when they have an additional queen they put her in another box and carry on.’

Hammond: ‘I think you told us there was no [well] water?’ ‘No.’ ‘They have just got their cisterns?’ ‘They have only got their cisterns and this last year they ran short and had to carry their water from beyond Ramle, something like ten kilometres away.’ ‘Their drinking water?’ ‘Water for everything, for drinking and for their cattle, for everything. They had no water.’ ‘And they are not going in for any of these fruit trees, because they have not got the water?’ ‘They have not gone into fruit trees. ... We are anxious to give them a small forest; some of

²⁴⁵⁰ FO 492/20, pp 406-09.

²⁴⁵¹ FO 492/20, pp 1-531.

the trees of the forest will be useful for the bees themselves...' 'Is there any chance of finding water in a place like that?' 'I do not think anybody will make an experiment there. On the other side of the road there is a village which has a well in the valley and we are trying to improve that well to provide water for both villages.'

'How many dunums do they cultivate round the village?' 'Two thousand eight hundred and thirty dunums. [283 ha.] ... They own and cultivate that area.' 'Do they sell some [crops]?' 'Hardly. ... They cannot grow vegetables definitely.' 'So in a village of that sort you would say definitely there is no land that they can sell?' 'In that village they would be prepared to buy from you any land you could offer them now. ... Because they are short of land, definitely.' 'Now what happens as that village goes on growing, because they do grow? ... What happens to the surplus population?' 'It is a problem which is becoming gradually more acute. ... Some of them have been flocking to the towns. ... [But it] is one of the very few villages in the whole country that has been able to develop the bee keeping... and they are able to dispose of their honey favourably... I know in the past this same village used to cultivate land which belonged to a neighbouring village, which has sold part of its land to the Jews, Abu Shushe.'

'Do you know in your district which [in 1936] were the troublesome villages?' 'We only know the troublesome places when trouble took place, but we do not know the definite villages that took part. During the disturbances the villagers which had the habit of doing mischief went to villages which were not in their own vicinity.' 'The men walked off to another village and did the damage?' 'To a village a long distance off.' 'You could not hold the village responsible?' 'No, that is one of our difficulties [and] they never gave information one against another. They were all united in one purpose and we had no means of finding out.'

Carter: 'There is no school there at present?' 'No. The village have paid £75 in the hope that Government will subscribe the same amount in order to build a school, but Government have so far said that the village was too small to deserve a school.' 'There is this village 2½ kilometres off. Has that village a school?' 'Yes.' 'Do the children from this village go to that?' 'No. ... Any village school can hardly cope with its own pupils.'

Finally, Musa Nasir said he had no certain way of finding out whether the Jewish settlements in his district were self-supporting, and confirmed that there was no way to confirm, when a settlement claimed it could economically absorb so-and-so many new employees, that that was really the case.

330. The Arab press

13 March 1937

Back in London, the Royal Commission on 13 March 1937 requested brief summaries of the Palestine press from 1935-36, both in Arabic and Hebrew, which were delivered from Palestine a month later.²⁴⁵² The review noted the “excesses of the vernacular press” and started with the key event of 19 November 1935 [^{>284}]:

In November 1935 the rounding up and death of Sheikh Izz ed-Din al-Qassam, a Syrian residing in Haifa, who organised an armed Arab band in North Palestine, provoked typical reactions in both the Arab and Hebrew presses. The Arab newspapers at once described him as a national and religious martyr. ... ‘Palestine, you are on the verge of an abyss. Rise to rid yourself from Jewish and British slavery. Egypt was imprisoned, exiled and beaten. The leaders in Egypt have awakened. Where are our leaders hiding?’ (pp 12-13) [*event after* ^{>286}]

The press analyst continued,

This tone persisted in the early months of 1936. The students of Palestine were urged to awake. ‘The time is near and the situation grave. Unify yourselves. Demand your violated rights and stolen freedom. God is with you.’ (p 13)

As for the Hebrew press,

The outcome of the ‘Legislative Council’ debates in the House of Lords in February and in the Commons in March 1936 [^{>289; >290}] was enthusiastically hailed as ‘a great Jewish victory,’ though the subsequent invitation to the Arab delegation [to visit London, ^{>290-295}] provoked the comment ‘The Jews must be on their guard’; for this visit to London means the mobilisation of all opponents of Jewry, in London, in British colonies and in Arab countries. (p 14)

We have seen Earl Winterton’s shame at not having been sufficiently “mobilised” to take part in the Commons debate. [^{>328}]

The Arab press (p 16) accused the British authorities of things such as “dropping poisoned sweets from aeroplanes [and] desecration of the Quran and violation of mosques, of interference with women, and of wilful destruction of personal property”. In support of the strike movement, “A discussion between the Police Staff and the Arab personnel was described as ‘the stand of honour and glory by Arab policemen,’ ... and [the message] to the Arab workers in Haifa Port in August [1936] was: ‘The spirit of majesty and sublimity dominates Haifa.’” Quoting more general political opinion:

The Government imprisons and demolishes and imposes extortionate fines in the interests of imperialism, and is well known for its Zionist bias. ... Your country was occupied on the understanding that you would have a free hand. Jews and Zionists are responsible for your present fate; ... everything is in the hands of Weizmann and no British guarantee should be trusted. ... Great Britain has made the League of Nations into a tool for the realisation of its wickedest objects and the legalisation of its worst political and social crimes, and relies on it as an agent for the annihilation of Palestine. (pp 16-17)

²⁴⁵² CO 733/346/10, pp 5-6, 11, 12-18, 24-25.

The Hebrew press accused the Government of encouraging the “savages [who] are experienced in murdering” and the “wild persons of the desert [who] set fire on all sides to the National Home” ... “The Englishman realises the importance of British-Jewish cooperation and yet in daily life he hates the Jews and likes the Arabs”. (pp 17-18)

One Arab article congratulated the northern residents of the Syrian nation, of which Palestine was actually a part, on the “Franco-Syrian treaty of Alliance” of March 1936 (leading to independence):

We Arabs of Palestine in whose body the English have planted their arrows, will not forget or forgive you. ... We speak with gladness in our hearts for our sister country but wonder what can be wrong with the Arabs of Palestine and why the Mandatory Government only deals out freedom drop by drop and seeks to content us with vain shadows. (p 5)

Although the press was preoccupied with the “mediation” of Nuri Pasha es-Said of Iraq and Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, “the conclusion of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty negotiations in July and August [1936]” drew praise; according to the British press-readers:

The general tone was along the lines of Egypt’s luck and Palestine’s misfortune. In Egypt, the British showed ‘political broadmindedness and clever insight. They preserved the dignity of Britain in Egypt and in all Oriental countries.’ In Palestine the British approached ‘the excited and wounded Arabs just as they would a platoon of soldiers on a battlefield. They imagined that the Arabs, by demanding their legitimate national rights, were challenging the Empire. So they persisted in provocation and in talk of military forces until the disturbances reached boiling point and produced the most serious national movement known in history.’ (p 6)

The Arab newspapers reviewed were (*quoting*):

1. *Al Liwa* (Jerusalem) Circulation 3-4,000 The official organ of the Palestine Arab Party (the Mufti’s Party), the President of which is Jamal eff. Husseini, who is the proprietor of the paper.
2. *Falastin* (Jaffa) Circulation 4-6,000 In Christian-Arab ownership and the oldest daily newspaper in Palestine. It supports the National Defence Party, the President of which is Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, the former mayor of Jerusalem.
3. *Al Difa* (Jaffa) Circulation 4-6,000 It supports the Arab Youth Movement and the Istiqlalist Party, of which Awni Abdul Hadi is the Secretary-General.
4. *Al Jamiya al Islamiya* (Jaffa) Circulation 2,000 It is conducted on independent and erratic lines but is generally strongly islamic and nationalistic.
5. *Weekly Journal Palestine and Transjordan* (Jerusalem) Circulation 1,500 Its managing editor is Fuad Saba, the Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee, and its present editor is Emil Ghoury, who accompanied the unofficial Arab propaganda mission to London in the summer of 1936. Its tone is mainly polemical. (pp 24-25)

The Government between November 1935 and October 1936 issued 36 “suspensions” to these Arab papers and 13 “official warnings”, and to the Hebrew press 15 suspensions and 10 official warnings. (pp 13, 18)

331. Wauchope's limited understanding

8 April 1937

Just before the Peel Commission's arrival in Palestine in November 1936 High Commissioner Wauchope himself had conceded that

the fear of imminent Jewish domination was felt by all from the highest to the lowest and was the mainspring of the disturbances and that the bodies which organised the strike and the rebellion 'sprang up locally and spontaneously'.²⁴⁵³

But Wauchope often inconsistently emphasised the economic rather than the political injustices as "the mainspring". I quote from a Colonial Office summary of a message he sent to then Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore on 8 April 1937, about the time the Peel Commission was writing its Report back in London:

In addition to the landless Arabs, which according to Government estimates constituted one quarter of the Arab rural population, there was the question of Arab unemployment, which Wauchope described in the report as the 'most serious problem and is neither temporary nor local'. This problem was raised 'in every town and village' he visited and threatened to loom larger both in the political as well as the economic field. The Government's discrimination against Arab labourers in favour of the Jews added fuel to Arab resentment: 'On many roads the Arab receives little more than half the wage for equal output.'²⁴⁵⁴

This chronology deliberately under-emphasises economic injustices in order to focus on the national or political issues which caused or enabled such economic injustices and which were, in and of themselves, the Arab's overriding concern. [see >333 just below] Yet the economic impoverishment was existential: At United Nations hearings on the 'question of Palestine' in May 1947, India's representative Sir Abdur Rahman would list at least twenty-one Arab villages that had been "wiped out" due to Jewish land purchase and exclusive use of Jewish labour, while the Jewish Agency spokesman admitted that fourteen had ceased to exist.²⁴⁵⁵ Such were the concrete consequences of British policy, and it is true that Palestinian nationalism was not just a matter of pride, dignity, history and abstract right – the things I've emphasised; the immorality of British policy consisted just as much of such material and social damage as of its racial, or ethno-religious, political discrimination, discrimination which included murder, wounding, imprisonment and the punitive destruction of buildings.

²⁴⁵³ CO 733/317/1, p 287, 17 October 1936; Kayyali 1978, p 204.

²⁴⁵⁴ CO 733/311, pp 2 & 4, Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore, 8 April 1937; Kayyali 1978, p 205.

²⁴⁵⁵ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 159, citing UNSCOP Report, Vol. 3, pp 219, 221.

332. Supreme Committee to British public

ca. 1937

A statement by the Supreme Committee for Defending Palestine and the General Centre for Islamic Studies in Palestine told the British public that due to their government's policy, "20 years after the British rule" 7/8 of the 400,000 Jewish people in Palestine are recent immigrants from Europe; religious violations have included establishing a police station inside the Al Aqsa Mosque – causing protests in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq – and turning a mosque in Umm al-Fahm into a military post; some Muslim figures in Haifa and Jerusalem were dismissed from their jobs because they protested.²⁴⁵⁶

²⁴⁵⁶ Translated by Yousef Aljamal.

بيان

من المركز العام لجمعية الشبان المسلمين

واللجنة العليا لقطاع من فلسطين

إلى العالم الاسلامي والشعب البريطاني

لم تقتصر مهمة السلطة البريطانية في فلسطين مدة العشرين سنة الماضية على إغالي أموال المكلف البريطاني وسفك دم الجندي البريطاني - لاحتلال اليهود - من كل الجسبات والأوطان - محل العرب المسلمين في وطنهم الصميم الذي يتوارثونه من أربعة عشر قرناً على الأقل حتى صار لليهود أربعمائة ألف ساكن في فلسطين ولد سبعة أمتهم في أقطار جديدة عن فلسطين ولا تحت إليها بصلة ولا سبب وحتى تولد من حشر هؤلاء الغرباء في هذا الوطن الرقي الاسلامي مشروع إقامة ملك لليهود فيه مما لم يسبق له نظير إلا في الأمم المتوحشة

لم تقتصر مهمة السلطة البريطانية في فلسطين على هذا وعلى السعي لإجلاء العرب عن أوطانهم وحرمانهم من حقوقهم الطبيعية فيها . بل تجاوزوا ذلك إلى اضطهاد المسلمين في دينهم وانتهاك حرمة مساجدهم ومقدساتهم وانتهاك رجال دينهم وقضاة شرعهم وأئمة جوامعهم ووعاظهم وتشتيت مجالسهم الاسلامي بينها ما يقابل ذلك من تشكيلات اليهود الدينية تتمتع بأعلى منازل الكرامة وتمتلى من مظاهر السلطان والنفوذ ما لم تعلم به ولا في تاريخ ملوك بني اسرائيل

نقول ذلك بمناسبة انتهاك الجنود البريطانية في الددة الأخيرة طرمة للمسجد الأقصى أولى القبلتين وثالث الحرمين الشريفين والمكان القدسي الذي بارك الله حوله بنص القرآن الحكيم وأسرى إليه بنبي الله الكرم وخاتم رسله عليه وعليهم أفضل الصلاة والسلام فأثار احتلال تقلة البوليس الذي قد يكون بين أفراد اليهودي وغير السلم للمسجد الأقصى غضب كل من بلغه خبره من مسلمي الأقطار ورفضت الاحتجاجات علي ذلك من علماء دمشق وعلماء جبل لبنان وعلماء جبل عامل ومن الهيئات الدينية العراقية ومن هيئات أخرى في جهات متعددة معتقدين أن الدولة البريطانية تتحدى شعور المسلمين الديني في أقطار الأرض وتشتري غضبهم وسخطهم بجميع الأثمان وفي كل المناسبات حتى كأنها تتعد ذلك في هذه الظروف العالمية المرحجة بدليل ما فعلته في آن واحد في المسجد الأقصى على ما أشرنا إليه وفي اتخاذ مسجد أم الفحم ككنة عسكرية معطلة شعائر الله التي كانت تقام فيه وصادة الناس عن عبادتهم في داخله وطردها إمامه ومؤذنه وإفاتها أمين بك القمبي أحد أعضاء المجلس الاسلامي الأعلى بعد إفاتها سماحة السيد محمد أمين الحسيني رئيس هذا المجلس وقبضها على الشيخ الجليل محمد مطيع درويش أحمد قاضي الشرع الشريف في مدينة يافا مع تقدمه في السن وعلى الشيخ محمد صبحي خبزران قاضي الشرع الشريف في مدينة حيفا وعلى الشيخ مصطفى فاضل

I again deviate from my rule of looking only at British-Palestinian dialogue because Awni Abdul Hadi's comments at a meeting with leading Jewish Zionist Moshe Shertok were certainly paid attention to in British circles.²⁴⁵⁷ [also >274] After Shertok asserted the Jews' opposition to partition, Awni declared that "the Arabs would fight against [partition of Palestine] to the bitter end" and would always oppose further Jewish immigration. "It was enough that the Jews were a third of the inhabitants of this country; the Arabs would not agree that the Jews should exceed this proportion." The majorities desired by each side were mutually exclusive and "there was no place for an agreement." Shertok repeated the hoary argument that the Arabs would profit economically from the Jews, but "Awni Bey commented that the Arabs were poor in any case, and the question was not for them an economic one. Here was a question of national honour."

This recurring theme, now arising between a native and a political Zionist – that the problem was political, not economic – was later described by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi:

Much ink has been spilled in debating the precise effects of Zionist settlement and the land appropriation of Palestinian peasants, but most of the debaters miss the main point. The essence of injustice in the Zionist plan was not in the expropriation of land from individuals and communities, though this was unjust enough, but in the political plan that called for the denial of the rights of the native majority. *Even if nobody lost his land*, the programme was unjust in principle because it denied majority political rights. The problem was not one of land ownership or finding room for settlements: it was one of human beings and their basic human and political rights. (*emphasis added*)²⁴⁵⁸

Since economic disadvantages were individual and real, the Palestinians protested them, the more so as taking over land inalienably for the Jewish people was a necessary condition for Zionism's political success; but the Palestinians always listed political independence at the top of their demands. The problem was politicicide.

Abdul Hadi then rejected political parity and said Palestinians would continue their "war" for self-determination. In Shertok's view

Awni had no hatred for the Jews. They were engaged in their national enterprise, and he understood them. But he saw the English as the main ones responsible for the situation which had been created in the country.

This insight and the ongoing anti-British rebellion show that the indigenous citizens of Mandatory Palestine realised that it was Britain, not the Zionists, who were the sufficient condition for clearing the road to a non-indigenous state in Palestine.²⁴⁵⁹ Shertok, apparently with inside information, added that "in his opinion Awni was leading his people to destruction."

²⁴⁵⁷ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 99.

²⁴⁵⁸ Beit-Hallahmi 1992, p 76.

²⁴⁵⁹ Also Khalidi 2020, pp 49-50.

May 1937 HC Wauchope wrote home that 'As one measure to restore order and diminish crime we interned some 200 Arabs known to be bad characters by the Police...'²⁴⁶⁰ [Whether or not these administratively-detained Palestinians were political prisoners, as indicated by the one-day general strike on their behalf held in Haifa and Acre, the message was to stay orderly, improve one's character and stay out of jail.]

²⁴⁶⁰ CO 733/332/II, p 174.

XIX. Elegant robbery

334. Partition approved

25 June 1937

In a **SECRET memorandum** dated 25 June 1937 Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore urged his fellow Cabinet members to approve the report of the Peel Commission.²⁴⁶¹ Two weeks later, on 7 July, HMG would agree and simultaneously publish two Command Papers: 1) the 400-page Report of the Royal Commission (the ‘Peel Report’)²⁴⁶² [336] and 2) its own ‘Statement of Policy’ agreeing with the Commission’s recommendations²⁴⁶³ [335]. Its main, well-known recommendation was to rob the northern and western parts of Palestine permanently, using the euphemism “partition”.

In the memo, Ormsby-Gore reported that he had sent copies of the Royal Commission’s Report to the Cabinet on 22 June and “in strict confidence” to non-Cabinet Zionist Privy Councillors a day or two later – including “Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Amery,... Mr. Greenwood, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Lord Samuel and Lord Snell [as well as to Clement Attlee, leader of the Opposition].” (§1 & 5) The Palestinians and their few sympathisers in British politics were at this stage to be left uninformed: “Advance copies” of both Report and Summary would also go out *only* to His Majesty’s chief officials in Palestine, Aden, India, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, to the top British “Representatives” in fourteen European countries, eleven Near Eastern countries or districts, and the U.S. (Appendix I)

It would take at least until 7 July, wrote Ormsby-Gore, to prepare “Arabic translations of the summary [for distribution] in Middle Eastern countries... in Cairo, Baghdad, Jeddah, Beirut, Damascus and Aleppo” – but not Palestine, which would, around or shortly after 7 June, get Arabic and Hebrew translations only of the Report’s “Conclusions”, to be sent out within Palestine by the High Commissioner; moreover, very carefully timed announcements by the Palestine Broadcasting Service and the BBC’s Empire News Bulletin were organised. (§3-4 & Appendix I) The Council of the League of Nations would of course be informed, since the “proposal for partition [involved] the abrogation of the existing Mandate and the substitution of a new form of Mandate over the proposed British enclaves...” (§9, Appendix I) Evidently, no Arabic version of the complete report was made.

To convince the Cabinet, Ormsby-Gore argued from the unanimity of the Commission, the “strength of its personnel”, and the report’s “lucid and penetrating analysis”; simply, partition followed from the “irreconcilable national aspirations” of the two groups (with equally valid claims). (§6) The scheme would be costly, but less costly than “the maintenance for an indefinite period of a policy of repression”. (§8)

It is obvious, moreover, that, without a reasonable measure of assent [alternatively, “an effective measure of consent”] on the part of the two peoples concerned, no scheme of parti-

²⁴⁶¹ CAB 24/270/11, pp 273-78 (stamped) = pp 1-11 (printed) = §1-17, Appendices I & II, *all citations*.

²⁴⁶² Cmd. 5479.

²⁴⁶³ Cmd. 5513.

tion involving the establishment of two independent States can be put into effect. ... In that event, it would be necessary to consider whether His Majesty's Government would be justified in taking steps with a view to setting up one independent State [I presume the Jewish one] while retaining mandatory control over the rest of the country. (§10)

If “disorders break out again” martial law and the “disarmament of the population” should be put into practice. (§13) In the “transition” or “interim” period, before the Mandate was officially terminated, land transactions “which might prejudice the scheme of partition” should be prohibited and immigration should be kept at the “political high level” of 12,000 per year. (§14) To quell Arab fears Haifa and Acre and their environs should stay under British control for “at least 10 years, at the end of which time the question of their incorporation in the proposed Jewish State will be open for consideration...” (§15)

Appendix II of the memorandum consisted of four pages (pp 7-11) of solicited comments from Reginald Coupland, main author of the Peel Report, one comment referring “naturally, [to] some arguments which could not be published.” (p 7) Coupland had been the main force behind partition already in the secret-testimony sessions in late 1936 and early 1937²⁴⁶⁴ and had, according to Laila Parsons, been the main British proponent of partition prior to 1937 other than Chaim Weizmann who had embraced it already in 1932²⁴⁶⁵. Partition was, in fact, according to John Shuckburgh, as early as late 1921 considered by the Weizmann camp amongst the Zionists.²⁴⁶⁶ [>128] As we just saw, even the Arabs' friend Earl Winterton in his testimony to the Commission also favoured partition with a British Jerusalem enclave. [>328]

After asserting that the rest of the Commission agreed with his “personal opinions”, Oxford Professor Coupland entered the thicket of “exchange of land and population... bound up with the union” of the Arab State and Trans-Jordan; without union with Trans-Jordan the transfer of population would be more difficult politically and more costly financially. (p 8)

HMG were after all in this Statement of Policy agreeing with the Commission that the Arab State would include Trans-Jordan²⁴⁶⁷ and that for many Arabs in the new Jewish State “in the last resort the exchange [transfer] would be compulsory”, as it would be unambiguously formulated (by author Coupland) in the Peel Report²⁴⁶⁸. This shows that various top Jewish Agency officials – Weizmann, Moshe Shertok, Lewis Namier, and mainly Ben-Gurion – had succeeded with their lobbying during 1936 and 1937. As U.S. general-consul in Jerusalem George Wadsworth told Shertok in May 1937, HMG saw the partition-cum-transfer “proposal as a constructive plan indeed”.²⁴⁶⁹

Since HMG found it “unjust to crystallize the territorial basis of the [Jewish] National Home exactly as it is now...”, in drawing the “frontier... we have therefore allowed for

²⁴⁶⁴ FO 492/20.

²⁴⁶⁵ Parsons 2019, pp 11-15, 20.

²⁴⁶⁶ CO 537/855, pp 3-4, 7-10.

²⁴⁶⁷ Peel 1937, XXII §6, XXII §35-49.

²⁴⁶⁸ Peel 1937, XXII §43.

²⁴⁶⁹ Masalha 1992, p 60 and p 56, citing Sharett (Shertok), Yoman Medini, p 15.

some expansion". (p 8) The expansion should occur to the north, not the south, and the foreseen "Frontier Commission"²⁴⁷⁰ should expect that "the Jews are likely to plead... that the line drawn down the edge of the Maritime Plain ought to run along the top of the hills, not along the bottom". (p 9) Interested readers should compare this with the maps accompanying the two-state resolution, #181, of the UN General Assembly of 29 November 1947 [481], revealing that both plans foresaw the Galilee and the Naqab as the areas for the Jewish state's "expansion".

Coupland felt that HMG was offering what was objectively a good deal, but

Presumably the Plan will be violently attacked on its appearance by the Arabs and by at least a large section of the Jews, but one cannot help hoping that the advantages to both sides set out on pages 394-395²⁴⁷¹ will presently induce both parties to acquiesce. (p 10)

If his "hope" was not satisfied,

The Arabs will further be confronted with our recommendation that if they try to stop immigration by rebellion they will be treated with the utmost severity. (p 10)

It is by the way an illusion to imagine that the desire to treat disobedient natives "with the utmost severity" somehow doesn't fit right – is maybe in bad taste – among the quiet old buildings of Oxford University where Coupland wrote down these comments.

He closed with four reasons against appeasing the Arabs by restricting immigration, which was an "old and, I hope, discredited policy", including the observation that "one Jew is a match for several Arabs" and that "it fails to solve the political problem; whatever the size of the National Home, it bars the way to Arab independence." (pp 10-11)

²⁴⁷⁰ Peel 1937, XXII §19.

²⁴⁷¹ Peel 1937, XXIII §1-5, essentially "Half a loaf is better than no bread." (§1)

335. Statement of Policy

7 July 1937

The short **Statement of Policy approved by the Cabinet on 30 June 1937** and published on 7 July²⁴⁷² expressed “general agreement with the arguments and conclusions of the [Royal] Commission” [>336] and explained to the world that the British, ever since taking on the Mandate, had had the “expectation” that “in the process of time the two races would so adjust their national aspirations as to render possible the establishment of a single commonwealth under a unitary government”; however, the experience had been “discouraging” and HMG are “driven to the conclusion” that “there is an irreconcilable conflict between the aspirations of Arabs and Jews in Palestine” and therefore “their obligations to Arabs and Jews respectively were incompatible”. (§3, 2) Finally, logic was victorious within the British Government: Since the two aspirations were incompatible – duh – the two Balfour-Declaration commitments were incompatible.

They will keep the Mandate until the “scheme of partition” is established, and the “Palestine (Defence) Orders-in-Council” will assure military control if “serious disorders should again break out”. (§3, 5) They will also “prohibit any land transfers which might prejudice such a scheme” and – in a further rejection of the Palestinians’ demand for a suspension of immigration – “a total Jewish immigration in all categories of 8,000 persons shall be permitted for the eight months’ period August 1937 to March 1938, provided that the economic absorptive capacity [>85; >105; >142] of the country is not exceeded”. (§6) Given the vehemence and consistency with which the Palestinians had for almost twenty years opposed any European-Jewish immigration, to permit several thousands more at exactly this time, in connection with the appearance, at long last, of exactly this long, thorough and combustible report, showed the iron, stubborn will of Great Britain, cost what it may, to fulfil the Jewish Zionist aspiration for a sovereign state. Nothing could deter Britain. The costs came immediately flooding in the form of continuation of the Arab Rebellion.

HMG, so the Statement further,

are much impressed by the advantages which it offers both to the Arabs and the Jews. The Arabs would obtain their national independence, and thus be enabled to co-operate on an equal footing with the Arabs of neighbouring countries in the cause of Arab unity and progress. They would finally be delivered of all fear of Jewish domination, and from the anxiety which they have expressed lest their Holy Places should ever come under Jewish control.

It is true that, where you are not, you cannot be dominated. At any rate, for the Arabs the price tag on “national independence” and freedom from “fear of Jewish domination” was to be a good one-quarter their country; unity with “the Arabs of neighbouring countries”

²⁴⁷² Cmd. 5513; CAB 24/270/16, pp 305-07.

would be paid for by the unity of Palestine. The Arab State would moreover be financially subsidised by both Britain and the Jews and everybody “would obtain, in the words of the Commission, ‘the inestimable boon of peace.’” (§7)

This 13-page entry covers a 400-page document that is essential reading both on account of its analysis and because its main two-state recommendation, giving roughly half of Palestine to the Zionist immigrants, was adopted ten years later as United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 [^{>481}], thereby fulfilling the British and Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

To recapitulate: On 29 July & 7 August 1936 this 'Palestine Royal Commission' was set up by a "Command" from "His Majesty", signed by Malcolm MacDonald in his role as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to "ascertain the underlying causes of the disturbances which broke out in Palestine in the middle of April [1936]", to search for "legitimate grievances" regarding how the Mandate had been or was being "implemented", and to "make recommendations" for removing such grievances and preventing further such disturbances. [^{>309}]²⁴⁷³ These were its terms of reference, the definition of its job.

The Commission consisted of William Wellesley Peel, Horace Rumbold, Laurie Hammond, Morris Carter, Harold Morris and Reginald Coupland, and it worked in Palestine from 11 November 1936 until the week of 17 January 1937, and thereafter in London.²⁴⁷⁴ The timing of the Commission's actual voyage to Palestine was determined by the end of the general Arab strike, for the Cabinet had decided to send it only "after order is restored".²⁴⁷⁵ Their Report²⁴⁷⁶, dated 7 July 1937, would commence with the assertions (1) that "Jewry has been fated never to attain freedom and security for all its people at one time" and (2) that "it was... only on Palestine that the hopes of Zionism were fixed", and would conclude by saying of the sick patient Palestine: "The disease is so deep-rooted that, in our firm conviction, the only hope of a cure lies in a surgical operation." (I §21, 30; XIX §11) The recommendation for surgery would be discussed but not agreed to in the House of Commons on 21 July²⁴⁷⁷ [^{>342}], then studied by the "Partition ('Woodhead') Commission" set up on 23 December 1937/4 January 1938²⁴⁷⁸ [^{>353}], then after the Woodhead Commission's Report released 9 November 1938 [^{>376}] immediately rejected by HMG²⁴⁷⁹ [^{>377}]. This investigative storm thus took two-and-a-half years, simultaneously with but not quite as long as the Great Revolt in Palestine itself.

Its terms of reference followed almost word for word a draft presented by Chaim Weizmann to Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore dated 9 July 1936.²⁴⁸⁰ And indeed, the Commission correctly reported that the "Arabs" protested up front that the Commission's "terms

²⁴⁷³ Peel 1937, pp vi-vii, ix.

²⁴⁷⁴ Peel 1937, pp ix-xii.

²⁴⁷⁵ CO 733/318/2, p 2; CAB 23/85/4, p 88.

²⁴⁷⁶ Peel 1937 (= Cmd. 5479), *all citations and quotations*, giving Chapter (I-XXIII) and Paragraph (§).

²⁴⁷⁷ Hansard 1937a.

²⁴⁷⁸ Cmd. 5634.

²⁴⁷⁹ Cmd. 5893.

²⁴⁸⁰ CO 733/318/12, pp 101, 104-05.

of reference precluded the Arabs from attacking the Mandate itself.” (IV §13) [*see e.g.* >100; >182; >183; >191; >309] The Commission was thus also correct in saying that the Arabs’ main “grievance” had to do with Britain’s presence in Palestine *per se*, a presence which specifically meant the denial of their claims to “self-determination embodied in [the League of Nations] Covenant”; basically, “the overriding or setting-aside of them was the main cause of the disturbances” (IV §33).

As Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore had written to Zionist leader Weizmann on 10 July 1936:

You are quite right as to the Mandate not being brought into question by the Royal Commission; that certainly is our intention; but the interpretation to be placed on the Mandate will necessarily come within the purview of the Commission. Many thanks for letting me know of your movements... ²⁴⁸¹

That is, Britain still refused dialogue with the Palestinians on the latter’s main point. This main point had always been the illegitimacy of the Mandate as such, whatever the details of that Mandate – details which the Peel Commission spent 400 pages going into. Because it takes two to talk, there was concerning the basic grievance no dialogue.

The content

After a Preface, Chapter I bore the title ‘The Historical Background’. It devoted twenty-three (§3-7, 30 & §13-30) of its thirty paragraphs (numbered sections, each one paragraph long) to ‘The Jews in Palestine’, ‘The [Jewish] Diaspora’ and ‘Zionism’, while devoting five sections (§8-12) to ‘The Arabs in Palestine’. Of its thirteen pages, eleven deal with Jewish history, either in Palestine or in Europe under persecution, while two deal with the history of Palestine’s Arab people. Thus five times as much space was given to the Jewish ‘side’ of Palestine’s history than was expended on “the Arabs”. The effects of this first chapter were to (1) establish and affirm the supposedly factual ‘historical connection’ of the Jews with Palestine, which had been the thickest pillar of British support for Zionism during the last twenty years, and (2) bolster the conflation between the persecution of Jews in Europe with the possibility of Palestine as their special place for political refuge. Regarding this second point, around the time of the Report’s publication the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Graham Brown, wrote a letter to the pro-Zionist Archbishop of Canterbury criticising this view:

The Jewish problem of Europe must be solved by the Christian powers at their own expense and not at the expense of Palestine. ²⁴⁸²

To trace these two themes of the Jews’ historical ties to Palestine and making the Palestinians pay for European sins, the reader *should see* this book’s Theme Index.

The Report’s consideration of the Arab viewpoint began thus:

It was not till we had announced the date on which we intended to leave the country that the [Arab] Higher Committee decided to abandon its ‘boycott’ and co-operate with us in

²⁴⁸¹ CO 733/297/3, pp 5-6.

²⁴⁸² Quoted by Robson 2011, p 154.

trying to find the way to peace in Palestine [p.319; p.322]; and when at last they came before us, headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem [Amin al-Husseini], the first words of the prepared statement he made to us, were these: 'The Arab cause in Palestine is one which aims at national independence. In its essence it does not differ from similar movements amongst the Arabs in all other Arab territories.' (V §35)

Hitherto, that is, by "boycotting" and not "co-operating", the Arabs were the party that had impeded "the way to peace". As this chronology proves, however, it was always the British who threw the first stone. The Arabs were saying that justice – in the form of national freedom – was the precondition for peace.

The Peel group did agree, though, with the Mufti's closing testimony "that the first cause of the 'disturbances' was 'the fact that the Arabs in Palestine were deprived of their natural and political rights'"; nothing but "the termination of the Mandate" and "independent government" would do. (V §35) The Mufti had summed up the Arab demands as:

(1) the abandonment of the experiment of the Jewish national home, (2) the immediate and complete stoppage of Jewish immigration, (3) the immediate and complete prohibition of the sale of Arab land to Jews, and (4) the solution of the Palestine problem on the same basis as that on which were solved the problems in Iraq, Syria and the Lebanon, namely by the termination of the Mandate and by the conclusion of a treaty between Great Britain and Palestine by virtue of which a national and independent government in constitutional form will be established. (V §35)²⁴⁸³

Were 400 pages needed for this simple story, the story the Palestinians had been telling the British, in so many words, ever since the Arab Executive Committee's 'Report on the State of Palestine' of the winter of 1921 [p.99]?

Elaborating on the "Arab" view, the Commission wrote that after two decades of denying the Mandate's legitimacy

On balance the National Home has meant material gain to them [the Arabs]. (V §36) But the...National Home... has been established against their will. (V §21) Their feeling in the matter has been put in some such figurative language as this: 'You say we are better off: you say my house has been enriched by the strangers who have entered it. But it is my house, and I did not invite the strangers in, or ask them to enrich it, and I do not care how poor or bare it is if only I am master in it.' (V §36) ... [Especially the Youth Movements] are quite unmoved by economic arguments. (V §43) What the Arabs most desire is national independence. (V §46; also V §37; XX §9)

This stance – expressed apparently in "some such" inferior "figurative language" – was normatively rejected by the Commission:

The Jews were fully entitled to enter the door forced open for them into Palestine. They did it with the sanction and encouragement of the League of Nations and the United States of America. (V §21)

²⁴⁸³ Also UNSUPR 1978a, > 'Peel Commission'.

That the door had been “forced” was thus admitted without shame. British use of force was OK, although the force’s British character was watered down by the add-on that it was, after all, condoned by “the League of Nations and the USA”.

In addition to the *cantus firmus* praising the Zionists’ indispensable gift of economic development, the Peel team seems to have felt something else justified any “forcing” that had to be done – namely Jewish culture. By 1925, they wrote,

this little society of 100,000 Jews already reflected the post-War life of the Western world. A creative spirit was apparent in local art and literature. (III §15) ... With every year that passes, the contrast between this intensely democratic and highly organized modern community and the old-fashioned Arab world around it grows sharper... The literary output of the National Home is all out of proportion to its size. ... It was while we were in Palestine, as it happened, that Signor Toscanini conducted the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, composed of some 70 Palestinian Jews, in six concerts mainly devoted to the works of Brahms and Beethoven. ... There is Arab literature, of course, and Arab music... (V §7-8)

Concerning the Mandatory’s practical *implementation* of the Mandate, yet nevertheless relevant to this study, was the Commission’s insight that a major injustice was

[t]he inequality of opportunity of Arabs and Jews respectively in putting their case before Your Majesty’s Government, Parliament, and public opinion in this country; and the Arab belief that the Jews can always get their way by means denied to the Arabs. Based in general on the status of the Jewish Agency both in Jerusalem and in London, this belief was greatly strengthened by the publication of Mr. MacDonald’s letter to Dr. Weizmann in 1931 [^{>246}] and by the debates in Parliament on the proposals for a Legislative Council early last year [^{>289; >290}]. (IV §45.iii)

While this emphasised the overlapping of Zionist *values* between the British and the Jewish settlers, there were in fact other inequalities in the background: Far more Zionists than Palestinians were in Britain; they had far more money to spend on communication and argumentation; and as the quotation just above lauding the presence of Signor Toscanini shows, they were closer to the British in terms of lifestyle, education and language than the Palestinians. Thus the settlers’ voices counted more.

It was the Peel Commission’s turn to tackle the meaning of “Jewish national home”, the key phrase in the Balfour Declaration [^{>16}], Churchill White Paper [^{>142}] and Mandate [^{>146}], and their treatment showed that they, at least, had listened accurately to the Palestinians and to former High Commissioner Chancellor [^{>326}]:

The people of Palestine cannot accept the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. (III §25) ... It was quite another thing to contemplate, however remotely, the forcible conversion of Palestine into a Jewish State against the will of the Arabs. (II §51) ... After examining this and other evidence and studying the course of events in Palestine since the War, we have no doubt as to what were ‘the underlying causes of the disturbances’ of last year. They were: (i) The desire of the Arabs for national independence. (ii) Their hatred and fear of the establishment of the Jewish National Home. (IV §43) [*also >309*] ... The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate under which it was to be implemented involved the denial of national independence at the outset. ... [I]f ultimately the Mandate should terminate and

Palestine become independent, it would not be independence in the Arab sense but self-government by a Jewish majority. (IV §44) ... [T]he creation of the National Home has been neither conditioned nor controlled by the Arabs of Palestine. It has been established directly against their will. (V §21)²⁴⁸⁴

The Peel Report noted that its findings as to the basic causes of the 1936 disturbances chimed with those of the investigators of the “disturbances’ of 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1933”. (IV §44 (i)) [⁸⁸; ¹²²; ²²⁰; ²⁶⁸]

Further concerning the grey area between ‘National Home’ and ‘State’:

This definition of the National Home [that of the 1922 White Paper] has sometimes been taken to *preclude* the establishment of a Jewish State. But, though the phraseology was clearly intended to conciliate, as far as might be, Arab antagonism to the National Home, there is nothing in it to prohibit the ultimate establishment of a Jewish State, and Mr. Churchill himself has told us in evidence that no such prohibition was intended. (II §21, 39, 52) [³²⁷]

By claiming (correctly) that no wording ruled the Jewish state out they were clearing the path to their two-state solution. Of course other Zionists besides Churchill who had also testified before Peel were ruling it *in*, and already planning to use their own force to achieve it.²⁴⁸⁵

Regarding the recurring suggestion that instead of either representative democracy or partition a ‘federal’ or bi-national system with political-power parity between the two groups might be the solution, the Commission had also read Palestinian opinion correctly. Defining “parity” as “equal representation in the Council” for the two communities, they confess that

it is difficult to believe that so artificial a device, even if the Arab leaders were willing to adopt it, would operate effectively or last for long. Government by Parity is not representative government as it is understood in the democratic world. ... Secondly, we do not think that Parity... would tend to promote more amicable relations between the races. ... But these speculations are of little value, for, in any case, Parity would undoubtedly be rejected by the Arab leaders, moderate and extremist alike. It implies what they refuse to admit – the potential right of the Jews to an equal share with them in the government of Palestine. (XVIII §7-10)

Remember that “the Jews” potentially meant all Jews in the world, not just those in Palestine at that time.

The Report made an important correction concerning immigration quotas: the

principle of economic absorptive capacity... is at the present time inadequate and ignores factors in the situation which wise statesmanship cannot disregard. Political and psychological factors should be taken into account. (X §77, 73)

Manifesting some of this “wise statesmanship”, it recommended that

²⁴⁸⁴ See also UNSUPR 1978a, >‘Peel Commission’.

²⁴⁸⁵ Khalidi 1988, pp 10-11.

immigration should be... decided upon political, social and psychological as well as economic considerations. A 'political high level' should be fixed at 12,000 a year for the next five years... (XIX §10.6.i; also X §73, 77, 96, 97)

This was almost exactly the yearly figure decided by HMG and Parliament in their 1939 ('MacDonald') White Paper.²⁴⁸⁶ Arab immigration to Palestine, curiously, played no role in the Commission's "wise statesmanship", being merely listed in a table for the years 1921-1936 showing for "Jews" 282,645 immigrants and for "non-Jews" 17,495. (§X.2)

Early on, in an apparently offhand paragraph, the Report revealed a reason why it felt justified in advocating halving the Arab patrimony:

The fact that the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917 in order to enlist Jewish support for the Allies and the fact that this support was forthcoming are not sufficiently appreciated in Palestine. The Arabs do not appear to realize in the first place that the present position of the Arab world as a whole is mainly due to the great sacrifices made by the Allied and Associated Powers in the War and, secondly, that, in so far as the Balfour Declaration helped to bring about the Allies' victory, it helped to bring about the emancipation of all the Arab countries from Turkish rule. (II §19)

The Report further asserted that during World War I "the Sherif's own people" were indeed of military help, but "The Arabs of Palestine did not rise against the Turks, and, while some Palestinian conscripts deserted, others continued fighting in the Turkish army." (II §11, 12) Paraphrasing: Not only did Britain thus owe more to the Jews than the Arabs, but *the Arabs themselves* were in debt to the Jews and Britain, via the Balfour Declaration, for their freedom from the Turks. Apparently, such indebtedness justified the payment by the Arabs of their independence and/or loss of half their territory. The deal according to the Palestinians, by contrast, was that the British should have had to pay for help in defeating the Ottomans with their eschewing Near Eastern colonies. [>10; >400]

On the subject of British promises of independence the Royal Commission mentioned only McMahon's letters to Hussein [>10] (II §3, III §24, IV §33, 34) and the Anglo-French Agreement [>28] (II §23), but not the Hogarth Message [>21], the Declaration to the Seven [>25], or the League of Nations Covenant [>46] – all of which acknowledged to some degree the Arabs' political claim. The Commission placed far more importance on the Zionist promise in the Balfour Declaration than in all the promises to the Arabs put together.²⁴⁸⁷ While the Report did quote the March 1921 deposition of the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress [>99] at some length, it misconstrued somewhat the basis of that PAC's "claim for immediate and complete national self-government", emphasising the legal aspect and the promises made to all Arabs to the neglect of the PAC's ethical arguments from natural, historical, hereditary right.²⁴⁸⁸ [also >143] It did acknowledge the fact that Palestine was at least as advanced as Iraq and Syria (III §24), as had been claimed by the PAC in 1921²⁴⁸⁹.

²⁴⁸⁶ MacDonald 1939, §14.1.

²⁴⁸⁷ Also Antonius 1938, pp 400-01.

²⁴⁸⁸ Al-Husseini 1921, pp 13-19.

²⁴⁸⁹ Al-Husseini 1921, p 35.

The Commission was the British organ that finally admitted in so many words, to its credit, the irreconcilability of establishing the Jewish national home, as negotiated by Britain and the Jewish Zionists, with respecting the political rights of the people who had come with the territory²⁴⁹⁰; it found the Balfour Declaration guilty of self-contradiction rather than conjuring any wordy, judicious ‘balancing’. (XVIII §13; XIX §3, 9; XX §13, 17) While wading through the Mandate’s contradictions the investigators went even farther, laudably asserting that whatever the Declaration and Mandate meant or didn’t mean, the “people of Palestine” had in February 1922 [^{>135}] clearly demanded immediate independence (II §37), and while the Jews were historically connected to Palestine, “Article 2 of the Mandate requires... the ultimate establishment of independence [for a unit called Palestine].” (II §42, 45-47)

The Commissioners’ own opinion was that

[T]he forcible conversion of [all of] Palestine into a Jewish State against the will of the Arabs ... would clearly violate the spirit and intention of the Mandate System. It would mean that national self-determination had been withheld when the Arabs were a majority in Palestine and only conceded when the Jews were a majority. It would mean that the Arabs had been denied the opportunity of standing by themselves: that they had, in fact, after an interval of conflict, been bartered about from Turkish sovereignty to Jewish sovereignty. ... [T]he international recognition of the right of the Jews to return to their own homeland did not involve the recognition of the right of the Jews to govern the Arabs in it against their will. (II §51; also V §21)²⁴⁹¹

The Commission’s three-state solution did mean, though, that “the forcible conversion of” *half of* “Palestine into a Jewish State” against the will of the large majority was OK; if only half of Palestine was involved it was not a “violation of the spirit and intention of the Mandate System”. In the Covenant’s terms [^{>46}], perhaps it would be finally letting the Palestinians “stand by themselves”, but on one leg. In any case, to rescue British commitment to “self-determination” the Peel Commission would not even touch the idea of the simple solution of taking a vote amongst the existing population of indigenous Palestinians and recent immigrants on what they wanted, as had been demanded again and again by the Palestinians in the form of their demand for a ‘national representative government’.

Foreseen under the Peel partition scheme were actually three separate states, as Britain would keep large areas for itself, namely the relatively Christian ones of Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee around Tiberias, and the almost exclusively Arab ‘corridor’ from Jerusalem through Ramle and Lydda to Yaffa. (XXII §14, 11) [*also >351*] To British eyes, these areas were the “Holy Places”:

²⁴⁹⁰ Also Shlaim 1998, p 56.

²⁴⁹¹ Also Kattan 2009, p 254.

The partition of Palestine is subject to the overriding necessity of keeping the sanctity of Jerusalem and Bethlehem inviolate and of ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world. That, in the fullest sense of the mandatory phrase, is 'a sacred trust of civilization'... (XXII §10)

Palestinians studying Peel's map or reading these words might with good reason have taken this as a message of distrust of their willingness and ability to govern these areas fairly, as they had been governed for centuries. Evidently even the *Christian* Palestinians (about 11% of the total Moslem and Christian population) were alone not up to the job. [see >347]

At any rate the "permanency" of this new, to-be-established Mandate covering the (mostly Christian) "Holy Places" was emphasised by the Report's declaration that

We regard the protection of the Holy Places as a permanent trust, unique in its character and purpose, and not contemplated by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations [>46]... [W]hile it would be the trustee's duty to promote the well-being and development of the local population concerned, it is not intended that in course of time they should stand by themselves as a wholly self-governing community. (XXII §12; also §14)

This was bold: The Covenant's commitment, however vague and contradictory, to self-determination was to be replaced by the bare-faced colonialism of British ownership of what was after all about 10% of the land north of the Naqab.²⁴⁹² It was also "permanent", with not even the prospect of self-rule. No reason was offered why an Arab majority would not govern these areas so as to preserve the "sanctity of" and "access to" them. [see also >436]

My own summary

Part I of the Royal Commission's Report contained three worthwhile Chapters covering the history of Palestine up until 1936 (I-III) which I have largely skipped over. Part II, covering 'The Operation of the Mandate', consisted of thirteen Chapters on Administration, Public Security, Financial and Fiscal Questions, The Land, Immigration, Trans-Jordan, Public Health, Public Works and Services, The Christians, Citizenship, Education, Local Government, and Self-Governing Institutions. Aside from devoting, as noted just above, an unduly large part of its 'historical background' to Jewish history in relation to Palestine, Parts I and II are a relatively thorough and objective record of these two decades of British rule. They show that official Britain understood perfectly well the Palestinian point of view:

The Arab grievances may be summarized en bloc as a repudiation of the Mandate and all that it implies, from which the following main grievances arise: 1. The failure to develop self-governing institutions 2. The acquisition of land by the Jews 3. Jewish immigration 4. The use of Hebrew and English as official languages 5. The employment of British and Jewish officers, and exclusion of Arabs from the higher posts 6. The creation of a large class of landless Arabs, and the refusal of Jews to employ Arab labor 7. Inadequate funds for Arab education. Whilst we believe that these grievances are sincerely felt, we are of the opinion that most of

²⁴⁹² See PASSIA maps, <http://www.passia.org/maps/view/8>

them cannot be regarded as legitimate under the terms of the Mandate and we are therefore not called upon to make recommendations on them. It is only in regard to the last that we are able to suggest any remedy. (XIX §8, §9)²⁴⁹³

On whether they were “legitimate” grievances on grounds other than “the terms of the Mandate” the cream of Britain’s political elite declined to take a stand. But alas, they were correct: The Mandate’s first Article, it will be remembered, gave the “Mandatory” complete dictatorial power.²⁴⁹⁴ [^{>146}] By definition, then, and assuming the phrase “the terms of the Mandate” included the *fact* of the Mandate, nothing at all the Arabs said had any legitimacy. By the simple expedient of declaring the Mandate’s terms out of bounds – a declaration itself without argument, by the way – the Palestinians were silenced.

The Commission expressed itself on other themes which have cropped up in this chronology:

1. It denied that Palestine fell under §4 of Article 22 of the Covenant [^{>46}] as an ‘A’-type mandated territory (as Syria and Mesopotamia were conceded to have been) wherein the Mandatory had to “take into account the rights, interests and wishes of all the inhabitants” and “facilitate the progressive development of... independent states... based on an organic law”. Its ‘proof’ of this failure to qualify, however, did not rely on the Covenant text but only on Article 1 of *the Mandate* [^{>146}], so the ‘proof’ actually formally fails. It also said the Mandatory was under no obligation to give ‘A’-type territories self-government because §4 merely “permitted” that (“their existence as independent nations *can* be provisionally recognized”). The wording of the Covenant was indeed vague enough that this rendering by the Commission cannot be declared false. But whatever the correct interpretation of Covenant Article 22, the Commissioners actually granted that Article 2 of the Mandate required “the development of self-governing institutions”, rigorously entailing “the ultimate establishment of independence”. Again, it could afford to do so because its three-state solution would remove over half of Palestine from any such obligation towards the indigenous people. (II §42 (2), IV §37)
2. While countless British politicians bemoaned the inability and unwillingness of Arabs and Jews to get along harmoniously [*e.g.* ^{>234}; ^{>242}; ^{>289}], blaming them and not Britain itself for the malaise, the Peel Commission realised in agreement with all the previous investigatory commissions [^{>88}; ^{>122}; ^{>220}] that “it is the Mandate that created... the national antagonism between Arab and Jew” (XVIII §13) “It is not a natural or old-standing feud.” (XXIII §4)
3. As the House of Commons debate of 17 November 1930 had also showed [^{>242}; *also* ^{>271}; ^{>326}], the Commission was correct that “What [the Jews] most fear is a crystallization of the National Home as it is, leaving the Jews in a permanent minority in Palestine...”. (V §46) To declare the Home built would release Britain from the Mandate which was protecting Zionism. The Commission, though, non-committally or even contradictorily declared that “the Mandatory has so far fully implemented his obligation to facilitate the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine. But this does not mean that the National Home should be crystallized at its present size.” (X §95)²⁴⁹⁵ It was also correctly aware that “even if it were possible

²⁴⁹³ Also Tannous 1988, pp 221-22.

²⁴⁹⁴ Mandate Text, 1922, Article 1: “The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and administration...”

²⁴⁹⁵ See also Sinanoglou 2019, pp 108-09, 111.

to crystallize the National Home as it stands, to forbid another Jew from entering Palestine, or another Arab dunum to be bought, the mainspring of Arab agitation would remain untouched"; that mainspring was "independence". (V §38)

4. It was the opinion of the Commission that "By 1936 the Jewish National Home had practically grown into something like a State within a State." (X §94) The Jewish Agency "unquestionably exercises, both in Jerusalem and London, a considerable influence on the conduct of the Government. ... This powerful and efficient organization amounts, in fact, to a Government existing side by side with the Mandatory Government." (VI §78-79)²⁴⁹⁶
5. Population transfer (eviction): Tens of thousands of indigenous people – for instance, but not only, those in the overwhelmingly Arab Galilee, which was to be Jewish, numbering over 200,000 – and a few hundred Jews, analogous to the population transfers in 1923 between Greeks and Turks, should be forcibly exchanged: "Partition... must mean more than drawing a frontier and establishing two States. Sooner or later there should be a transfer of land and, as far as possible, an exchange of population." (XXII §36) "[A]s regards the plains, including Beisan, and as regards all such Jewish colonies as remained in the Arab State when the Treaties came into force, it should be part of the agreement that in the last resort *the exchange would be compulsory*." (XXII §43, *emphasis added*) Within Palestine as well, between the two new states, "the most strenuous efforts should be made to obtain an agreement for the exchange of land and population". (XXII §42; *see also* IX §63-64)²⁴⁹⁷ The British taxpayer should be ready to pay for the Commission's "scheme" for the "transfer, voluntary or otherwise, of land and population". (XXII §44) With great acumen the Commission noted that the Arabs "would, it is believed, strongly object to a compulsory transfer..." (IX §87) [*also >339*]
6. Concerning the main premise of Zionism – that the political rights of Jews in Palestine derived from their historical and emotional connection to Palestine – the Commission quoted one of the Palestinian "non-Jews" who'd given evidence: "The Jews, in fact, are to live in Palestine, to quote the words of the Churchill Statement of Policy, 'as of right and not on sufferance'; while the Arabs, on the other hand, are to live in Palestine as on sufferance and not of right." (IV §37)²⁴⁹⁸

The Commission's Map No. 4, "Jewish-owned land", incidentally, makes visually clear how small a proportion of Palestine was in 1936 actually owned by Jews. (p 407, after the Appendices)

Summing up the demographic and land-possession problems of the Report, eyewitness Akram Zuaytir writes:

According to official statistics the proposed Jewish state was to include 325 thousand Arabs owning 3,25 million dunums, as against 300 thousand Jews owning 1,25 million dunums. On the other hand, the Arab state was to include no more than 1,250 Jews.²⁴⁹⁹

Whatever the exact numbers, placing the Galilee in the foreseen Jewish state meant that in all likelihood Arabs would be in the majority. It seems reasonable to ask the question

²⁴⁹⁶ Also Parsons 2019, p 15.

²⁴⁹⁷ Also Khalidi 1988, p 11.

²⁴⁹⁸ Also Huneidi 2001, p 25.

²⁴⁹⁹ Zuaytir 1958, pp 100, 101, also 208; *in general on Peel* pp 94-102.

what it even *meant* to call a state “Jewish” in which Jews were not a majority. In any case, as with the Jewish state proposed by the UN General Assembly on 29 November 1947 [481], which when Bedouins were counted had a slight Arab majority, the principle was ‘rule by minority’.

The Commission summarised its own position thus:

Nor do we suggest that the obligations Britain undertook towards the Arabs and the Jews some twenty years ago have lost in moral or legal weight through what has happened since. The trouble is that they have proved irreconcilable; and, as far ahead as we can see, they must continue to conflict. To put it in one sentence, we cannot – in Palestine as it now is – both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home. (XX §17)

The underdeveloped “Arabs” had said this all along. (*also* XVIII §13; XIX §3, 9; XX §13, 17)

The Report correctly said that “a free Palestine in present circumstances means an Arab State” (V §15). But it was “wholly unreasonable” to ask “the Jews” to live as a minority in Palestine because this would have been “the direct negation of Zionism...” (III §37), and therefore “the creation at this stage of a national independent government would preclude the fulfilment of the pledge made by the British Government to the Jewish people.” (XVIII §4) A “national independent government”, that is, would “unreasonably” place Jews, for the foreseeable future, in a minority position. But when all was said and done, this was the one thing Britain was not ready to do: negate Zionism.

At this fork in the road, alas, the Royal Commission eschewed the option of a single democratic state with proportional representation so long begged for by so many Palestinians: Only the partition of Palestine, they said, stood a chance of constituting a “lasting settlement”. (X §74; XIX §11; XX §19-20) According to Antonius, by the way, who had been Assistant Chief Secretary of the Palestine Government from around 1925 until early 1930, Peel himself had once supported not partition but rather some such democratic solution retaining Palestine’s territorial integrity; apparently Peel had at one time asked the Zionist representatives who were making additional demands for special treatment:

You have been seeking all sorts of percentages and distinctions and fixings of percentages for Jews in all classes of labor, government, and otherwise, the civil service, railways and so on, but do you think that is a very healthy condition in a country...[?] Would it not be far better if they [Jews and Palestinians as a whole] were treated... as citizens of a country, and that all these distinctions of race should be, as far as possible, put aside?²⁵⁰⁰

Assuming Antonius is correct, Peel had at some point changed his mind, abandoning his support for the 2-decades-long Palestinian position.

Despite itself using the phrase “dual obligation” with regard to land-settlement questions (IX § 1-41), the report broke ranks with the mistaken view, articulated for instance by Anthony Eden within the British Cabinet on 20 January 1937 [323] and before the Permanent Mandates Commission on 14 September 1937,²⁵⁰¹ and still held by many historians today,

²⁵⁰⁰ Boyle 2001, p 245.

²⁵⁰¹ Woodhead 1938, p 287.

that the Mandate placed two *equal* or “dual” obligations on Britain. The Jewish National Home “obligation” had always had the upper hand, as proven by the language of the Balfour Declaration itself (fobbing the Arabs off with the sobriquet “non-Jewish community”, with mere “civil and religious” rights) [*see* >16] and by twenty years of statements and practices. Peel was right:

Unquestionably... the *primary* purpose of the Mandate, as expressed in its preamble and articles, is to promote the establishment of the Jewish National Home. (II §42, *emphasis added*)

This was the last official intellectual effort on the part of HMG to justify their work for Zionism. As Rashid Khalidi notes, “Peel satisfied the basic Zionist aims of Jewish statehood and removal of the Palestinians, albeit not in the whole of Palestine...”²⁵⁰² Antonius’s angrier verdict in 1938 on Peel’s partition proposal:

The scheme is based on the expectation that the Arabs would, or could be made to, renounce their natural and political rights in any part of Palestine; that frontiers may be laid down in defiance of physical features and of ingrained habits of human intercourse; that trade and good government can thrive in a small country not larger than Wales, after its dissection into some half-dozen entities made up of separate states, enclaves and corridors; and that a population of 300,000 settled people, deeply attached to their homes and their culture, would submit to either of the alternatives proposed for them by the Royal Commission: forcible eviction or subjugation to a Jewish state established over their heads.²⁵⁰³

It is little wonder that Antonius’s book made such an impression before and during the St. James talks of early 1939. [>383ff] Compare, if you wish, the recent dry, Palestinian-free, book-length pro-partition study of Penny Sinanoglou.²⁵⁰⁴

But opinion within HMG was swinging away from partition and even Zionism. A new Command Paper issued on 23 December 1937 [>353], after Parliament’s failure to approve Peel’s basic recommendation [>340; >342], saw at the very least that the devil lay in the detail, and set up a “technical” or “Frontier” Commission (the ‘Woodhead’ Commission, >376) to draw exact borders and with a wider remit to judge the feasibility/advisability of *any* partition scheme. The December Command Paper would also, by the way, correct its 7 July Statement of Policy, the one which had recommended the Report to Parliament [>335], saying that HMG “have not accepted the [Royal] Commission’s proposals for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area.”²⁵⁰⁵ This “non-acceptance” was despite the logic of the demographics of the proposed Jewish state, peopled with at the very most 50% Jews: as correctly stated by Nur Masalha, “the notion of transfer was a natural concomitant to the partition idea.”²⁵⁰⁶

²⁵⁰² Khalidi 2020, pp 43–44.

²⁵⁰³ Antonius 1938, pp 403–04.

²⁵⁰⁴ Sinanoglou 2019.

²⁵⁰⁵ Cmd. 5634 §3; also Woodhead 1938, pp 8, 12, 52–53, 82, 235, 257.

²⁵⁰⁶ Masalha 1992, p 55; also Said 1979, pp 99–103.

1937 'The Peel Commission admitted that security expenditure in Palestine had risen from PL 862,000 in 1935 to PL 2,223,000 in 1936.²⁵⁰⁷

as of July 1937 'Not surprisingly, the Royal (Peel) Commission's recommendations were vehemently rejected by all shades of Palestinian opinion. They further triggered an unprecedented explosion of violence among the Palestinian peasantry in the countryside.'²⁵⁰⁸

²⁵⁰⁷ Kanafani 1972, p 51; Peel 1937, IV §30, VII §10-11, 25, 47, XVI §16.

²⁵⁰⁸ Masalha 1992, p 61.

337. Norman Bentwich to Jamal al-Husseini

14 July 1937

Norman Bentwich was a leading Jewish British Zionist who for the approximately twelve years up to 1931 had been Palestine Attorney-General. [*also* >56] In discussions in London with Jamal al-Husseini he mooted a draft solution avoiding partition in favour of a cantonal federation whose first clause set out the crucial collectivist premise that “Both the Arab and Jewish communities are in Palestine as of right.” Under diminishing British rule, a government of Palestine and Trans-Jordan based on the parity of the two groups would accept the “rights of Jews from other countries to immigrate into Palestine” but grant no “special privileges” to Jews, only “full civil and political rights of [individual] citizens.”²⁵⁰⁹ I do not know if or how Jamal replied to this proposed solution, which soon enjoyed some popularity [*>*383; *>*436-39; *also* >463].

²⁵⁰⁹ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 100.

On 15 July 1937 in a **telegram to Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore** High Commissioner Wauchope reported that

Opposition to the recommendations of Royal Commission regarding partition is almost unanimous in Palestine and apparently in the Middle East generally and among Arab Kings. This is rapidly hardening daily although moderate Arab opinion would have been much stronger if Haifa and Acre had been excluded from Jewish State...²⁵¹⁰

On 19 July 1937 Wauchope regretted in a despatch to Cosmo Parkinson at the Colonial Office that the Peel Commission's Partition Proposal was rejected not only by high Jewish officials like Ben-Gurion and Ussishkin but by most Palestinians:

At present, I judge the Christians of Galilee and Archbishop Hajjar²⁵¹¹ to be united opponents to all form of Partition that gives Galilee to the Jews – the Mufti's influence is of course against Partition, but there are, for the moment, large numbers against it quite apart from Mufti. ... The National Defence Party are now very angry with Abdullah [ruling in Transjordan] for declaring himself in favour of Partition. [see also >364] ... An Arab official who has always been much agin the Mufti, told me today that Arabs are daily hardening against Partition [because it means] surrender of Galilee and Acre district to the Jews [and] an Arab State would mean a poverty-stricken State with no oranges or rich lands...²⁵¹²

Giving the overwhelmingly non-Jewish Galilee to “the Jews” was indeed a clear message. Inexplicable is that Wauchope even remotely entertained the notion that the Palestinians would swallow the loss of the Galilee and Akko.

Shortly after the Peel Commission's report, on 30 July, Ormsby-Gore accurately summarised things to the Permanent Mandates Commission:

The Arab concentrates first on Article 2 of the mandate, which says that the mandatory Power is to establish self-governing institutions. They have never ceased to demand self-government in Palestine and self-government in accordance with the numerical strength of the people in that country. By self-government they mean a Legislative Council with a Government responsible to that Legislative Council. On the present numerical basis that would mean eight Moslem Arabs for every four Jews and every one Christian. But that is only a step in what they want: they have never ceased to desire, and to tell us that they desire, the termination of the mandate and its replacement by a system of treaties similar to that which the other Arabs have in Iraq and are now getting in Syria. Still more insistent, however, is

²⁵¹⁰ CO 733/352/2, p 140

²⁵¹¹ Also Robson 2011, pp 16, 35.

²⁵¹² CO 733/332/11, pp 148, 151-52, 160-63; Nashashibi 1990, p 57 note.

their other main demand, and this demand is put forward, not only by the Arabs of Palestine, but by the neighbouring Arab Governments and countries unanimously—i.e., the stoppage of all further Jewish immigration.²⁵¹³

The ratio of Moslem, Jewish and Christian residents in 1937 was 63:28:8.

According to Lesch,

By late July, the British officials in Palestine realized that Arab opposition to partition was far more widespread than they originally estimated and that no 'moderate' opinion willing to accept the partition plan existed.²⁵¹⁴

Around this time Wauchope said that if the Arabs did not accept the Royal Commission's partition solution, and continued to rebel, "rebellion will be suppressed, if need be by severe measures such as will prevent any further rising for some years to come."²⁵¹⁵

16 July 1937 *Haj Amin Al-Husseini [the Mufti] meets with the German Consul to Jerusalem, Mr. Dohle, asking for support against the Zionists in Palestine.*

17 July 1937 *"The Mufti [Haj Amin Al-Husseini] escapes arrest through "a back door", according to Wauchope writing on 16 August 1937."*²⁵¹⁶

²⁵¹³ PMC 1937, 'Ormsby-Gore to the Thirty-Second (Extraordinary) Session of the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Commission, 30 July 1937; UNISPAL Document C.330.M.222.1937.VI; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document-1/>

²⁵¹⁴ Lesch 1979, p 121.

²⁵¹⁵ CO 323/1395/26, p 26; Cronin 2017, p 48.

²⁵¹⁶ CO 733/352/3, pp 22-23.

On 19 July 1937 Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore shared with the Cabinet **two letters** High Commissioner Wauchope had recently sent to Colonial Office official Cosmo Parkinson.²⁵¹⁷ First, Wauchope wrote that he had seen Emir Abdullah in Amman, who was in favour of the Palestine partition plan which included Trans-Jordan in the Arab State. The task for Wauchope and Trans-Jordan High Commissioner Kirkbride:

We are going into the question of how many Arab families could be established in Transjordan given money to assist them. ... Kirkbride, Bullard and the others tell me the people are delighted with the idea of Partition, as they consider that ends the idea of Jewish settlement in Transjordan. I believe with Partition it [Jewish settlement in Transjordan] might come later – slowly, gradually and happily.

Second, he related that the Iraqi Prime Minister had issued a statement against partition, and feared “that it will stir the Arabs in Palestine to make every resistance against Partition”; Ibn Saud had also sent an incendiary letter to “his friend in Damascus”. Wauchope concluded:

I have no doubt these two statements have been a most powerful factor in causing Ragheb Bey and the Nashashibi Defence Party publicly to declare their opposition to Partition, whereas a week ago Ragheb and Farraj told me freely, without being asked, they were definitely in favour of the principle of Partition. Nor have I any doubt that the Mufti [Amin al-Husseini] and Awni [Abdul Hadi] are using all their influence against Partition;...

Already at this time arrangements had been made with the captain of a British ship in Haifa

for the transfer of the Mufti to the [H.M.S.] *Repulse* should he in any way commit himself. ... Should rows develop say after the arrest of the Mufti, it would be useful to have power to send some lesser fry to Malta for a short period. We had considerable hope that the Mufti was about to contravene the law as regards holding a meeting without Police approval, in which case I should have immediately deported him, I am sure with the full approval of the Secretary of State [Ormsby-Gore].

That the Mufti had just escaped arrest prevented his opponents from freely supporting Partition, according to Wauchope, so “I am considering whether it would be possible to ‘clip his wings.’ But we shall have to go carefully.”

One idea to encourage support for partition amongst the Arabs:

The only suggestion of any importance that [General John] Dill has offered is that we should tell Ragheb that a well-wisher has given him £10,000 if he declares himself in favour of Partition and we should then hand him over that sum. ... There is little doubt that he could be bought for that sum. ... I think we shall get some fair articles inserted in the *Falastin* newspaper in a roundabout way, but I fear they will have little influence.

²⁵¹⁷ CAB 24/270/38, pp 405-06, all citations.

Meanwhile, the arrangements which had been made “last year” to deport “two or three prominent leaders to Seychelles” on board the *Repulse* planned that the “Ship will anchor outside breakwater so as to obviate possibility of demonstration on wharf.”²⁵¹⁸ [also >326; >346; 360]

13 and 19 July 1937 ‘*Wauchope would like to prevent Awni Bey Abdul Hadi Spero (and the Mufti and Ragheb Bey Nashashibi) from attending a conference in Geneva, but sees his administrative detention as the only legal way to prevent it; moreover [sic.], “Jews will be represented in Geneva” and a travel ban would cause fallout amongst the Arabs.*²⁵¹⁹

20 July 1937 ‘*Why the overwhelmingly Arab Galilee was to be part of the Jewish State was explained by Weizmann: people in high places wanted the Jewish State to have a long border with “Christian Lebanon”; the Arab State would be separated from Lebanese Moslems and the Galilee Christians would be separated from Lebanese Christians.*²⁵²⁰

²⁵¹⁸ Also CO 733/352/3, ‘Deportation of Arabs’.

²⁵¹⁹ CO 733/352/4, pp 4-5.

²⁵²⁰ Jeffries 1939, pp 718-19.

340. Lords against partition

20 July 1937

After two long debates on the Peel partition proposal on 20 and 21 July 1937 the House of Lords, albeit without an explicit No vote, could not bring itself to support the Government.²⁵²¹ On 20 July, after speeches by Zionist Lords Snell and Peel, Herbert **Samuel** and Lord Melchett made contributions worth our attention.²⁵²² Herbert Samuel was now 1st Viscount Samuel of Mount Carmel and Toxteth (no joke: the one place is in Palestine, the other in Liverpool), and spoke against the partition plan from a Zionist standpoint. (cc628-46) He did first make the broader statement that

As the [Royal] Commission rightly point out, the Arab national movement is the same in Palestine as it is in Syria, as it is in Egypt, and as it is in Iraq. It is analogous to the movement of Indian nationalism and similar movements in other countries in the world...

This presumably justified an Arab State in principle, but the particular proposed partition boundary

means that out of 400,000 Jews one-third or 142,000 will not be in the Jewish State at all. The number that is left is 258,000. Two hundred and fifty-eight thousand Jews in the Jewish State, and in the same territory, the Commission tell us, there will be 225,000 Arabs. And that is to be an independent Jewish State, which is to have a seat in the League of Nations, which is to fulfil the aspirations of the Jews. Two hundred and fifty-eight thousand Jews and 225,000 Arabs! (cc635-36)

He did not analogously say how many “Arabs” would not be in the Arab State.

In his 1945 *Memoirs* his recollection was that in this House of Lords speech his criticism had been that

One-third of the existing Jewish population would be left out of the so-called Jewish State. Included in it at the outset would be almost as many Arabs as Jews (225,000 to 258,000).²⁵²³

His recollection further was that he’d written to Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore in opposition to the Peel partition plan, justifying his opposition to partition on nobler, or more basic, grounds:

I said that ‘the fortunes of both the Arabs and the Jews are to be decided, probably for a generation, perhaps for longer. Both communities are vitally concerned in the decision. Neither has accepted the Royal Commission as an arbitrator. By what right can the British Government claim to determine, on the strength of the report of a Commission, the whole future of these two intelligent and politically conscious communities, without even hearing their views upon proposals which may be entirely novel?’²⁵²⁴

²⁵²¹ Hansard 1937; Hansard 1937a.

²⁵²² Hansard 1937, *all citations unless otherwise indicated.*

²⁵²³ Samuel 1945, p 284.

²⁵²⁴ Samuel 1945, p 283.

Wait a minute: While I haven't been able to locate this passage in *Hansard*, here black-on-white, written in 1945, Samuel had finally caught up with Enlightenment thinking on such issues of self-determination and democracy. In 1937, when the "British Government" went against his wish for a large, populous and *araberrein* Jewish state, he evidently saw no other escape hatch than to argue that the Mandatory was not just drawing the wrong lines but had no "right" to draw any lines at all.

To be sure, the typical Samuelian ambiguity of the last sentence quoted above left room for both a principled anti-colonialist interpretation and for the interpretation that the U.K. *did* have colonial rights in Palestine, but along the way had to "hear" the views of the affected people. Of course, had these people not been "intelligent and politically conscious", "hearing their views" wouldn't be required. He moreover did not name the point in time when the Arabs' political maturity had apparently suddenly been achieved. What they had said to the King-Crane Commission in 1919 [⁵⁹] had not had to be heard, and he had had a hand in blocking their access to the Cavendish Committee and the Permanent Mandates Commission [¹⁶⁶; ¹⁷⁸; ¹⁸²; ¹⁸⁹; ¹⁹¹]. But now it was outrageous that one would not "hear their views". Nor did he address his own earlier presumption in writing his prescriptive 1915 manifesto to the Cabinet 'The Future of Palestine' [⁸]. Whatever: Peel had given the wrong answer.

Samuel equivocated concerning the Peel Commission's plans to transfer Arabs out of the Jewish state and Jews out of the Arab state, compulsorily if they didn't volunteer. (cc636-37) On the one hand he acknowledged that the transfer of Greeks and Turks in the early 1920s had worked and been "admirably done", and he didn't outright reject the Commission's compulsory-transfer proposal. His oblique objections were in fact not ones of ethical principle but rather that the scheme was not "possible" due to 1) the crassly unequal number of Arabs and Jews that would have to be transferred (225,000 to 1,250) and 2) the difficulty of moving the Arabs:

The Commission say there ought to be a removal of population, or what is called, strangely enough, an exchange of population, that the Jews from the Arab State should be brought into the Jewish State and the Arabs in the Jewish State should be transferred. ... There is nothing... to induce 225,000 Arabs to leave the land in which they and their fathers have been settled for a thousand years, where they have their mosques and where they have their graveyards. ... [Thus] the Commission say... [they] should be removed compulsorily.²⁵²⁵

He did then come out for some limitation of Jewish immigration, stating that

the Jews must be ready to make a sacrifice. They must reassure the Arabs. We [the Jews or the U.K.?] cannot go on without it [a sacrifice]. Therefore they must consent to a limitation of immigration other than on the principle of economic absorptive capacity. (c641)

Eight years later in his *Memoirs* he recalled that he had in the Lords said of immigration that

its rate for a period of years should be limited, so that, at the end of the period, the Arabs would not find themselves in a minority. By that time the whole situation might have been

²⁵²⁵ But see Wasserstein 1990, pp 9-10, 15.

so modified, especially if an Arab Confederation had come into being, that the balance of population in Palestine would no longer appear to the Arab world so important a matter as hitherto.²⁵²⁶

Then, I suppose, they wouldn't mind becoming a minority. This willingness to lower the number of monthly immigration permits was here not put forward based on its inherent moral merit – it was not a matter of Arab *rights* – but rather because “we” (the Jews, or Zionists) can only succeed by making some compromise.

Judging by everything else Samuel had ever said or written, it must have been for him a sacrifice or compromise to now propose what he called a “positive policy” (cc643-44) for a huge “Arab Confederation” of which Palestine would be a component, and within Palestine there would be a bi-national set-up under British control where “there ought to be two communal organisations, Jewish and Arab”; non-geographical “Communities” or “Millets” on the “Turkish Empire” model would have large community and local powers and sit together on a “Central Advisory Council”. “Out of this might grow at a later stage a constitution more formal and more democratic.”²⁵²⁷ As he put it,

there should be a Central Council in Palestine, not elected by the people and not based on numbers, but representing the two communities; that is, a kind of Federal Council, with British officials present there to help and advise. ... [T]he Arabs, perhaps, may be brought to recognise that the links of the Jews for four thousand years with this country cannot be broken... (c643) [*also >314*]

Lacking the demographic advantage, Samuel was again invoking the hoary historical connection of Jews with Palestine – and deriving from it political parity.

Speaking just after Samuel in the Lords **Cosmo Lang**, as Archbishop of Canterbury head of the Anglican Church, which had a small but significant place in mandated Palestine, rose to praise the Jews and Zionism:

The Jews – how can we fail to sympathise with the ideals of Zionism? When we consider the history of that most remarkable race, one of the most remarkable in the world [and] when we think of their determination to find some means of securing for themselves a place of cultural influence and of political strength, can we wonder that they should long to have a home of their own in the original home land of their race? ... The Commissioners make an appeal to the friends of the National Home, among whom I would wish to include myself, ... to bend their minds to finding a way out. ... It is partition. (cc648-49)

This Man of God, a believer in “influence” and “strength”, did claim that he saw both sides (c648), but he obviously liked one side better than the other.²⁵²⁸

The next speaker was Henry **Mond** (Lord **Melchett**), Chairman of the Jewish Agency. (cc653-64) In just a few paragraphs he made a fundamental case for Zionism consisting of seven parts (paraphrasing):

²⁵²⁶ Samuel 1945, p 285.

²⁵²⁷ See also Samuel 1945, pp 149-50, 284.

²⁵²⁸ Also Robson 2011, pp 151-56.

1. The fate of persecuted European Jews had somehow to do with Palestine. (cc656, 658, 660)
2. Providing refuge for these Jews was not “more than Arab generosity can bear”. (c656)
3. The Balfour Declaration had always meant that the Jewish National Home “might grow into a Jewish Commonwealth, an independent Commonwealth...” (c657)
4. The Palestinians were not distinct, just part of the group of Arabs who politically owned vast territory. (cc657, 663)
5. What the Jews wanted therein was just a “little bit of country no larger than Wales”. (c657)
6. The Jews had actually been promised Transjordan as well, and now they’d been “driven back” to an area “smaller than the County of Norfolk”. (cc657-58)
7. Only “the Zionist Organization” could make the desert bloom. (c662)

On 7 July 1937 the Government had issued its ‘Statement of Policy’ approving the Peel partition plan²⁵²⁹ [>334; >335], and on 21 July there was to be a House of Commons debate on the whole Peel Report. [>342] According to Jeffries, on 19 July Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore, who would argue for the Peel plan two days later, met with Weizmann, whose **notes on the meeting** would be read out on 7 August 1937 at a secret session of the Zionist Congress in Zürich.²⁵³⁰ On the following points Ormsby-Gore assured Weizmann he would try to modify the Peel recommendations:

1. There should be no joint Arab/Jewish port at Jaffa/Tel Aviv. [Peel XXII §31]
2. Four towns which are now part of the separate, continuing British Mandate (Acre, Haifa, Safad and Tiberias) should be turned over to the Jewish State. [Peel XXII §22.iii]
3. The Jewish State should pay no subvention to the Arab State. [Peel XXII §23]
4. The new parts of Jerusalem should be turned over to the Jewish State. [Peel XXII §11]
5. Weizmann “said that the whole success of the scheme depended upon whether the Government genuinely did or did not wish to carry out [the] recommendation [for compulsory population transfer]” [Peel XXII §39-43], whereupon Ormsby-Gore said he would propose a Committee for arranging the details of the resolved transfer.²⁵³¹
6. The Jewish State should be expanded to include “Potash Works and the Rutenberg Electric Power Station”. [Peel IX §55, XXII §34, IX §97-98, XIX §3]

At the close of the interview Weizmann replied to Ormsby-Gore’s query as to his personal opinion:

[I]f the points which I had raised in the interview were settled to our satisfaction, I personally would look with favour on the scheme. I added that what I had told Mr. Ormsby-Gore and what he had told me I should repeat, naturally in confidence, to my closest friends in Zürich, and also to every member of the Permanent Mandates Commission.²⁵³²

²⁵²⁹ Cmd. 5513.

²⁵³⁰ Jeffries 1939, pp 699-703, citing the *Jewish Chronicle* of 13 August 1937.

²⁵³¹ Also Khalidi 1988, p 11.

²⁵³² Jeffries 1939, p 702.

342. Commons partition debate

21 July 1937

This entry should be read in tandem with entries >242 and >290 on the Commons debates of 17 November 1930 and 24 March 1936, respectively, since many of the same issues and arguments were raised.

On 21 July 1937 the House of Commons debated the Peel Commission Report [p.336] for eight hours without approving it.²⁵³³ It accepted amendments put forth by Churchill and Lloyd George merely allowing the Government to go to the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva and put their pro-partition case – but not in the name of Parliament, which first wanted to see if a better partition were possible.

Colonial Secretary **Ormsby-Gore**, who 20 years earlier decisively crafted the Balfour Declaration, led off by rightly praising the unsurpassed analysis done by the Commission and warning that

everything said in this Debate will be scrutinised word by word by both Jew and Arab, not only in Palestine, but throughout the world, and that there is in this problem of Palestine a problem which is not confined to Palestine, but involves the whole of Jewry throughout the world and the whole Moslem world as well. (c2236)

Relying on the elision between ‘Arabs’ and ‘Palestinian Arabs’, he then said the Arabs were deeply in debt to Britain:

There was clearly a general pledge to the Arabs given by the Allied Governments to further their independence. ... I think it is fair to remind the Arabs that that independence which they enjoy throughout the Peninsula of Arabia, which they enjoy in Iraq, which they are about to enjoy fully in Syria, and which if this scheme goes through they will enjoy throughout Transjordan and the greater part of Palestine, would not have been achieved but for the fact – and it is not the Jews’ fault – that there are 10,000 British graves in Palestine and many more in Iraq. The Arabs owe this country something, and it is tragic that, after all that Britain has done for the Arabs, there should be 20 years afterwards this running sore in Palestine. (c2239)²⁵³⁴

He did not mention that Iraqi independence had also to do with the Iraqi Revolt of 1920.²⁵³⁵ He then raised a theme that would dominate British parlance for the next ten years, namely “conciliation between Jew and Arab”, saying it was such a shame that “British officials in Palestine” could not “get Arabs and Jews to meet at [their] house[s]”. (c2240)

After extolling the economic benefits for Arabs of the Zionist Mandate, Ormsby-Gore did rightly state that “the trouble of Palestine is political and not economic”, but then

²⁵³³ Hansard 1937a, all quotations.

²⁵³⁴ Also Peel 1937, II §19.

²⁵³⁵ On Iraqi events during these years see Antonius 1938, pp 313-17, 358-68; also Fieldhouse 2006, Ch. 3 & *passim*.

blamed the trouble on Arab “nationalism” and a world-wide “worship of nationality”, conceding that there was also a “vivid Jewish nationalism”. (c2242) As usual he then tied “the fires of anti-Semitic persecution” in Europe to Palestine and said proudly that “We took into Palestine, compared with all the other countries in the world, far more of the German-Jewish refugees.” (c2244) The “we” referred to HMG, not the Palestinians. As for the Arabs, they were aware that “the Jews” were many in number and influential in politics in Britain, and thus said “We are in despair”. (c2245)

More concretely to Peel’s plan, and applying the same logic as the Zionists employed to claim ownership of Palestine:

We have every right as a Christian country to claim that in perpetuity Bethlehem, the City of David, which has become so associated in the minds of every Christian as the birthplace of our Lord, where the population is predominantly Christian, should be excepted from the Jewish-Arab State. And equally Nazareth, in which everybody also takes an interest and which is predominantly a Christian town.

He immediately concluded: “It is therefore essential that if partition is to be fair, practical and successful, it should be tripartite...” (c2248)²⁵³⁶ [*also >351*] (The UN partition plan of 1947, as well, would be tripartite, with greater Jerusalem as a “*corpus separatum*” staying under UN Trusteeship.²⁵³⁷ [*>481*]) He closed with the issue of evicting Palestinians:

There must be a series of fact-finding inquiries. We must ascertain where and how many Arabs can be settled in Transjordan and elsewhere in Palestine, if there is to be a scheme of transfer, and obviously a scheme of transfer is most desirable. (c2250)

Much of the foreseen Jewish State, that is, should be cleansed of people of non-Jewish ethnicity, as recommended by Lord Peel, Oxford Professor Coupland and the other Commissioners²⁵³⁸ – ‘cleansed’ because one after all gets rid of what is of no use or less worth.

Welsh MP Morgan **Jones** rejected partition until Parliament was told more about it or given the reasons why the Government accepted this Commission recommendation; but his speech mainly attested the economic benefits of the Mandate to the Arabs and criticised the administration of the Mandate by inexperienced officers. (cc2256-58) He was spot on about one thing, though:

It is proposed that Palestine shall be divided, virtually, into three smaller Palestines, a Jewish State, an Arab State and a Mandatory State, shall we call it. But in each of those three States there may be reproduced the exact circumstances and characteristics which now apply to the whole.

He immediately gave population statistics of the three “smaller Palestines” to show that the demographic problems remained. (c2259) He added that the Jews would reject this scheme of partition because they got so much less land than they wanted (which included Transjordan, even) and the Arabs would reject it because the land they got was of a poorer quality than the Jews’. (c2260)

²⁵³⁶ Peel 1937, XXII §10, 12.

²⁵³⁷ UNGA 1947q, III.C.3.

²⁵³⁸ Peel 1937, XXII §§36 & 43.

Leo **Amery**, who had been Colonial Secretary from 6 November 1924 until 4 June 1929, stood up to oppose partition because it narrowed the potential for the Jewish state and because it “does mean a tremendous narrowing down of the relief that Palestine might have offered to the down-trodden Jews of Eastern and Central Europe... a tremendous disappointment”. (cc2274, 2276) Labour MP Daniel **Frankel** supported Amery on this point and added:

The great work that has been done in a few years in Palestine has proved the Jewish case completely that they can successfully colonise a country in such a way as to be a source of admiration to the rest of the world.” (cc2290, 2289)

“Successful colonisation” was a concept.

Another reason against partition, so Amery, was that only a Jewish state as strong as possible can “introduce a new and quickening element into the whole of that derelict region of the Near Eastern world”. (c2277) In sum, while with the Peel proposal “the Arabs are getting fulfilment of at least 100 per cent. [sic.] of their pledges”, the Jews were having

what they believed to have been promised to them whittled down step after step. An area as large as England was whittled down to something like the size of Wales, and now that again has been whittled down to something like the size of Norfolk. ... [T]hey have had a rather raw deal. (c2280)

Like Lord Melchett in the Lords debate [^{>340}], Amery believed with “the Jews” that they had “been promised” all of Transjordan and as well the areas west of the Jordan which the Peel plan put into the Arab state. MPs Archibald **Sinclair**, Josiah **Wedgwood** and Winston **Churchill** spoke at length in the same vein.

Arnold **Wilson**²⁵³⁹, who had lived in the Near East for 19 years, threw in a seldom-heard thought on Palestine’s economic progress:

Propagandists, with the utmost good faith, are always pointing out the vast improvements which the Jews have made in Palestine, and comparing them with the miserable state of Palestine before they came there. I have lived in Arab-speaking countries, in Persia and Turkey, and I can testify that just as great and beneficent changes have taken place where there were neither Jews nor Britishers. ... Since Iraq has attained sovereignty they have made great progress. ... The Arabs are as capable of development as Englishmen or Persians or Turks. They are not an inferior, unintelligent race, incapable of progress. I know by experience that they are as capable of progress, as any race in Asia. They do not accept much which we ourselves accept, sometimes questioning, as being synonymous with progress and civilisation. They do not regard a miniature Piccadilly set down in the desert as a mark of progress... (c2297)

Douglas **Clifton Brown**, who from 1943 until 1951 would be Speaker of the House [*also* ^{>290}; ^{>303}], pointed out the imbalance between pro-Zionist and pro-Palestinian speakers in such Parliamentary debates (cc2306-07) then attested that the Peel Report was more objective, having declared the Palestinians justified in their three main grievances:

²⁵³⁹ See also Wikipedia >Arnold Wilson.

The first grievance of the Arabs was that the Mandate was quite unworkable and impossible. The Royal Commission has blown the Mandate sky high, and the Arabs, therefore, were justified in their first grievance. The Arabs complained about immigration, on which the Royal Commission find that instead of immigration being limited according to the economic capacity of the country, there must be a super-political limit imposed on it; and it is limited to 12,000 at the most now.

In judging their other grievance, over land sales, as well, the Commission had found that indeed many Arabs had been rendered landless. (cc2306-07, 2308)

On population transfer Clifton Brown said:

Is it fair that the Arabs of Acre who are seamen and merchants should be transferred to the plains of Beersheba, or to say that the hill Arabs of North Galilee should make their living in the plains elsewhere? ... It seems to be unfair, when you are transferring populations from one area to another, that only 1,250 Jews should be left in the Arab State while 235,000 Arabs should be left in the Jewish State. From that point of view the Arabs are certainly getting the worst of the deal. (c2310)

After Liberal MP James **de Rothschild**'s speech against partition and for a stronger Jewish National Home, Anthony **Crossley** picked up Clifton Brown's theme of the Arabs' under-representation in such debates:

I cannot help wishing that there were two Arabs to come and address the House. I believe everyone would have flocked in to hear them, and it would have created a fairer impression if they had had their direct spokesmen as well as the Zionists. The hon. Member used one contemptuous phrase. He said the Arab is not only the son of the desert, but he is the father of the desert. (c2322)

After de Rothschild interjected that he was merely quoting from a book, Crossley continued by saying that the latest Palestinian uprising

was merely the culmination of six previous rebellions. I wonder if it is Liberal to decry and deny the national aspirations of a people like the Arab *fellaheen*. ... I remember, too, the Debate that took place only just over a year ago on the Legislative Council [^{>290}], which followed very much the same trend as this Debate, speech after speech with the full force of Zionist opinion behind it. That Debate was the last straw that broke the camel's back and brought the rebellion. ... No one but a hard man would deny the national aspirations, the repression, the subjection and the misery of the Jewish people in the world. I would, however, remark in passing, that there is no people who have treated the Jews right up to the time of this Mandate with such consideration as the Arabs throughout all their lands. (cc2322-23)

Crossley was correct that the House debate of 24 March 1936 had cleared away the Palestinians' last hesitations about rebellion, the next-to-last straw having been the Black Letter of 1931 [^{>246}].

Crossley then summarised the history of the Mandate, poked fun at the Report's refusal to outright support the Palestinians' position that Arab areas *south of the area west of the line between Damascus and Aleppo* were included in McMahon's promise of simple independence [^{>10}], and concluded with a reluctant endorsement of partition:

I would ask the Arabs to realise that if they give up a part of their national aspirations under this scheme, so do the Jews give up a part of theirs. ... If that be so, I would make this one further remark to them. I believe that logically they win their case from end to end. I believe that the logic is wholly with them, but in practical politics logic so often ends in disaster. (cc2323, 2327)

As to this ethical “logic”, at eight minutes before midnight Communist Party MP William **Gallacher** spoke bluntly against partition:

I rise as an absolute opponent of partition. I have heard Members talk about the Palestinians as though they had no right to Palestine, but we can never solve this question unless the basic right of the Palestinians to Palestine is understood right from the start. That is very important. There can be co-operation only if the Jewish people will recognise that basic right. But if you have a situation where the Zionists, who are not representing the interests of the Jewish people but who represent a particular political trend, say, ‘Yes, we will meet round a table with the Arabs,’ but always with the understanding that the Jews must get a majority in Palestine, to talk about meeting round a table is utterly futile. We have had people say in the House that in no circumstances will the Zionist movement consider anything else but a majority of Jews in Palestine. That can never bring us understanding. ... Let the Zionists make an arrangement with the Arabs. (c2358)

The House then without a roll call in effect rejected the Government motion to approve the Peel Report. (cc2366-67)

23 July 1937 *The Arab Higher Committee rejects the Peel Commission’s proposal and demands an independent Palestine where British interests as well as the ‘legitimate Jewish and other minority rights’ would be safeguarded. [See also ‘Memorandum, submitted by the Arab Higher Committee to the Permanent Mandates Commission and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Dated, July 23rd 1937*²⁵⁴⁰, >343]

²⁵⁴⁰ http://www.eltaher.org/docs_photos/1937-Memorandum-to-the-Permanent-Mandates-Commission-Arabic-and-English-doc114_en.html

According to Porath, as rumours of the partition plan leaked out the Arab Higher Committee visited the neighbouring Arab countries to lobby against it:

When the recommendations [of Peel] were published, the HAC [Arab Higher Committee] sent telegrams to the Arab rulers which read as follows: 'The Arab people in Palestine prays for your Majesty's support and advice at this critical, historic moment, and appeals to you in the name of this Holy land, depending on your Arab honour and your religious obligations, to work for rescuing the country from imperialism, Judaisation and dismemberment.'²⁵⁴¹

To my knowledge not only no non-Jewish Palestinian supported partition, or a Jewish state in Palestine (i.e. Zionism), or the forced transfer of themselves from their homes, but neither did any Arab aside from Transjordan's Emir Abdullah [>339].²⁵⁴² Mustafa Kabha reports that, to be sure, the newspaper *Filastin* never expressly objected to the partition plan and *Al-Difa* only lukewarmly opposed it.²⁵⁴³

Regardless of the details of the as yet unrevealed-to-them partition plan, on 8 July the AHC had thus simply in principle publicly rejected partition, for instance in a memorandum to the Permanent Mandates Commission which called for:

- (a) the recognition of the right of the Arabs to complete independence in their own land;
- (b) the cessation of the experiment of the Jewish National Home;
- (c) the cessation of the British Mandate and its replacement by a treaty similar to treaties existing between Britain and Iraq, Britain and Egypt, and between France and Syria, creating in Palestine a sovereign State;
- (d) the immediate cessation of all Jewish immigration and of land sales to Jews pending the negotiation and conclusion of the treaty.²⁵⁴⁴

The National Defence Party, having recently split off from the Arab Higher Committee, issued its official rejection of the partition plan on 21 July, followed by the AHC on 23 July; they were unified in demanding that the British Mandate be replaced by a Palestinian independent state, treaty-bound with Britain, guaranteeing reasonable British interests and rights of the minority Jews – with the National Defence Party adding that the Anglo-Palestine treaty should guarantee that the ratio of Jews to non-Jews remain unchanged.²⁵⁴⁵ Speaking correctly of all Palestinians, Walid Khalidi writes: "They could not accept the legitimization of a Zionist political title in Palestine."²⁵⁴⁶

²⁵⁴¹ Porath 1977, p 230, citing *Filastin*, 9.7.37; also Kayyali 1978, pp 207-08.

²⁵⁴² Sayegh 1965, p 43; Abu-Lughod 1981, p 406; also Woodhead 1938, p 235/\$488.

²⁵⁴³ Kabha 2007, pp 228-32.

²⁵⁴⁴ Woodhead 1938, II. §25.

²⁵⁴⁵ Shaw 1946, p 41; Kayyali 1978, p 207, citing CO 733/333, 13 September 1937.

²⁵⁴⁶ Khalidi 1984, p 189; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 102-03.

On 29 July 1937 a harsh critique of the partition plan was sent to the High Commissioner, the President of the League of Nations, the Permanent Mandates Commission and the Colonial Secretary by Shukri Tagi, President of the 'Arab Committee of Citrus Fruit Industry'.²⁵⁴⁷ It built on the data of the Hope Simpson Report of 1930 [233], challenged many "misleading figures", "misleading maps" and "discrepancies" in Peel's presentation, and illustrated concretely the plight of Arab citrus growers and workers in what was to become a Jewish state:

In Chapter XX of its Report the Royal Commission states 'We do not think that any fair-minded statesman would suppose, now that the hope of harmony between the races has proved untenable, that Britain ought either to hand over to Arab Rule 400,000 Jews, whose entry entry to Palestine has been for the most part facilitated by the British and approved by the League of Nations, or, that, if the Jews should become Majority, a million or so of Arabs should be handed over to their rule.' And yet after this exhibition of 'natural conscience' this same Commission ordains without a qualm of a thought as to its own consistency that 300,000 Arabs owning 3,700,000 dunums of land should be handed over to the rule of 250,000 Jews owning 1,300,000 dunums only. Our astonishment at the presentation of such a scheme by a judicial body of reputed wisdom, nobility and impartiality passes description. (p 31)

The feeling that one or the other British utterance during the Mandate "passes description" has befallen me many times during my research – because they defiled both logic and ethics.

A detailed eight-page rebuttal of the Citrus Growers' arguments was written by a British team under the 'Officer Administering the Government', the 'Commissioner on Special Duty', and the 'Commissioner for Lands and Surveys' and sent to Foreign Minister Eden and the Permanent Mandates Commission. (pp 8-9, 10-17) Regarding this attempted rebuttal Downie sometime in August minuted, on Colonial Office paper for the edification of Ormsby-Gore, Wauchope and Foreign Secretary Eden, that

I am to suggest that, if Mr. Eden sees no objection, it would appear to be sufficient to inform the Secretary General of the League of Nations that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government no useful purpose would be served by discussing the Committee's arguments, since these related to the scheme of partition proposed by the Palestine Royal Commission, to which His Majesty's Government do not regard themselves as in any way committed, and that as announced by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in his speech to the Council of the League on the 14th September it is intended to appoint a further special body to draw up proposals for a detailed scheme of partition [353; >376], and it will be the duty of this body to take into account such representations as those put forward by the Committee. (p 7)

This cleverly dissociated HMG from the Royal Commission – and maybe that was accurate: As we shall see, this new "body", the Woodhead Commission, would basically agree with the Committee of the Arab citrus growers.

²⁵⁴⁷ CO 733/351/9, pp 23-33, *all citations*.

28 July 1937 '[O]n July 28, 1937, all 93 homes of the village of Baqa Al-Gharbiya were demolished and lands and crops destroyed. Before April 1936 there were about 2,000 British soldiers in Palestine, but by 1938 there were 25,000.'²⁵⁴⁸

1937 '[Under the leadership of Abdel Qader al-Husseini] the rebels inflict[ed] humiliation on the colonialist forces in many sites such as Bab al-Wad, the villages of Balaa, Yabad, Silat al-Dahr, Silat al-Harithiya, Beit Umrein, Jaba, Deir Sharaf, ad Zayta, and in the Nablus and Tulkarm areas where Abdul-Raheem al-Hajj fell as a martyr, as well as in Halhul, Beit Mahsir, Beddu, and other villages in the Jerusalem hills.'²⁵⁴⁹

²⁵⁴⁸ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 84.

²⁵⁴⁹ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 227.

344. George Mansour to Britain

ca. August 1937

In a 1937 booklet, 'The Arab Worker under the Palestine Mandate', published by the Commercial Press in Jerusalem, George Mansour built on the testimony he'd given to the Royal Commission in open session in January 1937.²⁵⁵⁰ Mansour (1905-1963) had been a baker and schoolteacher, was Secretary of the Arab Labour Federation in Yaffa and of the Arab Workers Society, founded in Haifa in 1934, had been a key member of the Arab Centre in London [>303], and was also "a central figure in the 1936 General Strike". (pp 190, 192) Excerpts from this booklet, which this entry in turn quotes from, were printed in a special issue in 2012 of the journal *Settler Colonial Studies* edited by Omar Jabary Salamanca, Mezna Qato, Kareem Rabie and Sobhi Samour.

Mansour first quoted Earl Winterton's refutation in the House of Commons on 21 July 1937 [>342] of two claims by pro-Zionist MPs: "anyone who visits Palestine" knows that Arab opposition to Britain and Zionism is universal, not "confined to a few effendis and a few landlords"; and it was untrue that witness George Mansour "represents nobody but himself. ... He represents the only organised Arab labour in the country". (p 191) Mansour next put his testimony in context:

While recognising that the fundamental issue is political, we believe that economic factors played a tremendously important part in the disturbances of 1936 and that this aspect has been totally ignored by the Royal Commission. (p 192)

He then took apart six of the seven claims made by the Royal Commission²⁵⁵¹ which purported to show that the growth of the Jewish National Home, with its accompanying investment from abroad, had benefited Arab labour. (pp 194-99) Paraphrasing:

1. The issue is not whether Jewish investment and immigration have had "a fructifying effect on the economic life of the whole country" but whether the Arab population has benefitted.
2. For the claim that "Arab industry" has benefitted, the Commission offered no proof, and Jewish-Zionist money from land sales "has gone to absentee Syrian landlords"; Arab "citriculture" had been doing very well, thank you, before the onset of the Jewish national home.
3. Again pertaining to the Arab citrus industry, its development was due to the Arabs themselves and to the "Department of Agriculture and to the example of the German Christian Colonists and the Monastic Orders, who live and work among the people *without dispossessing them...*" and "At the time when the Mandate was established, some half million Arab peasants managed to live on the land..."
4. If "the employment of Arab Labour has increased in urban areas, particularly in the ports", some was "owing to Jewish activity" but the Tel Aviv port, for instance, employed no Arabs at all and the British Administration under pressure from the Jewish Agency abandoned the project of a joint Arab-Jewish port for Jaffa/Tel Aviv.

²⁵⁵⁰ Mansour 1937.

²⁵⁵¹ Peel 1937, V §32.

5. Pertaining to the alleged benefits of Jewish hospitals, Mansour gave a detailed statistical analysis and concluded that “These statistics show that the Jews have received infinitely more medical help from non-Jewish institutions than non-Jews have received from Jewish institutions”.
6. One claim was that the “beneficent effect of Jewish immigration on Arab welfare is illustrated by the fact that the increase in the Arab population is most marked in the urban areas affected by Jewish development”. Mansour: “This argument is really extraordinary. We would ask the Commission to state in which cities of Palestine they would have expected the Arab population to increase most rapidly, *if there had been no National Home*. Surely it would have been in Jaffa, the port of Jerusalem and the centre of the citrus trade; in Haifa, the second port and terminus of the pipeline; and Jerusalem, the capital?”

Mansour had preceded these remarks by noting that the Royal Commission had based its assertions, as it itself admitted, after listening only to “the Jewish representatives”.²⁵⁵²

As for the General Federation of Jewish Labour [the Histadrut], it was “the most influential party in the Jewish Agency [and within that] party the most important unit is the so-called Mapai” which theoretically opposed “imperialism” but “its Zionism, on all occasions, takes precedence over socialism” and anti-imperialism. However, “Zionism in Palestine could not exist for a single day without the assistance of British ‘imperialism’”; Mapai had to violate their socialist principles which would tell them to help the Arab worker, if only because

If the ‘natives’ reached the European standard of civilisation, there would be no conceivable justification for a Mandate. If the peasantry were prosperous and content, they would never sell their land to the foreigner. If there was a flourishing local industry, there would be no justification for introducing competing industries from outside. If there was an independent autonomous Government, there would be no possibility of setting up a rival Zionist or semi-Zionist Government. The attitude of the Mapai towards Arab labour, then, is that of any other colonising immigrants towards the native inhabitants, very much intensified by the fact that Zionists regard the indigenous inhabitants as inconvenient interlopers in a land that ought to be entirely Jewish... (pp 200-01)

“Colonising immigrants” is perhaps a good synonym for ‘settler colonialists’, if it is remembered that under the Mandate it was Britain that provided both the muscle and the ideological cover for the colony; strictly speaking, it was not, as Khalidi calls it, “the Zionists’ colonial enterprise”²⁵⁵³.

The Histadrut – which controlled the Jewish Agency, the official partner of the British Mandatory – pursued its policy of employing only Jewish labour, for the above and its own reasons stemming from Zionist ideology. A revealing example of this policy in practice, so Mansour, concerned the stone used to build Tel Aviv, an example made public only by the efforts of the Communist Party, which opposed Zionism “on the ground that it is an imperialist movement”. An “illuminating document, circulated by the Labour Council of Tel Aviv to all the workers in the building trade”, said that a boycott had been agreed of stone quarried, worked or transported by Arabs: “This agreement guarantees

²⁵⁵² Peel 1937, V §32.

²⁵⁵³ Khalidi 2020, p 51.

to supply Tel Aviv with Jewish stone”; workers should “use the Jewish product only” and “not... allow the unloading of stone unless they are certain that it is Jewish” – and in general “prevent cheap labour from creeping into other Jewish industries”. (pp 202-03) In one on-the-site dispute in fall 1936, “The police..., under the command of a Jewish police officer, arrested 97 Arab workers.” (p 204)

Mansour’s effort to politely and factually refute the Royal Commission’s points one by one is heart-breaking, because nothing Palestinians said made any difference. The Great Revolt with its strikes and physical attacks on the Mandatory show that perhaps a majority of Palestinians had come to realise that nothing Mansour or anybody else could have written or testified made any difference. There was no dialogue partner, with the ruler ‘communicating’ only non-verbally with the ruled, the general form being described by anti-colonialist Frantz Fanon years later:

In the colonial countries... the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force.²⁵⁵⁴

As Mansour himself wrote,

The [non-Jewish] ‘other sections of the population’... do indeed make their grievances known through the proper official channels, but there the matter generally ends. ... [Even when a grievance is temporarily rectified] [s]ooner or later, the Government would in any case have yielded to Zionist pressure. (pp 193, 197)

That the replacement of Ormsby-Gore as Colonial Secretary by Malcolm MacDonald on 16 May 1938, or even the replacement of Wauchope as High Commissioner by Harold MacMichael on 1 March 1938, led to more listening by the British, is a thesis plausible enough to warrant further research. But during the Revolt years, nobody but a few MPs and civil servants cared.

As for George Mansour, according to the journal *Settler Colonial Studies*,

After his testimony and due to his strong relationships to trade unionists in Britain, he was appointed to the Palestine Office [Arab Centre? >303] in London, where he remained until the Second World War. Returning to Palestine, he was unable to revive his labour work as a result of continued harassment and repeated arrests.

He later spent time in Baghdad, and after the *Nakba* in Egypt, then as of 1959 in Beirut with the Arab Higher Committee “doing trade union work”. (p 190) Building on Mansour’s work, Ghassan Kanafani in 1972 would elucidate the combination of socio-economic and Zionist-imperialist causes of the 1936-39 Rebellion; evictions, landlessness, and lower wages for Arabs than for Jews were overlain by a nationalist struggle against “Zionism, in collaboration with the mandatory power”.²⁵⁵⁵

²⁵⁵⁴ Fanon 1961, p 29.

²⁵⁵⁵ Kanafani 1972, pp 10-11.

13 August 1937 *'All the reports that are reaching the Foreign Office of the growing hostility [to partition and HMG] in the Arab countries make it certain that a policy of this kind could only be carried through at the risk of a general conflagration in the Near East.'*²⁵⁵⁶

²⁵⁵⁶ FO 371/20818, paper E6410, Baggallay to Halifax.

Izzat Tannous reports that he, Jamal al-Husseini, Alfred Rock, Musa Al-Alami, Awni Abdul Hadi and Amir Adil Arslan

constituted the Arab Palestine delegation delegated by the Arab Higher Committee to discuss the Palestine case in the League of Nations, and in particular, with the Permanent Mandates Commission [PMC]. ... For twenty-one days we discussed with the Commission our unique, complicated problem, both orally and in writing. We argued on every point and there was hardly a question which we did not thrash out. We submitted memoranda supported by figures and all our complaints became well known to the Commission. When the discussions were closed and all was finished, M. Rappard, who acted as the spokesman and the Secretary of the Commission, summed up the discussions and made this 'conclusion.' 'What can we do for you, gentlemen, Great Britain is a Great Power, Grande Puissance, Grande Puissance,' he repeated!²⁵⁵⁷

I have not yet accessed any minutes of these meetings over a period of twenty-one days. I have accessed some PMC minutes of several meetings on Palestine from 30 July to 18 August 1937 within a '32nd (Extraordinary) Session', but in their 235 pages have found no records of these meetings, which might have been unofficial.²⁵⁵⁸ Those minutes show only the usual set-up of dialogue only between the PMC and Britain, in the persons of Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore and W. Hathorn Hall; indeed, it would be astounding if official meetings had been held. The minutes of this Extraordinary PMC session do however contain a very good history of the build-up to and first year of the rebellion, with many observations on the Arab Higher Committee. According to Nur Masalha, Ormsby-Gore's testimony there included HMG's eschewing compulsory transfer in "the belief that in the end the Arabs would evacuate the Jewish state voluntarily."²⁵⁵⁹

²⁵⁵⁷ Tannous 1988, pp 215-16.

²⁵⁵⁸ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-208831/>

²⁵⁵⁹ Masalha 1992, p 63, citing Jeffries 1939, p 665.

346. Bludan Pan Arab Congress

8-10 September 1937

Planned and delayed since December 1931, **this meeting took place in Bludan**, Syria, because the British wouldn't let it happen in Palestine, and embodied united Arab opposition to Zionism.²⁵⁶⁰ It was "attended by 350 to 450 delegates from Arab countries, rejects the partition proposed by the Peel Commission and demands an end to the Mandate, Zionist immigration and the transfer of Palestinian lands to Zionist ownership."²⁵⁶¹ Of the approximately 385 representatives, 116 were from Palestine, 138 from Syria, 82 from Lebanon, 33 from Trans-Jordan, 12 from Iraq and 4 from Egypt; Palestinian "persons of prominence" were Haj Taher Karaman, Mu'een Madi, Izzat Darwaza, Shibly Jamal, Mogannam Mogannam, Shafe' Abdul Hadi, Jamal al-Husseini, Abdul Fattah Tuqan, Ishaq Darwish, Mustafa Bushnaq, Farid Anabtawi, Fahmi Abbushi, Amin Tamimi, Musa Sourani, Hussein Abu Sitteh, Ragheb Dajani, Shaker abu Kishk, Ya'coub Ghussein, Fahmi Husseini, Izzat Tannous, Mahmud Abu Khadra, Suleiman Farouqi, Fuad Saba, Wadi Bustani, Mikhail Tuma, Tawfiq Majdalani, Ahmad Shak'a, Fakhri Nashashibi, Abdul Hamid Shuman, Rashid Haj Ibrahim and Issa el Issa.²⁵⁶² Apparently Amin al-Husseini, who at this time was described by Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore "as the 'black-hearted villain' masterminding the troubles" and the "fons et origo of the murders in 1929" (a claim disproven by the Shaw Commission)²⁵⁶³ was not in attendance.

The Arab Higher Committee position, as presented by its representative, Izzat Darwaza, stated that the Palestinian cause was an Arab and Muslim concern, and that each and every Arab and Muslim should carry out his responsibility in the struggle with the Zionists toward the preservation of Palestine as an Arab and Muslim country. Abdul Hamid Said at the same time reminded them that the British aimed at creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine as a colonial military complex. ... The Zionist policy would force the Arabs to take new attitudes towards them. ... The Jewish rights could also be maintained in accordance with constitutional regulations.²⁵⁶⁴

A "Confidential" British intelligence report from Baghdad to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden recorded that Nuri as-Said of Iraq had been elected chairman of the political committee²⁵⁶⁵ and that the Congress had resolved:

(1) That Palestine is an integral part of the Arab fatherland. (2) That the Arab nation rejects partition. (3) That the establishment of a Jewish State will be firmly opposed. (4) That the

²⁵⁶⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 208; also Bethell 1979, pp 32-34; Lesch 1979, pp 147-49; Mattar 1988, p 82; Ayyad 1999, pp 168-69. See CO 733/352/75718/35 'Report on Arab congress in Bludan', September 15, 1937 and FO 684/10/37/1692/2.

²⁵⁶¹ PASSIA 2001, p 57.

²⁵⁶² CO 733/353/7, pp 30-33.

²⁵⁶³ CO 733/352/3, pp 18-19, letter to Acting High Commissioner William Denis Battershill, 8 September 1937; Lesch 1979, p 122.

²⁵⁶⁴ Ayyad 1999, pp 168-70.

²⁵⁶⁵ See CO 733/353/7, pp 66-71 for a list of the political committee's 29 members and its report.

Balfour Declaration should be abrogated; the Mandate annulled; and an Anglo-Palestinian treaty concluded whereby independence was recognised and a stop put to Jewish immigration.²⁵⁶⁶

The same report summarised the main speech of the Congress President, Said Naji-al-Suwaydi (Naji Swaidi):

The occasion is not one for the formation of arguments in proof of the rights of the Arabs in Palestine. Arguments to this effect are to be found in abundance in the reports of the various committees of the congress. ... [S]ince the war, international statesmanship has tended to be more material than moral in character, and has had more respect for might than for right. No nation is conceded any rights unless it is capable of defending itself. ... If the Arabs wish to make the world understand the nature of their rights in Palestine, they must be strong enough to defend Palestine. [Nevertheless] the Arabs are bound by certain ties to the British people. The British also have extensive interests in Arab countries. The Arabs fought side by side with the British in defence of their existence [and] are known to be a grateful people who repay good with good, provided their national existence suffers no harm.²⁵⁶⁷

Another report to Eden attested the “restrained... tone” of all public speeches except one, yet “the general tenor of the discussions was intense dislike of the partition scheme and hatred of Zionism”; “about half” of the 128 Palestinian participants, however, found the resolutions of the congress “insipid” and thus a

secret meeting of about 100 Palestinian and Syrian Nationalists was held in a private house in Damascus in the early hours of the 12th September for the purpose of discussing what effective measures could and should be taken to combat what was thought to be the inflexible British intention of putting the partition scheme into force. ... Other Syrian hotheads, who took a leading part in the Palestine disturbances of 1936, are being actively canvassed...²⁵⁶⁸

At the secret, smaller meeting after the Congress had closed,

A letter from the rebel chief, Fawzi al Kawokji [Qawuqji], written in Baghdad, was read out at the meeting. In it he declared his readiness to proceed at once to Palestine whenever he was asked to do so by the [Palestine] Arab Higher Committee.²⁵⁶⁹

Communicating the same basic reaction of the Congress to the Royal Commission partition plan [336] were a telegram in French dated 12 September, sent “from the National Congress of Arabs to British Delegation, Geneva”, and on the same date a telegram to the “Prime Minister London” adding that the demand was for

Anglo Palestine treaty recognising independence sovereignty Palestine establishing constitutional State which guarantees minority rights recognised by international principles Jewish immigration must be stopped taking legislative measures prohibiting any transfer of Arab lands to Jews Stop. Congress declares Anglo Arab friendship depends upon realisation previous demands Stop. Persistence England present policy forces Arab nation take new

²⁵⁶⁶ CO 733/353/7, p 25, Scott to Eden, 17 September 1937; Kayyali 1978, p 209.

²⁵⁶⁷ CO 733/353/7, p 25.

²⁵⁶⁸ CO 733/353/7, p 23, British Consul in Damascus MacKereth to Eden.

²⁵⁶⁹ CO 733/353/7, p 51.

attitude Stop. Understanding between Arabs Jews can not exist save upon basis these demands which form only possible just natural means putting end to period of trouble disaster permits preservation of peace in Holy Land. President Congress Naji Swaidi²⁵⁷⁰

The political committee stressed that it had read the [400-page] Royal Commission report and

find that the solution, especially respecting the partition of Palestine, to be entirely contrary to the Arab rights, and are likely to expose Palestine, as well as all the Arab world, to great political, social, national and economic dangers. ... It also decides that the means suggested by England can never bring peace and tranquility to this land but, on the contrary, they are likely to cause a continuation of violence and fights. The Congress declares that the just and natural solution of the problem is to consider Palestine as one complete entity, and that the mandate, which has ultimately proved to be a failure, should terminate.²⁵⁷¹

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tawfiq Bey as well, visiting the League of Nations in Geneva in mid-September 1937, explained to the British that the Iraqi government opposed the partition of Palestine. According to British official Rendel, who was present,

The solution... advocated by all the Arabs... was that Palestine should be made an independent Arab State in which the position of the Jewish minority should be fully guaranteed, but in which a system of population quotas should be established to ensure that the Jews should never become a majority. Sir J. Shuckburgh and I explained that this was out of the question...²⁵⁷²

Nassir Eddin Nashashibi writes of this Congress that

its resolutions were surprisingly mild in their criticism of Britain, though opposed to the Peel recommendations, and vehemently anti-Zionist. The Palestinian exiles in Damascus formed 'the Central Committee of the Jihad', which took charge of the revolt's organization and had the close co-operation of the Syrian-led Palestine Defence Committee...²⁵⁷³

It is noteworthy that the demands of the Bludan Congress would actually be accepted by HMG and Parliament in May 1939 in the form of the MacDonald White Paper [410]. And would remain official HMG policy until the U.K. officially gave up the Mandate on 20 September 1947 [471]. But at the time, HMG's reaction was to outlaw the AHC, arrest five AHC leaders on 1 October 1937 and exile them to the Seychelles – not including Jamal al-Husseini and the Mufti, who escaped.²⁵⁷⁴ Between five and ten thousand others were put into detention camps, 112 were hung, and many saw their houses destroyed by British acts of collective punishment.²⁵⁷⁵ [also >326; >339; >360]

end of September 1937 'List of Arab Moderates assaulted and assassinated [presumably by other Arabs] during recent months; assaulted: Hasan Bey-Shukri, 11 May 1936 and 23 Jan-

²⁵⁷⁰ CO 733/353/7, pp 107-11.

²⁵⁷¹ CO 733/353/7, p 72.

²⁵⁷² CO 733/352/5, pp 17-18.

²⁵⁷³ Nashashibi 1991, p 196.

²⁵⁷⁴ Khalidi 1984, p 217.

²⁵⁷⁵ Khalidi 1984, pp 190, 218, 226; also Boyle 2001, pp 234-35.

uary 1937; Fakhri Nashashibi, 30 June 1937; Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, ca. 22 July 1937; assassinated: Nasr-el-Din ed-Din, 2 July 1936; Haj Khalil Taha, 28 September 1936; Dr. Taha Khalil Taha, 22 January 1937; Hasan Hanun of Tulkarm, 16 August 1937; Ibrahim Bey Khalil, 4 September 1937; Abdul Salam Barkawi, 12 September 1937; Ihsan Enhadin of Safad, 7 September 1937; Said Shanti of Jaffa, July 1937.²⁵⁷⁶

26 September 1937 [Acting District Commissioner of the Galilee Lewis Andrews and his bodyguard were assassinated, triggering British repression.]²⁵⁷⁷

1 October 1937 ‘The British arrest [Jerusalem] Mayor Hussein Fakhri Effendi Al-Khalidi for membership in the “illegal” Arab Higher Committee and deport him [along with Ahmad Hilmi Abd al-Baqi, the bank director, Yaacoub al-Ghussein, Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, and Fouad Saba] to the Seychelles. Jamal Effendi al-Husseini was also targeted for deportation but avoided arrest.’²⁵⁷⁸ ‘All national Committees throughout Palestine were dissolved [and] The result of that action (was) the destruction of all responsible political leadership in Arab Palestine.’²⁵⁷⁹ ‘Amin al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi, Alfred Rock, Izzat Darwaza and Abdul Latif Salah were out of the country and thereby likewise avoided arrest and deportation.’²⁵⁸⁰

²⁵⁷⁶ CO 733/332/11, pp 106–07.

²⁵⁷⁷ See also Kanafani 1972, p 47.

²⁵⁷⁸ CO 733/332/11, 1 October 1937, pp 85–86, 116; Woodhead 1938, II. §26.

²⁵⁷⁹ Barbour 1946, p 195; also Khalidi 1978, p 140; Jeffries 1939, p 708.

²⁵⁸⁰ Lesch 1979, p 123.

347. Hyamson-Newcombe scheme

9 October 1937

The 'partition' solution – whose most important aspect was the establishment of an ethno-religious Jewish state in Palestine, of whatever size or with whatever boundaries – was during this time contested on ethical as well as practical grounds, and both proportional-representative democracy and bi-nationalism were seen by some as fairer alternatives. [e.g. >266; >314; >340; >352] For instance, starting in London on 9 October 1937 two important British officials, Albert Montefiore Hyamson and Colonel Stewart F. Newcombe, began proposing what has become known as **the Hyamson-Newcombe Scheme**: that the Jewish National Home not become a Jewish state; that Jews should comprise at most 50% of the population; and that "A sovereign independent Palestinian State [was] to be created on 1st January [1938]..." Follow-up talks with Arabs in Beirut on 12 January 1938 continued this individualist approach to overall citizenship with "complete autonomy... to all communities in communal matters" in non-partitioned Palestine, the Jewish population however being limited to its present size [proportion – roughly 30%] rather than 50%; after all, neither the Bludan Congress nor the Arab Kings had authorised Arab leaders to go along with further immigration from Europe.²⁵⁸¹

Further talks in Beirut on 6 February 1938 and in Baghdad in July 1938 confirmed this latter approach, differing from the first London draft only on the matter of the maximum number of Jewish citizens.²⁵⁸² Susan Hattis says that the following Arabs were "willing to discuss" the Scheme: Naji Pasha Suvidi (Swaidi, President of the Bludan Congress [>346]), the Emir Abdel (Adil?) Arslan, Awni Abdul Hadi, Jamal al-Husseini and Mogannam Elias Mogannam.²⁵⁸³ The anti-partition and permanent-indigenous-majority (anti-parity) pillars of this modification of Hyamson-Newcombe made their way into both the Woodhead [>376] and MacDonald [>410] White Papers.

14 October 1937 *[V]iolence broke out [-] attacks on vehicles transporting Jewish passengers... Jewish colonial settlements... under sporadic gunfire... The Iraqi pipeline... sustained partial damages... Trains transporting British troops [and] police patrols... came under gunfire... Tel-Aviv Airport... duty offices, passport offices and wireless installations... were set on fire.*²⁵⁸⁴

fall 1937 *'Strong punitive measures were taken in the wake of the resurgence of violence in mid-October [but nevertheless] the rebels were attracting and training more recruits... Rebel Headquarters called al-Lujnah al-Markaziyya lil-Jihad were instituted at Damascus under the active administration of [Izzat] Darwaza and the guidance of the Mufti from Lebanon.*²⁵⁸⁵

²⁵⁸¹ Office of U.S. Historian, subenclosure 2, drafts of 9 October 1937, 12 January 1938 and 6 February 1938. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1938v02/d753>

²⁵⁸² Also Ben-Gurion 1968, Chs. 22-24; Hattis 1970, pp 178-86; Wikipedia, >'Alfred Montefiore Hyamson'.

²⁵⁸³ Hattis 1970, pp 182, 196.

²⁵⁸⁴ Ayyad 1999, p 170.

²⁵⁸⁵ Kayyali 1978, p 211, citing CO 733/354 [/1 or /2], Cabinet, Palestine, 1 December 1937.

fall 1937 'Pinchas Rutenberg, who holds the electricity concessions, is General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Haganah.'²⁵⁸⁶ [also >147; >183; >189; >195; >235]

²⁵⁸⁶ CAB 24/273/11, p 70, Ormsby-Gore to Cabinet/Battershill to Shuckburgh, 15 November 1937.

To W.D. Battershill, the Chief Secretary of the Palestine government, Ragheb Nashashibi sent **the following letter** on 2 November 1937:

Your Excellency On the occasion of the anniversary of the 2nd day of November [p.16], the National Defence Party finds it necessary to assure the British Government that the policy which has been adopted in this country, during the last twenty years, and the administrative and economic conditions which were created by the mandatory government for the purpose of governing Palestine in a manner inconsistent with the national aspirations of the Arabs, who form the overwhelming majority of the population, have, after this long period of experience, confirmed the view, which has always been declared by the Arabs, that the unfavourable position in which they were placed in their country and which is detrimental to their national existence, is neither compatible with the natural rights to which they are fully entitled, nor with human justice, and is, above all, inconsistent with the pledges given to them by the British Government during the World War, under which the British Government undertook to assist them to reap the fruits for the part which they played in that war, namely to stand alone. [p.46] ... The National Defence Party is of the opinion that it is high time now... to change this [Jewish national home] policy by adopting, at a non-distant date, proper methods in settling the problem of this Holy Land in a manner which will enable its inhabitants to exercise their right in national government and national sovereignty, on a representative and constitutional basis, which are familiar throughout the world. The Arabs have been persistently putting forward their just demand which has been admitted to them, as a people fully qualified to govern themselves. The Arabs were, and still are, united in their endeavour to obtain this demand, which has always been unanimously adopted by their congresses and confirmed by their delegations, and in the memoranda which they submitted to the British Government on all occasions. ... [T]heir objective: liberty and independence.²⁵⁸⁷

Normal democracy was “familiar throughout the world”. The Palestinians had incessantly spoken and written this message to the British Government.

November 1937 *The British Government approves the idea of partition and sends the Woodhead Commission to make a detailed plan; it then reports that partition is impractical, reversing the Peel Commission's findings.*

²⁵⁸⁷ Nashashibi 1991, pp 149-50, citing FO 371/20828, 'Battershill to Ormsby-Gore', note.

In the fall of 1937 the small Palestine lobby in the U.K., through Izzat Tannous, sent **an open letter to all parliamentarians**:

I am asked on behalf of my Compatriots to set forth the ARAB CHARTER as follows: 1. That the people already in Palestine – whether Arab or Jew, shall be regarded as the Trustees of the Holy Land. 2. That a National Government shall be formed according equal political, civil, and religious rights to all, independent of race or creed. 3. That representation in such Government shall be in proportion to population, but that Minority Rights shall be guaranteed. 4. That a Treaty safeguarding the legitimate interests of Great Britain, on lines similar to those of Egypt or Iraq, shall be made between Great Britain and Palestine. 5. That the Mandate shall end with the signing of the Treaty, all further immigration into Palestine being suspended till its signature, the assumption being that the British Government has fulfilled its obligation to the Jews in regard to the ‘National Home’ in Palestine. IZZAT TANNOUS *Arab Delegate in London* THE ARAB CENTRE, 72 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.²⁵⁸⁸

At least on the part of those who were financing and manning the Arab Centre, every effort was being made, in spite of the Rebellion, to retain long-term good relations with both Great Britain and world Jewry. As its author put it, “The Arab Charter gave all the Jews who had entered Palestine during the mandate equal civil and political rights with the Arab indigenous population, and gave them representation in the ‘Independent Palestine Government’ in proportion to their number with minority rights guaranteed.”²⁵⁸⁹ The Charter’s last point also gave Britain a way out in legal terms: it had done what the Mandate had said, namely establish a national home in Palestine for the Jewish people. Mission accomplished.

Fall 1937 *‘The British forces were extremely rough with the Arab inhabitants. If one shot was fired from the direction of a village, all the foodstuffs of that village would be destroyed by the army and the men would be taken to squat for hours in the sun in the village square. Collective fines were imposed and houses were destroyed under the law of collective punishment and in certain villages young men were shot without trial.’*²⁵⁹⁰

²⁵⁸⁸ CO 733/379/8, item 48 (p 31); Tannous 1988, pp 236–37.

²⁵⁸⁹ Tannous 1988, pp 259–60.

²⁵⁹⁰ Tannous 1988, p 235.

William Battershill, Chief Secretary and Acting High Commissioner, reported to Shuckburgh, now Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office in London, on the military and political state of things:

Last week Rutenberg [General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Haganah, and Owner and Director of the country's electricity works] came to see me, and offered... to sound the Emir Abdullah and Ragheb Bey Nashashibi and other Arabs with regard to their co-operation in political matters with certain Jews, one of whom he mentioned was Shertok. ... [I declined the offer.] I fear that Ragheb Bey is as unstable as mercury, and what is more he lacks what Kipling called 'essential guts.' ... His influence in the country is slight. He chatters too much, gloats in public over the discomfiture of the Mufti, and thinks that he will come out on top in the end. ... He has no moral character or backbone.²⁵⁹¹

As to the prospects for peace and quiet:

[F]rom the recent interviews I have had this week I am confirmed in my opinion that the Arabs still believe that they are justified in carrying on this campaign of violence and unrest, and that they think it will have the effect of inducing His Majesty's Government to deviate from its expressed policy. I doubt whether any Arab really has any ethical feeling against murder, and I am sure Arabs look upon murder as a justifiable and satisfactory weapon to use not only in private feuds but in political controversies. We shall never get them to change their fundamental beliefs on this point...²⁵⁹²

His racist mind-set blinded him to the fact that his own country routinely, with hundreds of thousands of victims worldwide, used murder "in political controversies".

27 November 1937 *Sheikh Farhan As-Sadi, who took over the leadership of the Palestinian Brigades after the death of Sheikh Izz ed-Din Al-Qassam, is arrested by the British Police. On 2 December he is sentenced to death and hanged.*

²⁵⁹¹ CAB 24/272/11, p 70.

²⁵⁹² CAB 24/273/11, p 71.

From the time of Izz Eddin al-Qassam's last battles against the British in the fall of 1935 [p.284] until his own death on 18 October 1938 in a battle against the British at the age of 25, the colloquial poet Nuh Ibrahim directed many verses directly at the British.²⁵⁹³ He spent five months in Akka Prison in 1937 and there wrote to 'Your Honour Mr. Bailey, Representative of the Northern District' about his unfair jailing and the exiling of those Mr. Bailey called a "terrorist" or, alternatively, a "gang member". "You silence anyone from talking so that we can't disclose our certain innocence". Filling the prison, "You brought us from Haifa and Nazareth, Tiberius and Beisan, Safad and Ijzim and al-Tireh, scholars, the old and young." As Samih Shabeeb observes, when Nuh Ibrahim wrote that Mr. Bailey's "rule... should have been just", the implication is that the Palestinians expected better behaviour from the British. At the end of the poem he wrote, "At long last you realized that the situation was dangerous and you learned of our innocence and that we had been oppressed." (pp 66-67)

The last names of General John Dill and Lord Peel rhymed well enough, and Nuh Ibrahim's poems addressed them both, using the pun. Actually two poems (pp 72-73) were directed to "Your Honour the Royal Commission", the first musing that "Maybe you can eliminate this problem and solve the matter in question" and containing these verses:

In the beginning we boycotted you, to keep our honour
 But we came back and cooperated with you by order of our rulers. ...
 How many investigative committees we've seen, and we wonder at the necessity
 too many fiascos my lord, too many bricks hurled at us. ...
 Palestine is the case, clear and bright as the sun
 Zionism stole it, and now wants to set up its rule
 And Arabs want their rights and their unmet demands.

After Peel recommended Partition came the second poem, with the title 'The Plan for Dividing Palestine' – "a new solution that will not be implemented for sure" – and containing these verses:

We hear you are hell bent on dividing us.
 Take Jerusalem and Bethlehem? and Haifa be made an international city?
 And crowd Arabs in Amim, and give the coastal lands to Zionism? ...
 Have you read McMahon's documents to Arabs in the name of Saxon
 Cancelling Balfour's unfounded promise to Zion?
 This partition plan we reject as an impossible failure

²⁵⁹³ Shabeeb 2006, all citations. English translations by Hilal Hijawi and Rochelle Davis.

Nineteen years we've waited and now we've become endangered. ...

Keep your conscience clean, provide justice to the oppressed ...

Think hard and make a decision, we're sick of waiting, perhaps the problem will be solved and the occupation ended.

We can start organizing our country and be free in our land.

Long live Palestine, Arab and free, and may the glorious Arab flag long fly over it.

By writing "start" organizing he was probably criticising Palestine's leaders for doing too little.

Nuh Ibrahim also praised in poetry Izz Eddin al-Qassam, the dignity and sacrifice of the Yaffa sailors during the strike, the general valour of the *Mujahideen*, the unity of Christians and Moslems, and the women, the mothers, who sacrificed for Palestine.

The first eight lines of an 18-line poem (pp 74-75) tell of the fighters' treatment of a wounded British officer:

A bizarre story, my listeners, it happened in Haifa in Palestine.

It's going to become the example for the honour of resistance fighters.

A documented event it is, in these turbulent days

In a battle among battles, the fighters had won.

An important British officer with major injury to his shoulder

He screamed and asked to be saved and was carried by the fighters.

Their honour dictated saving him and they nursed him until he got well.

At the end they set him free, an example to the occupiers.

Shabeeb attributes Nuh Ibrahim's popularity to the "simplicity and directness of his words", his oral delivery, his "credibility... as a poet, provocateur and fighter [and 'martyrdom']", and his use of new media such as phonograph records and radio broadcasts.

Along the way the British press censor wrote this reply to Nuh Ibrahim:

Based on my jurisdiction as censor of the press, and as established by the emergency laws, I, Owen Tweedy, warn against the printing or publishing of the book containing the collection of poems by Nuh Ibrahim which was printed outside Palestine, and which is also known as 'The Song Collection of Nuh Ibrahim' [Majmu'at Anasheed Nuh Ibrahim], whether printed or published openly or secretly. (p 67)²⁵⁹⁴

1937 [British Emergency Regulations (included) a group of sentences (for instance):] 'six years imprisonment for possessing a revolver, 12 years for possessing a bomb, five years

²⁵⁹⁴ Translation into English from the Arabic version in the *Daily Journal of Akram Zuaytir, the Palestinian National Movement, 1935-1939*.

*with hard labour for possessing 12 bullets, eight months on a charge of misdirecting a detachment of soldiers, nine years on a charge of possessing explosives, five years for trying to buy ammunition from soldiers, two weeks imprisonment for possessing a stick... etc.*²⁵⁹⁵

²⁵⁹⁵ Kanafani 1972, p 43.

Revealing the extent of British knowledge of 'Arab' opinion is **a note from HC Wauchope to Sir Cosmo Parkinson** at the Colonial Office dated 21 December 1937:

[George] Antonius, in my opinion, is a real extremist and exercised an evil influence over the Mufti, but he carries no more weight among the Moslems of Palestine than our good friend Dr. [Judah] Magnes does among the Jews. Dislike of Partition and the dread of Zionism [, however,] needs no working up by anybody among the Arabs. It is universal.²⁵⁹⁶

(Magnes was on the radical 'left' of Zionist opinion by supporting *parity* between the immigrant minority and the indigenous majority.²⁵⁹⁷ [>463]) "Extremist" Antonius would indeed in his 1938 book *The Arab Awakening* write, "But the logic of facts is inexorable. It shows that no room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession."²⁵⁹⁸

22 December 1937 'William Ormsby-Gore answers a Parliamentary question on preventive detention and the emergency Defence Regulations saying that "61 Jews [and] over 500 Arabs are militarily detained".'²⁵⁹⁹

²⁵⁹⁶ CO 733/332/12 (old: 75156, Part 2), pp 12-13; also Mattar 1988, p 79.

²⁵⁹⁷ Ben-Gurion 1968, Chs. 5, 11, & 12; Hattis 1970, pp 169-71, 243, 268, 278, 287; Magnes et al. 1947/1983.

²⁵⁹⁸ Antonius 1938, p 412.

²⁵⁹⁹ CO 733/332/10, p 23.

XX. OK, maybe parity

Although the League of Nations Council had on 14 September 1937, after a presentation from Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, accepted partition in principle²⁶⁰⁰, much was still unclear about the boundaries of British enclaves, e.g. of Jerusalem²⁶⁰¹, and a new commission was being considered within the Colonial and Foreign Offices to study the Peel solution more closely; Eden had made clear to the PMC that the “terms of reference of the proposed Commission is still under [consideration] by H.M.G.”²⁶⁰².

Two months later, in November 1937, according to Kayyali, Eden implausibly claimed to the League Council that conditions had changed since the Peel report, and therefore **formally proposed** to the Cabinet, in agreement with Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore, **another Commission** to improve the nuts and bolts of the two-state, actually three-state, scheme, for instance the boundaries and status of the British enclaves.²⁶⁰³ Ormsby-Gore, to be sure, wanted the new Commission to stick to partition *per se*, writing to the Cabinet on 9 November that

...in the working out of the scheme of partition we should make it clear that we shall deal with the Arabs of Palestine and Trans-Jordan alone, and, if their co-operation is not forthcoming, settle the matter over their heads. ... [O]ur acceptance of the arguments contained in the Report of the Royal [Peel] Commission and of the conclusion that partition is the best and most hopeful solution of the problem absolutely precludes us from any compromise with the demands of the Arab world within and without Palestine which involve at the best the toleration of the Jews in Palestine as a permanent minority.²⁶⁰⁴

Foreign Secretary Eden on 19 November sent the Cabinet a lengthy rebuttal²⁶⁰⁵ of Ormsby-Gore’s pro-partition philosophy, including the insight that

The Arabs are not a mere handful of aborigines, who can be disregarded by the ‘white coloniser.’ ... There are many Arab leaders who fully and clearly realise all the implications of the creation of the Jewish State [e.g. its expansion once established]... From the Arab point of view Palestine is an Arab country, the best area of which is being treacherously handed over to an alien and particularly dangerous invader by a Power whom the Arabs thought to be their friend. (pp 28-29)

There followed fifteen pages documenting pan-Arab rejection of partition and willingness to fight it, including six Annexes from intelligence organs in the field, as well as a “Foreign Office Memorandum of October 25, 1937, regarding the Original Intention and Implications of the Balfour Declaration”, which included a refutation of the pro-parti-

²⁶⁰⁰ Cmd. 5634, pp 8-11.

²⁶⁰¹ CO 733/354/5.

²⁶⁰² CO 733/354/6.

²⁶⁰³ Cmd. 5634, all citations; also Kayyali 1978, pp 209-10, citing CO 733/354, Cabinet, Palestine, 19 November 1937.

²⁶⁰⁴ CAB 24/272/15.

²⁶⁰⁵ CAB 24/273/6.

tion argument that the U.K. could disregard the Palestinians' "moral and political right to freedom and to what used to be called 'self-determination'" because Great Britain had "liberated" Palestine from Turkish rule, thereby acquiring "a moral right to dispose of at least a part of Arab territory in whatever way she thinks fit..." (p 37). Penny Sinanoglou reports that the Foreign Office successfully removed a term of reference stating that "permanent minority status for the Jews" was incompatible with the Balfour Declaration.²⁶⁰⁶ Ormsby-Gore's answer to Eden dated 1 December 1937²⁶⁰⁷ once again took the hoary pro-Zionist position amounting to 'In the beginning was the Balfour Declaration': Despite recognising that that declaration and subsequent iterations suffered from "the lack of a clear definition of the obligations of His Majesty's government, particularly with reference to the establishment of a national home for the Jews" (p 104), he regarded it as illegitimate that "Both in Palestine and... in surrounding Arab countries, this opposition [to partition] has been based not on the merits of the question at issue, but on the inveterate Arab objection to the Balfour Declaration" (p 105). Well, yes.

At any rate, this new Commission would soon become the "technical" or "Partition" Commission headed by John Woodhead [376], and Ormsby-Gore would lose this battle, being replaced on 16 May 1938 by Malcolm MacDonald as Colonial Secretary. The Woodhead report eleven months later, in October 1938, would not concoct any partition plans that overcame the problems of the Peel Commission's plan [336; also 373], and this opened the path towards the single-democratic-state solution of the MacDonald White Paper [410].

The White Paper stating this new commission's remit bore the title 'Policy in Palestine. Despatch dated 23rd December, 1937, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies [Ormsby-Gore] to the High Commissioner for Palestine [Wauchope]' and was published as Cmd. 5634 on 4 January 1938. The commission's members were appointed in March 1938. Kayyali writes that already before its instatement, namely on 8 December 1937,

the Cabinet after prolonged discussions resolved 'to inform the (Partition [Woodhead]) Commission that it was open to them to represent that no scheme of partition that they could devise was likely to prove workable.'²⁶⁰⁸

This new White Paper actually expressed broad agreement with that of 7 July 1937 (Cmd. 5513 [335]) accepting the Peel Report's [336] "tripartite division" of the country (Arab, Jewish, and "British Mandate enclaves"), but not necessarily with "that [particular] plan, and in particular they have not accepted the [Peel] Commission's proposal for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area." (§3) The remit was to draw up "a more precise scheme" and "materials" enabling HMG to judge if the "best possible scheme" suffices as to "its equity and practicability." (§4)

Needed was a "modification" of the borders between the 3 units proposed by Peel so that the Arab and Jewish units could be self-sufficient, include "the fewest possible Arabs and Arab enterprises in the Jewish area and vice versa", and be workable technically and financially. (§6) Finally, if HMG didn't regard any of the "technical Commission's" maps to

²⁶⁰⁶ Sinanoglou 2019, p 144, also 146-47.

²⁶⁰⁷ CAB 24/273/14.

²⁶⁰⁸ Kayyali 1978, p 211, citing CO 733/354, Cabinet. 46 (37), 9 December 1937.

be “equitable and practicable... it may be necessary... to give further consideration to the suggestion of the Permanent Mandates Commission” to administer the Arab and Jewish areas “under a system of ‘cantonisation’ or even under separate Mandates.” (§7)

This Command Paper then gave an approving review of various decisions and statements since 7 July (pp 5-12) under the heading ‘Summary of Recent Statements and Resolutions’. Some reflected dissatisfaction with the Royal Commission’s particular plan. In this ‘Summary’ Ormsby-Gore also quoted extensively (pp 5-7) from himself, namely from his testimony before the 32nd (Extraordinary?) Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva [see >341; >345], *inter alia*:

[Mr. Ormsby-Gore] had certainly had no intention of conveying the impression that the Balfour Declaration was not still a binding obligation on both the League and the United Kingdom. Obviously, like the mandate, it was still a binding obligation, and would remain so until replaced by an independent Jewish State. It was only if the suggested plan of partition were accepted, and eventuated in the creation of a Jewish State, that the Balfour Declaration would reach its fruition and cease to be binding. (p 6, *emphasis added*)

Now, exactly 20 years after the Balfour Declaration’s invention of a “national home for the Jewish people”, that Declaration’s fruition was said to be a national “state” for the Jewish people. Or at least the present HMG held that the end of the Mandate and the retirement of the Balfour Declaration must await the Jewish state.

Further,

The Mandates Commission would see that the solution recommended by the Arab Higher Committee [see >349] implied: first, the retention by the Arabs of the right to complete independence in their own land, which they described as the whole of Palestine; second, the cessation (whatever that meant) of the experiment of the Jewish National Home; third, the cessation of the British mandate and its replacement by a treaty similar to those existing between the United Kingdom and Iraq²⁶⁰⁹, the United Kingdom and Egypt, and France and Syria, constituting Palestine as a sovereign State; and, fourth, the immediate cessation of all Jewish immigration and of land sales to Jews pending the conclusion of the treaty. That solution, Mr. Ormsby-Gore wished to say, quite frankly, was unacceptable to the United Kingdom Government if it were for the whole of Palestine. (pp 6-7)

In its turn the PMC attested that the U.K. had “failed... to give satisfaction to the conflicting aspirations of Arabs and Jews...” but

This satisfaction cannot, of course, be complete. For the Arabs, any partition must necessarily involve the abandonment of a fraction of what they consider to be their hereditary patrimony. For the Jews, it could involve, together with a restriction of the scope of their national home, already limited, as they allege, by the exclusion of Trans-Jordan in 1922, a fresh reduction in its capacity of absorbing population. (pp 7-8)

²⁶⁰⁹ Cmd. 2370.

With regard to “the delicate problem of the transfer of populations from one territory to the other which might be necessary if there was a partition...” Ormsby-Gore testified to the PMC that it should be “carried out with the greatest fairness.” (p 8) [376]

For Wauchope’s edification the Cabinet in this White Paper attached the speech at the PMC on 14 September 1937 by Eden, wherein Eden expostulated on the “dual character” of the Balfour Declaration, the “twofold task” for the “mandatory Power” which made the “self-governing institutions... in Article 2 of the mandate” impossible. HMG had simply “not contemplated that these two obligations would prove mutually incompatible...”, but alas “the conflict between Arab and Jewish political aspirations... was inherent in the situation from the first...” (p 9)

Recall that the Balfour Declaration stated that what Britain wanted to work for was to fulfil “Jewish Zionist aspirations” – now called “Jewish political aspirations” – which were by definition, as the Palestinians and many British officials had been saying for 20 years, incompatible with the “Arab political aspirations”, because the “Jewish Zionist aspirations” so named in the Balfour Declaration were uncontestedly for a Jewish state – a view now confirmed by Ormsby-Gore (p 6) before the League of Nations’ Permanent Mandates Commission. Since it was a matter of definition, of logic, every drop of ink spent, and blood, during the two decades of the Britain’s empirical imperial experiment had been wasted.

29 December 1937 *The Constitution of Ireland replaces the initial constitution of 1922; it asserts jurisdiction over the entire island and removes all references to or hints of British sovereignty.*

January 1938 *Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said visits London with a plan for the Middle East and Palestine, envisaging an Iraqi-led Arab Federation with Jews guaranteed minority rights inside Palestine and the right to emigrate to any country within the Federation.*

1937-38 *‘Here are some of the shelled villages [receiving collective punishment]: Kawkab Abu al-Heija, al-Maghar, Sha’ab, al-Birwa, Jaba’, al-Tira, Lubyra, Balad al-Sheikh, Hawwasa, al-Mjeidel, ‘Arab al-Sakhinah among many others in the North; al-Mazar, Sila, Rummana, Umm al-Fahm, Qabatiyya, Jab’a, Yaabud, and Baqa al-Gharbiyya among others in the Jenin area; Asir al-Shamaliya, Deir Sharaf, Barqa, and Hawwara among others in the Nablus area; Beit Rima, Shu’fat, Rammun, Qalunya, and Beit Surik among others in the Jerusalem district; and el-Khader, Husan, Sureef, Yatta, Halhul, and al-Dawaymeh in the Hebron and Bethlehem areas.’²⁶¹⁰*

²⁶¹⁰ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 228.

The 1938 book *The Arab Awakening*²⁶¹¹ by the Greek Orthodox Catholic George Antonius (whose family name was originally Mtanios), a Cambridge University graduate who for over 20 years had worked uninterruptedly with Faisal, the Palestine Arab Congresses, the Mandate Government, and various newspapers including that of his father-in-law in Cairo, Faris Nimr Pasha [;>4; >386], and who would in the first half of 1939 play a key role in the St. James talks [;>386ff; >400; >406], was from the date of its publication very influential not only amongst Arabs but in Whitehall.²⁶¹² Earlier, in the late 1920s, Colonial Office and Palestine Government officials had discriminated against the talented Antonius when it came to positions and promotions within the Administration, quite likely because he was an... Arab.²⁶¹³ Forty years later Edward Said would describe his book as “the finest Arab study of the struggle for independence”.²⁶¹⁴

It stated the Palestinians’ case concisely:

The rights of the Arabs are derived from actual and long-standing possession, and rest upon the strongest human foundation. Their connexion with Palestine goes back uninterruptedly to the earliest historic times, for the term ‘Arab’ denotes nowadays not merely the incomers from the Arabian Peninsula who occupied the country in the seventh century, but also the older populations who intermarried with their conquerors, acquired their speech, customs and ways of thought and permanently arabised. ... [The] Arab claims rest on... the natural right of a settled population... to remain in possession of the land of its birthright; and [on] the acquired political rights which followed from the disappearance of Turkish sovereignty and from the Arab share in its overthrow, and which GB is under a contractual obligation to recognise and uphold. ... Thus in their opposition to the British mandate, the Arabs are animated by the motive of self-preservation as well as that of self-determination. Their attitude is not dictated by any hostility to the Jewish race. (pp 390-91)

The Palestinians’ “connexion” to Palestine was such that they would not be expelled without a literal fight:

The traditions of the present inhabitants are as deeply rooted in their geographical surroundings as in their adoptive culture, and it is a fallacy to imagine that they could be induced to transplant themselves even to other Arab surroundings, any more than the farmers of Kent or Yorkshire could be induced to to and settle in Ireland. It may seem superfluous to point this out, but the fallacy is one on which the Palestine Royal Commission have raised a new edifice of false hopes; and the fact needs stressing, therefore, that any solution based on the forcible expulsion of the peasantry from the countryside in which they have their homesteads and their trees, their shrines and graveyards, and all the memories and affections that go with life on the soil, is bound to be forcibly resisted. (p 390)

²⁶¹¹ Antonius 1938, *all quotations*.

²⁶¹² Boyle 2001, pp 1-2, 13, 16, 214-18, 272, 285; Andersen 2017, p 7; also Rickenbacher 2017, pp 96-102.

²⁶¹³ Boyle 2001, pp 136-42.

²⁶¹⁴ Said 1979, p 20; *but see* Fieldhouse 2006, pp 20-35.

Regarding historic connections of certain people to certain lands, his argument went deep:

The connexion [historical, between Jews and Palestine] is too well-known to need recapitulation; but what does need stressing, in view of the widespread misconceptions that prevail, is that an historic connexion is not necessarily synonymous with a title to possession, more particularly when it relates to an inhabited country whose population claims, in addition to an ancient historic connexion of their own, the natural rights inherent in actual possession. (p 393)

During the Mandate the British supporters of Zionism, that is, had reasoned faultily in jumping from the true premise of “an historic connexion” of Jews with Palestine to the unwarranted conclusion that that amounted to “a title to possession” of Palestine. He added the observation that the Jews had always been treated well and had historically thrived in the Arab world, even currently “in the surrounding Arab countries”. (pp 391-92)

Antonius believed as well that

the problem was fundamentally one in which an aspirant nation from abroad aimed at ousting from its secular holding the nation in possession at home. ... The economic aspect is overshadowed by the moral and political issues. ... In the early years of the mandate, the main source of Arab discontent was the denial of independence [but] [t]o the Arabs the problem is now essentially one of self-preservation. (pp 397, 408)

What the Palestinians had long predicted and feared had become fact.

His verdict:

The solution proposed by the Royal Commission rests on the argument that, since Arabs and Jews have equal rights to the possession of Palestine, the country should be divided between them. ... The scheme is based on the expectation that the Arabs would, or could be made to, renounce their natural and political rights in any part of Palestine [and] that a population of 300,000 settled people [in the proposed Jewish state], deeply attached to their homes and their culture, would submit to either of the alternatives proposed for them by the Royal Commission: forcible eviction or subjection to a Jewish state to be established over their heads. ... [N]o room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession. (pp 402, 403-04, 412)

Antonius also observed that the Arabs’ “natural and political rights” had been acknowledged by McMahon’s letters to Hussein [>10], the Hogarth Message [>21], the Declaration to the Seven [>25], the Anglo-French Agreement [>28], and the League of Nations Covenant [>46]. (pp 390, 395) But his core argument was ethical, expressed in the context of increasing persecution of Jews by Germany thus:

No code of morals can justify the persecution of one people in an attempt to relieve the persecution of another. The cure for the eviction of Jews from Germany is not to be sought in the eviction of the Arabs from their homeland; and the relief of Jewish distress may not be accomplished at the cost of inflicting a corresponding distress upon an innocent and peaceful population. (p 411)

On the issue of relieving “Jewish distress” in Europe he then fired at Britain, saying,

It is for Great Britain who has taken the lead in this work of charity at Arab expense to turn to the vast resources of her empire and to practise there some of the charity she has been preaching. (p 411)

Antonius in these last pages of his book pled for the “common sense” solution of a single democratic state with safeguards for minorities, a view covered better in a later entry.

[>479]

355. A doctor to President Roosevelt

1938?

According to Tom Segev,

George Antonius's papers preserve the draft of a letter an Arab doctor in Jerusalem apparently intended for the president of the United States. The letter contains the essence of the position Arab spokesmen would adopt after the Holocaust, that the Arabs should not have to pay the price for Europe's persecution of the Jews. 'We all sympathize with the Jews and are shocked at the way Christian nations are persecuting them. But do you expect Moslems of Palestine... to be more Christian or more humanitarian than the followers of Christ: Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, etc. etc.? Have we to suffer in order to make good what you Christians commit?'²⁶¹⁵

This letter, which was presumably sent, captures a major theme during the later stages of the Mandate when the focus of the U.S. was on Palestine as the place that had to take in 100,000 displaced Jewish Europeans. [>323; >414; >427ff]

²⁶¹⁵ Segev 1999, p 465 note 64, 'Draft letter' by Dr. T. Canaan (1938?), ISA [Israeli State Archive] P/1051/9.

356. Arab Ladies to Wauchope

5 February 1938

Approximately **200 'Arab Ladies of Jerusalem'** signed a **memorial** given personally to High Commissioner Wauchope on 5 February 1938 by a delegation consisting of Mrs. Hussein Saleem Eff. al-Husseini, Miss Azizeh Abdul Hadi, Mrs. Widjan Khalidi, Miss Sul-taneh Halaby (the only Christian), Miss Zlikha Shihabi, Mrs. Samiha Taji and Sitt Latifa Abu Seoud. The complaints had mostly to do with mistreatment – “torture and insult” – of Arab patriots and the exile to the Seychelles of leaders [346]. “The Ladies strongly protest against these repressions imposed on the Arabs by the Government which is bent on its Zionist policy... with the intention of repressing and spiting them and forcing them with all the instruments of terror to accept the obliteration and destruction intended for them and their country.”²⁶¹⁶ [see also >210; >257; >320; >269]

²⁶¹⁶ CO 733/368/9, pp 219-225.

357. Young Moslems in Cairo

10 April 1938

Dated 10 April 1938 is a '**Manifesto from the Supreme Committee to defend the Arab Cause of Palestine**' by 'The Young Men Muslim Association, 12, Al Malika Nazli Avenue, Cairo', addressed 'To the Islamic World and the British Nation' and signed by Dr. Abd El Hamid Sayid, President.²⁶¹⁷ It started with factual background:

The authority of the British Government in Palestine during the past twenty years has not been restricted only to spending money collected from British taxpayers, and shedding the blood of the British soldier, in order to bring Jews of various nationalities and countries to replace the Arabs in the land they have inherited for the past fourteen centuries. By this action the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine now number 400,000 of which no less than seven out of every eight were born in far off lands, having no connection with or kindred in Palestine.

The tone sharpened: British actions and "methods" are "alien to all but uncivilized races." The British "mission" was moreover

to evacuate the Arabs from their homeland, and to deprive them of their National rights. They have gone further than this by ill-treating the Muslims in their religion, attacking their mosques and sacred spots, insulting their men of religion, judges, leaders of prayer, Preachers, etc., and dispersing religious meetings. [This] is shown clearly by the entrance of British soldiers into the Mosque of El Aqsa, one of the most revered Mosques of the Muslim World, the first of the two Kiblas, and revered as the most holy after Mecca and Medina. ... The occupation of the Mosque by Police composed of non-Muslims and Jews affected and angered all Muslims throughout the world... They believed that Great Britain intends to hurt the feelings of the Muslims of the World, causing them disappointment and dissatisfaction whenever a chance occurs. ... Also the Mosque of El Fahm was turned into a Military Barracks.

The manifesto protested against the "insultingly" carried-out dismissal and arrest of religious *ulemas*, judges, and preachers – six of them by name – who had been imprisoned "without charges being preferred against them. ... This is War which the British authority in Palestine has declared against the Islamic Faith and its 400,000,000 of adherents in all parts of the world."

In closing, the young men said that the Moslem world had moved slowly in order to give Britain "sufficient time to escape from this delicate position, and return to the right path. ... A tardy repentance [however] may be in vain" as anger was high and patience thin. Then from the *Holy Koran*:

Say unto them work as ye will but Allah will behold your work, and his Apostle also and the true believers: and you shall be brought before Him who knowth that which is kept secret and that which is made public; and He will declare unto you whatever you have done.

²⁶¹⁷ CO 733/368/6, pp 177-78, all citations; or CO 733/368/8 ('miscellaneous') or CO 733/368/10 ('representations from within Palestine').

This was only one of many protestations from Egypt against the British presence and/or its partition intentions.²⁶¹⁸

²⁶¹⁸ CO 733/368/6, *passim*.

Frances Newton was a long-time resident of Mount Carmel, Haifa, a friend of the Arabs who on 1 May 1938 **printed a pamphlet** categorised by the British as “anti-British propaganda”. Its title was ‘Searchlight on Palestine: Fair-Play or Terrorist Methods? Some Personal Investigations.’²⁶¹⁹ [*also* >381] In great detail it revealed abuses of Palestinians by the Palestine police applying the Emergency Regulations which themselves were unfair. Several times the Koran had been desecrated, the village of Izgim been destroyed and its inhabitants sent away, a house in Endor ruined, sewing machines had been destroyed, and the Café Centrale in Haifa wrecked. She claimed generally as well that the British had failed to give “equal weight” to the 2 communities, as the Passfield White Paper [>234] claimed HMG would do, because

the Zionist Organization is able to bring extreme pressure to bear upon the colonial Office..., against... which the Palestine Arabs are helpless. Great Britain, for her part *cannot* follow her tradition of impartially balancing the claims of the conflicting interests of nationals under her rule, since the scales are thus tipped from the outset in favour of the Jews.

The pamphlet was distributed (mailed to people in Britain, Egypt, Palestine, etc.) by the Arab Centre at 72 Victoria Street, London, headed by Izzat Tannous and signed also by Beatrice Erskine, Secretary. Newton had explained her motivation for the pamphlet in a letter to Erskine on 5 April: Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore had said in the House of Commons that reports of “ruthless and lawless behaviour of the troops and police in Palestine, and cruelty and misconduct” were “all lies” and “discredited by [their] own obvious falsity and extravagance”; she would “therefore take up the gauntlet thus thrown down by Mr. Ormsby Gore.”

Newton’s pamphlet was one of several issued by the Arab Centre. [>303; >344; >349] The Colonial Office feverishly discussed whether to suppress their publication in London, and/or arrest the issuers for sedition, and/or deport Miss Newton from Palestine.²⁶²⁰

²⁶¹⁹ CO 733/370/8, item 31 (pp 66-77).

²⁶²⁰ CO 733/370/8, *passim*.

Exactly presaging today's debate between the two-state and one-democratic-state solutions, some Palestinians embraced a standard democracy instead of partition. In Kayyali's rendering:

Writing privately to Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, son of the author of the Black Letter, Jamal Husseini [cousin of the Mufti and brother-in-law of Musa Alami] noted that partition was not the only possibility: 'We are prepared to take in the present Jewish population in Palestine and give them full and equal rights and proportionate seats in all Government institutions with Municipal and communal autonomy in strictly Jewish settlements.'²⁶²¹ A similar suggestion was submitted by Abdul Latif Salah. Nothing came out of this initiative as... the British were... determined to crush the rebellion before entering into any negotiations with the Arabs.²⁶²²

Salah on 26 September 1938 wrote from The Arab Centre, 72, Victoria Street, S.W.1, to Prime Minister Chamberlain saying that the

non-Zionist Jews who are willing to cooperate with the Arabs outnumber the Zionists. These non-Zionist Jews have declared clearly that they do not desire a Jewish State, or Majority of inhabitants, in Palestine and they are ready to accept a certain percentage for the Jewish population in Palestine. The Arabs may accept a solution on the following basis: (1) The population of Palestine to consist of Arabs and Jews who have adopted Palestinian Citizenship. (2) A democratic Government with Executive and Legislative departments and a Parliament where the inhabitants are represented in accordance with their number. (3) The present percentage of the Jewish population to be considered final.²⁶²³

On 30 September Malcolm MacDonald declined to hold an "interview" with "Abdel Bey Latif Saleh".

The beginning and end of **Jamal's "private and personal" letter** to MacDonald of 27 May:

I thought much before writing this letter from fear lest I should over-step the limits due to me. But the kindness you showed me when we met in 1930 has at last convinced me to address this letter to you in private upon your return to the Colonial Office. I remember telling you when we met, at the House of Commons [^{>244}], that unless the Palestine question is being settled justly and equitably and its Arab owners are dealt with as human beings who are well aware of their rights and duties, the Holy Land will yet be a source of trouble to all concerned. ... Our problem is not more acute than that of Ireland which was solved through your good advice and agency. Could we expect as much at your hands? ... I beg lastly to congratulate you upon assuming your new office and hope that your name will be remembered in Palestine as it is due to be remembered in Eire.²⁶²⁴

²⁶²¹ This sentence is in CO 733/370/13, p 12.

²⁶²² Kayyali 1978, p 213, citing 26 September 1937 [sic: 1938], CO 733/372.

²⁶²³ CO 733/372/5, pp 19-22.

²⁶²⁴ CO 733/370/13, pp 9, 11, 12.

Jamal also mentioned that “The position is now that our average land tenure is below the Lot-viable [lot size viable for a family] and the country cannot support any more immigrants of any race; this, not to mention our natural increase of 25 per thousand per year which must be reckoned with.”²⁶²⁵

Two high-ranking British officials agreed with him. During this time, new High Commissioner Harold MacMichael and General Officer in Command Lt.-Gen. Haining “were of the opinion that the postponement of partition and the complete cessation of immigration offered the only hope of eventual peace in Palestine.”²⁶²⁶ About a year later the MacDonald White Paper would adopt Jamal’s position for a proportional-representative democracy, but insisted on letting in about 75,000 more European Jewish immigrants.²⁶²⁷ [^{>410}]

Did Jamal receive a reply from MacDonald? No.²⁶²⁸ Dealing with the letter, as well as with Jamal’s similar letter to the Permanent Mandates Commission on 28 June 1938 [^{>360}], “the Secretary of State [MacDonald] decided that he would not reply to Jamal Husseini’s letter ... [but instead] send a copy to Sir H. MacMichael [High Commissioner in Jerusalem].” CO official Downie argued against replying because

Jamal Husseini was a member (and... a dangerous member) of the now out-lawed Arab Higher Committee. If he had not fled from Palestine he would have been arrested and deported to the Seychelles. ... [A] reply might almost be regarded as ‘communication with the enemy’.

Shuckburgh agreed: “Jamal Husseini is one of the people whom we regard as ‘morally responsible’ for the series of outrages that culminated in the brutal murder of W. Andrews [triggering the deportations]. [^{>296}; *event within >346*] ... This letter from Jamal al-Husseini is an embarrassment.” On Andrews’s own morality or brutality Shuckburgh does not comment; according to Wasif Jawhariyyeh, who as a civil servant had many dealings with him, including some office business on the morning of his assassination, “he extremely hated the Arabs and was biased toward Jews, as far as I know” and “was one of the supporters of the partition plan.”²⁶²⁹

Commenting on Jamal’s letter on 24 June, officer J.S. Bennett, however, seems to have agreed with Jamal’s “accusation that H.M.G. have attributed the trouble in Palestine simply to the ‘Effendis’ [whereas] the Royal [Peel] Commission, whose general conclusions H.M.G. accepted, found that there was a conflict of national aspirations. [Furthermore] his ‘alternative’ proposals look like one of the many brands of cantonisation;...”²⁶³⁰

Here, by the way, Bennett was mistaking Jamal’s proposal [*also >360*] for “cantonisation”, where the cantons would be ethnically defined; like ‘bi-nationalism’ and ‘federation’, these hybrid solutions are harder to define than the simple solution identical to the rep-

²⁶²⁵ CO 733/370/13, p 11.

²⁶²⁶ FO 371/21864, pp 47-48; Kayyali 1978, p 216.

²⁶²⁷ MacDonald 1939, §14.1.

²⁶²⁸ CO 733/370/13, pp 2-4, *all further citations*.

²⁶²⁹ Tamari & Nassar 2014, pp 222-23.

²⁶³⁰ CO 733/370/13, p 2.

representative democracies of Western Europe being put forth by Jamal, and by him and George Antonius in the 1939 St. James talks [395; 406]. At any rate, the National Archives hold documents showing that one such “brand” of cantonisation, perhaps known to partition-opponent Jamal, had been floated by Archer Cust to High Commissioner Wauchope on 18 January 1935 [280] and by Weizmann and Cust to Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore, on 30 June 1936, a scheme dividing the country pretty much along the lines that would be recommended by UN General Assembly Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947.²⁶³¹ Another, “like the Swiss Federation”²⁶³², suggested by the Melchite Archbishop of Galilee on 9 July 1938, foresaw two Jewish cantons – one around Tel Aviv and one in the Plain of Esdraelon, with the rest “divided between Moslem and Christian.”²⁶³³ But Jamal was proposing merely some degree of local autonomy, within a framework in which all central questions would be determined by normal representative-democratic procedures, albeit complemented by a quota system in elected and administrative bodies.

Soon after MacDonald succeeded Ormsby-Gore as Colonial Secretary on 16 May 1938, the Secretary of the Arab Palestine Office in London, Izzat Tannous, tried to meet with him, first being refused. MacDonald was still pro-Zionist, as he had been when he had written a letter to *The Times* back on 29 December 1930 criticising the Zionism-critical Shaw Commission Report [220] for overstepping the bounds of its remit; but he was open-minded:

‘However,’ the Colonial Secretary said [to go-between Sir Douglas Clifton Brown], ‘I will meet Dr. Tannous if he will write to me from his hotel and not from the Arab Center.’ ... But this did not worry me [Tannous] in the least for I was sure that whatever was inserted in the Arab Center Bulletin was the truth. Hence, it was the truth that stimulated MacDonald a few weeks later to go incognito to Palestine in order to see the lamentable situation in the country with his own eyes.²⁶³⁴

They would soon have several conversations [361; 364; 367] and Tannous was actually able to speak in a hearing room at the House of Commons on 23 June 1938.²⁶³⁵

May-June 1938 *‘Tegart’s Wall of barbed wire, plus numerous forts and pillboxes, was installed along the borders to Lebanon and Syria from the Mediterranean to the Sea of Galilee to keep out reinforcements and supplies for the rebels.’*²⁶³⁶

June 1938 *The Jewish Agency Executive and David Ben-Gurion ... support the compulsory transfer of Palestinians ... to neighboring Arab states.*

²⁶³¹ CO 733/297/3, pp 35-39.

²⁶³² A false analogy, because the Swiss constitution says not a single word about ethnicity or religion.

²⁶³³ CO 733/368/9, p 121.

²⁶³⁴ Tannous 1988, p 163.

²⁶³⁵ Tannous 1988, pp 243, 247, 257; Shaw 1946, p 44.

²⁶³⁶ CO 733/379/3, pp 50-51 Barbour 1946, pp 192-93; Jeffries 1939, p 712.

mid-1938 'By mid-1938, the rebels controlled almost all of Palestine, including the Old City in Jerusalem. Palestine had come under the people's control through the actions of the primitive and primitively armed peasantry. The cry of challenge to authority could no longer be ignored.'²⁶³⁷

summer 1938 'During the summer of 1938 the rebellion reached its climax. ... The rebels constituted the supreme authority in most parts of Palestine with their own legal and administrative set-ups. ... "Civil administration and control of the country was to all practical purposes non-existent".'²⁶³⁸

²⁶³⁷ Ghandour 2010, pp 92-93.

²⁶³⁸ CO 733/379/3, p 15 (direct quotation); Kayyali 1978, pp 214-15, citing CO 733/372[/1?], Enclosure to a letter to Downie, 20 September 1938, and CO 733/379[/3?], p 2, Haining to War Secretary, 30 November 1938; also Lesch 1979, p 223. See CO 733/379/3, pp 10-18, 'Report on the operations carried out by the British forces in Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1st August to 31st October, 1938'.

Arguing similarly to his 1932 article in the journal of the *American Academy of Political and Social Science* [>262], and in his letter of 27 May 1938 to Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald [>359], on 7 June 1938 Jamal al-Husseini wrote from Geneva (he had fled Palestine just before he would have been sent with the other exiles to the Seychelles [see event within >346]) to ‘H.E. The President, Permanent Mandates Commission [PMC], League of Nations, Geneva’.²⁶³⁹

[I]t is time and essential that the Arab of Palestine should be regarded as any civilised human being who knows well the extent of his rights and is ready to die in their defense. The whole policy, now under execution, was founded on the fallacy that Palestine was a country without a people and so it should be given to the people without a country.²⁶⁴⁰ In the Mandate the inhabitant owners are being referred to as the non-Jewish inhabitants, which degrading nomenclature denotes the spirit and atmosphere in which the Mandate and the policy it advocates were laid. This hazardous negligence of those in power was and will still be the cause of all trouble. ... In October 1937, [those in power] disbanded the higher Arab Committee, exiled its members and imprisoned without trial most of the members of its National sub-committees. [>326; >339; event within >346; >356] ... Furthermore, they governed the country under the terrible revised Emergency Regulations and gave the police and the troops a free hand in such persecution, torture and unhuman behaviour that have rarely been heard of in this age of civilisation, hoping thereby to force the people into complete submission to the dictates of their injustice.

The “non-Jewish” phrase in the Balfour Declaration and Mandate text, in other words, captured the attitude of degradation of a people *with* a country.

After these historical-background comments he continued:

When the British Government adopted the Partition scheme in July 1937, they were well aware that it will be unanimously rejected by the Arabs who still form the overwhelming majority of the population. Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations imposes that a national Government be established in this ‘A’ mandated territory of Palestine. [>46] On the other hand several British experts and Commissions of Enquiry have shown that the average land tenure amongst the Arabs is below the Lot-viable. In such a small country as Palestine, which is primarily agricultural and which has rarely been devoid of unemployment during the last twenty years, immigration of any category of people or any nationality is most detrimental and consequently not reasonable.

Jamal was arguing against immigration on economic and environmental, not specifically ethical or political, grounds. The usual conclusions followed:

²⁶³⁹ CO 733/370/13, pp 6-8, all quotations.

²⁶⁴⁰ Wikipedia's entry on this phrase shows one of the deeper layers of British disregard for Palestinians: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_land_without_a_people_for_a_people_without_a_land

With these facts in view the only legal, equitable and feasible solution lies in the establishment of a national independent Government similar to those established in the once 'A' mandated territories of Irak and Syria and the complete cessation of immigration and Jewish acquisition of lands. Under such a scheme the Arabs are willing to accord to the present Jewish minority, seven eighths of whom were admitted into the country in the face of the continued passive resistance of the population, full and equal rights and complete municipal and communal autonomy in Jewish settlements. ... The Arabs of Palestine are therefore determined to stand firmly on this reasonable and safe ground and will never agree to any proposal that requires any further political sacrifice on their part. I have the honour to be, Your most obedient servant, Jamal Husseini, President Palestine Arab Party and Member Arab Higher Committee.

An answer from the Permanent Mandates Commission is not known to me.

361. Tannous with MacDonald (1)

20 June 1938

In a **Memorandum** dated 12 August 1938 called 'Discussions on Palestine', Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald told the Cabinet about **several meetings he'd had that summer with Dr. Izzat Tannous**, Weizmann, Egyptian Prime Minister Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha, and Sir John Woodhead (head of the 'Partition' or "Technical" Commission) [^{>353; >376}].²⁶⁴¹

[also >362-67]

The first meeting with Tannous was on 20 June 1938 while he was in London organising the Arab Centre. [also >303; >349; >358; 219a; >412] The opening exchange:

[Tannous] launched into a statement of the Arab case against the Mandate and the proposal for partition. He said that the feeling of hostility in the Arab world and in Palestine was spontaneous; it had not been engineered from Italy or any other external source. The Arab complaint against the Mandate was that it differed from the principle of all the other Mandates in that, instead of providing that the interests of the existing inhabitants of Palestine should be safe-guarded, it actually gave preference to the interests of a new immigrant race. He spoke at some length about the iniquity of letting the Jews – or rather the Zionist Jews – pour into Palestine, so that now there was actually a demand that a part of Palestine should be handed over to them in full sovereignty. (p 9)

That is, this mandate blocked self-determination for the "existing inhabitants", and the Mandatory's particular two-state solution added to the "feeling of hostility".

MacDonald added for the benefit of the Cabinet that the Arab case was "well-known". In spite of this knowledge, MacDonald denied that the Palestine Mandate was much different than all the other Mandates:

I replied that I did not think that the Palestine Mandate had been so contrary to the principles of the other Mandates as he suggested. (p 9)

This reply was disingenuous: slow as release from tutelage had elsewhere been, nowhere else had it been part of the Mandatory's job profile to establish a national home for any outside group against the will of the indigenous people – such establishment being the reason given why a truly representative legislative council or even less powerful self-governing institutions had again and again been denied.

In a likewise "well-known" statement of the British case, MacDonald continued:

Great Britain had undertaken a double obligation in Palestine. ... In our view there was room for both a large Jewish population and a large Arab population in Palestine. The interests of the Arabs could be safeguarded at the same time as we were facilitating the immigration of Jews. It would be our constant endeavour to promote the interests of the Arab population. (p 9)

²⁶⁴¹ CAB 24/278/25, pp 270-73, all citations, but citing instead the printed page numbers: 9-16; also in: CO 733/361/4, item 47 (C.P. 190 (38)), item 20 (75054/38) & CO 733/366/4/Part IV, item 17.

That the Arab population did not *want* a “large Jewish population”, if they were Zionist Europeans, did not count. Formally: The *interests* of the Arab population were decided by Britain. MacDonald a bit later similarly said,

If our promise to the Jews had meant that we should act contrary to the interests of the Arabs in Palestine, I could understand the argument in favour of repudiating the Mandate. (p 10)

It was Tannous’s turn:

[T]he interests of the Arabs were being, and had always been, subordinated to those of the Jews in Palestine. ... [T]here were two irreconcilable nationalist movements... [Britain] had created the situation... (p 9)

He was putting responsibility where it belonged, claiming that

if the Arabs in Palestine and the Jews in Palestine were left to themselves, he thought they would be able to reach an accommodation. But the Jews in the outside world put on a pressure which made a friendly settlement impossible. Those Jews apparently had received the support of the British Government. (p 9)

Britain’s present policy made things worse:

Partition would only aggravate the situation, for the Arabs would never consent, except if they were forced to, to the surrender of a part of their country to an immigrant race; and if a Jewish State were established, the Arabs would only await the day when they could attack that State and drive the Jews out. (p 9)

Partition meant two states, but in the absence of the “Jewish State” and of Great Britain, there would be “accommodation”.

MacDonald picked up the problem of endangered Arab-British friendship:

All of us here cherished that friendship. But I understood him to suggest that in order to preserve it we should repudiate the Mandate. That was impossible. ... Even if we wanted to break that promise [to the Zionist Organization and the League of Nations], we could not do it. But in any case we did not propose to break the promise... to the Jews. (pp 9-10)

Tannous was saying that the Mandate wasn’t friendly; MacDonald was saying that the promise to the Jews/League of Nations was more important to Britain than Arab friendship. Perhaps, moreover, MacDonald sincerely thought Britain could not “repudiate the Mandate”, but eleven months later his freshly-written White Paper did just that, saying: “This proposal for the establishment of the independent State would involve consultation with the Council of the League of Nations with a view to the termination of the Mandate”²⁶⁴² [>410] Even if he had just lied to Tannous, by 17 May 1939 he had learned from Tannous and other Palestinians; at any rate, it would a year later prove to be not at all “impossible” to break the “promise” to the League of Nations and the Jews.

The two then agreed to meet again “before the summer recess”, MacDonald closing with the words,

²⁶⁴² MacDonald 1939, §10.1.

I should speak to him then with complete frankness, as I knew that he would speak to me with complete frankness. I should probably say things with which he would strongly disagree, just as he would say things with which I would no doubt disagree. But I felt sure that we would discuss the problem in a very friendly spirit. (p 10 or 11)

It seems that MacDonald was speaking to Tannous (a medical doctor, after all) as an equal, as if their 'subject positions' did not differ with regard to power. The tone – and in the 1939 White Paper the content – was in any case very different from the undisguised top-down language used by most of Palestine's rulers, both before and after Malcolm MacDonald.

Colonial Secretary MacDonald's meetings with Weizmann on 23 June and 17 July 1938, and one sometime in July with Egyptian Prime Minister Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha, show some of his thoughts about relations with the Arabs.²⁶⁴³ After Weizmann praised "security" in Palestine, particularly Tegar's Wall, MacDonald said that he

wanted... an agreed settlement, which meant a settlement which was acceptable to the Jews and the Arabs as well as to the Mandatory Power. But an agreed settlement seemed out of the question unless the representatives of the Mandatory Power could talk not only with the Jews but with men who could speak for the Arabs... (p 267)

HMG had, of course, exiled, killed or jailed most Palestinian leaders by this time.

He told Weizmann he "personally was still inclined to think that partition was the wisest policy at this time" yet disagreed with him that a firm British pro-partition decision would bring the Arabs into line; instead, "we should have to be prepared to face the undying hostility of the Palestinian Arabs" – and the U.K. would thereby lose the "friendship" of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria and require "considerable armed forces".

Even should HMG abandon its partition proposal, he "had not contemplated... stopping immigration and sale of land to the Jews"; he planned "a round-table conference" with all three parties [377ff] although he had little hope in an agreement and probably "the Government would have to impose a settlement". (p 268), a prediction which in May 1939 turned out to be true.

Weizmann said he would have been glad to hear MacDonald say,

I would reject any idea of a permanent Jewish minority in Palestine, and also any idea of the Mandate being replaced by the establishment of an Arab State.

But MacDonald instead liked Herbert Samuel's idea [314] of reaching a 40% Jewish population over the next ten years, "double their present population", and "the possibility of Jewish settlement in Trans-Jordan"; this, to be sure, would not be a "final-settlement". (pp 268-69)

At one point MacDonald went on the defensive:

I said that I did not think he could seriously accuse us of having changed our policy from time to time in any way which involved a broken promise to the Jews. The trouble was that our promise had been vague. We had undertaken to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. What on earth was a Jewish National Home? (p 269)

At a later July meeting Egyptian Prime Minister Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha reported to MacDonald that now a "critical attitude towards Great Britain was not confined to the public in Egypt" but had spread even to "Moslem opinion in India", and that exiling the Palestinian leaders had been a mistake. MacDonald: "All of us here would deplore that

²⁶⁴³ CAB 24/278/25, pp 267-70, all citations.

any policy of ours should disturb the friendly feelings between our two peoples. But the Palestine problem was not an easy one..." Mahmoud Pasha could not get MacDonald to agree to a suspension of Jewish immigration during the proposed large ("round-table") Conference, and he expressed support for MacDonald's idea of a longer-term 40% maximum on Jewish residents. (pp 273-74)

Both the Egyptian Prime Minister and the British Colonial Secretary saw no chance for Palestinian-Jewish agreement on immigration, and that "it would be left to the British Government to decide what the policy should be", but they agreed that as the Palestinians "did not feel... listened to", a conference would "make the Arabs feel that they had had a chance to make their case". MacDonald thought he had impressed Mahmoud Pasha with his "fresh argument" that "one of the virtues of the partition proposal was that it, for the first time, set a definite and severe limit to the Jewish National Home". Finally, he reported, in front of Mahmoud Pasha he had feigned full commitment to partition because otherwise, "A word from him... that I was wavering... would go swiftly through Palestine, and be an encouragement to the Arab terrorists to redouble their efforts." (p 274)

Compare these discussions between MacDonald and Tannous to Nuh Ibrahim's poetic rendering [*see also >351*], written sometime during the Revolt, of a debate between an Arab and a Zionist:²⁶⁴⁴

[Arab:] People, witness and see who is right. Nations unified, and look what's become of Palestine?

[Zionist:] By my life and the life of Shalom, my rights are suppressed Misery has befallen me, a morning of misfortune, I have lost Palestine.

I am Arab, and when I die, throw me away, I'll erase the Zionist name, to protect my country Palestine From the malice of colonizers.

I am the Zionist, well-known, my role in the world is obvious, My wealth is in double-dealing and lies, I must own Palestine, I must own Palestine.

You may own it tomorrow, and then you will find troubles and misery And encounter the angels of doom (Munkar and Nakeer) on Judgment day, you poor man. Until then you'd own Palestine.

Forget not the gift of wealth, betrayal and shame, With which I can buy the necks of men and perform the deeds of devils. Because I must own Palestine.

Do your deeds arrogant man; in this world you are famous. I'm the eagle, you little bird, and you're escaping the talons And you want to own Palestine!

I'll run away and won't fight, my girls will answer for me. Because of them, I won't be disappointed. I win 90 out of every 100. And I must own Palestine.

Spit on such men, blathering of such pride! I've lost hope in you, stuck in mud and tar. You've got to leave from here.

Khabeebi, listen to me, whatever you see before me, I want a national home for the Zionist of Palestine. And I will own Palestine.

By God, in your life you'll never see this. Instead you'll remain plucked, The work of the lion, you lamb, you'll meet the crows of doom. If you stay in Palestine.

The world has bored me, and I've been tossed out of its countries. And you too are chasing me to keep me out of Palestine. My ancestor's land since history's dawn.

Stop saying anything that occurs to you, it's as if you're asleep. Palestine is the cradle of Islam, Jesus the Messiah, and the prophets. Where to, poor man?

Impossible, I won't leave it and I will achieve my ends. I may win or lose, I won't leave Palestine. Palestine, I will own.

You have to go.

²⁶⁴⁴ Shabeeb 2006, pp 69-71.

I won't go.

Still there?

I fear none.

Stay and witness your end.

Do what may.

Bam, bam, bam!

O my losses, my wealth, my capital, Palestine I have lost.

The use of 'Khabeebi' instead of 'Habeebi' underlines the fact that the Zionist is a European Zionist, not just 'a Jew'.

6-15 July 1938 [*In Évian-les-Bains, France, 31 countries fail to remove their immigration restrictions on displaced European Jews, partly due to opposition from the World Zionist Organization which wanted as many as possible to go to Palestine.*]²⁶⁴⁵

²⁶⁴⁵ See Suárez 2016, p27; Suárez 2023, e.g. Ch.5.

The **second summertime meeting on the Thames** between Izzat Tannous and Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald [see >361; >367], on 18 July, started with MacDonald's assurance that the case of mistreatment of an Arab prisoner "in the concentration camp at Acre" had been diligently looked into and indeed "excessive force" had been used, but the authorities could not find out who the responsible "camp officers" had been, to which Tannous replied that exactly such things were "what made his friends suspicious. ... Surely they could... discover the individual or individuals... if they wished to."²⁶⁴⁶ (p 11)

Although the Woodhead Commission had been set up on 23 December 1937 to investigate the practicality of any scheme of partition²⁶⁴⁷ [>353; >376], HMG's official position was still for a tripartite division of Palestine²⁶⁴⁸ [>334] which continued to enrage the Palestinians. MacDonald warned Tannous, who was after all working in London to lobby Parliament, that although the Jews' lobby was more powerful and although "the Arabs had many friends not only in London but in the House of Commons", they were losing sympathisers in England because of the "campaign of Arab terrorism" which "had done their cause a great deal of harm". Tannous said that might be, but

The only reason why so many of the Arabs were resorting to violent methods was their despair. The British Government had made up its mind to put through the policy of partitioning the Arabs' own country. This was a terrible thing for his people to contemplate; they could never consent to the alienation of a part of their native land. But as we [the British] seemed determined on this, many Arabs felt that they must demonstrate their feelings by giving up their lives for their country. That was why they were fighting in Palestine to-day. He said that the situation was all the more incomprehensible to the Arabs because our proposal ignored so completely their interests. We had never listened to the Arab case against partition. We had decided upon our policy without consulting them. In that situation his people were filled with despair.²⁶⁴⁹ (p 11)

As it turned out, in November 1938 HMG did what Tannous and all other Palestinians demanded: in following the Woodhead Commission's (complexly worded) recommendation that no partition scheme was good enough, it abandoned the partition policy [>377] and the Arabs, both Palestinian and others, would moreover be thoroughly consulted during the St James Conference starting in February 1939 [>386ff].

In answering during the 18 July meeting, MacDonald first switched away from the Palestinians to talk about "the Arab peoples". Britain had freed them from the Turks and allowed "various States" self-determination. Specifically regarding the Palestinian Arabs,

²⁶⁴⁶ CAB 24/278/25, pp 270-73, citing instead the printed page numbers: 9-16; CO 733/361/4, item 47 (C.P. 190 (38)), pp 9-16 & item 20 (75054/38) & CO 733/366/4/Part IV, item 17; also Hughes 2009, *passim*. Also Hughes 2010.

²⁶⁴⁷ Cmd. 5634.

²⁶⁴⁸ Cmd. 5513.

²⁶⁴⁹ See on general colonial despair Fanon 1961, e.g. pp 200-02.

if they felt that they had not been able to discuss this problem sufficiently with the Royal Commission, that was their own fault. They had boycotted the Commission during most of its time in Palestine. ... We had now sent a technical Commission to Palestine again for the very purpose of making contacts with the people of Palestine, and on this occasion, too, it was not the British Commission who refused to discuss with the Arabs, but the Arabs who refused to meet the Commission. (p 11)

Tannous, like two decades' worth of Palestinians before him, explained the reason for such a boycott of a British Commission: in this case "they could not discuss partition, for they were wholly opposed to it." (*emphasis added*) Parallel to this stand-off had been the Palestinians' various petitions to the Permanent Mandates Commission, the former objecting to the Mandate as such and only reluctantly registering specific "grievances" about the administration of the Mandate, and the latter saying, 'Sorry, the topic of the Mandate itself is off limits.' [^{>178;} ^{>182;} ^{>183;} ^{>191;} ^{>227;} ^{>257;} ^{>338;} ^{>343;} ^{>345;} ^{>360}]

Similarly, Tannous had already at a 23 May meeting with MacDonald's Eastern Department chief Cosmo Parkinson, who favoured the Peel partition scheme, explained why the Arabs found it senseless to discuss the details of their funeral. Parkinson suggested that

the Arabs... could, of course, make clear, if they wished, that they did not like the principle of partition, but with that caveat they could state their desiderata in a divided Palestine. Dr. Tannous replied that the Arabs could not accept partition and would not discuss it. ... Dr. Tannous... stressed several times the non-existence of racial hatred of Jews by the Arabs [and] that with the fear of domination and expropriation removed, the two races were capable of co-operation. The Arabs did not object to a Jewish National Home, but they did object to a Jewish State. ... The only solution of the problem was one State for the whole of Palestine based upon the present position as regards the population - whether it were independent or not did not matter.²⁶⁵⁰

Without such compunction King Abdullah of Transjordan would around this time submit to Woodhead a plan for an Arab federation with a somewhat undefined autonomy for Jews in limited areas of Palestine.²⁶⁵¹ [*also* ^{>338}]

To MacDonald Tannous said that what the Palestinians were ready to discuss was co-existence in their "own country":

[T]hey were ready to go on living side by side with the Jews in Palestine as neighbours. They recognised that the two races had to live together. There were now 450,000 Jews in the country, and the Arabs were reconciled to accepting this large Jewish population in their country, and to giving them full rights as citizens. They could do this without partition. The Holy Land ought not to be divided, and whilst partition was the policy there would be no peace. Would not the British Government be prepared to let Palestine remain one country, with Jews and Arabs living peacefully together? ... Surely [the British] had learned by now that it was wrong to bring Jews into Palestine... However, the Arabs were prepared to accept the present Jewish population in Palestine... (pp 11-12)

²⁶⁵⁰ CO 733/361/4, item16 (75838/38).

²⁶⁵¹ Shlaim 1998, pp 59-60.

MacDonald

answered that this was the policy which we had been pursuing for twenty years. But it had proved in the end unworkable, except on conditions which we could not accept. (p 12)

There is no truth in this claim that Britain had been “pursuing” Tannous’s vision of a united, democratic state for twenty years or even twenty days. This is also a good place to ask what several Palestinians had asked over the years: Would MacDonald agree to the partition of the island containing Scotland, Wales and England so that a large number of Iberians or Indians or Germans could set up a separate state in one half? But this appeal to empathy had always failed.

MacDonald did however identify the “condition” HMG *did* insist on, namely “the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine” as part of HMG’s dual obligation, and once again told Tannous what the Palestinians’ own interests were:

In order to safeguard the interests of the Arab population of Palestine... we had adopted the policy of allowing only so much Jewish immigration as the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine at any time permitted. (p 12)

But both objectively and subjectively, the “interests of the Arab population” lay in *no* “Jewish immigration”; had MacDonald not heard, or read, correctly?

MacDonald then made the usual claim that “the British... were impartial as between the other two parties” of the Palestine triangle, and as a result of Arab violence “we had to turn to another solution, that recommended by the impartial Royal Commission” – but immigration could not stop because “it meant the British Government breaking pledges it had solemnly given”. (p 12) (Throughout this chronology it was only the promises to the one side that were “solemnly” made.) In extolling partition, MacDonald at this point expanded the language of ‘Arab interests’ to that of the (“impartially” determined) “advantages” and even (material) “well-being” that would accrue when “a part of Palestine itself would be added to [the] great area where the Arabs were a sovereign people”! (p 13)

At this impasse (MacDonald: “I was as obstinate as he was in refusing to alter my position.”) between two parties of vastly unequal power, Tannous remarked generally, as an argument against partition, that the Zionists wanted to

spread over the Near East. The idea of a Jewish National Home had never been given any limits. Where was it to stop! The Jews were now being persecuted in Europe, and the Zionists wanted to bring all the persecuted Jews into Palestine. ... Dr. Tannous urged that the Jews had already got all that they could expect in the way of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. (p 13)

The JNH, that is, should be declared as now established.

MacDonald’s minutes ended by noting that the

discussion continued on these points for an hour, and was cordial throughout. Dr. Tannous said two or three times at the end of the conversation that he hoped that when the Wood-

head Commission came back to London we would consider the situation with them with an open mind, and reject partition, and invite an Arab delegation to come to London for the purpose of negotiation. (p 13)

Exactly that happened. [>377ff]

365. Bushe to MacDonald

late July 1938

Legal Adviser to the Colonial Office H. Grattan Bushe **wrote to Colonial Secretary MacDonald** shortly before 26 July 1938 showing that he had observed Palestine and listened to Palestinians:²⁶⁵²

I fully realise that the present state of affairs in Palestine is not my business, but a great Minister once said that occasions arose when Civil Servants should give a Minister their views whether he asked for them or not. My only other excuse is that I have been dealing with Palestine for longer than anyone else in the office and that, so far, my forebodings which I have expressed often enough semi-officially have come true. ... I think you have got to contemplate a whole nation disillusioned, frightened and desperate; their faith in the British Government gone, their hope of any future, save what they can achieve by force, dissipated, fighting on because there is nothing else for them to do.

If that was true,

we can send the whole British Army to Palestine and it won't be a solution. If that is true the things we have done in the way of punishing the innocent with the guilty, of destroying property, of interning thousands of untried persons, and of banishing the leaders, are... useless. ... The House of Commons has shown itself to be disinterested in the Arab cause, the press appears to be almost entirely pro-Jew, and nearly every recommendation of Commissions or Reports, in so far as they have favoured the Arab cause, has been turned down in the past.

A solution?

The problem could have been settled, and could, I believe, still be settled by a recognition that the Jews have obtained their 'Home'. Is not 400,000 and, say, a limited immigration for the next number of years,... a very good home? There is no promise in the Balfour Declaration of a Jew majority. The Jews in Palestine would have to be protected, their rights would have to be respected, and we should have to draft a constitution which gave recognition to those overwhelming considerations. Outside the precincts of Whitehall and the shadow of Westminster Palace I never find anyone who takes any other view...

Due to the similarity between these thoughts and those of MacDonald as expressed to Parliament [[>378](#)], Musa Alami [[>380](#)], and in his White Paper [[>410](#)], it can be ventured that Bushe was the lead author of the MacDonald White Paper. He was a member of the British Delegation to the St James talks [[>386](#)] and served on the Maugham-Antonius committee [[>400](#)].

²⁶⁵² CO 733/371/1, item 1 (3 pages).

Colonial Office official Downie wrote a 32-page historical and analytical study of the history of “The Palestine Dilemma”²⁶⁵³, remarking, according to Cosmo Parkinson, that “we have a dark jungle in front of us” and he could soon no longer “see the wood for the trees” – a study which MacDonald “read with great interest” on 14 August shortly after his last meeting with Izzat Tannous [>>367]. The Woodhead Commission was at the time seeking an “equitable and practicable” partition map. In sharp contrast to Grattan Bushe [>>365], Downie was ethically and emotionally unable to grasp the situation for the simple question it presented – independence and freedom for the indigenous, or not? He fretted that before the appointment of the Royal Commission

For sixteen years we had been endeavouring to administer Palestine on the basis of an ambiguous Mandate, and our strict impartiality had lost us the friendship of the Arabs... without winning the gratitude of the Jews;... (p 1)

On the one hand, since the British rightfully approved of the Jewish National Home as a “nationalist” ideal based on Zionist aspirations, i.e. one with an “exclusive and self-sufficient character”, even including “exclusive employment of Jewish labour by Jewish organisations”, nothing but a separate state in a *partitioned* Palestine would do. (pp 3-5)

Both the Jews and Arabs in Palestine, so Downie, had according to the Mandate a right to independent self-government, and both were capable enough for that. (pp 7-9) (The British Government had often claimed that the Palestinians were not capable of self-government, still needed tutelage; but as soon as a Jewish state in part of Palestine became a probability, they were capable.) Further, Parliament and the League of Nations both “remain uncommitted” as to whether the solution of two states, one of them Jewish, was a good idea, and the Jews and Arabs themselves were more or less against it, although “the Arabs have always demanded the immediate establishment of an independent Arab state [and] it is the Arabs, not the Jews, who are in a hurry for self-government.” (pp 7-11)

The Arab campaign of terrorism which broke out soon after the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission still continues and shows no signs of abating in spite of vigorous counter measures. The Arab Higher Committee has been scattered, and those members who did not escape from Palestine have been deported to the Seychelles. The Nashashibi Party, generally opposed to the Mufti and reputed to be moderate [Ragheb Nashashibi was not exiled], have shown themselves no less intractable than the Mufti and his entourage; and at the moment there is no representative Arab body with whom negotiations might be opened. (pp 12-13)

Among the five “crucial factors”, or assumptions, looking forward, were:

(a) It is hopeless to attempt to administer the Jews and Arabs of Palestine as one people under any unitary form of government. ... (c) We cannot, without an open breach of a long-es-

²⁶⁵³ CO 733/371/1, item 2, all citations.

established pledge, place the Jews in a permanent minority position – however protected – under an Arab state. (d) The Arab demand for self-government is immediate, and peace, order and good government cannot be attained unless that demand is met forthwith or unless a definite assurance is given of independence in the near future. (pp 14-15)

In defining the “pledged” Jewish national home in point (c) as one in which they were a majority in Palestine – the reason for the self-imposed “dilemma” of the title of his memo – Downie was stating British policy in rare, clear terms. HMG’s *sine qua non* was Jews’ constituting at least 50% of the population (at which point democracy would become thinkable). The MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939 [410] would, finally, reject point (c) and fulfil point (d) (even if the “near future” was for the Palestinians in the end not near enough [412; 414]), thus unleashing Zionist violence against Britain²⁶⁵⁴ and moving Churchill, as Prime Minister as of 1940, to once again push partition [418].

Downie then discussed the two separate questions of the Woodhead Commission’s terms of reference, namely the practicability and the equitability of partition, which he put into a matrix of acceptance/rejection by Arabs/Jews. (pp 15-19) In Downie’s view “Palestine has not been a national entity for centuries, if ever” and therefore it is not “national aspirations” moving the Arabs’ rebellion, as was the case in Ireland, but rather

an external force, the Pan-Arab movement [and] it is questionable whether the Pan-Arab movement has any solid historical or spiritual foundation [and] in so far as the Pan-Arab movement represents a genuine desire on the part of Arabs for independence, its aspirations have already largely been stated, e.g. in Egypt, Iraq, Trans-Jordan and (in the near future) in Syria. (pp 20-22)

Despite his ingenuity in de-legitimising Palestinian nationalism against the historical evidence [1-7; 10; 25; 52; 354] he then concluded, somewhat against the grain of what he had just written:

Bearing in mind the impossibility of continuing to administer indefinitely both races under a régime of repression and with no satisfactory criterion for the regulation of Jewish immigration, one is driven to the conclusion that... the only solution is the conversion of Palestine into an independent and predominantly Arab State in which the Jewish community would remain a permanent minority under suitable guarantees. (p 27)

He seemed here to come down, after all, on the side of the “solution” which would take on HMG policy status in the form of the MacDonald White Paper and which depended on rejecting the operational premise of the last 2 decades (point (c) above), that the Jews under no circumstances should be left a minority. He closed by luke-warmly describing the bi-national or confederal “Hyamson-Newcombe-Magnes” [347] and “Lord Samuel” [340] schemes – the latter saying that Jews should become no more than 40% of the population and “the main constitutional issue be kept open for ten years”. (pp 28-31)

²⁶⁵⁴ Suárez 2016; Suárez 2023, pp 62-68.

367. Tannous with MacDonald (3)

11/12 August 1938

When they met again on 11 August 1938²⁶⁵⁵, after MacDonald had spent a few weeks in Palestine,²⁶⁵⁶ Tannous urged in the interests of ending the terrorism despised by both the British and the Arabs that the British “should let the Mufti and the other exiles return to Palestine” and that the Arabs should now be seriously consulted:

He and his friends had a real grievance in that we had not consulted them, but had decided our policy with the knowledge that it was directly opposed to their wishes. He thought it had been a mistake to publish the Peel recommendation in favour of partition [Cmd. 5479] and the Government acceptance of that policy [Cmd. 5513] on the same day. (p 14) [^{>336, >335}]

MacDonald refused the first wish:

It might be that when a settlement had been reached and that settlement had been put into effect and peace had been restored, some of the exiles might return. I was making no promise, and indeed had hardly considered the matter. We all had more urgent work to do. (p 15)

For MacDonald and “we all”, the exile of important leaders was literally beneath consideration.

Although “he could make no promise now that there would be further discussions... he thought it right that the Arabs should be able to express their views quite frankly to us before final decisions were taken”. That would be a first in British-Palestinian relations. Tannous also brought up the delicate problem of Palestinians’ taking part without this amounting to consent to partition or for that matter any other Mandatory policy. Because MacDonald had indicated that partition was being doubted by HMG, he bound Tannous to utter confidentiality concerning any planned talks. Tannous would go soon to Jerusalem and agreed to inform MacDonald of anything that might be useful to him. In the event, the official announcement of the talks scheduled for early 1939 came in November after the Woodhead report had been received and accepted. [^{>376; >377}]

²⁶⁵⁵ CAB 24/278/25, pp 270-73, all citations, but citing instead the printed page numbers: 9-16; also in: CO 733/361/4, item 47 (C.P. 190 (38)), item 20 (75054/38) & CO 733/366/4/Part IV, item 17.

²⁶⁵⁶ But see Bethell 1979, p 45.

In case it seems that MacDonald devoted a disproportionate amount of time to conversations with Izzat Tannous [>361; >364; >367], a look at the Colonial Office archives for 1938 shows that the overwhelming majority of his conversations were with Zionists – Weizmann, Rutenberg, Brodetzski, Namier, Lady Reading, etc.²⁶⁵⁷ Nicholas Bethell, based on his later interviews with MacDonald, reports on the Colonial Secretary’s “three long meetings with his good friend Weizmann” in June and July 1938 in which they discussed hypothetical scenarios of partition as opposed to a Palestinian state, of various amounts of future allowed immigration, and the role of Jewish terrorism; and on 19 September, after dinner with Ben-Gurion, Mr. and Mrs. Weizmann and Balfour’s niece Baffy Dugdale, MacDonald revealed his change of heart in favour of the Palestinian cause to the Zionist leaders, somewhat later prompting Weizmann to say to Malcolm that his father, Ramsay [>246], scarcely eight months dead, “must be turning in his grave at what you’re doing”.²⁶⁵⁸

It is perhaps important in light of MacDonald’s personal progress from May 1938 to May 1939, when the White Paper carrying his name was published, to note **the letter he wrote to Tannous at the Arab Centre** in mid-August 1938:

Dear Dr. Tannous, It was kind of you before you left London to send me a note. I also felt pleasure in meeting you, and hope that our talks will be helpful in the present distressing Palestine situation. I will certainly write to the High Commissioner [MacMichael] about you. I hope that you will have an enjoyable holiday and find your family well. I shall look forward to seeing you again when you return to London which I understand will be early in October. With kind regards, Yours sincerely, Malcolm MacDonald.²⁶⁵⁹

Yaani, such a letter to a Palestinian lobbyist from previous Colonial Secretaries Churchill, Cavendish, Amery, Webb, Thomas, Cunliffe-Lister or Ormsby-Gore is inconceivable.

By way of prefacing **his Memorandum of 21 August to the Cabinet** on his summer meetings,²⁶⁶⁰ MacDonald wrote that there had been “rumours that the wisdom of Partition has been questioned in the Cabinet”, so he had told “Palestinian Arabs” and their “sympathisers” that there was no truth in that. He also described Tannous, who was “in charge of the Arab Centre in London”:

He is an Arab Christian, but has been in the past closely associated with the Mufti, and was with Jamal Husseini (who fled to Syria with the Mufti) a member of the Arab Delegation to London in 1936. He has always tended to be a moderate, and therefore his influence in Palestine is probably not very great. His conversations with me may help to increase his prestige and influence amongst his fellow-countrymen, but they are just as likely to limit his influence through earning for him the hostility of the extremists. ... [H]e is a man capable of

²⁶⁵⁷ E.g. CO 733/361/4 & /5.

²⁶⁵⁸ Bethell 1979, pp 39-42, 45-46, 67, 200.

²⁶⁵⁹ Tannous 1988, p 263.

²⁶⁶⁰ CAB 24/278/25, p 266.

reason and some courage, and at least has some official political position in the Palestinian Arab world. ... He is the one faint ray of hope that I see at present of our being able to establish some kind of useful contact with politically important Arab opinion in Palestine...

Arab Christian George Antonius was evidently not yet on MacDonald's radar. Such contact was sparse, given the number of "politically important" Arabs who were in jail or exile. But at least one "Arab" had been found who was "capable of reason".

After telling his fellow Cabinet members they'd all have to await the Woodhead 'Technical Commission' Report [^{>376}], MacDonald also described HMG's basic dilemma:

None of [the "proposed solutions"] is really satisfactory; so far as I am able to judge, all of them would be rejected by either the Arabs or the Jews or both; we are faced with a choice between evils.

Aside from the misleading passive voice - "faced with" - the focus on "solutions" obscured the premises which pre-programmed exclusively "evil" choices.

Mandatory policeman Ted Horne related the following description of the Palestinians' 'message' to Great Britain:

Fawzi's [Fawzi Qawuqji's] troops were from rural peasant recruits for the most part, with limited weapons, no armour, few cavalry and no aeroplanes. Training was also very sparse and there was always a shortage of ammunition, food and ready cash. In spite of this, the rebels managed to burn down 40 police stations and posts, damage the railways and postal system severely, establish whole 'no go' areas in rural Palestine. They held their own courts and even used their own stamps ... the real point to be made is that nobody thought the Arabs capable of launching such a campaign in which British prestige was sorely tested and lessons were learnt of military value. ... The rebels had fought the good fight and lost but they had frightened Whitehall.²⁶⁶¹

Just after quoting Horne, Zeina Ghandour adds that "The rebellion was ultimately crushed by the overwhelmingly superior military, political and financial power of the Mandatory. ... By December 1938, Palestine had been reclaimed by the British. The rebellion did not unavoidably self-implode, it was crushed." Britain had made the first military moves in 1917-18, and twenty years later were making the last ones, in the end defeating military leaders Abd al-Kadir al-Husseini, Fawzi al-Qawuqji and scores more. In between, in addition to words, the natives used violent resistance to British violence to make their simple point.

Ghandour also records the words of one of her interviewees ('Anonymous') in 2004 in a refugee camp in Lebanon:

The English were governing Palestinian land while the Palestinians wanted independence so this is how the rebellion started. ... It was a rebellion. The English knew it was a rebellion and the whole world knew it was a rebellion. ... The rebels were attacking military and government posts, so they knew it was a rebellion. They knew very well that we were not criminals.

'Anonymous' added:

Listen to me. We couldn't digest the English. They are worse than the Jews. The English were fairer with the Jews than with the Arabs. They armed the Jews and gave them ammunition but they didn't give anything to the Arabs. The reason for our *Nakba* is the English. Go and tell them. They are the ones who ruined our houses and made us refugees. They slaughtered us. We don't like them. I'm sorry, what am I saying? Are you English?²⁶⁶²

It was British intent and power, not Zionist-Jewish intent and power, that were the main reasons and *sine qua non* of the rape and exile of Palestine. According to Boyle the rape analogy was current:

²⁶⁶¹ Ghandour 2010, pp 96, 98, 191, citing the Palestine Police Old Comrades Association Collection.

²⁶⁶² Ghandour 2010, pp 106-07.

Throughout the 1930s, [George] Antonius felt the British and Zionists were ignoring the writing on the wall, going against practical common sense, and flouting justice. He understood the mounting anger, anguish, and sense of helplessness and desperation among Palestinians. Observers in neighboring states commonly likened the situation to rape. It did not take uncanny prescience to anticipate revolt and bloodshed.²⁶⁶³

That Britain's support in fact turned out to be a necessary condition for Zionism's success has never been more succinctly stated than by Numan Abd al-Wahid:

[T]he denial of representative government and democracy to the Arab Palestinians was the founding facilitation of British rule in Palestine and subsequently one of the key building blocs in the creation of Israel and the eventual ethnic cleansing of Palestine. ... Representative government in Palestine was a threat to the British-Zionist project and as such needed to be forestalled. ... In effect, the founding strategy of Zionism in Palestine was the cross-party, British denial of representative government and democracy to the indigenous Arab population.²⁶⁶⁴

Al-Wahid succinctly and chronologically lists the steps taken by the British, including the brutal repression of 1936-39, in paving the way for the near-complete dispossession of 1948. Fayez Sayegh likewise describes in some detail the groundwork done by Britain for the emergence of the state of Israel out of the Mandate-era proto-state.²⁶⁶⁵

August 1938 *'Between 300 and 400 Arabs were "collected from the villages near the northern frontier" and "incarcerated in cages at Iqrit and Malikiya." The purpose of the action was "to tranquilize the country and to give the brigands something to think about for a few days.'*²⁶⁶⁶

end of August 1938 *'By the end of August 1938, the British civil administration in various cities suffered almost a total collapse, despite all British measures of crushing the uprising. This resulted from the Palestinians' systematic attacks on British administrative offices.'*²⁶⁶⁷

early September 1938 *'The British killed some twenty villagers at al-Bassa, most if not all in cold-blood, during an operation in which villagers were also tortured according to Arabic sources. ... [S]oldiers collected approximately fifty men and blew some of them up in a contrived explosion under a bus. ... They shot four people in the streets... [Later] the British Commander selected four men who were tortured in front of the rest of a group [of 100].'*²⁶⁶⁸

²⁶⁶³ Boyle 2001, pp 193-94.

²⁶⁶⁴ al-Wahid 2011; also Alami 1949, pp 381-82.

²⁶⁶⁵ Sayegh 1965, p 14.

²⁶⁶⁶ Cronin 2017, p 50.

²⁶⁶⁷ Ayyad 1999, p 172.

²⁶⁶⁸ Hughes 2009, pp 336-38.

XXI. “Why are you in Palestine?”

On 13 September 1938 High Commissioner MacMichael sent **a tract written by Aref Abdul Razzak** to Downie at Colonial Office HQ in London.²⁶⁶⁹ [*also >381*] It was one of a number of “propaganda pamphlets” in English addressed to “all British forces in Palestine”; Razzak was seen as the “most prominent” rebel leader, originally in the Nablus-Ramallah region but now also in the Jerusalem-Ramleh region. (pp 23, 24) Razzak gave voice to the “rebels”:

Gentlemen: Have you ever stopped a moment to ask yourselves why you are in Palestine? Why do you subject yourselves to the performance of this most difficult and dangerous task? It is common knowledge that the English army is in the first place to defend his country and its interests, to help the oppressed, to lift the fallen and to serve humanity and justice. Have you ever asked yourselves whether you are fighting for these ends in Palestine now? ... [Y]ou would have hesitated to behave as you are behaving at present and your Christian conscience would have reprieved every one of you. ... You are only here to lose your lives or take the lives of others for the sake of a handful of Jews who are not worthy of your defence. (p 24)

Recall the expression of this same opinion in the General Syrian Congress’s rejection of the mandate system *as such*, because of the lack of any need for ‘tutelage’ by the West, in mid-1919. [*>52*] The British had often challenged the legitimacy of any group of Palestinian leaders to speak for the broad populace, but, as Zeina Ghandour asks, what made Britain a legitimate dialogue partner for the Palestinians?²⁶⁷⁰ [*see >99*]

Then came the competing historical claims to ownership:

Palestine has been our home for over 1,300 years. It is stamped by our tradition, culture and language and it remained so in spite of the Turkish Rule. ... The [British] Government... shattered [our] hopes and fell a prey to Jewish Aspiration and unjust demands, and broke her promises supporting the experiment of evicting the Arabs from their Homeland. The Jews base their claim to this country on the fact that some 5,000 years ago they lived in Palestine, and consequently they have a historic right of returning... Imagine what a wanton and illogical allegation. Following such a line of reasoning, the Italians of today would be entitled to claim and take England, as their ancestors, the Romans of old, lived in the British Isles, and ruled them some thousand years ago. (pp 24-25)

Undoubtedly you have experienced during your stay in Palestine that you are facing a race whose national feeling has reached the boiling point and who under this tremendous feeling is most willing to give up their lives recklessly and desperately for their National cause. Every one who dies is a National hero and a Religious Martyr... (p 25)

Shifting to anti-Jewish mode, he said the traditional friendship between the British and the Arabs was being risked “for the sake of an offensive race and a persecuted gang of

²⁶⁶⁹ CO 733/372/4, pp 23-26, *all citations*.

²⁶⁷⁰ Ghandour 2010, p 159.

Parasitic Jews. A Jew has always been a parasite living off the entrails of his fellow men. He is a materialist and an inhuman creature.” By contrast the Arab is “peace-loving... He is not a blood-thirsty savage, bent on loot and destruction as described by the impertinent and audacious Jewish Propagandists. The Arabs have ultimately decided to follow up their cause till the end...” Signed, “First in Command, Arif Abdul Razzak, Southern District”. (pp 25-26)

Dated both ‘23/9/57’ and ‘16/11/38’, another document signed by Razzak, ‘Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Forces in Palestine’, in the name of the ‘Revolutionary Council, Southern Syria’, expressed irony and anger towards the English.²⁶⁷¹

Save the honour of England! The happy old days of English nobility are gone only to be followed by a Savage Generation, deprived of its sense of humanity and justice. The days of Edmund Burke standing before the House of Parliament to defend the Indians against [the] similar savage manouvers of Warren Hastings are no more. Every Englishman in Palestine of to-day is a new Warren Hastings...

The Palestinian souls being murdered included “the innocent child, the crimeless old man and the harmless lady”.

Our loss, [how]ever, is incomparable with that of England. England is losing her Honour, her Reputation and her prestige. ... [E]ach morning comes with a new proof of barbarism but rather of Englishism. Ask the remnants of IRTAH – the last village abolished... A poor innocent father with his two children were killed inside their peaceful home. ... These victims were seen without limbs and with broken bones pierced in their eyes; done by ROYAL SCOT[TI]SH REGIMENTS... Then last but not least, houses that were bombed up over their inhabitants of women and children in Majdal-Nablus. ... These are buried there but side by side to them lies the HONOUR OF ENGLAND...

The same CO file holds an example of the military leadership’s attempts to prevent Palestinians’ working with the British as “Supernumerary Police” as well as exhortations to go on strike (including butchers and vegetable dealers); a “moratorium on debts” was declared “effective from Sept. 1, 1938 indefinitely” and creditors would face flogging for a first offence and execution for “the repetition of the offence”²⁶⁷²

²⁶⁷¹ CO 733/372/4, p 6.

²⁶⁷² CO 733/372/4, pp 8-11, 14.

Five religious leaders from Akka wrote on 22 September 1938 to “The General Secretary of the League of Nations, Geneva. Through His Excellency The High Commissioner for Palestine”, conveying their upset due to the “saddening events” of late.²⁶⁷³ Abdallah Al-Jazzar (Mufti of Acre), As’ad Al-Shuqairi (‘Alem), Bulus Shu’ab (Acting Greek Catholic Metropolitan), Antonius Sader (Priest of the Maronites), and P. Gabino Martin (Latin Priest) came immediately to the basic problem:

Palestine is neither a colony nor a dominion. It is an Arab country and belongs to its Arab population. The insistence upon its partition and the creation of a Jewish State therein was the sole factor which caused the present high tension and aroused the original people of the country to defend their lawful rights, to unanimously insist upon the abrogation of the Mandate, the stoppage of immigration, the prohibition of land sales and the establishment of a national government, and on similar other demands. That being the case, the insistence upon the execution of partition by the application of force cannot have any successful results, for God’s might is above the power of man.

British troops committed unspeakable acts: “The imposition upon towns and villages of curfew regulations for two or three days successively [was] in a manner which would not allow the people to call for prayers or to go to places of worship for prayer. ... Churches have been violated.”

Mohammad Su’ud El-Uri, ‘Alem in Al-Masjed Al-Aqsa, “on behalf of the ‘Ulemas of Jerusalem, nay, on behalf of the whole Moslem ‘Ulema in all countries” sent a similar protest on 26 October to “my dear friend the Honourable Mr. Kirkbride [Trans-Jordan High Commissioner], the noble and brave, the lover of the Arabs...”

On 4 November High Commissioner MacMichael would write to Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald:

I am unable to recommend that any detailed replies be returned to these petitions. I suggest that it will suffice if they are formally acknowledged with an intimation that they have been forwarded to their several destinations.

The word “intimation” implies there was no intention to forward them. To other Palestinians the reply was given that there would soon be a conference in London.

²⁶⁷³ CO 733/368/10, pp 46-56, *all citations*.

A Foreign Office Minute dated 26 September 1938 written by Intelligence Officer Colonel MacKereth weighed the pros and cons of a “proposed declaration calling off partition in Palestine”.²⁶⁷⁴ He thought that such a declaration, for the

effect of conciliating the Arabs in Palestine or Syria,... would be unconvincing, and so inappropriate, chiefly on the grounds that it would bear the imprint of having been made in extremis, and as such liable to later renunciation. ... [I]nstead of H.M.G. making a new declaration, the Woodhead Boundary [‘Technical’ or ‘Partition’] Commission [^{>376}] should be persuaded to produce their promised Report at once;... They should pronounce against partition as recommended by the Peel Commission, but might well suggest a smaller area of settlement and the limitation of immigration. Upon this the enlargement of Transjordan to include Arab Palestine (Jerusalem might be internationalised). This would put the Emir Abdullah automatically at the head of the new Arab State. (pp 26-27)

A Mr. Trott in Jeddah commented:

I think that proclamation would be hailed with delight as a signal of victory for the Arabs. ... Opposition to former policy concentrated on two points: fear of domination by Jews, and sense of sacredness of Arab soil. First point is secured by cessation of immigration and second by postponement of policy of partition. (p 30)

A Mr. Bateman in Alexandria commented that abandonment of partition and stopping Jewish immigration “will have a good effect here”;

To have maximum effect [of conciliating Arabs], announcement should I suggest be simple and unequivocal and to the following effect:- (a) His Majesty’s Government have decided to abandon partition and with it all idea of a Jewish state. (b) They have also decided to stop immigration immediately and not to revive it for ‘X’ years and then only by agreement with Arabs. In any case His Majesty’s Government guarantee that they will never allow Palestine Arabs to be out-numbered by Jews.

Bateman was disagreeing with MacKereth in straightforwardly abandoning all partition plans and the Jewish state. Common to all three Britishers – and, for that matter, to HMG throughout most of the Mandate – is the picture of a sea of “Arabs”, rather undifferentiated in terms of geographic locality. An Arab, that is, would for instance just as soon be a Jordanian as a Palestinian. In the event, these ideas of an Arab veto on Jewish immigration, elimination of the option of a Jewish state and a fixed, less-than-50% proportion of Jews overall were taken up officially in 1939 by the White Paper of Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald. [e.g. >390; also >410]

Conditions in Palestine, so Bateman, warranted such a policy and there was no need to justify it (to the Jews or the world) by reference to a coming war in Europe, and

²⁶⁷⁴ FO 371/21864, pp 24-48, all citations; also CO 733/367/2, pp 42-52.

I would remind you that Arab Congress is due to meet here on October 7th [^{>374}] and that if as I trust His Majesty's Government take decision in the suggested manner they have it in their power to rob the Congress of its thunder at a single stroke if they take decision at once. (pp 35-36)

Such were the terms in which many British officers in the field, for whatever reason, viewed Britain's neglect of both peace and Palestinian demands.

High Commissioner MacMichael, for his part, wrote to MacDonald reacting to a telegram from the latter dated 10 October 1938²⁶⁷⁵, saying that both he and General Haining agreed that the combination of renouncing partition and ceasing immigration "offers the best and only chance to reconcile the Arabs". (pp 47-48) London did not listen.

²⁶⁷⁵ FO 371/21864, pp 119-21, also 140-41.

Around this time High Commissioner Harold MacMichael spoke in London to Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald at the same time that Iraqi Foreign Minister Nuri as-Said spoke to Foreign Secretary Halifax. While the MacMichael-MacDonald talks resulted in a harsh military response to the uprising, which was in its third year, Said's message supported independence, more in line with what MacDonald himself would say in the Commons on 24 November 1938 [378]. According to Barbour,

At the same time the belief was widely held that the technical [Woodhead] commission which had been sent to investigate the details of possible schemes for partition was about to report negatively. These two circumstances gave rise to a report that the Government had adopted the principle of the Arab proposal, supported by the Iraqi Minister, for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, bound to Great Britain by a treaty of alliance on the model of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty. This report caused great alarm in Zionist circles...²⁶⁷⁶

In Jeffries' words, the "new plan" of Nuri as-Said was actually "the Arab Higher Committee's old plan, and the plan of every Arab delegation which has visited Britain for twenty years" – an independent democracy with equality for all citizens and a treaty with Great Britain similar to that of Iraq's.²⁶⁷⁷ And this well-known vision was also what HMG would state as policy about a half-year later after rejecting both partition and any Jewish state in Palestine – except that there would be four deficiencies from the Palestinian point of view: 1) there would definitely be another 75,000 immigrants; 2) independence would have to wait about another 10 years; 3) the British would not let the Palestinians write their own constitution; and 4) an ambiguously-formulated requirement that the Jewish-Zionist community agree to the whole plan [410; also 395; 396; 402; 405; 412]

Word was already out in October that the Woodhead Commission couldn't save partition, and the Colonial Office, at meetings in London on 7, 10, 11 & 12 October, wrestled with the same questions as it had in 1936 before the busyness of the Peel Commission.²⁶⁷⁸ In attendance were *inter alia* MacDonald, MacMichael, Shuckburgh, Frederick Downie, Grattan Bushe, Cosmo Parkinson and Lord Dufferin – the most pro-Palestinian group of British colonialists ever assembled. They knew they had to abandon partition and limit immigration, but also that extreme care must be taken both about "breaking our pledges to the Jews" and "avoiding the appearance of surrender to [Arab] terrorism; we must show the world that our decision has its roots in justice, not force;..." (p 173)

The following few paragraphs are a snapshot of the tasks before the Colonial Office. Planning had begun for a "round-table" conference at St. James Palace [383ff] bringing

²⁶⁷⁶ Barbour 1946, p 198.

²⁶⁷⁷ Jeffries 1939, pp 746-47.

²⁶⁷⁸ FO 371/21864, pp 173-233, all citations.

together Britain, Jewish Zionists, Palestinians and the Arab states of Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan and Yemen. The question of “representation of the Palestine Arabs” arose, with MacMichael saying it was

Very difficult to find anyone who can speak for them, owing to dissolution of Arab political parties. Mufti ex officio barred: deportees should be brought back, but as a gesture after Conference, not before it as negotiators. ... [Mufti's point of view should however be represented] as long as no ‘accredited representative’ of Mufti recognised. (p 187)

Downie recommended that

[Non-Palestinian] Arabs may take initiative and depute Palestinian representatives. They may choose acceptable people, in which case we shall be saved the unwelcome responsibility of selecting representatives (who might be intimidated by extreme nationalists): but they might choose the Mufti. (p 187)

In MacMichael's opinion Jamal al-Husseini was one such “unacceptable person”, while Izzat Tannous was more acceptable; when MacDonald expressed hopes that the Mufti could be “isolated and discredited”, C.W. Baxter asked, “However, if you eliminate compromised terrorists, what Palestinian Arabs are left?” (pp 195, 198) After Downie noted that the “ex-members of the Arab Higher Committee... are still the only really representative Arab politicians, and could ‘deliver the goods’ on behalf of Palestine at the Conference”, the meeting concluded: “exclude Mufti and Arab Higher Committee but not informal associates of above, so long as not recognised as their representatives.” (pp 200-01) For Shuckburgh, what spoke against the Mufti's inclusion was the “personal hatred [of him] among the Jews”. (p 201)

The “impracticality of Partition” was resolved behind the scenes on 10 October, as was that “the rebellion will be strongly repressed and the population disarmed [and] land sales will be prohibited [and] the existing restrictions on immigration [i.e. no decrease from usual levels²⁶⁷⁹] will be retained”. (p 208) As for which Palestinians should be invited to London, MacDonald disagreed with MacMichael that “the representation of the Palestine Arabs at the Conference [is] less important than that of the Arab States. Important to have people to represent the Mufti's point of view...”; the best option would be that the “notables” would “choose a delegation ad hoc”. (pp 215-16) The British were here ruling out of the dialogue most ‘representative’ Palestinians, but that changed: invited and present would turn out to be Palestine Arabs Jamal Eff. al-Husseini, Amin Bey Tamimi, Mr. George Antonius, Awni Bey Abdul Hadi, Musa Bey al-Alami, Alfred Eff. Rock, Yaqub Eff. Ghussein and Fuad Eff. Saba.²⁶⁸⁰ [[>]386]

Sir Grattan Bushe asked, “In the settlement hoped for, is an Arab State ruled out?” MacMichael answered, “Rebellion has shown them incapable: British rule must continue, at least for a period. Possible, however, to contemplate an enlarged Trans-Jordan.” Mr. Downie: “But all the Arab proposals envisage an Arab State. The Royal Commission declared the Mandate unworkable, and the Arabs as fit for self-government as Iraq or Syria.

²⁶⁷⁹ Duly decided on 12 October, see FO 371/21864, p 229.

²⁶⁸⁰ FO 371/23223, p 6.

... The Arabs will never accept any settlement that does not definitely preclude the possibility of a Jewish majority...". (p 220) Cosmo Parkinson: "Could we not at least re-interpret the Balfour Declaration as precluding a Jewish State?" MacDonald: "Would prefer not to exclude (for the distant future) even this." Parkinson: "But if partition is excluded, yet a Jewish State not excluded, it could only mean a [Jewish] State of all Palestine. This more than cancels the advantage, to the Arabs, of the rejection of partition." Downie: "All experience, and the Royal Commission's opinion, shows that (whatever the Jews may say or think) nothing can persuade the Arabs that economic progress and Jewish infiltration are better than poverty and national independence." Lord Dufferin: "We have hidden our intentions behind a screen of words and uncertainty for too long. Is it not an unavoidable fact that, if there is to be peace in Palestine, we must at last say plainly that we do not even intend either a Jewish majority or a Jewish State?" (p 222)

MacDonald replied: "There is something in this statement of the case. But the combined attitude of the Jews and the House of Commons rules it out as a practical programme. Owing to the [European] refugee problem, a dispassionate examination of the Balfour Declaration is impossible at the present time." (p 223) This was an unabashed attestation of the strength of the Zionist lobby in the U.K. and of the conflation, in the Western perception, of the European Jewish problem with Palestine.

However, so MacDonald, "Certainly obligations to Arabs should be more emphasised." MacMichael: "Most important to remove the Jewish Agency's privileged position." (p 225) MacDonald: "Death of partition has been conceded." Bushe: "Partition was only a gratuitous addition to Arabs' previous case. Its removal restores the status quo ante Royal Commission, with the 1936 rebellion and its causes unresolved. Some further concession seems essential." (p 226) Downie: "Can it not legitimately be argued that matters have reached the point where the Jewish National Home can only be imposed by force, and that His Majesty's Government cannot admit themselves morally bound to do this?" MacDonald: "Possible formula for five years (a) no land purchases or rural immigration... (b) urban immigration to be permitted. Assure Arabs that existing Arab population shall always have sufficient land for their subsistence,... This implies that the Balfour Declaration is fulfilled when it can only be further implemented by transfer of Arabs, i.e. when resultant Arab urban unemployment becomes significant." [see >410 and >230-234] A Mr. Harris: "It is already doing so. All land available will be required for rapid natural increase of the Arab population." (pp 227-28) [see >220; >233]

Finally, anticipating the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady attempts to solve the democracy-Zionism contradiction, MacDonald raised the option of "cantonisation", to which MacMichael added that "Dr. Magnes' 'bi-national state' contemplates something of this sort." [e.g. >463] Downie objected, though, that "The Royal Commission showed that any idea of a common Palestinian nationality was made impossible by the ideals of the Jewish National Home." (p 229) Downie was placing the blame on Zionism, not dividing it equally between both Arabs and Jews. As George Antonius put it in his brand new, 1938 book,

The solution proposed by the Royal Commission rests on the argument that, since Arabs and Jews have equal rights to the possession of Palestine, the country should be divided between them.²⁶⁸¹

The parity premise was essential for a Jewish state in part of Palestine and a crucial stage on the Zionists' road to a Jewish state in all of Palestine. But no Palestinian had ever agreed that, even if for the sake of argument the Jewish collective could be said to have rights in Palestine, these were on a par with those of the indigenous Arabs.²⁶⁸²

MacMichael replied to MacDonald's "cantonisation" idea: "Parity in the federal authority could only be in respect of advice. The power of decision would have to remain in British hands, by means of an official majority." (p 230) Downie countered: "This leaves the British authorities holding the scales – but holding them unevenly, because of the Balfour Declaration, which makes impossible in this case our normal role of protector of 'native' populations. It is therefore no solution of the real difficulty unless the Balfour Declaration is modified at the same time." As Bushe had just said, they were back to where they had been at the outbreak of the Revolt in spring 1936.

MacMichael evidently could not yet contemplate any power in Arab hands, and indeed a few minutes later asserted that "What has hitherto prejudiced cantonisation is the fear of Arab political power in the federal government. This can be eliminated by emphasising that British rule is to continue: in effect scaling Palestine down from an 'A' to a 'B' Mandate." After Shuckburgh doubted that there is "sufficient common civilisation to make cantonisation a practicable possibility in Palestine [and said (correctly) that] Switzerland is a misleading analogy", Bushe and Parkinson agreed that the best course would be not to downgrade the Palestine Mandate but rather that "The Balfour Declaration should be revised in the direction of stating either (a) that the National Home has now been established or (b) that there will never be a Jewish State." (p 232) Why Shuckburgh found the analogy with Switzerland "misleading" I don't know, but it does in fact mislead in two ways: 1) The Swiss cantons are not defined ethnically, religiously or even in terms of language. 2) Swiss 'cantonisation' was desired and instituted by the Swiss people themselves, not by a colonial power.²⁶⁸³

Planning for the Conference and discussion of these issues in order to prepare a Statement of Policy based on the Woodhead Commission Report – which had been read by MacDonald and others at the Colonial Office already on 18 October, before its publication on 9 November [p.376] – continued from 28 October through 17 November 1938.²⁶⁸⁴ Repression in Palestine, choosing who to invite to London, and the reactions of both Arabs and Jews were mixed together in most discussions. Regarding "security", MacDonald once

suggested to the High Commissioner that, in order to avoid prejudicing the chances of representatives from the Arab countries neighbouring on Palestine coming to the London dis-

²⁶⁸¹ Antonius 1938, p 402.

²⁶⁸² Antonius 1938, pp 390-95.

²⁶⁸³ See also Sinanoglou 2019, pp 46, 48.

²⁶⁸⁴ FO 371/21865.

cussions, it would be necessary that certain military measures which were now being taken in Palestine should be moderated. He referred in particular to action taken against civilians, as for example blowing up houses. The authorities in Palestine did not agree with this suggestion, and regarded steps now being taken as an essential part of our military action.²⁶⁸⁵

The sheer banality of it: “blowing up houses”.

High Commissioner MacMichael regarded the “larger key groups” to be included in the Palestinian delegation to London as “(a) Husseini (b) Nashashibi (c) Abd El Hadi [Abdul Hadi] (d) Khageyi Add (e) Tuqan and possibly (f) Panti”; advances should be made to “(1) Ragheb Bey (2) Awni Bey (3) Doctor Linsen Hussein Khalidi (4) Suleiman Tuqan (5) Musa El Lamai [sic.: Alami] (6) Shibly Jamal and (7) Yaqoub Farraj”; “Number five is well educated [Cambridge] and clever but not wholly trusted. Pro-Mufti.”²⁶⁸⁶ The Galilee, by the way, is not represented in this list. As for representation from the Arab States, the Cabinet Palestine Committee meeting of 14 November continued dealing with that simpler problem.²⁶⁸⁷

The Colonial Office under MacDonald, staffed by people such as Bushe, Downie and Parkinson, after trying its hardest and failing to find a workable three-state solution, was moving towards the Palestinians’ solution. Since MacDonald took office on 16 May 1938, there had been Jamal al-Husseini’s letter to him [>359], his talks with Tannous during the summer [>361; >364: >367], his trip to Palestine, and these fall discussions flavoured by Nuri es-Said’s efforts for a “cantons” solution. And now, for the first time, not only the Palestinians, but the surrounding Arab countries were being invited to London for talks and given status equal to that of the Jewish Agency and Zionist Organisation. [>377-78] Furthermore, ruled out now within the Colonial and Foreign Offices was not only the Jewish state on the territory proposed by the Peel Commission [>336] but, with firmness, a Jewish state anywhere in the territory of Palestine. [>377]

As for British motives, which are largely outside the scope of this book, it is often claimed that through MacDonald’s White Paper of 17 May 1939 [>410] HMG was courting Arab favour with an eye on support in the coming war. However, battle against Germany and/or Italy in North Africa and the Near East was not a foregone conclusion, and should Nazi Germany be the enemy, Jewish Zionist support was guaranteed despite the swing towards the Palestinians. There was moreover at least the suggestion, as this entry shows, that political rather than military means of quelling the Rebellion should be on the table. But I suggest there were also reasons for the 1939 policy shift having to do only with the relationship between Britain and the people it had ruled for two decades. It was becoming clear that the ethics and logic of the Mandate would allow no national Jewish state in part or all of Palestine, not even as a ‘canton’ or as part of some ‘bi-national’ scheme. I claim that the Britons now deciding ‘the future of Palestine’ were of better moral character than the previous lot.

²⁶⁸⁵ FO 371/21865, p 241.

²⁶⁸⁶ FO 371/21865, pp 272-73.

²⁶⁸⁷ FO 371/21865, pp 278-88.

Autumn 1938 ‘High Commissioner MacMichael reveals that about 6,000 Jewish police “are provided with rifles by [the British] government” – at least 350 of them “supernumeraries... paid by private concerns”²⁶⁸⁸

1938 600 Palestinians are killed by the end of 1938 by joint British-Yishuv military actions.²⁶⁸⁹

1936-39 ‘[B]y the time the uprising ended over 5,000 Palestinians were dead and thousands more injured (per capita these casualties were higher than the intifadas of 1987 and 2000).²⁶⁹⁰

²⁶⁸⁸ Cronin 2017, pp 53, 56; Kanafani 1972, pp 48-49, 51.

²⁶⁸⁹ See PASSIA, <http://www.passia.org/maps/view/9>

²⁶⁹⁰ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 85.

374. Cairo Inter-Parliamentary Congress

7-11 October 1938

Britain's repression of the *intifada* that had begun in April 1936 increased anti-Zionist and also anti-Jewish sentiment in surrounding countries. The Palestinian *Al-Markaziyyah Lil-Jihad* (Central Committee of Holy War) operated with allies in Beirut, Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo²⁶⁹¹ and began in summer 1938 with the formation of a "parliamentary committee", issuing in October 1938 a statement containing the usual independence demands called the "Palestinian National Charter", signed in Cairo by 170 people. **The Inter-Parliamentary Congress** held 7 to 11 October 1938 included parliamentarians and others from India, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen, Yugoslavia, the Maghreb, China, and the Americas, as well as Palestinians Awni Abdul Hadi, Jamal al-Husseini and Alfred Rok. The Congress, attended by around 2,500 delegates, only sixty of whom were elected members of a parliament²⁶⁹², issued a Resolution and planned the pan-Arab delegation which, on the Colonial Office's invitation, went later in October to London to argue the anti-Zionist, anti-partition cause.²⁶⁹³

The Cairo Congress Resolution²⁶⁹⁴ recalled McMahon's promises [>10], those of Wilson on 8 January 1918 [>20] and the Anglo-French Declaration in 1918 [>28], and declared the Balfour Declaration "null and void" mainly because it "was made by a party or parties having no right to make it." "Jewish Immigration" since the War was a "calamity" and "*ultra vires*" but

this Congress... recommends that the people of Palestine should make a sacrifice by agreeing to accept in their midst the Jews who are already in Palestine. This must be, however, on the condition that further Zionist Immigration is definitely prohibited. ... [A] population of over 400,000 Jews [is] a fulfilment of the 'favourable view' of the British Government towards the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home. ... The partition of Palestine is not less dangerous than Jewish immigration... [It] would deprive [the Arabs] of their land [and] an outlet to the sea. [see also >364]

Accepting several hundred thousand Jewish individuals as citizens had become a firm part of the program, and the argument was brought once again that Britain was now off the Balfour-Declaration hook, having now actually "established... a Jewish national home" as it had promised to do.

The consensus case for Palestinian self-rule, and therefore against partition and immigration, was encapsulated in a report, in Arabic, by one H. Hindle James of his meeting on 11 October 1938, in Cairo, with the President of the Iraq Chamber of Deputies, Maulud

²⁶⁹¹ See Parsons 2016, pp 111-38.

²⁶⁹² Lesch 1979, p 150, citing CO 733/359/75021, dispatch from HC MacMichael, 3 November 1938.

²⁶⁹³ Barbour 1946, p 197; Furlonge 1969, pp 118-21; Porath 1977, pp 276-77, citing *Khutab Haflat al-Iftitah al-Kubra* and Ettore Rossi, 'Il Congresso Interparlamentare Arabo e Musulmano Pro Palestina al Cairo', *Oriente Moderno*, November 1938, pp 587-601 and *al-Ahram*, 18 October 1938; Ayyad 1999, p 171.

²⁶⁹⁴ CO 733/369/7.

Makhlas Pasha.²⁶⁹⁵ Maulud Pasha expressed the non-negotiability of partition – that otherwise, despite Arab friendship towards the British, there would be a fight – and proposed treating Palestine as Iraq had been and was being treated; he then asked the British to imagine how they would feel and what they would do

if a foreign race were to be imposed upon you. I cannot understand, he continued, how the British public who are lovers of justice themselves can fail to be indignant at the injustice which their Government is forcing upon a friendly race who fought as their friends at a time of crisis in the Great War. We have no hatred of the Jews as such; we feel that the BALFOUR Declaration was a mistake leading to injustice both for Jews and Arabs, which can never be remedied until that mistake is admitted. For this reason, we bear no ill-will to the Jews who are now in PALESTINE, nor to Jews of moderate opinion, but every Arab in PALESTINE and many Moslems in neighbouring countries are willing to die rather than to allow PALESTINE to become an entirely Jewish country under conditions which are driving all Moslem inhabitants from their homes. (pp 53-54)

Several Foreign Officers in the Near East were a bit later eager to rein in such “peripatetic outsiders” as Hindle James, whose intelligence activities, it was advised, should be restricted to Egypt.²⁶⁹⁶ Tannous, operating the Arab Centre in London, had great difficulty getting any reports of the Cairo conference into the British press – just as his friend J.M.N. Jeffries had at that time great trouble finding a publisher for his book *Palestine: The Reality*.²⁶⁹⁷

This Congress was in fact if not in intent preparation for the 1939 St James conference which many of them would attend and which gave birth to the MacDonald White Paper.²⁶⁹⁸ Its Executive Committee consisted of Egyptians Muhammed Ali Allouba, Tewfik Doss, Abdel Hamid Said [see also >346] and Hamed El Bassel, Iraqi Mawloud Moukhless, Syrian Fares Al Khoury [see also >4; >450; >450; >459; >476; >484], Lebanese Goubran Toueini, and Indian Abdel Rahman Saddiki.²⁶⁹⁹ At that time the elite Palestinian leadership was mostly in exile in the Seychelles, and Hajj Amin al-Husseini had fled to al-Dhauq, Lebanon.

Also in Cairo in mid-October, Arab women once again convened to support the Palestinian cause; hosted by “Egyptian feminist Huda al-Sha’arawi” [also >489], they included “Wahida and Samiha al-Khalidi and Fatma and Zahiye al-Nashashibi [who] joined Salina and Su’ad (the wife of Fahmi al-Husayni). ... The heroine of the occasion was Mamina, the widow of Sheikh al-Qassam.”²⁷⁰⁰

15-18 October 1938 *The Arab Women’s Congress in Cairo on the Question of Palestine is attended by women from all over Palestine.*

²⁶⁹⁵ FO 371/21865, pp 49-58.

²⁶⁹⁶ FO 371/21865, 16-page enclosure at p 144.

²⁶⁹⁷ Tannous 1988, pp 254-55.

²⁶⁹⁸ Lesch 1973, p 24.

²⁶⁹⁹ CO 733/369/7, items 72 and 42 or 43.

²⁷⁰⁰ Pappe 2002/2010, p 293.

18 October 1938 British military commanders take over administrative control from district commissioners throughout the country to increase pressure on the Palestinian rebellion; new reinforcements are brought in from England.

375. Abdul Aziz to MacDonald

Oct. 1938-Jan. 1939

Indian Moslems wanted to be represented at the St James talks, but were refused. Abdul Aziz, predecessor of Muhammad Ali Jinnah as president of the All-India Moslem League and friend of Malcolm MacDonald's father Ramsay, offered his services in "re-establishing cordial relations [between] the Arabs and Great Britain – based on his good connections with the Mufti, his nephew Awni Aziz Daoodi and others in Palestine – in settling the Palestine problem." A.B. Siddiqi and Chaudhri Khaliqzaman, Indian Moslems living in England, offered to entertain Abdul Aziz should he come to London. Shuckburgh, for his part, in a confidential note of 27 October 1938, regarded Abdul Aziz's self-view that he could be of service as a "conceit... for no very obvious reason." Go-between G.R. Stirling Taylor, on the other hand, on 15 October had given more credence to this person, who objectively could be regarded as seeking a role analogous to many Jewish Zionists from the United States, for instance, who were awarded hearings by the British Colonial Office.²⁷⁰¹

November 1938 Haj Amin Al-Husseini establishes the Central Committee of the National Jihad and the Council of Rebellion in Damascus.

²⁷⁰¹ CO 733/372/15, pp 10-11, 34-36.

Exactly 20 years after the Britain–France (‘Anglo–French’) Declaration promising full independence for Palestine [>28], HMG delivered the Report of the Palestine Partition Commission (also called the ‘Woodhead’ or ‘Technical’ or ‘Boundary’ Commission) consisting of Sir John Woodhead (Chairman), Alison Russell, A.P. Waterfield, Thomas Reid, and S.E.V. Luke (Secretary).²⁷⁰² Its officially a-political remit, issued on 4 January 1938, had been to suggest “modifications” of the Royal (Peel) Commission’s partition plans that would “afford a reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment, with adequate security, of self-supporting Arab and Jewish states” and necessitating “the inclusion of the fewest possible Arabs and Arab enterprises in the Jewish area and vice versa...” (Preface §1b) As we saw, Foreign Minister Eden when speaking to the Cabinet while setting up the Commission in December 1937 had said the Commission could also reject all partition schemes [>353], but in the end it sat on the fence, sort of rejecting them all but saying their own Plan C, which was quite different from Peel’s plan, was not as bad as the others. (XXII §507) A Colonial Office summary of the Report noted accurately that “The Commission practically say that partition is neither equitable nor practicable, but that if a scheme must be evolved, then what they call plan C is the best.”²⁷⁰³

Its preferred Plan C gave less area to the Jewish State mainly by keeping the entire North, which was majority Palestinian – above a line roughly between Tantura and Beisan – as British–Mandate territory (not Arab territory), because:

If a plan of partition is approved which brings under the political domination of the Jews large numbers of Arabs in an area where the Jews are not already in a substantial majority, the introduction of such a plan will be resisted by the Arabs with all the force at their command, in other words, by open rebellion, and will only be carried out if the resistance is suppressed by superior force. (XI §213)

Only in apparent contradiction to HMG’s Statement of Policy issued a few weeks later, in November²⁷⁰⁴ [>377], it then stated:

But although we are satisfied of the existence of this widespread antagonism to partition, we do not consider it to be of such a nature as to oblige us to report that no plan of partition can be regarded as practicable. (XI §214)

In sum:

We conclude that, apart from the question whether plan C, which is the best plan that the majority of us have been able to devise, will be accepted by those concerned, the financial and economic objections to that plan, without a customs union between the three areas, are so serious that we could not recommend it. If... we were to confine ourselves strictly to our

²⁷⁰² Woodhead 1938, all citations.

²⁷⁰³ FO 371/21864, p 255, Baggallay, 19 October 1938.

²⁷⁰⁴ Cmd. 5893, §2–4.

terms of reference, we would have no choice but to report that we have been unable to recommend boundaries which will afford a reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment of self-supporting Arab and Jewish states. (I §19; XXII §505)

One can hope the Palestinians did not waste much time reading this report, for after meticulous analysis it bore only weasel words: It was not the case that no plan was “practicable”, because its Plan C would work, albeit at the cost of violent fighting, but then maybe the states couldn’t pay their way. The important thing is that simultaneously with the Report’s publication HMG took a clear decision against partition.²⁷⁰⁵

Both the Zionist Jews and the Palestinians had rejected Peel’s specific partition scheme, the latter even refusing to meet with the Woodhead Commission during its stay in Palestine and Transjordan between 21 April and 3 August 1938, and making no written testimony; according to Akram Zuaytir, at the time active in the resistance, the Palestinians stood on principle: “No parts of the Arab Homeland will be bargained away; let those wishing to make grants to others, do so out of their own property.”²⁷⁰⁶ Not only was there a long tradition of boycotting British Commissions in order to avoid the appearance of accepting Britain’s right to install such Commissions, but its leaders and organisations were at that time exiled or had fled to avoid exile or worse, and according to eyewitness Abcarius,

Even if there had been someone who could have appeared before the Commission for the Arabs, his refraining from doing so would have been in keeping with the memorandum the Arabs had submitted to the Permanent Mandates Commission [p.343; p.360]. The [Woodhead] Commission was charged with the duty of evolving a workable scheme for partition, and the Arabs had unequivocally rejected partition as a solution to the Palestine problem. They could not give any evidence before the Commission without appearing to take part in formulating a scheme for partition which they had declared to be unacceptable. The Arabs might have given evidence, consistently with the attitude they had taken, if they had appeared before the Committee [Woodhead Commission] with a view to demonstrating factually and orally the bases on which their rejection of partition rested. But that would have been outside the Commission’s terms of reference and therefore irrelevant to the inquiry.²⁷⁰⁷

Their only other option would have been to testify, but only in order to discuss only the narrow terms of reference themselves.

The Report confirmed: “More than a year has now elapsed since the Royal Commission’s Report was published, but the Arabs remain inflexibly hostile to partition. During our stay in Palestine, no Arab came forward to submit evidence or to co-operate in any way with us: the boycott was complete.” (II §25) Recall that Izzat Tannous had in July 1938 explained in person to both Cosmo Parkinson and Parkinson’s boss Malcolm MacDonald that the Palestinians rejected partition absolutely and that independence in all of Palestine was non-negotiable. [p.364]

²⁷⁰⁵ Cmd. 5893, §4.

²⁷⁰⁶ Zuaytir 1958, p 110.

²⁷⁰⁷ Abcarius 1946, pp 197-98.

Perhaps due to the absence of Arab witnesses, the Commission merely re-stated the Palestinian position against any partition and for immediate complete independence as stated in the Arab Higher Committee's submission to the Permanent Mandates Commission in July 1937 and on 7 June 1938 [^{>343}; ^{>360}]. (II §25) The position of "the Jews", on the other hand, was given by quoting the much longer 8-point resolution of the 20th World Zionist Congress held in Zürich in August 1937. (II §27)

Completing its account of the "Political Background", the Commissioners also listed the numbers of killed and wounded during the first 7 months of 1938 – "not includ[ing] the casualties suffered by armed Arab bands [i.e. neither 'police' nor 'civilians'] in encounters with military and police forces" but including those suffered by armed British 'bands':

- British: killed – 4 police, 9 military, 1 civilian; wounded – 10 police, 38 military, 1 civilian
- Arab: killed – 23 police, 190 civilians; wounded – 33 police, 338 civilians
- Jewish: killed – 21 police, 68 civilians; wounded – 33 police, 275 civilians

Whether these statistics are relevant to either the political background or its remit is open to question, but Arab casualties appear to be here under-counted.²⁷⁰⁸

A majority of the Report's 248 pages dealt with boundaries and political geography (land quality, topography, population density, water, etc.), accompanied by no fewer than 12 fascinating maps and 3 resulting plans – A (Peel), B (Peel modified), and C ("the best which the majority of us have been able to devise") (I §19; XI §209; XXII §484). On behalf of the Palestine Government, Douglas Harris was in charge of providing the Commission with a wealth of detail, including computations of the lot viable in the Hebron Sub-District, for instance, for various types of cultivation.²⁷⁰⁹

Because its remit did call for study of "the possibility of voluntary exchanges of land and population" (Preface §1(ii) i), Chapter VIII (§104-152) took on the topic of exchanges and transfer of population because "while the Jewish minority in the Arab State is small, the Arab minority in the Jewish State is large." (VIII §105; also Preface §5; XIV §300) It thus devoted the rest of the chapter to the technical possibility of moving Arabs out voluntarily, footnoting the word "voluntarily" thus:

In the despatch dated the 23rd December, 1937, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for Palestine (published in Cmd. 5634 [^{>353}]) it was announced that His Majesty's Government have not accepted the Royal Commission's proposal for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area²⁷¹⁰. On behalf of the Jews it was also made clear to us that Jewish opinion would be opposed to the exercise of any degree of compulsion. (VIII §104; also X §178, XXII §488, Russell reservations §16g)

However one cut up the pie, any conceivable Jewish state would have a huge Arab minority, while the reverse was not true.

²⁷⁰⁸ See PASSIA, <http://www.passia.org/maps/view/9>

²⁷⁰⁹ Sinanoglou 2019, p 154; El-Eini 2006, p 350.

²⁷¹⁰ Cf. Peel 1937, XXII §43, 42, ^{>336}.

Still within the mindset that had spawned the British desire to bestow “tutelage” on the Palestinians, the Woodhead Report

- attested “a genuine feeling among the Arab population of hostility to partition”, not just rabble-rousing by the *effendi* (XI §212, 213);
- supported the “voluntary transfer [sic.] of Arabs from the Jewish state”; (XI §235);
- regarded “the prospects of such transfer of population [to be] remote”, although the Jewish Zionists are ready to foot the bill (XIII §282; XXII §488);
- swept aside the opposition of the Bedouin “backward tribes” (XIII §262);
- interpreted the “rights and position” of non-Jews only economically (XIV §292);
- held to be “irreconcilable” the objectives of the Permanent Mandates Commission to 1) “deprive the Arabs of as small a number as possible of the places to which they attach particular value” and 2) secure for the Jews “areas [that are] sufficiently extensive, fertile and well-situated” (XXII §483 (ii), §485); and
- was magnanimous after accepting the principle of robbing a large part of Palestine from the Palestinians: “[I]n drawing the boundaries we have thought it right to give priority to political considerations, and that it is better that the Jews should suffer certain financial and economic restrictions than that large numbers of Arabs should be subjected to alien domination in a Jewish State” (XIX §434).

The Commission affirmed what everybody knew since the Palin report [88], namely that the Zionist program could only be carried out by war, i.e. by “superior force” putting down “open rebellion”. (XI §212, 213; XII §486) And in considering the truncated Zionist program of statehood on only part of the territory, it recommended several protections of the Arab minority in the Jewish state, for instance representation in electoral bodies in proportion to their numbers, a guaranteed place for the Arabic language, and even the outlawing of the Jewish National Fund’s contracts forbidding the hiring of Arab labour or sale of land to Arabs (XVI §324, 328-29, 331). That is, the Commission regarded as perfectly acceptable normal democratic rules within the Jewish state, but funnily enough, implicitly, not within Palestine as a whole. One also wonders what would be ‘Jewish’ about the Jewish state and what would be ‘Arab’ about the Arab state were members of non-Jewish, resp. Jewish minorities offered full rights and protection. This same particular contradiction would plague the UN Special Committee on Palestine’s Majority Plan of 3 September 1947 as well as the UN General Assembly partition resolution #181 of 29 November 1947. [468; 481]

The Report’s penultimate paragraph is not without other-worldly pathos:

Whether economic federalism will lead ultimately to political federation we cannot venture to prophesy; but that it should do so would not be altogether surprising; and we think that meanwhile both Jews and Arabs may be disposed, after the weary and bitter struggle of the past year, to look with some favour on a plan which provides that in one respect at least, if only in the form of a customs union and a common system of communications, Palestine shall still remain whole and undivided. (XXII §508)

It then expressed the “hope” that its Plan C, which UN General Assembly Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947 would resemble, “may form the basis of a settlement by negotia-

tion” (negotiations, presumably, between Arabs and Jews). (XXII §509) This is a good example of simply not listening to the people they ruled, both camps having loudly and repeatedly rejected partition.

The 13 pages of ‘Reservations’ by Commissioner Alison Russell (pp 249-62) argued that the modified Peel plan (Plan B) was better than Plan C because it more firmly established a Jewish State. He began by arguing that the Jews had helped the British win World War I much more than had the Arabs, and that, quoting the 1922 Churchill White Paper [p142], they were in Palestine “as of right and not on sufferance”. Relying on quotations from the Peel Report,²⁷¹¹ Russell then argued that the Arabs in fact had an unpaid debt to the Jews because thanks to the Jews’ “support for the Allies” the Arabs got their “emancipation from Turkish rule.” Arab thanks, that is, should go ultimately to the Balfour Declaration itself with which Britain acquired that Jewish support. (§7, 8)

It followed, so Russell, that it was unjust for Plan C “to cut out three-fourths of the Jewish State” as it was drawn on Peel’s partition map (§11, 16c); he later instead said that it was “one-third” that would be “cut out” (§15). To the objection to his preferred Plan B that there was in the northern part of its proposed Jewish State a “preponderance of Arabs over Jews” he argued that “We are informed, however, that the Jews are ready and waiting to bring in very great numbers of immigrants into these areas.” (§16b) Further, the Jews had done “startling” things: “Jerusalem developed; Haifa developed; Tel Aviv created on a piece of sand...; the maritime plain ‘now turned into a rich province’...; Esdraelon,... marshy and malarious, now drained...; hillsides cleared of rocks and planted with vines, and the uncultivable hilltops planted with trees.” (§16f)

Compulsory transfer was not right, of course, but

the effect of offering Arabs high prices for their land would be that they would take the money and would emigrate and buy land in Trans-Jordan,... It does not appear to me that to permit an Arab to sell his land for three or four times its value, and to go with the money to a different part of the Arab world where land is cheap, can be said to ‘prejudice’ his rights and position within the meaning of Article 6 of the Mandate for Palestine. (§16g)

Any non-material feelings or values “an Arab” might have towards his or her place of birth were either invisible to Russell or irrelevant. He was however perhaps, unfortunately, correct that such a method was consistent with Article 6.

Russell then employed the argument seen occasionally in our documents that the worst thing for tranquility was uncertainty: therefore, it was better to tell the Arab “with maximum certainty... under what form of Government [he] will live” than to give him hope in, say, a still-mandated area with vague rules for the future. (§16g) As regards Haifa, it belonged in Jewish hands, partly to protect the Jewish “labourers of that town” from the “unlimited supplies of cheap [Arab] labour” that could come in under Plan C; and by the way, “From a military point of view it is necessary that Acre should be in the same hands as Haifa...” (§17)

As to some “financial and budgetary prospects”,

²⁷¹¹ Peel 1937, II §11-12, 19.

there is no sufficient reason why the Arabs of Palestine should be considered as entitled as of right to that high cost of social services which they have enjoyed as a result of Jewish immigration and which has resulted in such rapidly increasing Arab population. It seems to me that the Arab State might reasonably be satisfied with the standards of Trans-Jordan and the neighbouring Arab States. (§19)

Arabs did not deserve the same material living standards as Jews.

Russell warned of civil war if the Jews were thwarted:

[D]uring the troubles the Jews have behaved themselves extraordinarily well;... It is clear that the restraint shown by the Jews is due to no fear of the Arabs. I was impressed with the manly bearing of the youthful Jews, though some shewed traces of an arrogance 'which seemed to suggest that they felt themselves to be members of a superior race destined before long to be masters of the country.' ... They are the modern and progressive part of the population [and] if they feel that the pledges which have been given definitely to them are to be torn up, they would resent any provocation from the Arabs and might take the law into their own hands,... (§20)

"Finally,... I regret that Plan B can only offer to the Jewish State an area so small (considerably smaller than the county of Norfolk) and so inconvenient..." (§21)

Commission member Thomas Reid, on the opposite end of the spectrum of opinion than Russell, in his "note of reservations" (pp 263-81) wrote that even under Plan C 70% of the land in the Jewish State would be Arab-owned and 20% of the people would be Arabs. (§1)

We have devised and tested several plans of partition on communal lines and I cannot envisage any scheme which would not be even more defective and lead to stranger results than that set out in plan C, whatever formulae were laid down in our terms of reference. (§2)

He said that neither side consented to any of the partition plans, but mentioned the Arab numerical 2/3 majority only in passing. (§4-5) He adduced the testimony of seven or eight British witnesses to conclude that partition could be bought only at the price of constant and stark repression and inter-communal strife. (§6-13) As well,

One [Arab] witness stated to us early this summer, 'When partition goes through you will have to have a barbed wire right round it... with pill boxes every half kilometre... Hostility in our lifetime there will be.' This witness also said that the Arabs would not submit to Jewish rule. (§7)

Coming to the criterion of "equity",

One responsible witness said that it was not a reasonable proposition to cut out the Maritime Plain and set up a Jewish State there regardless of the fact that the majority of the people in Palestine are Arabs, and that it was not fair to set up a small non-Arab State against the will of the population of the whole of Palestine. Another said that to force Jewish rule on

Arabs in the Jewish State 'is immoral.' From a respected Jewish source a memorandum came to us stating that sovereignty in a Jewish State 'could not, unhappily, be said to be derived from the consent of the governed'. (§18-19; also 22, 39)²⁷¹²

Akram Zuaytir later praised Reid's position that HMG had fulfilled its promise to the Zionists and anyway, Britain had no right to act as a "guardian" for Palestine, much less to partition it.²⁷¹³

Over 40% of the large Arab citrus-growing areas would be in the Jewish State, said Reid. (§21) To the east of the maritime plain, moreover,

It was necessary to give a defensive boundary on the hills for the railway and for the proposed Jewish State. For this and other reasons the eastern frontier was pushed inland away from the coast where the Jews have settled, with the result that villages entirely owned by Arabs would be included in the Jewish State. The Arabs in the Jewish State will almost certainly not be an assenting contented minority, and one can imagine the political, social and economic results of partition for them. On the other hand, one can foresee the disastrous strife in store for the Jews, whether they finally subdue their Arab subjects and neighbours or not. (§25, 28)

The "independence" the Arabs aspire to would moreover be capable of allaying their "economic fears" and "the fear of the economic and political domination of the Jews". (§30)

The Jews are steadily purchasing, with funds donated gratis by world Jewry, the land of Arabs, even at the present time when an Arab risks assassination if he sells his land to Jews. We are authoritatively informed that in future such land will generally be paid for from Jewish national funds. Arabs know from experience that land so purchased becomes Jewish for all time, that it cannot be leased to any non-Jewish tenants, and that a clause in the leases forbids the employment of non-Jewish labour on such land. (§31) [see >233; >234]

Reid was asserting that with "independence" this "system of economic penetration" (§32) could be stopped.

Concerning budgets, "a solvent independent Jewish State could be set up at once. That would be an irrevocable act unless, owing to conquest of that state, or the consent of its Government, it ceased to exist." But the remaining Mandated areas and the Arab State would depend on subsidies from the British taxpayer. (§41-43) He throughout attested high political knowledge and concern amongst the Arabs, revealing not a trace of anti-Arab racism. In closing, "It may be said that one cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs, but it would not be easy to discover an omelet in any possible scheme of partition" – including the best of the bad plans, Plan C. (§62) Labour MP Reid would argue in Commons debates in 1946 [^{>443}] and 1947 [^{>481}] for what here is only implicit, i.e. the default solution if no partition scheme was "equitable and practicable" (§2, 4, 44, 46, 62-63), namely a democratic state in all of Palestine – as demanded by the Palestinians throughout the Mandate.

²⁷¹² Also Khalidi 1971, Ch. 43.

²⁷¹³ Zuaytir 1958, 118.

late 1938 ‘Two officers came and spoke with Saleh Salim, one of [the rebel] leaders. They said: “Listen Mr Saleh, Britain is about to go to war with Germany. We don’t want you annoying us as well. If one single shot is fired from this village, the whole village goes down.”^{m2714}

16 November 1938 ‘[The word “Englishism”] is taken from a notice, which read: “Ask the remnants of IRTAH – the last village abolished; there you find the last witness against the Englishism. A poor innocent father with his two children were killed inside their peaceful house.”^{m2715} [also >370]

November 1938 ‘In [this] period, cooperation between the Army and the Jewish authorities in fighting the Arab bands reached its peak [including] the Special Night Squads under the command of Captain Charles Orde Wingate and manned by Haganah members....ⁱ²⁷¹⁶

1938 ‘The military courts tried 526 persons during the year (454 Arabs and 72 Jews); 55 death sentences (all Arabs) were confirmed by the General Officer Commanding. The number of persons kept in detention was 5,933 of whom 254 were Jews, the remainder being Arabs.ⁱ²⁷¹⁷

²⁷¹⁴ Ghandour 2010, p 114.

²⁷¹⁵ CO 733/372/4, p 6; Ghandour 2010, p 122, ‘Rebel Propaganda’, 16 Nov. 1938.

²⁷¹⁶ Porath 1977, p 241.

²⁷¹⁷ Shaw 1946, p 49; also Mattar 1988, 91.

377. HMG Statement of Policy

November 1938

Based on the Palestine Partition (Woodhead) Commission Report [→376] **the British Government issued a Statement of Policy** written by Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald giving up on partition.²⁷¹⁸ That Commission had examined various partition schemes so that

it could be decided whether such a solution would prove practicable. ... [T]he four Commissioners advise unanimously against the adoption of the scheme of partition outlined by the Royal [Peel] Commission [→336]. ... Their conclusion is that... they are unable to recommend boundaries for the proposed areas which will afford a reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment of self-supporting Arab and Jewish States. (§2, 3)

After first citing only budgetary and customs-union difficulties, this HMG Statement does in the end include undefined “political” factors:

His Majesty’s Government, after careful study of the Partition Commission’s report, have reached the conclusion that this further examination has shown that the political, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the proposal to create independent Arab and Jewish States inside Palestine are so great that this solution of the problem is impracticable. (§4)

There is no mention of the *fairness* of the Arab and Jewish state-aspirations, much less of HMG’s finally taking sides or at least taking responsibility, but rather another call to get along with one another:

It is clear that the surest foundation for peace and progress in Palestine would be an understanding between the Arabs and the Jews, and His Majesty’s Government are prepared in the first instance to make a determined effort to promote such an understanding. [Namely,] they propose immediately to invite representatives of the Palestinian Arabs and of neighbouring States on the one hand and of the Jewish Agency on the other, to confer with them in London regarding future policy, including the question of immigration into Palestine. (§5)²⁷¹⁹

If only the foxes and chickens would get along! The two sides were here moreover reduced to ethnic, rather than political, categories, even if the category “Palestinian Arabs” acknowledged a territorial nationhood. While a further round of talks, rather than a solution, might seem anticlimactic, it should not obscure the changes in attitude within HMG towards the Palestinian and Arab side, which was now approaching equal footing with the Jewish-Zionist side.

A caveat was added:

²⁷¹⁸ Cmd. 5893, all citations; also FO 371/21865, pp 167-94.

²⁷¹⁹ Also Kayyali 1978, p 217, citing CO 733/398, High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 2 November 1938; Ayyad 1999, p 174.

As regards the representation of the Palestinian Arabs, His Majesty's Government must reserve the right to refuse to receive those leaders whom they regard as responsible for the campaign of assassination and violence. (§5)²⁷²⁰

No matter that on this criterion no Briton would be eligible to take part. But the Palestinians were forgiving: All of the thus "refused" leaders, including for example Hajj Amin al-Husseini, were themselves at this time willing to "receive" the British who were responsible for two decades of "assassination and violence" and which the British admitted time and time again to be violent "repression"²⁷²¹. For its part, the Arab Higher Committee on 15 November issued a pamphlet reacting positively to the British decision against partition and for a new, all-encompassing conference in London, and the possibility of a political solution in the near future.²⁷²² They had boycotted talks with the Peel Commission in the fall of 1937 [³¹⁹] and with the Woodhead Commission in spring and summer of 1938 [³⁷⁶], and they would later boycott talks with Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's people in September 1946 [⁴⁴⁴], but now, to my knowledge, there was no inclination to boycott.

²⁷²⁰ Also Shaw 1946, p 47.

²⁷²¹ E.g. Peel 1937, use Search function.

²⁷²² Ayyad 1999, p 174.

Defending the Statement of Policy²⁷²³ [→377] in the House of Commons on 24 November 1938, Colonial Secretary **Malcolm MacDonald** gave a coherent narrative that struck a range of well-known chords as well as the new chord of Nazi anti-semitism:²⁷²⁴

There are two protagonists in the piece. First of all there are the Jews. Nearly 2,000 years ago their home was Palestine, but since then they have been dispersed, scattered over the face of the earth. They are a country-less people. ... I must utter this word of warning. When we promised to facilitate the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine, we never anticipated this fierce persecution in Europe. ... The problem of the refugees in Central Europe cannot be settled in Palestine. It has to be settled over a far wider field than that. ... The second people who are involved in this bitter controversy in Palestine are the Arabs. They have lived in the country for many centuries. They were not consulted when the Balfour Declaration was made, nor when the Mandate was framed, and during the post-War years they have watched with occasional angry protests this peaceful [sic.] invasion by an alien people. ... They have been compelled to recognise the superior energy and skill and wealth of that wonderful people. ... If I were an Arab I would be alarmed. ... Those who conceived 20 years ago the possibility of facilitating the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine were moved by a great idea, and already in these first 20 years that idea has been translated into a wonderful act of creation. But I do sometimes wonder whether all of the authors of this great creative act were fully informed of the situation even at that time, in 1917, 1918 and 1919. I sometimes wonder whether they knew then that there were already living between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea more than 600,000 Arabs. ... They can deny it as much as they like, but materially the Arabs in Palestine have gained very greatly from the Balfour Declaration. I know that it is useless to press that argument on the Arabs... because they are thinking of something else. They are thinking of their freedom. ... I say that we British people ought to be the last people in the world not to understand the feelings of the Arabs in this matter, because we too would sacrifice material advantages if we thought our freedom was at stake. ... How to fulfil Britain's commitments to both sides is the riddle for which we have to find an answer. (cc1988-93)²⁷²⁵

I find the argument from introspection and empathy praiseworthy. However: The Jews were “first of all”, the Arabs “the second people” – the template for Western eyes looking at Palestine for a century and more. Non-consultation makes its appearance as does the oxymoron “peaceful invasion”. The Jews are “superior” to the Arabs in “energy, skill and wealth”. The Zionism idea is “great” and what it created “wonderful”. Conceivable for MacDonald is the absurd idea that the enablers of Zionism did not “know” that the “second people” were already living there – that Palestine was already ‘married to another man’ (see Karmi 2007). MacDonald had at least realised that the materialist British had

²⁷²³ Cmd. 5893.

²⁷²⁴ Hansard 1938, all citations; also Barbour 1946, p 199.

²⁷²⁵ Also Zuaytir 1958, pp 120-21.

usually been talking past, not to, the freedom-seeking Palestinians. Yet, the 'dual obligations' are not essentially incompatible. So far so familiar. But the 'music' was different: Malcolm MacDonald and Grattan Bushe were better people than Churchill, Samuel, Shuckburgh, Amery, Cavendish, Webb, Ormsby-Gore, and Malcolm's father. And: twenty years of Palestinian argumentation and agitation were paying off.

MacDonald then informed the House:

But that state of affairs also kills the proposal for the dividing up of Palestine into two sovereign States, and His Majesty's Government lost no time in accepting the position. A part of Palestine is not to be handed over to control by the Jews, another part is not to be handed over to control by the Arabs; the Government have declared that they will continue their responsibility for the Government of the whole country. (c1994) [^{>376-77}]

Then after some vaguenesses about mutual understanding and compromise he announced: "So the Government have proposed that discussions should take place in London."

Speaking for anybody who might find this climax anticlimactic, after 20 years of "discussions", Herbert Morrison took the floor immediately to ridicule MacDonald: "What has he said?" (c1997) (Nothing.) In fact, MacDonald had at least shown he had fully grasped the Palestinians' view in removing the smokescreen of purported economic prosperity and had said that if the colonial power failed in its role as discussion-facilitator it will "itself take full responsibility... for formulating and declaring future policy." (c1996) At least the planned talks meant that, on 7 December 1938, HMG "announced that in order to facilitate the nomination of the Arab delegates from Palestine at the London Conference, the deported Arab leaders would be released from the Seychelles Islands."²⁷²⁶ (Imagine, after over a year on the Equator, barred from interacting with all but fellow-prisoners, being expedited more or less directly to London in winter.)

Churchill weighed in:

There is tragedy [sic.] in Palestine. Blood is shed, murders are committed, executions are carried out, terror and counter-terror have supervened in the relationship between the Jews and the Arabs, both of whom have a right to dwell in the land which the Lord hath given them. ... But where does the blame lie? ... It is the fault, very grievous in persons of high station - it is a fault which amounts to a crime - of not being able to make up their minds. ... It is the vice of infirmity of purpose, and following from that, an impotence of positive decision. They are suffering from 'a decrepitude of the will power'... (cc2030-31)

He meant British persons high in the British Government of which he was then not a part. "Firmness" and "potency" were lacking. Churchill, who in 18 months would become Prime Minister, was implying that *any* decisive and certain course was better than indecisiveness! The thing was will power, towards whatever goal. (By these standards, of course, Churchill's future opponent Hitler was a perfect role model.) Which course he would potently decide was already widely known: that toward a sovereign Jewish state of some size. [^{see >326}] And when MacDonald and HMG exercised the virtue of firmness six

²⁷²⁶ Zuaytir 1958, p 121.

months later, with their White Paper's clear decision to establish a single-state-democracy [c240], Churchill firmly decided that although HMG had indeed firmly made up its mind, he without others' decrepitude resolved to change HMG's mind again, back to support for partition and half a loaf for Zionism. [see c245; c248; c254]

Churchill then joined in the general ridicule of holding still another conference and, evidently having missed MacDonald's point that the Palestinians were after "freedom", claimed that twenty Mandate years had brought economic prosperity to Palestine. (c2034-35, 2038) Again, HMG should show strength:

[Is] British administration in Oriental lands is no longer capable of facing a storm? Is our gift in the Orient capable of being exercised only when the waters are smooth? We ought to rouse ourselves, because much more than the fate of Palestine is at stake. Our capacity for Imperial government all over the world is impugned. (c2036)

Was this unbalanced statesman really saying his England was a "gift" to "the Orient"?

He then proposed a "positive plan... based on the principle of perseverance": 30,000-35,000 Jewish immigrants per year for ten years. But:

It will be said, 'Suppose the Arabs do not agree.' In that case,... I think we should feel that we have made them a reasonable offer [and] consider our special obligations to them discharged.

"Persevering" with British troops, however, would be far too expensive and disruptive of "our military system", so:

If we have not the good will and agreement of the Arabs on this 10 year plan, we must look to other means in that country to discharge our policy, and this can only be found, if the Arabs will not hearken to our counsels and will not accept any offer, in the strong armament of the Jewish population and the main reliance of the British administration in Palestine upon Jewish military strength.

A bloody civil war and expulsion there must be. And the Jews were strong enough. (c2039) The phrase "hearken to our counsels" is particularly delicious.

Finally, recalling the all-important worry of the Cabinet in 1923, when Cavendish was Colonial Secretary [c159; c165; c167], over Britain's loss of face before 'the world' were it to decline the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, Churchill closed by saying, "We have taken before all the world the responsibility for guiding this historic country of Palestine and all the world is watching how we discharge our duty." (c2040) The idea that Palestine neither wanted nor needed "guiding" had purchase in not one cubic nanometre of Churchill's brain.

MacDonald's most convincing supporter in the debate was Ralph Beaumont, who concurred with the Peel Commission's analysis [c336] that the Mandate was self-contradictory, upheld Arabs' right to self-government, harshly criticised past Governments for allowing more and more Jewish immigration despite the recommendations of all Government Commissions of Enquiry [e.g. c220; c233], and, replying to various Members' invocation of Jewish persecution in Europe, insisted that

Palestine has its own problem, and I would like the right hon. Gentleman [MacDonald] to make it perfectly plain that our policy with regard to Palestine shall be based on the interests, the needs and the potentialities of that country alone, and shall not be dictated to us by any events in Europe or elsewhere. (c2070)

That the Palestinians must pay for European sins remained, however, the crux of Zionist argument for the next nine (or eighty-five) years.

The Zionists were aware of MacDonald's change of heart. MacDonald later told Lord Bethell, who interviewed him concerning his role in abandoning partition during 1938:

One of my problems was that there were about 30 Jews in the House of Commons, almost all of them Zionist, and there were other non-Jewish members who were influenced by having a big Jewish vote in their constituencies. But there wasn't a single Arab member or any significant number of Arab voters in Britain, just a handful of members who supported the Arab cause. [Churchill told him in the House lobby that] I was crazy to help the Arabs, because they were a backward people who ate nothing but camel dung.²⁷²⁷

We see here once again the Palestinians' structural handicap, and the putrid racism of Winston Churchill, one of the two most significant British Zionists.

At least partition was being rejected by HMG, and Palestinians and representatives of the surrounding Arab countries were being *invited* to the conference to be held at St James Palace.²⁷²⁸ Very soon,

It was agreed that the Palestine Arab delegation [in consultation with the Mufti and including those released from the Seychelles] would put forward the demands of the Palestine Arab 'national charter' including the demand for an independent Palestinian state with an Arab majority. ... It was agreed that Jamal Hussein would lead the delegation as the Mufti's representative and that Hussein F. Khalidi, Alfred Rock, and Musa Alami would be members of the delegation with George Antonius and Fuad Saba as secretaries.²⁷²⁹

Ragheb Nashashibi and Yacoub Farraj of the National Defence Party would join them later.

The Palestinians had by November 1938 'communicated' to the British by their actions on the ground the seriousness of their resistance, as attested by General Officer Commanding R.H. Haining:

[T]he situation [by the fall of 1938] was such that civil administration and control of the country was, to all practical purposes, nonexistent.²⁷³⁰

For any number of reasons, His Majesty's Government was, in "high-level consultations... in London among representatives of the Colonial, Foreign and the War Offices, Air Min-

²⁷²⁷ Bethell 1979, p 44; also Khalidi 2009, p 30.

²⁷²⁸ Cmd. 5893; Barbour 1946, pp 198-99.

²⁷²⁹ Kayyali 1978, p 219.

²⁷³⁰ Lesch 1973, p 38, citing 'Report to War Office, November 30, 1938', §14, St. Antony's College, Oxford, private papers collection.

istry and the heads of the Palestine Government²⁷³¹ moving away from Zionism – that is, towards a solution in which Jews would remain, but remain in the minority, in Palestine. This shift becomes more visible with hindsight, particularly when taken together with MacDonald’s memo of intent of 4 January 1939 [383] and the MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939 [410] which abandoned the Zionist Mandate.

²⁷³¹ Porath 1977, p 279.

On 26 November 1938 **Aneecie Khadra** (Mrs. Subhi Bey El-Khadra [*also* >210]) **wrote** to Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, care of High Commissioner Harold MacMichael, asking politely that her imprisoned husband be better treated.²⁷³²

Sir, I have the honour to submit to you, Sir, the following grievance in connection with the case of my husband, Mr. Subhi Bey al-Khadra: his kidnapping, imprisonment in one of the Army Camps, and the maltreatment meted out to him in a manner which does not accord with any of the simplest principles of justice, nor with English traditions and nobility.

She explained that Subhi had deserted the Turkish Army in August 1917, served at the [British-Government] Arab Bureau in Egypt and fought with the British Army under Lord Lloyd (George Lloyd, who would become MacDonald's successor as Colonial Secretary on 12 May 1940, until 4 Feb 1941) until the end of the war – before serving with Emirs Faisal and Abdullah in Syria and Iraq, and in the Palestine Police Force until 1927. After receiving his law degree in 1932 “he was appointed advocate to the Supreme Moslem Council” until the High Commissioner in March 1938 dismissed him “as [he was] an internee in the Acre Detention Camp.”

My husband is a member of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party as he has always been after an Arab Independence and an Arab Union. He is also a follower of the late King Faisal's policy for an Anglo-Arab treaty in Arabia and the Near East. In Palestine, however, he opposes the British policy which aims at the establishment of a Jewish National Home. His opposition, however, did not exceed the limits of tongue and pen.

Variously for several years a member of the Arab Executive Committee and Arab Higher Committee [*>220; >243; >254; >296*], his first detention had been from May until November 1936 in connection with the General Strike, after which time he was accused, but acquitted, “under Article 59 of the Penal Code”;

Before my husband left the Court, however, he was encountered by a new order by the Police to the effect that he had to be placed under supervision in Acre for a period of one year in accordance with the Emergency Regulations.

Upon the assassination of Galilee District Commissioner Andrews on 26 September 1937 [*also* >296; >359] he was thrown back into Acre Concentration Camp for 14 months but on 5 November 1938

my husband was conveyed in a closed Police car from the Concentration Camp to the Central Prison at Acre. There, after sunset, he was served by the Officer in charge of the Prisons with an order of release. He carried his satchel and left the prison in front of a number of prisoners and policemen: but before leaving the main gate of the Prison he was caught by a group of British soldiers who tied him up with ropes, put him in a sack, covered him with blankets, stuffed him into a closed armed car and took him to an unknown direction which

²⁷³² CO 733/368/8, pp 21-25.

was, later found to be, Haifa: there he was placed in a cell and treated like criminals. We are not allowed to see him, nor to know of his condition or anything about him. The strong continuous rumours about the maltreatment and torture of my husband do, naturally, excite me and my young children and affect my poor health very badly.

I know, as well as the public knows, that Subhi Bey el-Khadra is a person who fled from the Turkish Army and joined yours, and that on account of that he was condemned to death. He fought on your lines, in the Arab Army, and it was a fight against his own Moslem nation, Turkey, and against his own Caliph. ... I believe, Sir, you sincerely intend to harmonize Anglo-Arab relationships, but would you believe that such an incident would contribute towards the fulfilment of such an intention, or would it in any way do justice to the British reputation in this country! ... Is it permissible to mete out such treatment to a patriot only for such ideas as he may hold?

“I conclude, Sir, by tendering my respectful thankfulness in anticipation.”

The British thought about it, but did not respond.²⁷³³ MacMichael telegraphed to MacDonald on 7 December 1937 concerning “the alleged treatment of Subhi-al-Khadra, a Palestinian Arab” (p 31), confirming:

On 29th September 1937 Subhi El Khadra [‘a leading Arab Nationalist and a dangerous agitator’] was sentenced to be detained at Acre under Defence Regulation No 15 B for a period of 3 months. The order was renewed from time to time the total sentence amounting to 16 months. ... On the representations of the Officer in Charge of the Detention Camp that Subhi El Khadra was at the back of all the intrigues and plots in the camp and was a menace to security and fearing that he would escape Subhi El Khadra was removed from the Acre Detention Camp on 6th October... and placed in military custody in the Peninsular Barracks at Haifa. I am considering whether Subhi El Khadra should not be deported under a suitable guarantee. (p 35)

At the Colonial Office in London, Luke commented:

I agree with Mr. Bennett, that the treatment of this man has been unnecessarily harsh and painful both to himself and his relatives. As Mr. Bennett points out, he is in the purest sense a ‘political prisoner’ who has been locked away for the greater part of the last two years merely in order to keep him out of mischief. (p 17)

Downie and Shuckburgh disagreed. Downie:

This man is described by the High Commissioner as a ‘dangerous’ agitator. ... His weapons [may be] only ‘tongue and fun’, but these can be quite as lethal as the cut-throat’s knife. I do not agree with Mr. Bennett’s conclusion that he is ‘in’ simply for his political views, and I find no disinterested evidence that he is not receiving ‘normal and humane treatment’. (p 17)

²⁷³³ CO 733/368/8, all further citations.

Shuckburgh:

I agree that we can only decline to intervene. Nobody likes this kind of thing. 'Repression' is always an odious business, and can be justified only on the ground that it is necessary to prevent something more odious still. That justification conditions in Palestine furnish in full measure. There is nothing for it... but to go through with the business. (p 17)

Both MacMichael and MacDonald in London agreed he should stay in jail and his treatment not be reviewed. (pp 19, 20)

Similar mistreatment was reported by the son of "Abd al-Hamid, a bank director":

Arrested on 20 February 1938 in Jerusalem, the British moved [my father] to Acre jail and then al-Mazra's detention camp (near Acre) before he ended up back in Acre prison hospital after what he claimed were severe beatings by prison guards that left him unable to walk.²⁷³⁴

²⁷³⁴ Hughes 2009, p 335.

I have not yet found the text of this protocol or its exact date, and appeal to readers to help find it.

According to Musa Alami himself, on 28 November 1938 and in early December he and Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald met in London “at the instance and with the full authority of the Cabinet” and jointly wrote “a protocol whose first article ‘stated that the object of the conference was to find ways and means of bringing about the independence of Palestine – the first time that a British Government had used this momentous phrase.’”²⁷³⁵ The two also worked out the composition of the Palestine delegation to London,²⁷³⁶ and agreed on “the replacement of the Mandate by a treaty with Great Britain; and the release of deportees”²⁷³⁷.

Alami later told Nicholas Bethell that while he was “in a café near the National Gallery” a messenger approached, asking him to come to the Colonial Office; there ensued two meetings, on 25 and 28 November, where, as MacDonald recorded it, he told Alami that

All sorts of things might happen in Palestine and an Arab state would not be ruled out by what I had said. ... I had never said anything which closed the door completely to an entire stoppage of immigration.

Then, according to Bethell,

Musa el-Alami took the notes of his meetings with MacDonald to the Mufti in Syria and he believes that it was largely because of them that the Mufti agreed to have his supporters attend the conference [at St. James in early 1939, >386ff].²⁷³⁸

In his interviews with Geoffrey Furlonge, Musa said that copies of **the Protocol of this meeting** went to the Cabinet, the Colonial Office, and to Alami himself to take to Palestine and show to others; landing in Beirut, he proceeded to the house of the Mufti where, to his surprise, all the returned detainees (mainly from the Seychelles) were waiting, and he in turn surprised them with the Protocol, saying in essence that the Mandate would be *replaced* by a treaty between Britain and... Palestine.²⁷³⁹

Concerning the coming St. James talks discussed by the two, according to Walid Khalidi, Musa Alami and George Antonius were to be “the main Arab strategists” [>386].²⁷⁴⁰ In Hamburg in January 1939, Jamal al-Husseini could not yet get a British visa, so met with Alami, his brother-in-law, in order to discuss the Palestinian goals and tactics.²⁷⁴¹ As for Mac-

²⁷³⁵ Furlonge 1969, pp 120-21.

²⁷³⁶ Khalidi 2005, p 64.

²⁷³⁷ Abcarius 1946, p 204.

²⁷³⁸ Bethell 1979, p 51.

²⁷³⁹ Furlonge 1969, p 122; Nashashibi 1991, p 169.

²⁷⁴⁰ Khalidi 2005, p 64, citing Hourani, Albert, 1988, ‘Musa Alami and the Palestine Problem, 1939-1949’ in: *Studia Palestina: Studies in Honor of Constantine K. Zurayk*, ed. Hisham Nashabeh, IPS Beirut, p 30.

²⁷⁴¹ Nashashibi 1991, pp 163-65; Furlonge 1969, p 119.

Donald, as Colonial Minister he was by definition the main British strategist. According to Martin Gilbert, while MacDonald was basically sympathetic to Zionism [²⁷⁴²], he for instance did accept, under pressure from Palestinian and other Arabs, as well as from Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, the Cabinet policy of trying to argue Weizmann into accepting an upper limit of 33% for the Jewish population of Palestine.²⁷⁴²

²⁷⁴² Gilbert 1976, pp 16-19.

381. Haining vs Arab rebels

1 December 1938

The General in charge of putting down the Palestinian rebellion, R.H. Haining, attacked in a **memo to the Cabinet**²⁷⁴³ the Arab “outburst of propoganda” spread by the likes of Miss Frances Newton [see >358] claiming that British military behaviour was “unnecessarily severe”. [see e.g. >296] There is “no organised rebel army,” said Haining, but rather “rebel gangs” numbering at most 1,500 members and led mainly by two men: Abdul Rahim el Haj Mahomed (“of good family and some education”) and Aref Abdul Razzak (“of much lower origin and less education”) [also >370]. The former answered less to the Mufti, now in Syria, than the latter, and “practically every village in the country harbours and supports the rebels” – either out of “sympathy” or through “terrorism”. An “anti-rebel gang” had emerged near Jenin led by Fakhri Abdul Hadi. To be sure, “to remove the active rebel element” the help of local “identifiers” is required as are “check and search” operations “carried out in considerable force” and entailing the setting up of a “cordon” with “cordon-breakers... liable to be shot”. Males were separated out, followed by “house to house searches” for weapons, etc. “Demolition of houses by troops” did happen, but only of houses of the guilty although “occasionally demolitions are carried out as a collective punishment”. Collective punishments were done in the form of fines, demolitions and curfews when “information regarding the actual perpetrators is lacking” and they were in Haining’s opinion justified because “collective responsibility... is fully recognized and understood by the Palestinian Arab.” What’s more, local Germans, Italians and the business community did what they could to hinder the British troops. Haining moreover praised the work of “Jewish supernumeraries” (unofficial armed police) who worked “in combination with the British personnel”.²⁷⁴⁴

It was the opinion of Colonial Officer Bennett, on 17 November 1938, that

General Haining would deprecate any political announcement which went any way towards meeting the Arabs and enabling them, without loss of face or hopes, to cease the rebellion. ... Apparently General Haining does not conceive it possible that the Arabs would genuinely want to cease the rebellion: he is determined to believe that such action would only be trickery and tactics for a ‘breather’. He would rather have the political situation kept alive and bitter so that he can inflict a military defeat on the rebels. All of this was discussed in London with the High Commissioner...²⁷⁴⁵

²⁷⁴³ CAB 24/282/5, pp 51-54.

²⁷⁴⁴ CO 733/379/3, pp 53-54; Cronin 2017, p 55.

²⁷⁴⁵ CO 733/367/2, p 5.

Meeting in Brussels, a group of student delegates, including “the Arab emigrants abroad”, aimed “to liberate the Arab homeland” which “cannot be divided or partitioned”; the Arab national idea

proscribes the existence of racial, regional, and communal fanaticisms [and] respects the freedom of religious observance, and individual freedoms such as the freedom of opinion, work, and assembly. ... The interests of the Jews settled in the Arab lands are not in opposition to the interests of Arab nationalism. But Zionism is directly opposed to Arab nationalism; we must resist it. ... The Jews are attempting to build up a Jewish state in Palestine and to bring into this state a great number of their kind from all over the world.²⁷⁴⁶

31 December 1938 *‘By the end of the year, as the result of the arrival in the autumn of large military reinforcements, [the rural] gang organization was first dislocated and finally reduced to comparative impotence in the field.’²⁷⁴⁷*

²⁷⁴⁶ Haim 1962, pp 100-02.

²⁷⁴⁷ Ghandour 2010, p 98, citing Report of the Mandatory to the League of Nations, 31 December 1938.

XXII. Best chance

Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald told the Cabinet in **his memorandum** dated 18 January 1939 that coming decisions “on the Palestine question [are] likely to arouse so much controversy” that it was best he adumbrate for them the main issues ahead of the announced St. James Conference. They concerned immigration, land ownership and above all the constitution and the timing of the future moment of full independence.²⁷⁴⁸ He needed HMG's approval of the line he was proposing. This 22-page memo should be read along with the White Paper of exactly four months later; while already containing many of the White Paper's policy decisions, it contains background thoughts and detail for which there would be no place in that shorter Statement of Policy. [>410] It is worthwhile comparing this memo with that of High Commissioner John Chancellor to then Colonial Secretary Sidney Webb dated 17 January 1930, i.e. nine years and one day earlier. [>218]

Like a dozen or more British statements and memos that had gone before, MacDonald first reviewed the promises that were made to both Arabs and Jews during World War I [>10] as well as the promises implicitly contained in the Balfour Declaration [>16], the 1922 (Churchill) White Paper [>142], the Mandate [>146], and his father's 1931 Black Letter [>246] – the familiar story of balancing the claims and/or rights of the two sides, of fulfilling HMG's so-called dual obligation. In response to “Jewish claims” based on these promises he wrote:

We cannot accept the contention that all Jews as such have a right to enter Palestine. Such a principle is not a corollary of recognition of the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine, and it implies no more than that the Jews who have already entered, or might be allowed to enter, Palestine are or would be in that country as of right; that is to say, that they are the equals in national status of the indigenous inhabitants. (p 35/§14)

This unequivocally overturned the 1922 White Paper which had officially acknowledged that it was basing HMG's policy of “gradually” letting in, as a matter of right, any and all Jews due to the “ancient historical connection” of their ethno-religious group to Palestine. The 1922 document, written by Churchill, Samuel and Shuckburgh, did see the right to enter Palestine as a “corollary” of the historical connection, but it was equivocal on whether the Jews who were or would be in Palestine “as of right and not on sufferance” were “the existing Jewish community” in Palestine or “Jewish people as a whole” wherever they now were. [>142] MacDonald was asking the Cabinet to limit this rightful presence to those already there; entering Palestine would be on sufferance.

The “contention” MacDonald referred to was made *inter alia* not only in the 1922 White Paper but also

²⁷⁴⁸ CAB 24/282/4, pp 34-44 (= printed page numbers pp 2-22), all citations; also Porath 1977, p 280.

- in the Mandate text, whose Preamble took as given the “recognition [that had] been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country”;
- by the Peel Commission in 1937 [³³⁶], which held that by 1919 “The right of the Jews on historic grounds to re-establish their National Home in Palestine was affirmed”, that by 1922 there was “international recognition of the right of the Jews to return to their old homeland”, that according to the League of Nations “Jews were admitted to be in Palestine by right”, and that by 1933 “naturally it was to Palestine that the eyes of world Jewry turned – to the only country they could enter ‘as of right and not on sufferance’”;²⁷⁴⁹
- by the Peel Commission again, contradictorily: “The Jewish people are recognized as being in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance, but it does not necessarily follow that any Jew at any time has a right to enter the country.”²⁷⁵⁰ Not “necessarily”, but perhaps most likely, or something like that.

Most explicitly in the last quotation, the language implies that the phrase “the Jews” refers to all Jews, anywhere, or “the Jewish people”, as it was their “admission” into Palestine, or their so-called ‘return’ to Palestine, that was a matter of right.

In the memo MacDonald correctly said that the Balfour Declaration’s declaration of “sympathy” was for more than just an a-political or semi-political Jewish national “home”:

The Jewish... rejection of any constitutional change which would place the Jews in Palestine in the position of a minority (whatever minority rights might be guaranteed) under an independent Arab Government... is based on (i) the use of the word “National” in the expression ‘Jewish National Home,’ [and] (ii) the fact that the Balfour Declaration purported to be ‘a declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations’, and that the British Government of the day were well aware that Zionist aspirations were fundamentally ‘nationalistic’. (p 36/§14)

[see >16]

MacDonald’s interpretation of the Balfour Declaration is correct, namely that it was by no means balanced, or held dual *equal* obligations to the Jews and the Arabs. The Jews came first.

As for the “Arab claims”, although

there are different factions within the Arab movement they do not represent any fundamental differences amongst the Arabs regarding political policy. [The] more moderate Nashashibi faction [is] equally vehement with the others in their opposition to the whole of our policy of introducing the Jews. ... The Arabs have generally been consistent throughout the last twenty years in urging... (a) the right of the Arabs to complete independence in their own land. ... (b) The experiment of establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine should be brought to an end. ... (c) Jewish immigration and land sales to Jews should be stopped completely pending the negotiation of... a treaty [with Great Britain] with safeguards for British interests and guarantees for the minority rights of the Jews. (p 36/§15)

²⁷⁴⁹ Peel 1937, II §29, II §51, II §49, III §75, also V §76.

²⁷⁵⁰ Peel 1937, X §91.

MacDonald then drew an accurate picture of the Arabs' stance towards the Jews in Palestine:

In general they are now reconciled to the 411,000 Jews who are already settled in Palestine remaining there. [But] the [Jewish] Home should not be a Jewish State or a political entity of any kind [and] its significance for the Jewish people of the world should be cultural and spiritual. ... [I]n Palestine there would be a considerable Jewish population enjoying the full rights of a civilised minority, keeping alive through the Hebrew University and other institutions Hebrew literature and arts, speaking the Hebrew tongue, and practicing around their own Holy Places the Jewish religion. (pp 36-37/§15)

As we shall see, even for that most generous of Jewish Zionists, Judah Magnes [^{>438; >463}], there had to be at least political parity, regardless of numerical minority, and for the more extreme British Zionists with whom the Palestinians had to deal in the 1940s [^{>413; >418; >424; >468; >481}] even parity was not enough – there had to be a Jewish state.

In MacDonald's opinion,

This is not a controversy in which one side is largely right and the other side largely wrong. ... The Peel Commission described the situation between the Jews and Arabs as 'a conflict of right with right.' (p 37/§16)²⁷⁵¹

Logically, denial of self-determination for the native inhabitants followed from exactly this premise of *ethical parity*, for if the minority "side" had as much right as the majority "side", it would be wrong to turn control over to that majority. MacDonald was thus contradictorily saying that it was "right" that the Palestinians be denied self-determination. Parity and self-determination were mutually exclusive.

Before moving on to 'Future Policy' MacDonald closed his general remarks by admitting:

All this is very unsatisfactory, and we cannot avoid blame for the situation which has arisen. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the authors of the various declarations made to Jews and Arabs during the war, which are really very difficult to reconcile, were rather confused about the whole business. (p 37/§18)

It is of course moot whether Balfour, the War Cabinet and Churchill, Samuel et al. were "confused", rather than purposely writing confusingly, but compare this admission with Bevin's shirking British responsibility eight years later [^{>450; >452}].

MacDonald expressed an enduring and

considerable sympathy with the Zionist desire to found a Jewish State in Palestine. ...The conception of a modern civilisation under Jewish inspiration blossoming on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean is a fine one [whereas] the Palestinian Arabs are really rather a poor lot of people. [However] it would be wholly wrong to suggest that this large Arab population should one day in their own native land and against their will come under the rule of

²⁷⁵¹ Peel 1937, I §1.

the newly-arrived Jews. ... But I think it is also necessary to reject the Arab claim that Palestine should become a sovereign Arab state, like Iraq, in which the Jews would be guaranteed minority rights. (p 37/§23; p 38/§27)

This reads as if MacDonald were thinking out loud, but at least he was saying that even “rather a poor lot of people” had the right not to be dominated by groups from overseas. But perhaps it was because they were such a “poor lot” that he found it “necessary” to reject their claim to sovereignty. One also must conclude that to MacDonald’s mind the Iraqis were less of a “poor lot” than the Palestinians, since in that country, as in Syria and Lebanon as well, “guaranteed minority rights” for Jews sufficed for their protection. In any case, despite his continuing antipathy to the phrase “Arab state”, MacDonald by 17 May 1939 had changed his mind and accepted an Arab-majority, normal-democratic Palestine [p410] and on 22-23 May secured Commons approval for it [p411].

In this memo, the reasons MacDonald himself offered for rejecting this “Arab claim” for normal sovereignty shifted from emotional and moral territory first to precedent and then to legal and practical grounds: 1) All the Powers after World War I said the Jewish National Home project must stand in the way of independence. 2) Nothing in the League of Nations Covenant implies independence for Palestine’s Arabs. 3) The Arabs as a practical matter do not have

the capacity to assume responsibility for the government of a country where such difficult problems would arise, and their willingness to accord in practice, to a large Jewish minority whom they dislike so intensely, proper minority rights must be doubted. (p 38/§28)

On the one hand the problem was that the locals lacked “capacity” – and because the presumably hyper-capable British had created such a difficult situation the Arabs needed tutelage now, in 1939, even more than in 1918. On the other hand the problem was emotional: “dislike”. Together, these two factors meant the Palestinians were disqualifying themselves, denying themselves the right to self-determination. If only the Arabs would become nicer.

MacDonald then bemoaned

the tragedy of the Jews that they have no country of their own; they are a minority in every territory in which they live [and they hope to] get away from the whole atmosphere of minority status... That the Jewish National Home in Palestine should now become a place where they were a formal minority guaranteed certain rights, and in which they were ruled over by an inferior people, would be intolerable to them, and contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. (p 38/§28)

As we can see from this paraphrase of the view of “the Jews” and from his comments just above, like several of his predecessors as Colonial Secretary he agreed with the Zionists’ estimate that the Arabs were “inferior”, a “poor lot”.

The nature of the future constitution was thus to be determined neither by the Arabs' historical claims nor by their majority status:

Neither the Jewish claim for the creation at some future date of a Jewish state covering the whole of Palestine nor the Arab claim that the country should become an Arab state can be admitted. (p 37/§22; p 38/§27; p 44/§74.2)

His own White Paper issued about 4 months later [^{>410}] would however after all “admit” an “Arab state” in the sense that the Arabs would remain a clear majority and the Jews not even get political parity.

But for now, in rejecting both national claims, MacDonald's logic was painting HMG into the *parity* corner. And parity is indeed what the memo came up with: Rather than a “federation” closely resembling partition, and rather than the ‘cantonisation’ proposals of Anthony Crossley in 1936 [^{>290}], the Woodhead Commission [^{>376}], the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1938 [^{>353}], and indeed MacDonald himself a few months earlier [^{>373}] – he now preferred

The preservation of Palestine with its present boundaries as a ‘bi-national’ state, in which the two races are regarded, and come to regard each other, as equals in status, with equal rights in the government of their country. (p 43/§64; p 42/§62)

The population of Palestine was thus reduced to two, and only two, “races”, rather than individuals as in Britain's own democracy or to several races, including perhaps various Christian groups and the Druze. And the “country” was now to be “theirs” – i.e. owned by both *collectives*. How this was different from “cantonisation” was not explained. Perhaps MacDonald at this stage, before his intense dealings with the Palestinian and other Arab representatives over the next three months, really believed that the indigenous and the immigrants could “regard each other” as equals – but in that case he had not done his homework.

Such was the resistance to a normal democracy that the bi-national, parity-based solution was put forth by all and sundry, even for instance by Professor H. Stanley Jevons (son of William Stanley Jevons, and thus presumably worth paying some attention to), who in various letters aimed at Malcolm MacDonald in anticipation of the planned St. James Conference (dated 20 November and 13 December 1938 and 12 January 1939) advocated the use of “sociology and social psychology” to solve the conflict; on 17 February 1939 he said he believed partition to be “impracticable” and that he had abandoned his previous notion of a “federal constitution” because it still had too great a “degree of partition”, in favour now of “dyarchy (though not as in India)”.²⁷⁵² The conceptual acrobatics demanded by bi-nationalism have a long history. [*see also* ^{>463}]

This premise of two collectives, of course, opens the door to a pro-Zionist interpretation of self-determination, as related by Huneidi:

According to Norman Bentwich, who became legal adviser to the Palestine government, the function of the mandatory in Palestine ‘did not conform’ with the [Covenant's Article 22]

²⁷⁵² CO 733/408/7, pp 14-26.

conditions: "The principle of self-determination had to be modified because of the two national selves existing in Palestine, and the majority Arab population could not be allowed to prevent the fulfilment of the Mandate in relation to the minority Jewish population."²⁷⁵³

The Palestinians, in contrast, always argued implicitly for the individualist view expressed by Hadawi, namely that "The issue is fundamentally one of individual rights and principles... and must be treated as a moral and political issue."²⁷⁵⁴

In any case, political parity based on the collective view of the conflict as envisioned by MacDonald should immediately take the concrete form of

an Advisory Council which would include, in addition to an official *bloc*, Jewish and Arab representatives in equal numbers. The Jewish and Arab members would be elected on communal registers. ... I suggest also... that, if a majority of the members of the Advisory Council which included a majority of the Arab and of the Jewish representatives passed a resolution asking that the Advisory Council be superseded by a Legislative Council [with final powers] on the basis of parity between the two peoples, then such a Legislative Council should be established. (pp 43/§65)

That is,

in the central organs of Government (*e.g.*, the Legislature) each of them has equal numerical representation, whichever may from time to time comprise a majority of the total population of the country. (p 42/§62)

MacDonald then went on to concur with the Peel Commission²⁷⁵⁵ that the Arabs would reject this, while the Jews might barely accept it. During the next few months he would also come to reject this 'parity' solution.

Parity reigned in MacDonald's emotions as well:

I do not write as an opponent of Zionism, but as a friend, and I say deliberately that we have paid too little heed to the rights of the Arabs of Palestine. We have been inclined to ignore them as a poor, weak people of whom we need not take very much notice. Let us be fair to the Jews, but let us also give these Arabs fair treatment. I would regard the wishes and claims of the Jews and Arabs as the wishes and claims of two peoples equal in status, neither of whom is subordinate to the other in right. [This is] proper political morality. ... The question cannot be considered, as the Jews urge, as one of pure economics; very important political considerations are involved. (p 39/§40)

As fair and noble as this sounds, and despite its being an improvement on the philosophy of all previous Colonial Secretaries, MacDonald was literally claiming that it was "moral" to lower an indigenous majority to the status of an immigrant minority – even if the policy of equal status had to be pushed through: "We may crush this opposition by force, but afterwards we shall only be able to keep it down by force." (p 39)

²⁷⁵³ Huneidi 2001, pp 14-15.

²⁷⁵⁴ Hadawi 1992, p 3.

²⁷⁵⁵ Peel 1937, V §64, XVIII §10.

While arriving at his formula for immigration MacDonald adamantly rejected the idea that opposition to Zionism among the Arabs is shallow and limited to the elite; it is “deep and widespread”. He then reverted to ignoring the “political” in favour of the economic criteria for immigration numbers, saying that since the country can economically absorb more people, the Arab demand for immediate stoppage of all immigration should be rejected. (pp 39-40/§40-42) Yet between the Scylla of “a violent outburst of Jewish extremists” and the Charybdis of further Arab rebellion and the ill-will of the entire Arab world, MacDonald leaned towards going “a long way to meet the Arab representatives.” (p 40/§48)

He was moreover aware that Palestine is not part of Europe, site of “the present terrible circumstances of Jewish persecution in Central Europe”, noting that

It may be urged by the Arabs with considerable force that it is unfair that their country should be picked out to give special assistance to the unhappy Jews. (p 40/§43)

This ethical argument, presented time and again not only by the Arabs, stood alongside, but did not really affect, all the calculations about *how many* European Jews could or should be allowed to immigrate.

MacDonald then derived the figure of 15,000 European-Jewish immigrants per year for ten years – which yearly number, albeit for only five years, found its way into his White Paper [410] – by first setting as the goal a maximum *percentage* of Jews at 35-40% and doing the maths. He then asked what happens after the ten years. As a favour to his colleague Foreign Minister Halifax, who otherwise agreed with his memorandum,²⁷⁵⁶ he suggested as the first of two options that there would then be further tripartite discussions, but he actually preferred a second option, namely giving “the Arabs an actual veto on any further expansion of the Jewish National Home.” (p 41/§52B) His White Paper would include this Arab veto on immigration at the end of five years.²⁷⁵⁷

Before saying that land sales should be restricted so that available land can accommodate “the growing Arab population” – in line with the “findings of Sir John Hope Simpson [233], the Peel Commission [336] and the Woodhead Commission [376]” (p 42/§57; also p 40/§41) – he wrapped up his various historical, ethical and practical thoughts by saying of the option of giving the Arabs a veto over the further growth of the Jewish national home:

Even Jews of great moderation like Lord Samuel [sic.] would be likely to criticise it as putting too great an obstacle in the way of the development of the Jewish National Home after ten more years. ... Though criticism would be very heavy in Parliament and at Geneva, we could defend the policy as one which is consistent with our obligations under the Mandate. It is not consistent with our interpretation of the Mandate as practised over many years and defined in Mr. Ramsay MacDonald’s letter of 1931, where the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine is declared to be the sole criterion governing immigration. [246] We should have

²⁷⁵⁶ See CO 24/282/18 for Foreign Secretary Halifax’s concurrence with MacDonald’s views despite one slight disagreement.

²⁷⁵⁷ MacDonald 1939, §13 & §14.3, >410.

to admit frankly that our new policy was a departure from that interpretation, and appeal back to the governing instrument, the Mandate itself. Under the Mandate we are obliged to facilitate Jewish immigration 'under suitable conditions'. [However] it is now clear beyond a shadow of doubt that the Arab population (whose 'rights and position' we are pledged to safeguard) will not be reconciled to an indefinite continuation of Jewish immigration... (p 42/§55)

The Arabs had proven this "beyond a shadow of doubt" both by their rebellion and by two decades' worth of words.

This memorandum, approved by the Cabinet Committee on Palestine on 30 January 1939 [→385], is the background for understanding the St James Conference talks [→387ff] and the ultimate 17 May 1939 Statement of Policy (the MacDonald White Paper) [→410], which would state a significantly more pro-Arab, pro-democracy policy.

1937-39 *'The number of Arabs hanged during the years 1937-39 exceeded 100.'*²⁷⁵⁸

²⁷⁵⁸ Porath 1977, p 239, citing Arabic-language sources; see CO 733/367/2.

384. Arab delegations in Cairo

17-21 January 1939

Prior to the 'Round Table Conference' at St. James Palace, the expenses of which were borne by HMG,

The Arab delegations chosen for participation in the Round Table Conference met in Cairo. They held three consecutive meetings on the 17, 19 and the 21 January 1939, wherein they agreed on the following: First: To do the best to rescue Palestine and to keep it an Arab country. Second: To rid Palestine from the danger of Zionism. Third: To bring about an Arab Government for Palestine where its relationship with Britain would be decided in a treaty similar to that of the Anglo-Iraqi one. Fourth: The national constitution for Palestine would include guarantees of rights and privileges for the Jews with respect to domestic and municipal matters. Their representation in the proposed government should proportionately reflect their number at that time.²⁷⁵⁹

Prominent British citizen Weizmann, however, was at the same time insisting that the Jews "refused the idea of remaining a minority in the country".²⁷⁶⁰

According to Bethell, on 15 January the Arab Higher Committee had already

issued a document accepting the invitation to London and proclaiming a covenant which demanded the end of the Jewish national home, Jewish immigration and land transfer to Jews, the end of the Mandate and an independent Arab Palestine linked to Britain by treaty.²⁷⁶¹

Barred by the British from attending was Hajj Amin al-Husseini, but his allies at that time, Ragheb al-Nashashibi and Yacoub Farraj, later joined the Palestinian group in London.²⁷⁶²

²⁷⁵⁹ Ayyad 1999, p 175 (citing *Filistin*).

²⁷⁶⁰ Ayyad 1999, p 175.

²⁷⁶¹ Bethell 1979, p 59.

²⁷⁶² See also Furlonge 1969, p 118.

385. Cabinet answers MacDonald

30 January 1939

Also prior to the imminent London discussions, on 30 January 1939, the latest ‘Cabinet Committee on Palestine’, chaired by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, commented on and accepted the ideas Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald had put forth in his memorandum of 18 January. [^{>383}].²⁷⁶³ The Cabinet Committee concretised his ideas by favouring the solution of “parity between the two peoples”, holding that:

We recognise the difficulty of persuading the Arabs to agree to the principle of parity but, on the assumption that Jewish immigration will be strictly limited, representations on a basis of population would condemn the Jews to a permanent minority position, and we agree with the Secretary of State [Malcolm MacDonald] that this would be contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration (§4)

The hope was that were the Arabs guaranteed at least 2/3 of the citizenry forever, they might give the 1/3 one half of the seats in, say, a parliament.

The Committee interpreted MacDonald’s memo as “our rejection of the Arab demand for independence” (§5), while at the same time agreeing that “the time has come to set definite limits to the expansion, without the consent of the Arabs, of the Jewish National Home.” (§8; also §12) Weizmann, according to the Committee, was less concerned about the number of future Jewish immigrants than “about establishing their claim that the Jewish people enter Palestine as of right and not on sufferance”, because he knew that this passage from the Samuel/Churchill White Paper [^{>142}] was the *sine qua non* of the Jewish state; this “Jewish claim [however, was] open to doubt” according to the Committee. (§13)

Although serious analysis of British *motives* for what they did in Palestine is outside my scope, in the case of this Cabinet, which would approve the revolutionary White Paper of four months hence, it is worth looking at the thesis advanced by some writers that HMG was largely motivated by a perceived need to keep the Arab world onside in light of a likely approaching war.²⁷⁶⁴ Indeed, at the St. James talks on 14 February Colonial Secretary MacDonald expressed this view when speaking with the Jewish-Zionist delegation.²⁷⁶⁵ [^{>389}] There is only very scant evidence for this view in this Committee Report, which only suggests that to keep Egyptian and Arab friendship Moslems should be allowed to themselves guard their Jerusalem Holy Places, this being described as a “gesture” and a “soften[ing], if possible” of Britain’s “rejection of the Arab demand for [Palestinian] independence” – which rejection it intended to stand by.

The Report did refer to a separate “Report, to be kept under lock and key” by the Committee of Imperial Defense which indeed told the Cabinet it needed to watch out that Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Transjordan, etc., who, to be sure, were treaty-bound

²⁷⁶³ CAB 24/283/2.

²⁷⁶⁴ E.g. Khalidi 2020, p 48.

²⁷⁶⁵ FO 371/23224, pp 6-9, 25-26, 27, 30-31.

to stick by Britain, did not switch to the side of Italy and Germany because this would strip the U.K. of its eastern lines of air and sea communication and its naval base in Alexandria.²⁷⁶⁶

In our view, if our future policy in relation to Palestine is such that it cannot be accepted by the Arab states as equitable, and is not a clear earnest of our intentions to maintain their friendship, these states who are already shaken in their belief in our good intentions will at least become alienated – if not actively hostile.²⁷⁶⁷

Through its treatment of Palestine Britain had been “alienating” the Arab and Moslem worlds for two decades – i.e. acting against its own “imperial strategic” interests, such as they were. This jibes with the view of the Committee for Imperial Defense that nothing but a reversal of normal pro-Zionist policy would save the Arab-British friendship, increasingly valuable given looming war.

All of a sudden, and putting huge question marks behind the view that Britain was only selfishly motivated, Britain would have to realise that it had been acting unselfishly for twenty years. For in reality, in terms of such nuts-and-bolts strategic and economic interests, the Zionist Mandate had always been a severe net loss for Britain, indeed a case of objective altruism towards Zionism. This had been the view of Robert Cecil MP during one of the first House of Commons debates on the Palestine mandate, way back on 29 April 1920.²⁷⁶⁸ [→79] That the high cost to the Treasury was due only to the Zionist policy was recognised by British officials time and again, an early example being Colonial Secretary Churchill’s short and secret memo to the Cabinet on 11 August 1921.²⁷⁶⁹ On normal criteria of self-interest Britain should have dropped Zionism like a hot potato. Some writers nevertheless present pro-Zionism as in Britain’s self-interest.²⁷⁷⁰ George Antonius on the other hand, in his analysis of British motives, hinted that Britain’s, and specifically Kitchener’s, belief that offering something to the Jews in Palestine served its strategic interests might have been due to “ignorance”, an example of “an ill-informed and haphazard decision which creeps into the shaping of policy, especially in war time...”.²⁷⁷¹

At any rate, while the White Paper of 17 May 1939 would not be a full reversal of policy, it came close. Perhaps the UK Government had finally woken up to the fact that its real selfish interests were not compatible with pro-Zionism. I am not in a position to say what the relative contributions to this were of a desire for justice on terms internal to Palestine, a desire for an end to the Palestinian revolt, and a desire to salvage some of the traditional friendship of the Arab and Moslem worlds. But it did go well beyond “gestures” to “soften” HMG’s rejection of the demand for immediate, virtually unconditional independence – gestures deemed advisable by the Cabinet Committee.

²⁷⁶⁶ CAB 24/282/7.

²⁷⁶⁷ CAB 24/282/7, p 75.

²⁷⁶⁸ Hansard 1920, c1498.

²⁷⁶⁹ CAB 24/127/13, p 39.

²⁷⁷⁰ See e.g. Regan 2017, pp 4-6, 9-10, 13, 25, 28-29, 38, 44, 49, 51, 64-65, 189-90, 204, 208, 346; also Smith 1993, p 7; but see Khalidi 2020, p 50; also Fieldhouse 2006, pp 122, 129ff, 148 & *passim*.

²⁷⁷¹ Antonius 1938, pp 261-62, 396, 398.

February 1939 *'After a [British] soldier was blown up by a mine near the village of Kafr Yasif..., soldiers burnt down seventy houses, blew up forty more and, reportedly, then told nine villagers from the neighbouring village of Kuwaykat to run, after which the soldiers gunned them down. ... Under pressure from the Anglican clergy, the army provided some relief to the homeless villagers...'*²⁷⁷²

²⁷⁷² Hughes 2009, p 342.

The first of the meetings between Britain and Arabs, all of which were closed to the press, was on 7 February 1939, attended by fifteen British delegates (including PM Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary Halifax, Colonial Secretary MacDonald and CO or FO officials Shuckburgh, Cosmo Parkinson, and Grattan Bushe), four delegates each from Egypt and Iraq, two from Saudi Arabia, five from Yemen and eight “Palestine Arabs, namely Jamal Eff. al-Husseini, Amin Bey Tamimi, Mr. George Antonius, Awni Bey Abdul Hadi, Musa Bey al-Alami, Alfred Eff. Rock, Yaqub Eff. Ghussein, Fuad Eff. Saba”.²⁷⁷³ Hussein al-Khalidi was also released from his Seychelles exile in order to attend the conference.²⁷⁷⁴ On the same day the British met with the 28-member Jewish-Zionist delegation (including Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, John M. Machover, Shertok, Harry Sacher and the US-American Rabbi Stephen Wise).²⁷⁷⁵ The ‘Arabs’ and ‘Jews’ wouldn’t sit with each other, so the British held separate talks with each group.

The British Delegation had obtained ‘SECRET’ knowledge of the above-named eight Palestinians, as well as of four other prominent Palestinian politicians, by consulting their “Who’s Who” – 17 pages of short bios of a dirty dozen opponents of Zionism.²⁷⁷⁶ In the order listed:

1. Taufiq [Tawfiq] Pasha Abul-Huda: Moslem, ca. 45, Palestinian by birth, now Chief Minister of Transjordan; Istiqlal Party.
2. Najib Bey Alamuddin: Druze, ca. 30, Beirut U.; Education Ministries first in Palestine now in Transjordan, British Council scholarship at U. of Exeter; excellent English, well-travelled.
3. Awni Bey Abdul Hadi: Moslem, 52, Jerusalem, Law School Istanbul, Sorbonne; lawyer from “wealthy landed family”; worked at Turkish Embassy in Paris, co-founded *al-Fatat*, private secretary to King Faisal, Palestinian representative at Wailing Wall Commission 1929 and Shaw Commission 1930 and member of London Arab Delegation 1930; member of Syrian Istiqlal Party and co-founder 1932-33 of its “off-shoot” in Palestine; “leading participant” in 1933 Jaffa and Jerusalem “disturbances”, secretary-to-be of Arab Higher Committee in 1936 but “interned at Sarafand”, released prior to appearing before Royal (Peel) Commission; “pan-Arab... not so much anti-British as anti-British policy...very anti-Zionist”, “has personality and charm”; in Geneva for “Arab cause”, “excluded from Palestine by a special ordinance”, now in Cairo.
4. Jamal Eff. al-Husseini: Moslem, 46, Jerusalem, St. George’s School, distant cousin of Mufti, brother-in-law of Musa al-Alami; “pan-Arab”, as of 1921 Secretary to Supreme Moslem Council and to Arab Executive Committee, in 1930 in London “to make propaganda” and in Palestine was for “non-cooperation with the Government” and “boycott of the Jews” and was “leader of the 1933 disturbances”; 1935 established Palestine Arab Party and weekly *El Liwa* (“The Flag”); 1936 in Arab Higher Committee; 1937 fled to Syria and Geneva, working with Emir Shakib Ar-

²⁷⁷³ FO 371/23223, p 6; >Appendix 9, full list.

²⁷⁷⁴ Boyle 2001, p 5; Khalidi 2020, pp 48-49.

²⁷⁷⁵ FO 371/23223, pp 16-17. See also brief footage at <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/london-aka-palestine-conference-at-st-jamess-palac>

²⁷⁷⁶ FO 371/23227, pp 393-409.

- slan in Syro-Palestine Delegation; at Cairo Parliamentary Congress where he “opposed Awni Bey Abdul Hadi’s proposal to call off violence”; “honest in motives”, “unscrupulous in methods”, incites Mufti to “extreme measures”, “bitterly anti-Jewish and uncompromisingly opposed to the continuation of the Mandate”, also not pro-Germany or Italy, but for “an Arab State which, like Iraq, would deal with HMG on a basis of equality”; “stubborn”, lacks “real intelligence” and is “unpopular”.
5. Dr. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi; Moslem, 46, Jerusalem, Dr. med., St. George’s, American U. Beirut, speaks English, French and Turkish; former Mayor of Jerusalem, “largely dependent on his salary”, “not an extremist unless his deportation has hardened his views”; “The Khalidi family, is as Palestinian families go, a good one”; brother of Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi, Principal of Government Arab College; Turkish Army, as of 1918 in Emir Faisal’s army, as of 1921 Public Health Department Palestine; switched from Nashashibis to Husseinis and in 1933 founded Reform Party which “possibly consists of only a little coterie of five individuals”; 1936 on Arab Higher Committee, 1937 deported to Seychelles; “only Arab notable who had the decency and courage to attend the funeral of the late Mr. Andrews”.
 6. Alfred Eff. Rock: Roman Catholic, 47, Jaffa, orange merchant, “claims descent from Crusaders”, “married to a French Christian”; 1929 London Arab Delegation, after 1933 disorders “bound over to keep the peace for one year”; as of 1935 Vice President of Palestine Arab Party, in 1936 “one of two Christian members of AHC”, in 1937 in Geneva before Permanent Mandates Commission concerning Peel Report, then in 1938 at Cairo Parliamentary Congress; in late 1938 accompanied Jamal al-Husseini to Paris, returned to Beirut, not extremist but pro-Mufti, “sympathetic attitude towards the proposed ‘Legislative Council’”.
 7. Amin Bey Tamimi: Moslem, 56, from Nablus, “not wealthy”, Palestine Arab Party; 1918-1921 worked for Faisal in Syria and at Paris Peace Conference then for Abdullah in Transjordan, 1922 in Lausanne, 1923 Delegation to London, as of 1926 Supreme Moslem Council; as of 1935 worked for Palestine Arab Party, also in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Persia, and on Arab Higher Committee; March 1938 “removed from the Supreme Moslem Council under the Emergency Regulations”.
 8. Musa Bey al-Alami, OBE: Moslem, ca. 45, Jerusalem, Cambridge U. [Trinity Hall], “wealthy”, “formerly Government Advocate” and “Arab Private Secretary to Sir A. Wauchope”, dismissed “after the Royal Commission had recommended that prosecutions should be in the hands of a British officer; opposed to present policy but not fundamentally anti-British”; “ardent nationalist” and anti-Zionist; “intelligent”, “speaks excellent English”, “conceited” and “somewhat lazy”.
 9. Mr. George Antonius, CBE: Christian, 42, Jerusalem, Kings College Cambridge, son-in-law of Dr. Faris Nimr, owner of Cairo *al Muqattam*; income £1,200 per annum; “brilliant brain”, was “Assistant Director of Education”, close friend of Sir Gilbert Clayton and worked for Charles Crane’s Institute of Current World Affairs, for which he gave frequent lectures in the U.S.; “has an excellent library” and wrote *The Arab Awakening*; “close personal friend of the Mufti, and a strong advocate of pan-Arabism” and “now definitely opposed to British policy”; gave evidence “with much brilliance” before Royal Commission and has lectured at Royal Society of International Affairs.
 10. Fuad Eff. Saba: Christian, 35, born in Shefa Amr, Haifa district, School of Commerce Beirut U., “holds several economics degrees”; recently Secretary to Arab Higher Committee and edited

Palestine and Transjordan weekly which was “extremely well produced and entirely devoted to Arab propaganda; after frequent Government suspensions this paper no longer appears”; “helped in economic questions in the nationalist movement”, was Auditor of the Supreme Moslem Council, and “deported to Seychelles September 1937”.

11. Yaqub Eff. Ghussein: Moslem, 40, Ramleh, “meagre” education, “land owner”, “Pan-Arab aspires to leadership”, and “active agitator of extremist tendencies”; “participated in the 1933 disturbances in Jaffa, was arrested and imprisoned [and upon] release he signed a bond... to keep the peace for a year”; Young Men’s Moslem Association and Youths’ Congress Party, and “also the mainstay of their party’s funds at the expense of the family estates”; member of AHC, raised funds in Cairo, is “a tool in the hands of youth, who use him to get their opinions before more responsible people”, “not a man of great intelligence or character”, “deported to Seychelles 1937”.
12. Abdul Latif Bey Salah: Moslem, late fifties, Nablus, “now excluded from Palestine”, educated in Constantinople, Advocate, “well off”, “leader of National Bloc Party (principal influence Nablus)”; until end of War “Secretary of the Ottoman Senate” then worked with Faisal in Syria; for some years on Supreme Moslem Council and later on Arab Higher Committee, opposed to “Husseini faction”.

There were around one hundred Arab delegates, including around twenty women.²⁷⁷⁷

²⁷⁷⁷ Khalidi 1984, p 230.

*During February and March 1939 there were dozens of meetings between the British and either 1) the Palestinians only, 2) the other Arab States only, 3) the Arab States and Palestinians, 4) the Jewish Zionists, or 5) all groups. The following approximately two dozen entries convey parts of the discussions relevant to the theme of self-determination.*²⁷⁷⁸

After the separate welcoming meetings on 7 February with the rivals disputing the ownership of Palestine, **the 2nd meeting** on 9 February saw HMG together with only the Palestinians.²⁷⁷⁹ Jamal al-Husseini re-stated for everybody the terms of the (elusive) Alami-MacDonald protocol [^{>380}], adding that nothing in the Palestinians' attitude had changed for twenty years.²⁷⁸⁰

The Arabs believe that their case is one of self-evident justice. It rests on the natural right of a people to remain in undisturbed possession of their country, and on their natural desire to safeguard their national existence and ensure that it shall be secured and developed in freedom and in harmony with their traditions and their ideals. ... A mandate was imposed upon them of which the terms were a flagrant violation not only of the promises made to them and of their own natural rights, but also of the right to political independence which was specifically reserved to them in the Covenant of the League of Nations. ... It was also most important to bear in mind that the Arab case did not depend only on the interpretation of pledges but also on the basic and natural rights of the Arabs. (pp 139-41, 261)

The appeal was threefold – to 1) British promises during World War I, 2) natural or basic ethics, and 3) Article 22 of the Covenant.

Furthermore,

even if it were true, the argument [that Jewish population and capital import had benefited the indigenous materially] is beside the point. In the eyes of the Arabs, the point is not primarily one of material consequences but first and foremost one of moral and political values. ... The demands of the Palestine Arabs may be summarised under four headings: 1. the recognition of the right of the Arabs to complete independence in their country. 2. the abandonment of the attempt to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine. 3. the abrogation of the Mandate,... creating in Palestine a sovereign Arab State. 4. the immediate cessation of all Jewish immigration and of sales of land to Jews. (pp 144, 147)

British CO official Lacy Baggallay had a low opinion of Jamal's statement, minuting:

This statement is very different from that of Dr Weizmann. The Jewish statement was a closely reasoned and argued appeal. This is simply an uncompromising statement of what the Arabs demand with little or no attempt at argument. (p 135)

²⁷⁷⁸ See also Ben-Gurion 1968, Chs. 28-45; Bethell 1979, pp 56-66.

²⁷⁷⁹ FO 371/23223, all citations.

²⁷⁸⁰ See Smith 1996, p 104.

Perhaps Baggallay was confusing simplicity and brevity for lack of argument; in his statement, to be sure, Jamal could only appeal to axioms of “self-evident justice” and “natural right”, but did Baggallay really reject such principles? Of course “the Jewish statement” had to be “closely reasoned and argued” because its basic case was so weak: a sort of Occam’s Razor is applicable to political debate. Baggallay had perhaps moreover not done his homework and was unaware of the hundreds of “attempts at argument” submitted by the Palestinians to his government over the previous two-plus decades.²⁷⁸¹ Perhaps, even, “Palestine Arab” Jamal al-Husseini had during twenty years gotten tired of making “arguments”, and was counting on 1) British officials’ having studied their archives and 2) their recognition that they claimed the same things for their own British nation.

Jamal combined basic points with some shallower legalistic ones:

The terms of the Mandate were the product of close consultation between the British Government and the Zionist Jews, from which the Arabs whose country was at stake were deliberately excluded. An administration was set up in Palestine which, for the last twenty years, has exercised unfettered power equivalent to an absolute dictatorship in all the domains of government – legislature, executive and judiciary – thereby denying the Arabs of Palestine, who before the War had enjoyed the privileges of parliamentary representation and ministerial responsibility, the most elementary rights of self-government. The Arabs have never recognised and never will recognise the Balfour Declaration or the Mandate. The first contained a promise which Great Britain was not entitled to make without Arab consent and which was, in any case, invalid, since it conflicted with a previous and binding British pledge. (pp 141-43)

He added that the Mandate conflicted with Article 22 of the Covenant. The minutes show, by the way, that in contrast to the attitude of earlier Colonial Secretaries such as Churchill, Amery, Passfield and Ormsby-Gore, MacDonald did not rule out discussion of, challenges to, or rejection of the Mandate *as such*.

On 10 February, in fact, MacDonald himself would make pro-indigenous arguments when meeting with the Jewish-Zionist delegation (i.e. with no Arabs present). He relied on the same axiom as Jamal, which would be undisputedly self-evident if applied to Western people:

The Mandate enjoined protection of Arab rights and, speaking for himself, Mr. MacDonald found it quite impossible to say that the Arabs had not a political or natural right to be consulted with regard to the disposition of their country. If Palestine contained a million American, British or German subjects, we should at once concede the right that they should have a say in the disposition of their country. The fact that the Arabs were a weak people and could be suppressed, if they rose, by a force of eighteen battalions, did not mean that they had not this right. ... The term ‘Jewish National Home’ ... was ill-defined. The Balfour Declaration appeared to have been deliberately left vague by the authors, whose attitude seemed to have been ‘let us make a start and see what happens’. Some of the authors, Mr. Lloyd George for

²⁷⁸¹ E.g. *up until 1939*: >27; >29; >30; >39; >44; >47; >48; >52; >67; >75; >83; >99; >135; >137; >178; >182; >183; >197; >200; >210-11; >222; >227; >243; >247; >262-64; >284-87; >296; >301-303; >306; >308; >312-313; >315-316; >320-322; >325; >345-346; >348-349; >354; >356-357; >359-361; >364; >367; >370; >374; >382.

example, expressed hopes with regard to the establishment of a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine. ... The Arab would say, 'Very well, if the Arabs have a majority of the population, then Palestine should be an Arab State with a Jewish minority, [and] the force of the Arab argument must be admitted.' We must do justice to the Arab point of view. (pp 175, 177; also p 189)

According to Ben-Gurion, MacDonald said that

he agreed with Weizmann that the Jewish people need a state, and were Palestine un-populated Weizmann's position would be not only correct but also easy to put into effect. However, over a million Arabs now live in Palestine, whose fathers and forefathers many generations ago were settled there. This land is no less theirs than is the land of any people who have lived there for centuries.²⁷⁸²

In front of the Zionist delegation he was sticking to the Protocol [p.380] he had evidently agreed with Alami in December 1938. And this statement contained an admission of HMG's racism.

²⁷⁸² Ben-Gurion 1968, p 341 (my translation).

388. British-Palestinian meetings

11 & 16 February 1939

When speaking to the Palestine Arab delegation on 11 February 1939, Colonial Secretary MacDonald first fell back on some standard Colonial Office arguments: 1) the Palestinians had wrongly refused the Legislative Council as proposed in 1922; 2) the McMahon 'promises' were not clear; and 3) the Mandate did impose pro-Zionist *obligations* on the British.²⁷⁸³ Photocopies of Sherif Hussein's letters, in Arabic, were then inserted into the minutes.²⁷⁸⁴ [>10 ; >400]

Concerning MacDonald's first point, at the 16 February meeting five days later Jamal al-Husseini would repeat the reasons why the Palestinians had always rejected such Legislative Council proposals, saying

Referring to the refusal by the Arabs of Palestine of a Legislative Council in 1922, Jamal Eff. Husaini said that Mr. MacDonald could hardly be unaware of the reasons for that refusal. At a time when their brethren in Iraq and Syria were beginning to enjoy real executive power, the Arabs of Palestine had been offered a Legislative Council which was no more than a sham. In 1930 His Majesty's Government had refused a Legislative Council although such a measure had been recommended by the Parliamentary Commission.²⁷⁸⁵

Back on 11 February MacDonald had continued:

But the Palestinian Arab Delegation had made one point which was of first rate importance. They had said that it was not a question of material advantage or disadvantage but of moral and political values. HMG understood that. The Arabs of Palestine had seen the steady and at times large Jewish immigration, to which there was no definite limit set under any existing agreement, and they wondered when, if ever, it was to stop. Hence they feared eventual political domination by an alien people. The British people understood these sentiments because they shared them and, in similar circumstances, would themselves make material sacrifices in defence of their freedom. He wished it to be understood that HMG accepted the principle that there should be no domination of Arabs by Jews in Palestine.²⁷⁸⁶

This still fell short of simple, immediate, self-government with proportional representation, as articulated by the Palestinians and practiced by them, by the way, in determining the Christian/Moslem composition of their own committees and delegations.²⁷⁸⁷ MacDonald would later advocate that "the Legislative Council would have a majority of elected Palestinian members, but it would also contain British and Palestinian Heads of Departments appointed by the HC."²⁷⁸⁸

²⁷⁸³ FO 371/23223, p 251.

²⁷⁸⁴ FO 371/23223, pp 312-37.

²⁷⁸⁵ FO 371/23224, p 136.

²⁷⁸⁶ FO 371/23223, pp 259-60.

²⁷⁸⁷ See Lesch 1973, p 19.

²⁷⁸⁸ FO 371/23232, p 315.

Even at this late date, on 14 February 1939, twenty-one years into British colonial control, there could occur at **the 6th meeting** an exchange between Jamal al-Husseini and Malcolm MacDonald as if the British had no background knowledge: To Jamal's statement that "the Arab Delegation had laid down their claims and... wished to hear the proposals or counter-proposals of the Government", the Colonial Secretary replied that first, "the United Kingdom Delegation... would have liked to hear the arguments of the Arab Delegation in support of their first demand, namely, the creation of an independent Arab State in Palestine." Such arguments had been delivered year by year, sometimes month by month. MacDonald's desire for something complicated and protracted seems to have come up against something that could only be asserted simply and briefly: "Jamal Effendi Husaini said that his claim was based simply on the Arab right to self-determination."²⁷⁸⁹

At **the 7th meeting** on 16 February MacDonald offered the Arab Delegation a reason for denying them self-determination:

Recent events... had shaken the confidence of those [Western] Governments which were interested in Palestine affairs in the ability of an Arab Government to give adequate security to the substantial Jewish minority in Palestine. He accepted Jamal Eff. Husaini's statement that the Arabs of Palestine were not anti-semitic. But it was, nevertheless, a fact that circumstances in Palestine during the last twenty years, culminating in the events since 1936, had created a very strong feeling against the Jews in Palestine. ... [T]he political leaders of the Palestine Arabs have often confessed themselves unable to restrain the actions of the more violent of their countrymen. ... He [MacDonald] thought that if this country [the U.K.] were to be persuaded that an Arab State was the right solution, public opinion must first be impressed by the conduct and actions of Arabs in Palestine.²⁷⁹⁰

This speech was repeating the common refrain that it was "circumstances", seemingly *sui generis* or in any case not British-caused, which were responsible for Arab feelings against Jews. That the main "circumstance" was the "Jewish Zionist aspiration" for a Jewish state in Palestine was apparently taboo. Incidentally, the talk of Jamal's "violent... countrymen" brings to mind the pot's calling the kettle black.

Jamal accordingly countered this unawareness that during the last twenty years the British themselves had been the architects of the situation: he reiterated that "before the War for centuries there were no pogroms or collisions" between Arabs and Jews, and that the British, not the Arabs, were responsible for the few clashes that had since the War occurred, which themselves were not anti-semitic but were "an attempt to draw the attention of the British Government to Arab wrongs and calamities and in no case had Commissions of Enquiry laid blame on the Arabs." (All the Commissions, from Palin

²⁷⁸⁹ FO 371/23224, pp 72-73.

²⁷⁹⁰ FO 371/23224, pp 130-31, 181-82.

through Peel, had laid the blame on Britain's forcing Zionism. [>88; >122; >220; >233; >336]) Were the British to fulfil the demand for independence, the "people of Palestine" would no longer be prone to "disorder".

The surrounding Arab countries, moreover, would guarantee the safety of the Jews – as would the military strength the Jews had already amassed, estimated at 50,000 men.²⁷⁹¹

In conclusion, Jamal Husaini assured Mr. MacDonald that if the Arabs obtained their independence, the Jews would have much better treatment in Palestine than they enjoyed at present anywhere in Europe. The history of the Arab people had shown this to be so. ... [T]he Arabs did not wish to get rid of the Jews, but... if the Jews wished to leave Palestine, so much the better. If they wished to remain, the Jews would be given the same status as others and there would be no question of domination. If we proceeded on these lines the day might come when it would be difficult to say who was or was not a Jew in Palestine...²⁷⁹²

Seven years later, at the Anglo-American Committee hearings in Jerusalem [>437; also >436], Albert Hourani's stance would be the same:

[I]t might be asked, what could the Jews expect under Arab rule in a self-governing Palestinian state with an Arab character? To this it should be enough to refer to the minutes of the proceedings of the 1939 Conference – which I believe are already in your hands – when Jamil Effendi Husayni, speaking as spokesman of the Arab delegation, made clear that what the Jews could expect would be full civil and political rights, control of their own communal affairs, municipal autonomy in districts in which they are mainly concentrated, the use of Hebrew as an additional official language in those districts, and an adequate share in the administration. ... The Arabs are offering not... ghetto status in the bad sense, but membership in the Palestinian community. If that community has an Arab character, if the Palestinian state is to be an Arab state, that is not because of racial prejudice or fanaticism but because of two inescapable facts: the first that Palestine has an Arab indigenous population, and the second that Palestine by geography and history is an essential part of the Arab world.²⁷⁹³

There seems to me something artificial in the need to justify that, say, a country full of indigenous Koreans should be a 'Korean' country, or a country populated by Italians should be 'Italian'.

Also at the meeting on 16 February Jamal, despite the fact that British rulers like Churchill had dishonestly denied that the Jewish home meant a Jewish commonwealth or state, trusted the assurance that no Jewish state was contemplated, now given by MacDonald and "the present British Government, but who could guarantee that another Government would not reverse policy?"²⁷⁹⁴ (Exactly that happened: the following Churchill and Atlee Governments would reverse MacDonald's policy.) In closing, Jamal accurately added that during the present talks MacDonald had been saying nothing new, nothing that had not already been discussed back in 1921.²⁷⁹⁵

²⁷⁹¹ FO 371/23224, pp 134-35, 189-90.

²⁷⁹² FO 371/23224, p 137.

²⁷⁹³ Hourani 1946/2005, p 87.

²⁷⁹⁴ FO 371/23224, p 137, 146-48.

²⁷⁹⁵ FO 371/23224, p 148.

While at this time MacDonald (and HMG) did at times accept “the right of the people of Palestine to independence”, in blatant contradiction to this he still “did not accept the idea of an Arab majority voice in the government, and thought that the safeguards [for the Jewish minority] should be fairly strong.”²⁷⁹⁶ He therefore also flinched at the term ‘Arab state’, preferring ‘Palestinian state’, leading George Antonius to comment:

The statement that there should be no Arab State was not easy to understand. It must mean that there should be no Palestinian state, since, once there was such a state it must have the **colour** of the majority of its inhabitants.²⁷⁹⁷

Antonius, by the way, was sick in bed during much of the talks, and thus in these minutes his words were relatively rare.

It was also on 14 February, but at a meeting with the Jewish Agency, that MacDonald explained his readiness to fulfil Arab demands not on grounds of indigenous rights or even on earlier British promises, but on the “strategic” and “security” need for the support of India and the Middle Eastern and North African countries in “a possible war” with Germany.²⁷⁹⁸ He bluntly told the Jewish Agency delegates that the “vital support” and “friendship of the Arab world [and] that of the wider Moslem world” was more important to Britain than the loyalty of the Jews.²⁷⁹⁹ [also >385] On the basis of this geo-strategic reasoning MacDonald’s Conservative colleague, Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax,²⁸⁰⁰ at the same meeting urged the Jews to “dispose of their rights by offering terms of conciliation”²⁸⁰¹ – but only after assuring his Jewish and British co-conferees that “the Jewish community was more intelligent than the Arab” and that “[t]he fact that the Arabs were less intelligent would add weight to their feelings”, and for this reason “No one could assess with any precision the potential ‘nuisance value’ of the Arabs.”²⁸⁰²

²⁷⁹⁶ FO 371/23224, p 198.

²⁷⁹⁷ Quoted by Hattis 1970, pp 205-06; also Lesch 1979, pp 175-76, citing minutes of 7th and 8th sessions, FO 371/23224.

²⁷⁹⁸ FO 371/23224, pp 6-9, 27; also Abdul Hadi 1997, p 105.

²⁷⁹⁹ FO 371/23224, pp 25-26, 30-31.

²⁸⁰⁰ Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1st Earl of Halifax.

²⁸⁰¹ FO 371/23224, p 33.

²⁸⁰² FO 371/23224, p 32.

At the 8th Palestine-Britain meeting on 18 February 1939²⁸⁰³ MacDonald right away said that he would go along with George Antonius's plea to ignore the wishes of the U.S. and the "countries represented at Geneva" and instead look at "what was right". He also noted that Jamal al-Husseini had said that he "saw before him some youthful members of the British Government and recognized the enthusiasm of youth. He had said that if Mr. MacDonald [age 37] and Mr. Butler [36] were Arabs they would be Arab Nationalists" – whereupon Antonius interrupted, saying that Jamal had said 'extremists', not 'nationalists'; MacDonald said yes, they would be "the extreme of extremists", but "not be so foolish", because extremists "do harm to their cause":

In the case of the extremists in Palestine, he would not for a moment subscribe to the view that they were noble men; if anyone present suggested that they were, that would lead him to feel that the time was not ripe for Arab government in Palestine. (pp 179-80)

These contradictory statements thus ended with one rule for the negotiations: the Palestinian negotiators should disown a large part of the Rebellion.

MacDonald then broached the question of responsibility in Palestine:

Jamal Eff. Husseini had said that the responsibility for the campaign of terrorism did not lie with the Arabs, and that it was only the policy of the Balfour Declaration which had caused a change in the habitual tolerance of the Arabs. MacDonald [speaking] thought that there was a good deal of justice in this, but all three parties, Arab, Jewish and British, must accept a share of the responsibility. The policy of HMG in promoting the National Home had aroused fears among the Arabs...

He was watering down British responsibility and substituting the language of subjective "fears" for that of objective injustice,²⁸⁰⁴ but at least these exchanges led to an unequivocal statement that HMG would state that it did not pursue "the eventual establishment of a Jewish State". (p 183)

Returning to the central question of "an independent Arab State in Palestine", Tawfiq Pasha Abul-Huda, one of the Palestinian Transjordanians,

thought that the British delegates had gone round and round the subject without expressing a definite opinion... MacDonald had given them to understand that HMG thought it possible to form a national Government in Palestine on certain conditions, e.g., safeguards. He also understood that they were trying to avoid the expression 'Arab Government'. ... The Palestine Delegation had stated what their objective was.

²⁸⁰³ FO 371/23224, pp 175-200, all citations.

²⁸⁰⁴ See Allen 2017, pp 386-87, 389, 399-401.

But, he continued, the British were still unclear about both their objective and “the length of the transitional period”. To which MacDonald replied that HMG “recognized the right of the Palestinians to control their own affairs *in due time* [also ‘in due course’]” but that time had not yet arrived. (pp 186-87, 198)

MacDonald’s having brought up the Legislative Council proposals of 1922 [^{>133-137; >142; >146}] led Jamal to make a few crucial points. He said he

would only observe that... its composition was such that the members in favour of the policy of the Balfour Declaration were in the majority. That fact was quite sufficient to account for its rejection by the Arabs. ... [H]e then thanked Mr. MacDonald for his kind words with reference to the activities of extremists in Palestine, but he felt that he must repeat that this extremism had been created by His Majesty’s Government and their policy. For twenty years the Arabs had been harassed by this policy: for twenty years they had received nothing but promises: for twenty years their demands had been met with bitter refusal on all sides.

Now, with the common British-Palestinian task of outlining a constitution, Jamal

wished to insist on the two points which he raised the other day: (a) there should not be guarantees on a communal basis; (b) no preference should be given to the minority which exceeds its numerical value. If these points were not dealt with, they would always be a source of trouble. As regards the [individual, not communal] guarantees, they should leave no loopholes, and the safeguards which should be given were those which were normal in all civilized countries. (pp 189-92)

Instead of tackling Jamal’s crucial insistence on a constitution free of references to communities or ethno-religious groups – a stance repeated by Jamal and shared by George Antonius at the meeting on 4 March [^{>395}] – MacDonald moved on to the question of immigration, saying that the “nature of other safeguards, such as parity or ‘weightage’, had been debated at the previous meeting” and, “to put it plainly, [HMG] did not accept the idea of an Arab majority voice in the government...” (pp 197-98) This explicit rejection for Palestine of a democracy such as it practiced at home in the British Isles was the twenty-year-old cause of Britain’s dilemma.

The parity option was very much alive and, as MacDonald spelled out in a meeting with the Jewish Zionist delegation on 17 February, it of course meant that since each side would have veto power, the Arab side could veto all further Jewish immigration,²⁸⁰⁵ – a stipulation that remained *a fortiori* in the representative democracy option of 17 May 1939 White Paper [^{>410}] which Parliament approved on 22-23 May [^{>411}].

Further on the subject of immigration, according to his report (for British eyes only) of his meeting on 19 February with the (non-Palestinian) representatives of the Arab states, MacDonald said that it should not lead to a Jewish population greater than 35-40%, and that furthermore there was on the British side certainty concerning “(1) No Jewish State.

²⁸⁰⁵ FO 371/23224, p 237.

(2) Independent Palestine State recognized in principle. (3) An international body to be appointed to frame the future constitution.”²⁸⁰⁶ “In principle” but not yet in practice, and the residents of Palestine were seen as unqualified to write their own constitution.

²⁸⁰⁶ FO 371/23225, p 180.

The 9th meeting on 20 February continued with the old arguments about immigration, with Jamal endeavouring to show that it had far exceeded the economic absorptive capacity of the country even before the surge in immigration in the mid-1930s; the British tried at length to refute this claim during the following days, particularly at the 10th meeting on 22 February.²⁸⁰⁷

When George Antonius added that the Royal Commission [^{>336}] as well as previous Commissions had seen that immigration should be restricted not only on economic but also on “political, social and psychological” grounds, MacDonald concurred.²⁸⁰⁸ At the meeting between the British and Jewish Delegations, also on the 20th and also dealing with immigration and land sales, Chaim Weizmann was countering that “Unremitting industry was a fundamental characteristic of the Jewish people, whilst the Arab was content to graze his goat.”²⁸⁰⁹

The 10th meeting (22 February) was attended by eighteen representatives of Arab States (including Iraq’s General Nuri as-Said) and eleven Palestinians, namely Jamal al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi, Musa al-Alami, George Antonius, Yacoub Farraj, Hussein al-Khalidi, Ragheb Nashashibi, Alfred Rock, Amin Tamimi, Yaqoub Ghussein and Fuad Saba.²⁸¹⁰ HMG’s “reply to the Palestinian Arab case about immigration” began with Malcolm MacDonald’s picking out of Jamal’s “full-blooded attack on the Administration of Palestine during the last twenty years” the single issue of whether or not the economic absorptive capacity principle had been (deliberately) violated, and whether the Shaw Commission [^{>220}] had or had not recommended “a reduction in the rate of immigration”. In the Colonial Secretary’s view, Jewish capital had with the exception of 1927-29 been able to employ almost all Jewish immigrants, but he

realised that the case of the Palestinian Delegation rested to a large extent on the argument that Jewish immigration had done material damage to the Arabs. They might admit that the Jewish immigrants had been absorbed, but they would claim that Arabs had been crowded out.

MacDonald also argued that the Palestinians were on average materially better-off, and greater in number, due to Jewish immigration. (pp 65-73) As we have seen, the Palestinians had argued that significant numbers of them were definitely worse off economically than they would be without Jewish investment and immigration, but mainly that the issue was not primarily economic, but political. MacDonald then spoke a further sentence to that point –

²⁸⁰⁷ FO 371/23224, pp 298-307 and FO 371/23225, pp 18-23, 65-78.

²⁸⁰⁸ FO 371/23224, pp 308-09 and FO 371/23225, p 76.

²⁸⁰⁹ FO 371/23224, p 362.

²⁸¹⁰ FO 371/23225, pp 60-85, *all citations*.

Mr. Antonius had pointed out that economic factors were not the only consideration and he [MacDonald] would deal later with the other factors. (p 73)

On the question of available land and land sales, as well, MacDonald subscribed to the argument that there was no problem, although he simultaneously said there might be one after all:

He did not think that anyone who had read the Reports of Sir John Hope Simpson, the Royal Commission and the Woodhead Commission [^{>233}; ^{>336}; ^{>376}] could doubt that, with the existing methods of cultivation in Palestine, the place for further settlement of Jewish immigrants was very limited. ... The Administration were under an obligation not to facilitate Jewish settlement if it would interfere with the rights and position of other sections of the population and they had to take account not only of the existing population but of the fact that the population was rapidly increasing.

The increasing indigenous population had always been the forgotten factor in computing how many immigrants, on how much land reserved exclusively for them, Palestine could “absorb”. Based on his hard-to-follow, fence-sitting preface, MacDonald then said flatly that “The British Government were not convinced that the time had come for definite restrictions on the sale of land in Palestine.” (pp 73-74)

Of course, said MacDonald after this long speech on economics before an audience of over 40 people,

as Mr. Antonius had pointed out, the matter could not be considered from the purely economic point of view. One of the mistakes of the Jews had been that they put all the emphasis on the economic aspect and ignored the political, social and psychological effects which had to be taken into account and which might be more important than the economic factors. (p 75)

It was “the Jews” who’d made the mistake, not Britain. He added a lecture about the world’s obligation to “help the Jews to get into new countries” because “homes for all these could not be found in Palestine”. (pp 76-77)

He then reverted to the Palestinians’ subjective “fears”: “The original Arab population of Palestine feared the steady growth and, perhaps, eventual dominance of a new, energetic and wealthy people.” That these “fears” had been shown to be well-founded, he did not mention. He did concede that not only “this fear” but also “the rights of the Arabs” were involved “in this matter”, and “did not consider that immigration should be regulated any longer by the principle of economic absorptive capacity alone... [F]uture policy should aim at removing justifiable Arab fears...” (pp 77-78) He was here agreeing after all with the Arab viewpoint, but as this entry shows, he said many contradictory things and was not firm, within his own heart and mind, on which way, or how far, Britain should go in correcting its Palestine policy.

An Arab – Abdulrahman Azzam of Egypt – finally engaged MacDonald in a short skirmish over the circularity of imported Jewish capital’s requiring imported Jewish labour, and vice versa. (In fact, the same capital could employ cheaper Arabs were the whole project economic, not political.) Then Jamal al-Husseini again took the floor:

[N]one of the Palestine Delegation would lay claim to the eloquence and ability with which the Secretary of State had built up a case out of no case. ... [However] he might be permitted to say that Mr. MacDonald had gone so far in his enthusiasm over the great benefits which Jewish immigration had brought to Palestine that he made the Arabs appear to be lacking in sufficient intelligence to appreciate what was or was not good for them. They had been told that, but for immigration, they would today have no purchasing power, and they had as good as been told that, but for immigration, they would have no children.

After this sarcastic snapshot of British paternalism, he said “he believed that the Palestine Delegation had put the Arab case plainly...” and only added, on the issue of land sales, that though “there had been no legal compulsion” to sell, many had “nevertheless been forced to sell their land;... [Moreover] In the common instances where land had been sold to the Jews by large landlords, the Arab tenants were not responsible for the sale, but the Government was responsible for their eviction as tenants”. (pp 79-80)

Unable to let Jamal’s barb about his “enthusiasm” over Zionism’s benefits stick, MacDonald said his opinion was due to his “fair reading of the Reports of the Peel and Woodhead Commissions”, and he was ready to hear the Palestinians’ arguments for immediate and total stoppage of immigration. (pp 83-84)

At the full Cabinet meeting on 22 February²⁸¹¹ MacDonald confirmed that the Palestinians and the other Arabs were united in demanding “Recognition of an independent Palestine state” [the original, typed word had been ‘Arab’, but it was crossed out and ‘Palestine’ pencilled in], “Complete stoppage of immigration” and “Complete stoppage of land sales to Jews”. He claimed that Ali Maher, speaking for the Arab states, placed “far more insistence” on the first than on the other two, while the Palestinians put more insistence on the latter two. He said “we must not allow ourselves to be landed in recognition of an Arab state”, while Foreign Secretary Halifax added that the “representatives of the Arabs [i.e. not the Palestinians] were ready to agree that we should have the right to veto legislation which would be prejudicial to the Jews”. The example of the Iraqi-British relationship was regarded as a good template.

²⁸¹¹ CAB 23/97/8, pp 301-05.

Colonial Secretary MacDonald asked High Commissioner MacMichael per telegram on 20 February 1939 for his opinion on the usual issues of immigration, future state structure, and degrees and timing of independence.²⁸¹² The exchange was of course ‘Secret’. MacDonald cabled that he had just been convening with the “Arab States (not with the Palestinian Arab Delegation)” and had concocted with them a political strategy: The Palestinians would, so MacDonald, likely concede to a limited number of further Jewish immigrants – but only if painted as a humanitarian “gesture of sympathy” during this time of their persecution in Europe rather than “based on Jewish rights under Balfour Declaration” – and also only if HMG would “go some way to meet (in form at any rate) their demand for an independent Arab state”; for instance, “as a first step... a Council of Palestinian Ministers (wholly Arab and Jew [i.e., not British])”. (p 132)

The immigration concession should be granted, allowing the Jewish population to reach “up to 35 per cent during the next five to ten years” and after that subject to “Arab veto”. (Exactly this formula would three months later be codified in the 1939 White Paper.²⁸¹³ [410]) But what did MacMichael think should be offered in terms of independence, in return for the Arabs’ acceptance of another few ten thousand immigrants? Perhaps an “immediate... constituent assembly representing all sections of the population (Arabs and Jews... in proportion to existing population)”? Its job would be to draft versions of a constitution for the final decision of Britain. Should in addition Arabs and Jews be given Government Departments as “Ministers”, replacing Britons who would be “Advisers” or “Secretaries”, with the present Executive Council being re-named “Council of State”? Power would remain in the HC’s hands but this would be good further tutelage. (p 134)

It is worth underlining the fact that MacDonald was thus even internally, away from Arab ears, seriously contemplating the “immediate” creation of a “constituent assembly”, for this would prove to be the largest bone of contention during the St. James talks that followed [393ff]. It was after all the slow tempo of the creation of such self-governing institutions that in Arab eyes would leave room for further delays, or fudging on substance, or a change of government in Britain – and the whole slow procedure was in any case an insult to the Palestinians’ ability to govern themselves, let alone their right to do so.

Thinking out loud to MacMichael, MacDonald’s concise starting position would be:

- (a) statement that there would be no Jewish State; (b) limitation of Jewish immigration with ultimate Arab veto; and (c) promise to consider establishment of representative institutions once peace is restored. (p 134)

²⁸¹² FO 371/23225, pp 132-41.

²⁸¹³ MacDonald 1939, §§12-15.

The 3rd point was ambiguous enough to leave HMG with exactly the leeway to delay and renege which the Palestinians and other Arabs insisted on ruling out: For when would “peace” count as having been “restored”? But these three points are an excellent thumb-nail summary of the 17 May White Paper.

In reply, **MacMichael** regarded elections and anything other than “local autonomy” as “essentially wrong” and “entirely impracticable”, while the Arab “demand for restriction on immigration” was “essentially right”. (pp 137, 138) He even agreed with what various Palestinians and Arab-friendly British politicians had been arguing since 1930, namely that Britain’s main “obligation” had been fulfilled, viz., “it can fairly be held that the Balfour declaration has already been implemented”. (pp 137-38) He equated “independence” with a sort of “bi-national autonomy”; further, steps towards independence should depend on whether Arabs and Jews “can work together when more closely associated”; concerning advisory bodies, Officials and Jews should be over-represented; and finally, the Effendi and commercial classes might accept this, but not the third class, the *fal-lahin*, who “in normal times prefer control by us to control by the Effendis”. (pp 140-41)

23 February 1939 *Sadhij Nassar (wife of Najib Nasser, owner of Al-Carmel newspaper) is the first woman arrested under the British Defense Emergency Regulations, and is held for 18 months.*

393. Meetings of Arabs, Brits and Jews 23 & 27 Feb & 1 March 1939

The **23 February** meeting was huge, including the non-Palestinian Arab states as well as Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Brodetsky, Shertok, Viscount Bearsted, Mr. Marks, the Marquess of Reading, Rabbi Wise and Mr. Lourie, and for the British MacDonald, Halifax, Butler, Lord Dufferin, Shuckburgh, Bushe and Baxter); Ali Maher Pasha of Egypt, General Nuri as-Said of Iraq and Fuad Bey Hamza of Saudi Arabia were joined by their lawyer, H.I. Lloyd).²⁸¹⁴ (p 146) MacDonald first conceded that

It was obvious that the Mandate could not continue for ever and that one day the people of Palestine must have their independence. If we were to follow the model of Iraq, the Mandate would be replaced in due course by an independent Palestinian State in treaty relations with Great Britain.²⁸¹⁵ There was much criticism in Palestine to-day because the British Government had taken no steps during the past twenty years towards conceding the people of Palestine the political freedom which their neighbours had gradually gained. (pp 147-48)

HMG would however insist on protecting the interests of Britain, the “various religious communities” and “the Jewish community”; Ali Maher Pasha then noted his failure to mention indigenous rights, going back to the basic point that “Great Britain never had the right to dispose of Palestine.” (p 155) As usual, the Arab position was for representative government with “equal rights” for “the Jews who were in Palestine at present”; immigration and other normal political questions would be settled once independence was attained. (pp 155, 156)²⁸¹⁶

Ben-Gurion said somewhat later not only that “the country had made great material progress in the last twenty years”, but also that “there were certain points which had to be made clear. The first was that the Jews were in Palestine of right, not as guests or as aliens. ... It was legitimate for the Government and people of Egypt to say whether or not they would accept further ‘guests’ within their frontiers. But this was not the case with Palestine.” (pp 161-62) As this shows, Churchill, Herbert Samuel and John Shuckburgh had made a good job of it when they inserted the clause into the Churchill White Paper of 1922 asserting the Jewish collective “right” to enter and/or be in Palestine, rather than their presence “on sufferance”. [p142]

Ali Maher Pasha then started a skirmish with Ben-Gurion, asking

what Mr. Ben-Gurion meant in calling Palestine the Jews’ ‘own country’. Mr. Ben-Gurion said that the world admitted the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine dating back over 3,000 years. Ali Maher Pasha enquired whether they held that this was a valid claim under international law. Mr. Ben-Gurion replied that it was so recognised in the Mandate, which was an international instrument. Ali Maher Pasha remarked that the Arabs at one time in history achieved wonders in Spain, but that they laid no ‘historical claim’ to that country.

²⁸¹⁴ FO 371/23225, all citations.

²⁸¹⁵ See Cmd. 2370.

²⁸¹⁶ Also Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 106-09.

[also >45; >143] Mr. MacDonald intervened to suggest that Mr. Ben-Gurion should be allowed to continue his statement. Mr. Ben-Gurion, continuing, said that the Jews did not regard themselves as a minority in Palestine in the same sense in which they were a minority in Egypt or Iraq. (p 163)

Ben-Gurion seems to have been relying on the Zionist premise that all the Jews in the world were part of Palestine's polity or citizenship.

Fuad Bey Hamza interjected that

he saw no point in continuing these meetings if the proceedings were to consist simply of general speeches. ... Moreover, the last word was with the Palestine Arabs, and they (the representatives of the Arab States) only desired to meet the Jewish representatives in order to work out... possible certain practical proposals. ... [I]f the subject for discussion was an independent Arab State, these other matters, such as immigration, would solve themselves, since they would come within the competence of the future Palestinian Government. (pp 165-66, 167)

This exchange once again showed the priority of the Palestinians' traditional demand for independence over their demands for an end to immigration and land sales.

In front of the 7-strong British delegation and the Jewish Zionists, Ali Maher couched his points in historical context, saying that regarding Jewish presence in the Near East, throughout history

All these people lived together happily, sharing a common culture and a common language. The main point for discussion now was not... the general safeguards required for the different communities in Palestine, but the situation created by the exceptional position of the Jews in Palestine. ... [W]hen the Balfour Declaration was issued, the Jews were given an exceptional position in Palestine, and this was the whole point at issue. ... The only way to peace was for the Jews to acquire Arab friendship by pacific penetration. (pp 154, 156)

To the picture of "pacific penetration" he added the fundamental Palestinian point that

Great Britain never had the right to dispose of Palestine. There was no right of conquest, as the Arabs had been on the side of Great Britain in the War. There had been no notification on the British side that Palestine would be annexed. On the contrary, there was the Mandate which made it clear that Great Britain was not the owner of Palestine. Not having rights of ownership, she could not transfer such rights to the Jews. (p 155)

While the mutually-exclusive claims to ownership of Palestine were usually seen as the competing claims of Palestinian Arabs and *Jews*, Ali Maher was making it clear that Britain's actions since 1917 constituted a third competing claim – their own ownership of Palestine. As one Englishman would later write, "We are foreigners in Palestine, and have not a jot of the claim there which native rulers have over their native and voluntary subjects".²⁸¹⁷ It was this claim, not the Jewish Zionists' claim, which was the Palestinians' enemy.

²⁸¹⁷ Jeffries 1939, p 738.

Concerning this tripartite meeting of 23 February, MacDonald told **the 'Cabinet Committee on Palestine' later that day**²⁸¹⁸ that

From the time when the London Conference first opened all the Arab representatives had consistently pressed for the establishment of an independent Arab State in Palestine... by which was meant a State in which the Arabs would be in a majority and the Jews in a minority. (FO p 3)

This was the "Iraq model" (with "Palestinian ministers at the head of departments straight away") rather than the "Egyptian model" with closer military ties to Britain (pp 14-15, 21) which MacDonald preferred and hoped Ali Maher of Egypt could help sell to the Palestinians (pp 15, 18).

At this Cabinet Committee meeting MacDonald also announced the concurrence of Lord Halifax and R.A. Butler, both of the Foreign Office, in his intention to state clearly in the coming White Paper that HMG opposed a Jewish state in Palestine in favour of a Palestinian one under certain conditions – mainly that an administration of Arabs and Jews could function; aside from this they wanted to introduce local Arabs and Jews into the already-existing Advisory Council and Executive Council; this would "sugar the pill" for the Palestinians who were not getting the *immediate* independence which they wanted. (pp 17-21) Secretary of State for India John Simon "thought that it would make a very great difference throughout the Moslem world if we were able to make a public declaration that our ultimate objective was an Independent Palestinian State". (p 23)

Simon also noted that the Palestinians had promised to safeguard the interests of the Jewish minority and that a treaty with Britain could include provisions for Britain's power to make sure "they were as good as their word". (pp 26-27) MacDonald then said "the Jews... had had a considerable shock at the London Conference" mainly because Britain remained committed to making immigration after ten or five years subject to Arab veto, but such a veto was "theoretically just, in view of Arab political considerations". (pp 24, 29-30, 31) Even in the face of the harsh reactions of the Zionists in the morning's tripartite meeting MacDonald preferred to "abandon his ten-years plan" in favour of a five-year temporal cap on immigration. (pp 29-30) He also said that the treaty with the Palestine State should include Britain's retention of the port of Haifa. (p 28)

A skirmish followed over whether the new independent state should be referred to as the "independent Palestine state" or simply "the Palestine state", with Foreign Secretary Halifax noting the "considerable psychological value" of retaining the word 'independent' and the India Secretary implying that the word 'independent' was accurate because the Arabs "had been given independence". (p 30) After Health Minister Walter Elliot expressed fear that "Jewish opinion in America" would turn the U.S. government against HMG's offer of independence and limits to immigration and land sales, Prime Minister Chamberlain said that nevertheless, there was no alternative to MacDonald's plan. (p 32)

Halifax was for inviting Hajj Amin al-Husseini to the next (planned, but never held) Round Table since this would increase the chances of the whole project's success, while Elliot

²⁸¹⁸ CAB 24/284/3, all quotations. (= FO 371/23226, pp 2-23)

was opposed because it would be seen as Britain's having "sold our friends". (p 33) The Chancellor of the Exchequer found that the Jews would have to deal with disappointment, because "In the end... the position in Palestine would be same as that in all other sovereign states, i.e. there would be no practical limit to the powers of a majority government." (p 26) But when "the end" would arrive was not near, with MacDonald saying that "the transitional period would be a long one" (p 26) (The White Paper would speak of ten years.²⁸¹⁹) The tenor of the Cabinet Committee was to take constitutional development as slowly as possible, and it formally approved of MacDonald's course (p 34).

One reason for giving so much detail of this meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Palestine is that I believe it has been misinterpreted by both Susan Boyle and Rashid Khalidi. Boyle²⁸²⁰ is wrong that it was a meeting of "the Cabinet"; it was a Cabinet Committee. She claims that "The Cabinet's prime interest was to safeguard Britain's 'vital defense interests in Palestine'", implying that Britain was insincerely offering something out of naked strategic interest. But the phrase "[Britain's] vital defense interests in Palestine" was minuted only in MacDonald's offhand thought that "we had more vital defence interests in Palestine than we had in Iraq". (p 28) The meeting otherwise did not deal with British defence interests. She also holds the word "independence" to have been "merely a psychological prop"; but as we have seen, the *fact* was that MacDonald was proposing, and the Cabinet Committee approving, independence for the state of Palestine; the only open questions were Britain's desire to retain the Haifa port and some troops and how soon or late such independence would be granted.

Boyle's summary is false:

MacDonald explained that he aimed to ensure at least fifteen years of transition to independence, at the end of which the latter could be further postponed due to evidence of Arab and Jewish noncooperation. The meeting ended with unanimous agreement to 'sugar the pill' of the intended rejection of Palestinian independence by adopting MacMichael's proposal that Palestinians be nominated to the advisory and electoral councils.

First, MacDonald nowhere spoke of "fifteen years". Second, the Committee ended by unanimously agreeing that Palestine should be independent - albeit within the above-stated caveats. Third, MacDonald's remark that adding a few Palestinians to the already-existing Advisory Council would 'sugar the pill' (FO p 10) was likewise an offhand one. Fourth, Boyle seems unaware that the Committee was talking about adding *both* Jewish and Arab "Palestinians" to the two existing Councils, in a ratio roughly to that of their proportions of the population.

Rashid Khalidi similarly writes that

²⁸¹⁹ MacDonald 1939, §10.1, 10.8.

²⁸²⁰ Boyle 2001, p 13.

the British government of the day always intended to subvert even this highly conditional projected extension [offer] of independence to the Palestinians. ... Malcolm MacDonald... and his cabinet colleagues meant to prevent Palestinian representative government and self-determination, even while appearing to grant the 'independence of Palestine'.²⁸²¹

To justify this interpretation his citation merely refers to "Boyle [2001], ... [p] 13, for a discussion of the relevant cabinet meeting of February 23, 1939". He also discusses the consultations between the Cabinet and the Colonial Secretary concerning the issue of Britain's "suppress[ing] the Arab majority in order to make possible the growth of a Jewish majority", writing:

[E]ven when the British appeared to grant the form of a concession on this point in the 1939 White Paper, which envisaged an independent Palestine after ten years, the cabinet discussions at which this initiative was decided upon reveal the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to have been fully intent on withholding the substance of any such concession to the Palestinians. These discussions make it clear that the British intended to make any changes in the system whereby Palestine was governed totally dependent on the consent of a Jewish minority.²⁸²²

But Boyle's and Khalidi's position is not supported by the 'Cabinet Committee on Palestine' documents. As readers of the online document CAB 24/284/3 can see for themselves, neither Chamberlain nor the *Cabinet Committee on Palestine* decided that the Jewish minority should continue indefinitely to hold veto power – much less revealing any "full" intent in that direction or granting the *yishuv* such power "totally".

Khalidi does later walk this back somewhat, writing that the British "offers" of independence and immigration and land-sales restrictions were merely

hedged around with conditions meant to rob them of some of their substance, including the necessity to secure the approval of the *yishuv* for the final steps envisaged, notably independence.²⁸²³

In the end, though, he does not acknowledge any British motives of fairness; the

modifications of its understanding of some of the basic terms of the Mandate... in 1939 [were only made] under the pressure of the Arab rebellion, and out of a cold concern for its strategic position in the Arab world as another world war approached.²⁸²⁴

Readers are also referred to MacDonald's behind-the-scenes opinions expressed to High Commissioner MacMichael, covered in the previous entry, in the few days immediately before the 23 February Cabinet Committee meeting.

But MacDonald, Grattan Bushe, Cosmo Parkinson, Charles Baxter, Lord Halifax and even John Shuckburgh had, in my reading of the documents, come a long way since May 1938 when William Ormsby-Gore was relieved of his duties as Colonial Secretary. I suggest

²⁸²¹ Khalidi 2006, p XXI, citing only Boyle 2001, pp 1-21.

²⁸²² Khalidi 2006, p 35.

²⁸²³ Khalidi 2006, pp 114-15.

²⁸²⁴ Khalidi 2006, pp 233-34; also p 115.

moreover that judgments about British intentions based on “cabinet discussions” should include the last meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Palestine, on 21 April, dealing with the final drafting of the White Paper. [p 408] Far from clearly intending to deny independence indefinitely, the Committee in effect instructed MacDonald merely to make use of vague language in order to keep some options open.²⁸²⁵ Finally, HMG were by their equivocations also trying to placate *the Jews*, not only the Palestinians or Arabs.

On **27 February**, meeting with all Arab representatives without the Jews,²⁸²⁶ MacDonald once again assured them that “the Mandate should *in due course* come to an end and be replaced by an independent Palestine State”. (p 93, *emphasis added*) “Later in the year” yet another Round Table Conference would start with the premise that “there should be a transition period during which Palestine would be working up to complete independence” and would determine safeguards for the “interests of the Jewish National Home”. (pp 94, 96) (The 20-year transition period to date, that is, since 1918, had apparently not yet ‘tutelaged’ the Palestinians sufficiently for self-determination.) Replying to Jamal al-Husseini’s request that, should there be such a further conference, it would handle immigration and land sales in addition to constitutional questions, MacDonald brought up again the new British argument for Jewish immigration (in addition to the twenty-year-old one of establishing the Jewish National Home): “It... could not be dissociated from the Jewish refugee problem [in Europe].” (p 100) This was a further hurdle for the Palestinians, or rather an old one set ever-higher.

On **1 March** at the 12th meeting, with only the Palestinians,²⁸²⁷ Jamal Bey first noted that unless the timing of full independence and the basic constitutional questions concerning majority-minority relations could now be agreed upon, “the present Conference so far at any rate had been practically a failure.” (p 257)

Independence had been held before the eyes of the Arabs in so many forms in past years, but it had never materialised. The Arabs had bitter experience of political declarations which had subsequently been transformed into bubbles, and during the last twenty years scarcely two years had passed without Arab hopes being raised only to be dashed on the rocks of disappointment. — [T]he Arabs of Palestine met Great Britain in the political field together with a third party whose great influence had always succeeded in upsetting the equilibrium and in pulling the Arabs down into the abyss. This unfortunate experience had necessarily created a peculiar psychological atmosphere in Palestine, with the result that the Arabs now believed only in complete realities. (pp 257-58)

The Palestine Arab Delegation thus immediately wanted “adequate safeguards and no loopholes” and a constitution not based on “communal bias”. (pp 258, 260) MacDonald again responded by saying that while the Palestinians wanted an *Arab* state, Britain wanted a *Palestinian* state, “in which the whole people of Palestine, Arabs and Jews alike, would equally enjoy self-government.” (p 263) Without the word “equally” this would be crystal clear, but its insertion raises the old confusion of whether the British were refer-

²⁸²⁵ CAB 24/285/11.

²⁸²⁶ FO 371/23226, pp 92-108.

²⁸²⁷ FO 371/23226, pp 257-70.

ring to equality of the human beings or of the ethno-religious 'communities'.²⁸²⁸ Unfortunately, as the end of the St. James talks approached, the required precision of language was not forthcoming.

The Palestinians then said that a transition period should not exceed three years, and "on the expiration of this period a completely independent democratic Government would have absolute control of the independent Palestine State"; and on the question of land transfers and immigration,

in a country where the land available was less than half of a subsistence area, any alienation of land was a crime directed against the political and social structure of the country. In a country... where the density of the population was so great and the annual natural increase of population was abnormal, the Palestinian Arab Delegation could not under any circumstances accept any artificial increase of the population by immigration, whether Jewish or other. (pp 261-62)

In terms of human ecology, this was an argument concerning environmental, social and cultural carrying capacity.²⁸²⁹

Toward the end of February 1939 'Cairo's al-Ahram published a report that as a result of the London Conference, Palestine would become independent.... Spontaneous demonstrations of jubilation took place... Arab elation was matched by violent Jewish opposition: "On the morning of 27 February a series of bomb outrages occurred almost simultaneously throughout the country. 38 Arabs were killed or fatally wounded and 44 were injured."²⁸³⁰

²⁸²⁸ Also FO 371/23224, pp 189-92, >390; FO 371/23227, pp 238-40, 245, 251, 252, >395.

²⁸²⁹ Seidl & Tisdell 1999.

²⁸³⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 221, citing CO 733/398, p 8, MacMichael to MacDonald, 24 March 1939; also Suárez 2016, p 59, citing TNA, KV 5/34, 72A, 'Secret, 24th May 1939, David Baziél or Bazili'; FO 371/23244 and MacMichael's reports in FO 371/23244; also FO 371/23245, 20-24 (Secret, 21 July 1939, MacMichael to MacDonald).

394. Arabs & U.K. (1st)

2 March 1939

There followed four meetings, on 2, 4, 6 and 7 March 1939, between an Arab (including Palestinians) Delegation and HMG, the two groups together called the (temporary) 'United Kingdom-Arab Committee on Policy'. The Arab side consisted of:

1. Jamal al-Husseini
2. George Antonius, Secretary General, Arab Delegation
3. Ali Maher Pasha, Chief of the Egyptian Royal Cabinet
4. Abdulrahman Bey Azzam, Egyptian, General Advisor, Arab Delegation
5. Tawfiq Bey as-Suwaidi, Iraq
6. Fuad Bey Hamza, Saudi Arabia
7. Tawfiq Pasha Abul-Huda, Trans-Jordan Chief Minister
8. Sheikh Najib Alamuddin, Trans-Jordan, Secretary
9. Muhammad Abdullah al-Shami, Yemen
10. Professor Ibrahim al Mougy

Downie, Bennett and Edmunds were the Conference Secretaries, while the British Delegation consisted of Malcolm MacDonald, R.A. Butler, John Shuckburgh, Grattan Bushe, C.W. Baxter and sometimes Marquess Dufferin, all either of the Colonial or Foreign Office.²⁸³¹

At the 1st meeting on **2 March**²⁸³² the discussants listened to MacDonald's worry about "safeguards" for minorities: "the Jewish National Home was not an ordinary minority, but an extraordinary one, and the question of the safeguarding of its interests presented a unique and special problem". The assumption was evidently that the Arab majority would discriminate against the Jewish minority, despite centuries of peaceful co-existence between Jews and all others in the Arab world and despite the leaders' explicit twenty year-long insistence that this would not be the case.

Fuad Hamza then challenged the vagueness of MacDonald's promise that independence would be granted "in due course" (pp 5, 6) and said that the future constitution could draw on the examples of Switzerland and India, or Egypt, Iraq and Ireland; the Arab participants also demanded another round-table, perhaps in four months (July 1939), to draw up an actual Constitution. (pp 6, 7) Fuad Hamza and Tawfiq as-Suwaidi took the Iraqi constitution as a model for safeguarding large minorities; out of the 4-million population there 1 million were Kurds, enjoying community autonomy in many matters and guaranteed a "stated number of Deputies in the Lower Chamber." (p 19)

Jamal disagreed with the four-month delay, insisting that the fundamental principles of the new Constitution be decided right then, after which "the people of Palestine" would write the actual constitution. (p 11) If written together with the British it might not be accepted by the Palestinians, for it would

²⁸³¹ FO 371/23227, pp 2-3 (= old numbers 57-58).

²⁸³² FO 371/23227, pp 4-22, all citations.

be convoked by the British; and the representatives of Palestine... would be nominees of the British Government. The conclusions of such a body could not be regarded as binding on the country; this could only be so if the constitution were the work of an elected assembly. (p 13)

MacDonald was keen to keep the authorship of the constitutional safeguards for the Jews firmly in British hands, and Jamal saw therein a difference not merely of procedure but of principle; he “could not conceive of an independent Palestinian State unless the people of Palestine themselves were given the right to draw up their own constitution”. (p 15) MacDonald however adamantly stuck to the idea that a constitution largely written by the British would “be submitted for approval to some popular assembly in Palestine”. (p 16)

Jamal then

asked for a definition of the term ‘Round Table Conference’. ... Would it mean that all parties represented would be of equal status? If so, did Mr. MacDonald imagine that the Palestine Delegation would sit with a Palestinian [Jewish or Zionist] minority on terms of equality? Mr. MacDonald said that he thought the exact terminology was unimportant. (p 16)

Jamal’s question, basically the crucial one concerning parity, was “unimportant”.

When Fuad pointed out that the people of Iraq, Egypt and Syria had written their own constitutions, MacDonald

replied that he could not agree that Palestine was on the same footing as the countries which Fuad Bey Hamza had mentioned. The reason for the difference was the existence of the Jewish National Home, to which various parties outside Palestine had obligations which they could not and did not wish to evade.

This invocation of colonial privilege under cover of self-imposed “obligations” – more-over passing the buck to “parties outside Palestine”, presumably including the entire League of Nations even if, like Britain, that assembly of states had no business in Palestine anyway – was not swallowed, and when Fuad “enquired whether the United Kingdom Delegation were prepared to agree to the principle that the drawing up of a constitution should be left to the people of Palestine” MacDonald declined to answer, saying it would be discussed at the next meeting in two days. (p 22)

Two days later, on **4 March** 1939, MacDonald's premise at the 2nd meeting of the U.K.-Arab Committee on Policy²⁸³³ was that a Round Table Conference in a few months' time, similar in form to the one now happening, would decide the nitty-gritty of a constitution – but that “some of these questions” deserved “preliminary discussion” now, namely:

1. the “transition period” from Mandate to State of Palestine;
2. the “conditions to be satisfied before the transition period came to an end”;
3. “safeguards for the Holy Places and for the position of Palestine as a Holy Land”;
4. “safeguards for the Jewish National Home”; and
5. “safeguards for British interests and the interests of other foreign countries”.

That is, the Palestine constitution itself would not be self-determined. Furthermore, immediate independence was not on the table.

Bestowing special political status upon people of Jewish ethnicity or religion – or at least making them a collective entity in any future constitution – was still the bottom line of Britain's values, even if the talks were pushing up hard against that bottom line. HMG as the colonial power was still setting conditions; foreign interests had a veto and the locals could not be entrusted with either the Holy Land or the JNH – the Home to which MacDonald immediately turned his attention. (p 235)

His Government, he said – although the matter had *not* “been carefully considered”! – wanted to lay out their thoughts on safeguards for the JNH because this itself was one of the British interests. While yes, the Palestinians should “work out” their own constitution, “The British Government had been charged by more than half the nations of the world with a special responsibility for the Jewish National Home.” This was one of the two main reasons why “the Jews in Palestine [were] not... an ordinary minority”; the other was that “the Jews” didn't have “a country of their own”. (p 236) This wording showed that the “National Home” should after all be a “country”, and HMG was for about the twenty-first year still not explaining to the Palestinians why this latter fact entailed the Jewish country's construction *in Palestine*. (MacDonald failed to name a third, objective reason why the minority in Palestine was not “ordinary”, namely that at least 90% of this minority were forced immigrants, colonising settlers.)

Ruling out a two-state or three-state solution, HMG suggested four possible rules for the inevitable political battles between the majority and the minority:

1. a “Federal State consisting of two or more Provinces or Cantons, that is to say, an area or areas in which Arabs predominated, and an area or areas in which Jews predominated”; this provided “provincial autonomy” but also a “Federal Authority” with “national powers”;
2. no somehow-autonomous cantons but rather “a bi-cameral legislature, the Lower Chamber elected on a more or less strict basis of population,... [e.g.] two Arabs to one Jew, and the Upper Chamber composed on the basis of parity...”; or

²⁸³³ FO 371/23227, pp 231-64, all citations.

3. same as just above but with only “a single Chamber on a basis of population”, minority protection being achieved not by cantons or by parity in one of the Chambers but rather by dividing the “matters” to be decided into two groups, some subject to ordinary majority decision and others requiring “a majority both of Arab and Jewish representatives”; and
4. vaguely and obviously experimentally, rather than embedding the protection in the structure of the Legislature, the constitution itself should somehow do this: “the constitutional organs should be based on the principle of parity”. (pp 237-38)²⁸³⁴

Jamal Eff. said the third option, although it suffered from the weakness that “it was equivalent to the system of parity which Mr. MacDonald had later criticised as not workable”, nevertheless “lifted politics above the communal plane”;

[S]o long as policy in Palestine was directed on a communal basis, there could be no peace, and we must try to exclude that feature from the constitution. ‘Communalism’ had not been a feature of politics in Palestine before the War, and even now, without any law or regulation on the subject, it would be found that the Arab Christians were more strongly represented than their numbers justified. ... So long as the communal basis persisted, government would always be difficult. ... [A]ll Mr. MacDonald’s suggestions implied the communal basis except suggestion (iii), and even under that suggestion the communal basis was introduced in the proposal that certain subjects should require a majority vote of both Arabs and Jews. (pp 238-39)²⁸³⁵

In today’s terms the Delegation was advocating against communalist bi-nationalism and for an individualistic single democratic state, as more explicitly laid out a bit later by Abdulrahman Bey Azzam of Egypt (p 242) and George Antonius (p 245).²⁸³⁶

Jamal speculated that communalist deadlocks, which MacDonald admitted were pre-programmed in any bi-communal system, might in time be ditched by the people themselves, and referring I believe to any of MacDonald’s four options, i.e. to any constitution for a cantonal or somehow federated non-Jewish Palestine:

He [Jamal] did not think that the Jews would work for it, especially if the constitution were organised on a communal basis in the first instance. If the communal basis were removed at the beginning, there might be difficulties for four or five years, but after that, party [non-sectarian] politics might come into being. (p 240)

“Mr. MacDonald agreed generally with this view”, but saw such difficulties, which Jamal admitted, as a chance to say that they were why “it was not practicable to fix a definite number of years for the transition period” during which British rule would continue:

[I]t would be essential to provide that the transition period should not come to an end unless and until Jews and Arabs were in fact working together and that their future co-opera-

²⁸³⁴ See later variations on these schemes: Anglo-American, Morrison-Grady, Bevin, UNSCOP’s Minority Plan and, to a lesser degree, UN Ad Hoc Committee’s Subcommittee 2 [>438; >442; >452; >469; >478].

²⁸³⁵ Also FO 371/23224, pp 189-92, >390.

²⁸³⁶ Also Boyle 2001, pp 11-14.

tion was secured. ... He did not see how the independent state could come into being until such co-operation was assured, but he was not pessimistic as to the possibility of securing such co-operation. (pp 240, 241) [see also >445]

One cannot over-emphasise the importance of this statement, and others like it, for it shows that the British were not in fact at long last and straightforwardly offering real independence: it all depended on “co-operation”, and while the Palestine and Arab delegations were manifesting willingness to co-operate, there was zero sign of it from the “Jews”.

(A digression into British motives: I believe MacDonald *wanted* to make a normal democratic country out of Palestine, but these issues of safeguards for the Jews and indigenous-Zionist co-operation were holding him back. He saw that many “Jews and Arabs” were now actually fighting each other, he shared the Western sense of special status for European Jews, and of course he knew the wrath of the Zionist lobby from Churchill and Samuel on down. Also, unlike his father, Malcolm MacDonald was not the Prime Minister, and I suspect, but can’t prove, that the Cabinet told him outright or between the lines that constitutionally, the Jewish minority couldn’t be handled like just any minority.)

Seven years later Albert Hourani, in his testimony before the Anglo-American Committee on 25 March 1946 [^{>437}], identified this exact same problem: Independence was to be granted only “conditionally upon the Jews and Arabs having already found a way of peace”.²⁸³⁷ [also >412; >414; >417] In any case, the prospect in March 1939 was that this British attitude left rule in Britain’s hands, with independence indefinitely postponable. Both the Zionist veto power, based on the implicit parity between them and the indigenous²⁸³⁸, and the indefinite prolongation of the Mandate which it implied were unacceptable to almost all Palestinians. This was why the White Paper was never accepted by the AHC. That said, the White Paper retained ambiguous language on this point and HMG, through MacDonald, had at various times told the Palestinians that they would not let the Jewish side stand in the way of the constitution for the State of Palestine.²⁸³⁹

Tawfiq Bey as-Suwaidi of Iraq asked the practical question of what “matters” would be subject to *both* Arab and Jewish majorities under option (3), whereupon MacDonald named “internal security, tariffs, finance..., land sales and immigration”; as-Suwaidi then “asked what would happen if the Arabs wished for the restriction of immigration and the Jews opposed such restriction. Who would be the competent authority to decide such a matter?” MacDonald had no answer. (pp 240–41) The example of tariffs was also raised, where Jews wanted them to protect industry, which was now in their hands, but the Arabs wanted the lower prices resulting from free trade.²⁸⁴⁰ (p 247)

Abdulrahman Hassan Bey Azzam, who would be General Secretary of the Arab League as of 22 March 1945, got back to principles in suggesting a fifth alternative:

²⁸³⁷ Hourani 1946/2005, p 83.

²⁸³⁸ FO 371/23227, pp 244–45; also Boyle 2001, p 17, citing FO 371/23230.

²⁸³⁹ FO 371/23227, p 372 [^{>397}] for just one example.

²⁸⁴⁰ See Smith 1993, pp 160–81.

In practically every constitution there were certain matters which could not be touched by the Legislature, for example personal freedom. Could we not select the few matters in which the Jews feared that the Arabs might destroy their vital interests, and provide in the constitution that in these matters the status quo must not be altered? This would avoid deadlocks, and the Jews would know where they stood, as their fundamental interests would be definitely safeguarded by the constitution. (p 242)

A bill of rights, that is, as was common in many democratic countries, to block a tyranny of the majority. Azzam was asserting that this solution would work, but alas, it was also the solution that would bury the Jewish State of or in Palestine forever. One wonders why MacDonald hadn't included it in his list.

Jamal returned to his argument against the communal concept, referring to his own experience:

It was a matter of experience that the Jews in Palestine were never satisfied with what they got, even under the Mandate. On the Municipal Council with which he had been connected, the British and Arab members had nearly always agreed, while it was the Jewish members who stood out. One of the British members had told him that this was because the Arabs were content to accept 100 per cent of what they were entitled to, the British usually accepted 80 per cent, but the Jews were never content with less than 150 per cent. (p 244)

MacDonald conceded this, but said the Jews had mitigating circumstances. (p 250)

Fuad Hamza of Saudi Arabia, instead of taking up Azzam's suggestion, then offered within the framework of MacDonald's option (3) above a list of things that might require majorities within both communities (p 243) (things which of course could also be untouchably anchored in the constitution under Azzam's fifth alternative):

1. personal liberty
2. freedom of thought
3. the exercise of religion
4. personal equality before the law
5. a guaranteed proportion of Jews in public offices
6. municipalities with jurisdiction over local matters

His similar list given a bit later expressed the 5th point as "there should be a fixed proportion of the inhabitants in Government positions and in the Legislature". (p 253) Tawfiq Pasha Abul-Huda supported this position as well. (p 255) Objectively and logically, "freedom of thought" plus some freedoms probably intended by Azzam in his concept "personal freedom" (freedom of expression, assembly, and association) would protect the rights of the Jewish minority in their collective activities as well as any constitution can do such a thing.

George Antonius then said, indirectly in support of Abdulrahman Azzam's fifth alternative, that

there would be no advance as long as the minority knew they possessed a veto. What the minority could properly demand would be the safeguarding of certain principles by their

embodiment in the constitution, reinforced perhaps by certain other outside factors. The tendency of such a [non-communal, in Jamal's terms (see just above)] constitution would be to impel all the inhabitants towards a feeling of equal citizenship in a unitary state. (p 245)²⁸⁴¹

He also reminded the meeting of the uncomfortable point, valid throughout the ages, that despite constitutional devices "It was a truism that no constitution could work unless there was the will to work it." (p 251)

But MacDonald did not budge from his fear:

[I]f sovereignty were placed *unreservedly* in the hands of the majority, the latter would have the power to over-ride *completely* the interests of the minority. (p 247, *emphasis added*)

Whether or not colonialist MacDonald was here 'projecting', he spoke as if he had not been listening and/or did not really believe the Arabs when they repeatedly insisted that although they would "have the power" that majorities always have, they saw the necessity of preventing the majority's "unreserved" power by identifying non-abrogable "interests" of the members of the minority, such as those listed by Azzam and Fuad just above. He similarly could not rid himself of the idea of the majority's "over-riding" or "domination", for instance when he later first correctly observed that an Arab majority "would undoubtedly put a stop to Jewish immigration", but then added that "this meant that the Jews would be dominated...". (p 259) Bringing in "domination" once again implied that he was neglecting the distinction between what a majority could legitimately decide and the rights it could not "touch", as Abdulrahman Bey Azzam had put it.

At this point John Shuckburgh, present at the meeting and nearing the end of a full two decades co-running Palestine, touchingly interjected that "he thought also the aim of the [present] Conference [was] to get a change of heart", which Jamal then concretised:

[I]f the Jews wanted to live in Palestine peacefully they must agree to a policy of compromise. If they wanted to get away from a State organised on a communal basis, they must remove communal features and pursue a policy of ordinary political status for all the inhabitants of Palestine. What safeguards were there for the Jewish minorities in England or in the United States? What was meant by domination? ... Let the Jews live in Palestine on equal terms with the other inhabitants and with equal rights. ... The Jews would be transformed into ordinary citizens. Even now they had Armenians, Circassians and other minorities who had the right to vote and lived amongst the Arab community and pulled together with them. (pp 251, 252)

Shuckburgh's superior MacDonald then fell back on framing the problem not in terms of rights or politics but of "learning": the "transitional period" was now, he said, necessary as the period "during which the Jews and Arabs had learned to work together". (p 260)

Antonius added that "the Jews were asking for the moon in demanding rights beyond those of an ordinary minority", and that the Jews should "decide that the period during which they possessed exceptional privileges was passing away and that they must adjust themselves to a State in which they would have the rights of ordinary citizens...". (p 251) Jamal added the view that

²⁸⁴¹ Also Antonius 1938, pp 333, 390-91; Boyle 2001, p 14; FO 371/23224, pp 189-92, >390.

If the British Government would leave the Jews of Palestine alone, and there was no interference from the Jews of the world outside, they would be the happiest people in the world. Otherwise there would be no hope of peace. (p 260)

The Palestinians had constantly argued that the Mandatory was deliberately sacrificing peace to the policy of forcing immigration and the collective political rights of the immigrants onto the local people – not a prescription for “happiness” for either side.

Azzam of Egypt then said that what the Arabs were suggesting was a greater degree of guaranteed freedoms and local autonomy than Jews had “in any part of the world”, somewhat sardonically raising the two-decades-old question:

Nobody knew precisely what the meaning of the term ‘Jewish National Home’ was, and perhaps the British Government should make clear their view on that point, but the self government which the Jews would attain under the Arab proposals would come somewhere near that conception. ... On the other hand, if the political Zionists thought that the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine meant that there was no sort of home for any of the other inhabitants of the country, there could be no agreement of any kind. (p 254)

MacDonald however stated that ‘Jewish National Home’ was “a term which, he was afraid, was not capable of final definition.” (p 256) Did he blush? The British, he was saying, had for 21 years and four months employed a term which they could not define but which was the absolute foundation stone of their policy.

The very ambiguity of the concept had of course been the shy but steady workhorse of the Zionist Mandate, and using the concrete example of immigration, MacDonald harnessed it once again:

If an Arab majority were empowered to place a veto on immigration,... to that extent the idea of the Jewish National Home would be defeated, and the larger interests of the country as a whole would be sacrificed. The life of the Jewish community was of vital importance to Palestine. (pp 256-57)

Aside from MacDonald’s paternalism of knowing what was good for Palestine, he was also begging the question by arbitrarily defining the Jewish National Home, using the code-words “the Jewish community”, as a necessary condition for the welfare of the “country as a whole” and *ipso facto* for the Palestinian majority. But exactly that was the issue in question because the Palestinian majority didn’t see it that way. This is a literal example of wiping the Palestinians from view. Finally, MacDonald again invoked ethical/political parity: “The British Delegation were anxious to be fair both to the Arab majority and to the Jewish minority.” (p 257) According to Ben-Gurion, at a meeting on 15 March Jamal Husseini challenged MacDonald’s premise of political parity, which MacDonald tried to deny.²⁸⁴²

MacDonald’s statement was actually true that “If an Arab majority were empowered to place a veto on immigration,... the idea of the Jewish National Home would be defeated...”, because the Zionist Jews could then *never* reach a majority. And in the event, MacDonald in his White Paper would renounce what he had said, quoted just above, in

²⁸⁴² Ben-Gurion 1968, p 410.

fact including exactly this Arab “veto on immigration”, albeit after five years.²⁸⁴³ Given such a reality of a permanent non-Jewish majority, though, the Palestinians could have been far more sanguine concerning the actual date of full independence: However long Britain dilly-dallied about that, even the Jewish Zionists would have had to resign themselves that their goal of a Jewish state was not achievable in all of Palestine. This would have put the Palestinians in a very strong position, strong enough anyway to be a strong reason to accept the White Paper at the end of May. [*see also >412*]

Prominent in the discussion were also the questions of when and with how large a super-majority the constitution could be altered (pp 255), the possibility of obstructing the Arab majority concerning normal matters, and the necessity, for future co-operation and harmony between the two communities, of ending the Zionist rules of hiring no Arab labour and selling no land to Arabs (pp 248, 254, 258). Regarding land in general, Antonius reiterated that whatever land was now still unused was “required for the natural increase in population”. (p 258) He and Jamal reminded the British that neither Zionist industry nor agricultural settlements were, on average, profitable without outside help. (pp 258-59) Finally, Azzam said once more that “now that 400,000 Jews had entered Palestine the Jewish National Home had already been established”, the more so as the “Jews had political and spiritual freedom and a cultural centre. ... He thought that the Jews attached far too much importance to mere numbers”.

Then MacDonald’s position hardened: unless the Arabs would agree to “safeguarding” the Jewish National Home in Britain’s sense – presumably agreement to one of his four options laid out at the beginning of the meeting –, “the British Delegation would regard themselves as released from their suggestion of an independent Palestinian State”. (p 264) He did not however specify which of the four options was Britain’s preferred method of “safeguarding”, rendering the statement somewhat empty. As we shall see, the White Paper of 17 May did carry through with their “suggestion of an independent Palestinian State” – not an ‘Arab’ state, to be sure – even if it wouldn’t happen before a delay of up to ten years and even if during the next five years 75,000 more immigrants would be let in. [*>410*]

²⁸⁴³ MacDonald 1939, §13.ii.

At the 3rd meeting of the 'Committee on Policy', on **6 March**²⁸⁴⁴, MacDonald opened with the statement, which turned out to be true, that the dialogue with the Arabs "would have its influence on any unilateral declaration which might be made", but he also re-stated the three British pre-requisites for the constitution of the new state with which he had also begun the meeting two days earlier²⁸⁴⁵: protection of 1) the Holy Places, 2) British interests and 3) "the Jewish National Home, in respect of which they [HMG] were agents of the League of Nations". (p 325) The foreseen Arab – even Moslem – majority, or the Islamic world in general, which had protected them against the Christians 800 years earlier, was what these had to be "protected" against.

He dictated the meeting's agenda, which would be to "state the ultimate objective, but not to define it closely..." then discuss the "period of transition" Britain had decided was necessary in lieu of immediate independence, the "first step" being "the addition of Palestinian members to the Advisory and Executive Councils". He said that "What was most important... was to get the peoples of Palestine to co-operate in practice and to break down their inhibitions and mutual suspicions"; and he put the bone back in the throat of the Arabs by making independence contingent:

If there was to be an independent Palestinian State it was essential that there should in practice be co-operation between the Arab and Jewish people and political leaders. ... [T]he essential condition for the establishment of full independence for Palestine was not that a certain period of years should have elapsed but that a state of affairs should prevail in which there would be a reasonable assurance of continued co-operation between Palestinians. (pp 325-26, 327) [*see also >445*]

Logically, since co-operation is a two-way street, "full independence" was to be contingent also upon the attitude and behaviour of the ethno-religious minority, which in any case would balk at calling themselves "Palestinians".

Jamal al-Husseini immediately protested that MacDonald was "receding" from his position of 2 March [*>394*], when "he had suggested a transitional period of five years; now he was proposing to leave it indefinite". MacDonald replied that Jamal was confusing the "constitutional transition period" with the five-year transition period for immigration ("after which the control of immigration might be handed over to the appropriate organ of Government in Palestine"). (pp 327-28) However that might have been, Jamal answered:

[I]f Mr. MacDonald's suggestions were followed there would never be co-operation between the two peoples in Palestine. This would never come so long as the Jews felt that they could delay independence. Jewish intransigence would only break when they knew that the Arabs would have their independence by a stated date and that the British Government would not

²⁸⁴⁴ FO 371/23227, pp 325--351, *all citations*.

²⁸⁴⁵ FO 371/23227, p 235.

intervene. Had it not been for the moral and physical force of the British Government behind them, the Jews would have come to an understanding with the Arabs long ago. [T]he Palestine Delegation... were convinced that so long as the Jews had influence (which they believed to be strong) over His Majesty's Government, the Arabs of Palestine could have no confidence in the latter. In insisting on a short transition period they were moved therefore by the fear of a change of Government in Great Britain in which the Jews would exert all their power and influence to upset the settlement in Palestine. (p 329)

That's exactly what happened after Churchill became Prime Minister of a new Government on 12 May 1940. [>424]

Jamal then went into the history of the matter:

The Palestine Delegation wished for a clean and decisive operation. The policy of drift for the last 20 years had led to the destruction of their country, and they could not give way on this issue because it was vital to their country's very existence. The Arabs of Palestine had lost everything that they cared for, and failing decisive assurances from the British Government it would be a matter of war. They were being strangled economically and politically by Jewish immigration; he believed that if there had been no General Strike in 1936 they would have been stifled already, and would not be here defending the Arab cause before His Majesty's Government. ... He would take no responsibility for a settlement in which there was an indefinite transition period. The stage of tutelage in Palestine was long past; they should have had their independence in 1920 as did the people of Iraq [as of 10 October 1922 or 3 October 1932];... (pp 329-30)

A half-hour later MacDonald, presumably without blushing, said that "a start had to be made somewhere in developing self-governing institutions in Palestine..."; he even admitted that he could not "give there and then reasons why that [transition] period should be indefinite, whilst he realised also that the Arabs' objections to its indefiniteness were reasonable". (pp 342, 344) At any rate, whatever feelings of sympathy MacDonald displayed it was this indefiniteness of the transition period in the eventual White Paper – even though explicit mention was not made of what could cause the period's (indefinite) extension, namely Zionist non-cooperation – that was indeed one of the two major reasons why many Palestinians rejected it, the other being actual Zionist intransigence, likely (but not certainly) giving them a veto over independence. [>394-397; >405; >410; >412]

It is here worth noting that eight years later, on 6 February 1947, Foreign Secretary Bevin and Colonial Secretary Creech Jones would recommend to the Cabinet that any period of British Trusteeship under Article 76 of the United Nations Charter preceding full independence should be *limited*: "a definite time limit shall be fixed for this period of transition. The period suggested is five years."²⁸⁴⁶ [>452] At least Creech Jones was not making independence dependent on "cooperation" between the indigenous and the forced immigrants.

Returning to the 3rd joint 'Committee on Policy' meeting: Jamal continued by saying that in the absence of an agreement the British

²⁸⁴⁶ CAB 129/16/49, p 327.

might attempt to impose a policy of their own. They could of course wipe out the Arabs of Palestine quite easily, but he thought this would be hardly creditable to His Majesty's Government, since the Arabs were asking for no more than those political rights which were accepted by the whole civilised world. (p 330)

MacDonald agreed with Jamal that "the Jews would never come to any understanding with the Arabs so long as they felt that His Majesty's Government stood behind them", but that without co-operation, when the transition-period time limit had run out the Palestine State would begin under "inauspicious circumstances" and the British would once again have to "step in". (p 331)

Jamal in reply:

[I]f Great Britain ceased to treat the Jews like spoiled children, all would be well. There was no difficulty with the Jewish communities in Egypt, Iraq and India, but, so long as the Jews felt that the Government were backing them, there was no hope that they would ever be satisfied. ... The Jews had made a hell of Palestine for the past 20 years; the Land on which the spiritual aspirations of so many people were centred had never passed through such terrible times. ... There were now 400,000 Jews in the country and it was time that *another place* was found for the Jewish National Home. ... When the Jews said that they desired co-operation with the Arabs this was only lip service, but the Arabs of Palestine, who were not a politically minded people, were speaking from their hearts. (p 332) (*emphasis added*)

Jamal's attitude was one of being neutral towards or even supporting a Jewish state, but in "another place".

George Antonius somewhat later similarly emphasised

that Mr. MacDonald always thought of the Jews as privileged citizens in Palestine. In fact they were ordinary citizens and the régime of special privileges for them was coming to an end [and] if the Jews were willing to become ordinary citizens of Palestine without exceptional privileges, there would no longer be any incitement to the Arabs or to anyone else to treat them with discrimination. (pp 343, 347)

That is, the Arabs' beef was with the Jews' political intentions; it was completely in the hands of the Jewish inhabitants to eradicate the causes of potential Arab discrimination against them.

After Antonius supported Jamal's argument that "unless a definite term was set for the transition period, a loophole would be left for Jewish obstruction", MacDonald answered that "it was a fact for which none of us were responsible that in Palestine as it is, a minority could by non-co-operation hold up the government of the country". This was an admission that by setting the pre-condition of harmony and co-operation he was handing the Zionists veto power. Moreover, concerning this shirking of "responsibility" Abdulrahman Azzam rhetorically "asked what had created this position", whereupon MacDonald pleaded that the "United States of America, France and other countries had a certain amount of responsibility for the Balfour Declaration", but Azzam corrected him: "In Palestine the British Government had created the present problem and must liquidate it". (pp 334-35)

After some bickering concerning the insertion of Palestinians into the Palestine Government and what to do should the Jews not co-operate, MacDonald finally budged, or contradicted himself, saying that

the British Government were anxious for co-operation between Arabs and Jews, not with any idea of giving the Jews a veto, but because they desired to see an independent Palestinian State. ... *If the Jews should refuse to co-operate then he could say with fair certainty that they would be dropped.* The Executive Council would include Arabs even if the Jews objected and refused to sit with them. (pp 338, 344, *emphasis added*)

Whatever the mixture of sincerity and appeasement in these words, he had seen that the central question was the Jewish veto. He a bit later confirmed, concerning the small transitional step of turning the country's administration over to locals, that "the British Government would not postpone the first step [introducing Palestinian Ministers] if the Jews refused to co-operate". (p 343) He however two days earlier had said the opposite, namely that "He did not see how the independent state could come into being until such co-operation [on the part of both sides] was assured,..."²⁸⁴⁷ [>395] MacDonald was learning out loud, fine, but what counted was what would be written in his White Paper [>410].

When Jamal tried to return to the principle that "any body which formulated the constitution should be representative of the people", MacDonald replied that "they were not in a position at that moment to agree to this or that safeguard being embodied in the constitution. Those were issues which it would take a long time to settle". (p 348) Antonius then objected that "the Palestine Delegation" were not now able to "go back to Palestine with agreement on questions of principle", and was seconded by Jamal who said that "no service would have been done to any future Conference unless agreement were reached on the vital matters of guarantees for the existing Jewish community in Palestine, the future of immigration, and the land question". (p 350)

This was a return to the discussions of the 2nd meeting on 4 March [>395], and MacDonald, with the concurrence of Rab Butler, said they needed more time for

expert advice [in order] to indicate their preference for any particular form of constitution, such as a bi-cameral legislature, a cantonal system, etc. He thought that they could agree on the principles of complete self-government and non-domination. (p 350)

This was a rejection of Jamal's just-uttered opinion that the constitution could and should be decided on by the people affected, and specifically by a group of formulators "representative of the people". Thereupon Jamal "asked what was meant by the word 'non-domination'", and MacDonald answered that "he meant that neither race should be in a position to interfere with the rights of the other". Jamal "replied that after their due rights had been given to the minority community the policy of any democratic government must be the policy of the majority", thus giving MacDonald some basic tutelage in democracy.

Antonius "added that Mr. MacDonald seemed to be obsessed with the idea of a privileged position for the Jewish minority in Palestine, in which they could require the majority

²⁸⁴⁷ FO 371/23227, p 241.

not to express its will according to normal democratic procedure". (p 351) Whether or not MacDonald was fixed on "privileging" the Jews or rather not trusting the Arabs, he was still framing the problem in terms of "race", of groups, i.e. "communally", as in the 2nd meeting – a premise rejected by the particular group of Palestinians and other Arabs he was talking to.

When on **7 March** 1939 at the 4th and final meeting of the U.K.-Arab 'Committee on Policy'²⁸⁴⁸ it was debated whether British plans for Palestine's constitutional future should or would be subject not only to Arab but to Jewish veto, Ali Maher Pasha once again made the most fundamental observation:

If Palestine had been an empty country, Egypt and, no doubt, the surrounding Arab countries, would have welcomed the establishment of a Jewish State there [and, that not being the case, asked] the Zionists to recognize the existence of the Arab inhabitants in Palestine, whose ancestors had lived there for 1,300 years, who were attached to their native soil, and regarded the incoming Jews... as intruders. (p 359)

He also asked the Jews to depend no longer on "the aid of [British] force [but rather] the good will of the Arabs". MacDonald in turn acknowledged the "expediency and necessity for slowing down the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine", while Fuad Bey Hamza of Saudi Arabia called not for slowing down but stopping altogether Jewish immigration, recalling that "the Arabs did not recognize that the Jews had any right to Palestine."²⁸⁴⁹

This dialogue happened three days before MacDonald's final statement ending the St. James Conference. The meeting had begun with the Colonial Secretary's postponing discussion of constitutional questions (state, federation, cantons, various legislative setups, safeguards for the Jewish minority) because, precisely then, "a telegram was being sent to the High Commissioner [Harold MacMichael]" [^{>398}] and until the HC replied, one couldn't "prejudice future discussion by giving any indication of the direction in which the minds of the British Delegation were moving". Jamal said that in that case he "wished... to urge on the British Delegation the importance of setting a definite time limit to the transitional period". MacDonald: it "should terminate when certain conditions were established in Palestine" (p 370) – relating to the co-operation, or lack thereof, between the two races. [^{see >396}] By means of an exchange of telegrams with his High Commissioner MacDonald thus broke the momentum of the most constructive talks ever during the 30 years of the Mandate: meetings 1-3 of the United Kingdom-Arab Committee on Policy.

Jamal al-Husseini

rejoined that this would mean the transitional period lasting forever. ... He recalled that the Parliamentary [Shaw] Commission of 1930 [^{>220}] had recommended the development of self-governing institutions. Progress had been very slow, and when at last the Legislative Council proposal had taken shape it was destroyed by the Jews. [^{>271; >279; >283; >284; >289; >290}] As he had previously had occasion to remark, so long as there was this third party which could wave its magic wand over the British Government, the Arabs of Palestine could have no confi-

²⁸⁴⁸ FO 371/23227, pp ~352ff, all citations.

²⁸⁴⁹ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 109-10.

dence in that Government. He was sorry to have to repeat this; but in Egypt and Iraq, for example, though progress towards independence had been slow, His Majesty's Government had stood by their word. (p 371)

He also

reminded Mr. MacDonald that, when they had met in 1930 [²⁸⁴⁴], Mr. MacDonald had told him that HMG intended to stand by Lord Passfield's White Paper [²³⁴]. No more than three weeks afterwards that White Paper was abandoned. (p 371)

Following this reference to his father's Black Letter of 13 February 1931 [²⁴⁶] MacDonald repeated his offer made at the previous meeting²⁸⁵⁰ that

HMG did not intend to be held up by obstruction in Palestine. If either people refused (as the Jews might) to co-operate in the first stages of the transitional period, these stages would go ahead without them. ... He would assure them that whatever policy HMG announced, they would adhere to and carry through Parliament and the League of Nations... (p 372)

At least pertaining to "first stages", that is, the Jews would, so MacDonald now promised, have no veto. Ali Maher Pasha welcomed this "assurance regarding a unilateral declaration" which would not be altered under Jewish pressure. (p 373) Jamal, on the other hand, was not ready to believe HMG would remain unbending, leading MacDonald to repeat that "though HMG anticipated strong pressure and trouble from the Jews when their policy was announced, it would go through nevertheless". (p 374)

This pledge would be officially broken by HMG in September 1946, after the intervening World War II, when Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin explicitly said that lack of harmony between Arab and Jew rendered the "self-government" foreseen by the 1939 White Paper "doomed to failure", entailing the abandonment of that White Paper.²⁸⁵¹ [⁴⁴⁵]

Tawfiq Bey es-Suwaidi, referring to MacDonald's repeated statements that some sort of co-operation between Jews and Arabs was indeed a precondition to freedom,

thought that, even if fifty years elapsed, it would still be very difficult for HMG to decide that circumstances justified the emancipation of Palestine, so long as the Jews maintained their present aspirations. ... Jews whom he had met recently had said clearly that they did not want independence until they were in a majority there. If this was their frame of mind, it was impossible to leave any uncertainty as to the date when independence would be achieved. (p 376)

As the content of the eventual White Paper would show, there was some truth in MacDonald's following statement that "these discussions had been extremely useful in persuading the British Delegation as to the kind of policy which was right in Palestine". (p 377) Grattan Bushe and Frederick Downie [*see* ³⁹⁴], particularly, had also officially, if only within the Colonial Office, shown support for the Arab vision of democratic control over their country. [³⁶⁶; ³⁶⁷]

²⁸⁵⁰ FO 371/23227, p 343, also pp 372, 374 and FO 371/23232, pp 3, 4, 18, 75.

²⁸⁵¹ FO 800/486, pp 3-4.

In my opinion, it was comments like these from MacDonald and the CO staff – that the Zionists would not be allowed to block the road, even if they refused to “co-operate” – which led most of the Palestinians present to be inclined to accept the White Paper when it came out on 17 May [410] and went through Parliament, culminating in approval by the Commons on 23 May [411]. I believe they had over the past year seen that MacDonald and the present Government were changing their position in their direction.

The White Paper then being drafted would also cover the issues of immigration and land sales, and MacDonald was reminded that “the natural increase of the Jewish and Arab population made it quite impossible for the Palestine Arab Delegation to accept further immigration”; moreover, regarding land, the average holding amongst Arabs was now 58 dunums [5.8 ha.] while the lot viable was 111 dunums. (p 378)

It was Antonius who then got back to the deepest deadlock between Britain and the non-Jewish citizens-to-be of Palestine: (pp 379–80)

Mr. MacDonald failed to take account of the fact that the Palestine Arabs had never recognized [legitimised] the policy of the Mandate or the Jewish National Home. They had not come to this conference to bargain.

The British position now, he continued, was nothing new:

Independence, for example, was implicit in the terms of the Mandate. ... The only thing that mattered was the fixing of a definite period for the establishment of independence, and this the British Delegation had refused.

Regarding land issues, he reminded MacDonald that HMG’s current offers were like those on offer “in 1935 or 1936, but that nothing had yet been done”. (p 380) Keep in mind that, as Jamal al-Husseini had just pointed out (p 371), the Palestinians had been badly burnt by the House of Commons’ failure [242] to endorse the Passfield White Paper [234] and by MacDonald’s father’s Black Letter which overturned that White Paper [246], however slightly that White Paper had really improved the locals’ standing in Palestine. [also >237; >243; >247]

Jamal, as well, said that on immigration “the Palestine Arabs did not believe in bargaining...”, but he could not even get MacDonald to agree to find and deport the up to 40,000 *illegal* immigrants in the country – although this would simply be “applying the law” – but only to promise to “put a stop to illegal immigration... in the future”. (pp 380–82) Fuad Bey Hamza “suggested that if the illegal immigrants were legalized they should be counted as new immigrants [meaning fewer new permits]”, to which MacDonald gave a vague assurance that HMG would consider that. (p 383) Finally, Jamal pointed out that “the Palestine Administration deported Hauranis from Syria and Trans-Jordan who had entered Palestine for seasonal work”. (p 384) When MacDonald in spite of this fact reiterated that the illegal immigrants “could not be turned out”, Abdulrahman Azzam “said that if immigration and land sales could be stopped, there would not be so much difficulty in Palestine”. (p 385) This was reminiscent of the Palestinians’ demand in the summer of 1936 that if the British would only at least temporarily suspend immigration, one could sit down at a table together. [>301; >306-07; >311-12]

When Rab Butler asked Jamal whether he “had some proposals to make on the subject of immigration”, Jamal replied that “he might have some suggestions to make if the Government were prepared to carry out his suggestions with regard to illegal immigrants [namely, counting them as new immigrants]”. (p 386) By thus asking for that very small concession – that the Government apply its own immigration laws – Jamal and Antonius would be going out on a weak limb in suggesting agreement with a bit more immigration – even if it would be less than the 75,000 immigrants HMG’s new White Paper would permit. This readiness for compromise was hinted at a few weeks later by Antonius.²⁸⁵²
[>406; >412]

Mr. MacDonald then “suggested they adjourn and meet again after the High Commissioner had replied to the telegram which had been sent to him” and again insisted that because of the need for certain conditions to be met HMG would not fix a definite duration of the transitional period. (p 387, 389) Another meeting of this Arab-British ‘Committee on Policy’, however, never happened.

²⁸⁵² FO 371/23232, pp 268-70 & 365-69.

At the 4th U.K.-Arab meeting on 7 March MacDonald had explained that constitutional questions must be postponed until High Commissioner MacMichael answered his telegram of the same date. [^{>397}] In that 'secret' telegram²⁸⁵³ he told MacMichael that at the four 'Policy Committee' meetings just held agreement had been reached [sic.] with the Palestinian Arabs

to leave aside for the time being discussion of form of constitution of an essential independent Palestine State and to concentrate on arrangements for the transition period.

There was disagreement because the British

pressed the view that no fixed time should be set for the transition period and that an essential condition of an advance from the transition period to an independent State should be that Arab and Jewish co-operation is assured [while the] Palestinian Arab Delegation press strongly for definite time limit to transition period and fixed time-table for advance through various stages to an independent State. As noted above, we have resisted this...

There followed some proposals about the ratio of Arabs to Jews in various transitional bodies and their competencies.

MacMichael replied on 8 March²⁸⁵⁴ that since "Palestine is still in a state of disorder verging on civil war" all of MacDonald's proposals were unrealistic. Susan Boyle's reading is accurate that MacMichael now "advised MacDonald to propose autonomy rather than independence, conditioned on proof that the Arabs and Jews were cooperating".²⁸⁵⁵ MacMichael added that MacDonald was not clear where ultimate "power and responsibility" would lie if not in "the Mandatory as represented by the High Commissioner", and on 11 March MacDonald commented internally, "I am not sure that [MacMichael] has fully understood the proposal."²⁸⁵⁶ Indeed, were John Chancellor or even Arthur Wachope in 1939 still High Commissioner, the Palestinians would have had a better chance.

²⁸⁵³ FO 371/23228, pp 93-95.

²⁸⁵⁴ FO 371/23228, pp 96-98.

²⁸⁵⁵ Boyle 2001, p 13.

²⁸⁵⁶ FO 371/23228, p 92.

This entry should be read along with >410, which covers the MacDonald White Paper text.

On 10 March 1939 MacDonald circulated to the 'Cabinet Committee on Palestine' the "substance of final proposals to be communicated orally to Arab and Jewish delegations".²⁸⁵⁷ (p 291) He had expressed similar views in his memo to the Cabinet of 18 January and to his Palestinian and other Arab guests at St. James. [>383; >387ff]

CONSTITUTION (1) The Balfour Declaration does not mean that Palestine should be a Jewish State. (2) His Majesty's Government's ultimate objective is the termination of the Mandate and the establishment of an independent Palestine State, either of a unitary or a federal nature, in treaty relations with Great Britain. (p 292)

The two-state solution was thus excluded, although the concept "federal" state was vague enough to include something very close to it, as indicated by MacDonald's distinguishing "federal" from "unitary". Further, (3) The "people of Palestine" through either elected or nominated representatives would form a "National Assembly" which would "draft" a constitution; this amounted to granting the Palestinians permission to draft their own constitution, as had been demanded by Jamal al-Husseini and some Arab-State representatives at the 1st and 3rd meetings of the 'United Kingdom-Arab Committee on Policy' [>394; >396]²⁸⁵⁸, but Britain would be "represented on the Assembly" in order to assure the constitution had certain "provisions", viz.:

(a) security of and access to the Holy Places; (b) protection of the different communities in Palestine in accordance with the obligations of HMG to both Arabs and Jews, and for the recognition of the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home; (c) safeguarding the interests of Great Britain and other foreign countries. (p 292)

Since one of HMG's purported "obligations" was protecting the Jewish National Home, the contradictions within that concept and between it and an independent Palestine State remained unresolved; at least, though, the JNH was now built, established, and now only had to be "recognised". And MacDonald was apparently accepting the Palestinian demand to author the Palestinian constitution.

Continuing, (4) in a "transitional period" of undefined length Britain would retain "ultimate responsibility" as Mandatory. Then:

(5) As soon as peace and order are sufficiently restored, initial steps would be taken during the transitional period to give the people of Palestine, by stages, a part in the government of the country. (p 293)

²⁸⁵⁷ FO 371/23228, pp 291-94, *further citations.*

²⁸⁵⁸ *E.g.* FO 371/23227, pp 11-16, 348-50.

The “sufficient” level of peace and order would be determined by Britain, and there is no mention of *how* peace and order would be restored – whether by a slow process of increasing co-operation and harmony between the conflicting parties or by the British military.

Stage *one* would see in the “legislative sphere” a majority of “unofficial” members (i.e. non-employees of the Palestine Government) who would be appointed to an “Advisory Council”, and in the “executive sphere” an Executive Council made up of “five British members” plus three Arabs and two Jews “selected” from the members of that Advisory Council – i.e., this Executive Council would have an even number of members and would have a 7-3 majority over the Arabs who held a 7-3 majority among the population (and an even greater majority among the residents of Palestine who were actual citizens).

Stage *two* would see the “conversion of the Advisory Council into a Legislative Council with a majority of elected unofficial members, with certain powers reserved to the High Commissioner”; specified were neither the rules for the election nor which “certain powers” were meant. Further, certain “members of the Executive Council” would become heads of “Departments”. The powers of the Legislative Council “might” moreover be “increased”. (p 293)

According to the next point (6), the Arabs’ demand that fixed dates be set was rejected: HMG “would hope that the whole process could be completed in ten years”, but all depended on “the situation in Palestine”; “within two years”, but only “if conditions in Palestine permit”, HMG was “prepared” to “hold elections for a Legislative Assembly [not ‘Council’]... the composition of which would be a matter for consultation between the different parties”. The vaguenesses here do not need comment, but MacDonald did plan to convey “orally” to the two “different parties” that “HMG would not regard the effective co-operation of both Arabs and Jews as essential before convening the National Assembly...”. (p 294)²⁸⁵⁹ That is, according to these words from MacDonald to the Cabinet, the Jewish minority, through non-cooperation, could not block this step. This was incidentally the first mention of a ‘National’ Assembly – either the ‘Legislative’ Assembly or the Assembly to write the Constitution was meant.

Continuing, still in the mode of thinking out loud,

but [HMG] would not contemplate recognizing an independent State and withdrawing altogether from Palestine unless they were assured that the measure of agreement between the communities in Palestine was such as to make good government possible. (p 294)

That is, while non-cooperation by one side would not block the “National Assembly” it would, at a somewhat later stage, block an “independent State” standing on its own. The Jewish minority *would* be able somewhere down the road to block the political development, i.e., prevent Britain’s voluntary withdrawal from an independent Palestinian state. “Non-agreement between the communities” would not prevent steps towards independence during the “transition period”, but could prevent the final step. In this scenario

²⁸⁵⁹ Also FO 371/23227, pp 343, 372, 374; FO 371/23232, pp 3, 4, 18, 75.

the “new Constitution” would thus spell the retention of power, indefinitely, by the High Commissioner. And of course “agreement” – co-operation, peace and order? – could be “measured” only by HMG.

It is admittedly difficult to untangle the various reasons for delay for various stages of the process ending in independence. While it is tempting to keep it simple and look only at what the White Paper actually said, such utterances by MacDonald to both the Palestinians (and/or Arab States) and his fellow Cabinet members in the run-up to that document do bear significantly on the question of whether HMG could be trusted to put their newly-found pro-indigenous principles into practice. And on this question of trust would hinge to a great extent the decision of each Palestinian on whether or not to accept or reject the White Paper. [see mainly >412; >414]

Next, MacDonald told the Cabinet his plans for continuing the influx from Europe: Under the heading “B. IMMIGRATION” a fixed maximum number of immigrants over a fixed period of five years was foreseen, namely 130,000, apparently computed from the goal of bringing the percentage of Jews up to “34 per cent”; 40,000 of these would be legalised illegal immigrants. This was a maximum number because the criterion of “economic absorptive capacity”, as defined by the High Commissioner, still applied. (The White Paper itself, two months later, would lower the total number to 75,000, but not including the estimated 40,000 illegals, making the theoretical total 115,000 instead of 130,000.)²⁸⁶⁰ Then came the stipulation fought for by the Palestinians for over twenty years: After five years “no further Jewish immigration would be permitted without the consent of all parties...” (The White Paper would read: “unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it”)²⁸⁶¹ The High Commissioner would continue to determine land sales “throughout the transitional period”. (pp 294-95) The content of this memo would be communicated to the Arabs, including the Palestinians, on 24 March.

²⁸⁶⁰ MacDonald 1939, §14.1.

²⁸⁶¹ MacDonald 1939, §13.ii, 14.3.

400. Maugham-Antonius Committee

16 March 1939

Beginning on 23 February 1939 a **committee** had been convened to clarify the promises made by the British to the Arabs during the period 1915-1918 [>10] but which would also make some broader observations on British management of the mandate.²⁸⁶² Advised by Sir Michael McDonnell, Chief Justice of Palestine 1927-36, the Palestinian/Arab side consisted of George Antonius, Awni Abdul Hadi and Musa Alami, Iraqi Tawfiq Bey as-Suwaidi, and Egyptian Abdulrahman Azzam; Antonius and as-Suwaidi had worked together with Gilbert Clayton in Arabia in 1925.²⁸⁶³ The British members were Lord Chancellor Frederic Maugham, Grattan Bushe, Lacy Baggallay and James Heyworth-Dunne.

Maugham, elder brother of W. Somerset Maugham, right away denied that he would *ad-judicate* the questions – “he was present as the representative of His Majesty’s Government only...” (§4) Thus the Committee’s remit, officially, was not to decide or even recommend anything. The Committee collected and printed the views of the two parties; those of the Palestinians, dated 23 February 1939 (Annex A §1-20), were signed by Antonius and pointed to the fact that British pledges of independence were not only to be found in McMahon’s letters, but that for instance Britain had

dropped proclamations by the thousands in all parts of Palestine... to the effect that an Anglo-Arab agreement had been arrived at securing the independence of the Arabs... (Annex A §19) [>14; >302; >422]

Further, in his reply (Annex D, §1-19) to Maugham’s basic statement (Annex B, §1-44) Antonius said that whatever differences remained concerning the geography of the McMahon-Hussein deal – Maugham had stuck to the view that Palestine was excluded (Annex B §43) – he thanked the British side for “recognising the significance” of the later, clearly re-assuring statements such as the Hogarth Message [>21], the Declaration to the Seven [>25], “certain assurances given by General Sir Edmund Allenby” [>18], and the Anglo-French Declaration [>28], all of which were reprinted in the committee’s report as Annexes F, G, H, and I. (Annex D §2)

The main report’s concluding sections stated:

[T]he attention of the Committee was drawn *inter alia* to the so-called ‘Sykes-Picot Agreement’, the ‘Hogarth message’, the ‘Declaration to the Seven’, certain assurances given by General... Allenby... and the Anglo-French Declaration of the 7th November, 1918. (§19) ... [I]t is... evident from these statements that His Majesty’s Government were not free to dispose of Palestine without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants of Palestine, and that these statements must all be taken into account in any attempt to estimate the re-

²⁸⁶² Maugham 1939 (= Cmd. 5974), all citations. See also FO 371/23232, pp 198-222 for the complete text and pp 164-98 for relevant drafts and comment.

²⁸⁶³ Boyle 2001, p 131.

sponsibilities which – upon any interpretation of the [McMahon-Hussein] Correspondence – His Majesty's Government have incurred towards those inhabitants as a result of the Correspondence. (§22)²⁸⁶⁴

Maugham and the Arabs were thus agreeing that everything did not depend on just the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, specifically not just on McMahon's flabby geographical description therein. But regarding that Correspondence the Arabs' well-known case was firstly that the excluded areas were “west” of the Damascus area, whereas Palestine was *southwest* of that area, and secondly that the reason stated by the British (and also by McMahon in one of the letters) for excluding any area was that it couldn't speak for areas that would come under French control [12] – and Palestine was undisputedly *not* one such area (*see* just below).

Before the Maugham-Antonius Committee convened, the Foreign Office had written a memo, for the attention of the Antonius legal team as well, making the case that McMahon had indeed excluded Palestine from the areas promised independence. Asked by the FO for his opinion on its memo, Maugham said that

in the matter of Sir Henry McMahon's pledge the [Foreign Office] memorandum did not state the case for His Majesty's Government as well as it could be stated, even allowing for the fact that the wording of the [McMahon] pledge was exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory.²⁸⁶⁵

The FO memo, that is, was equivocal about McMahon's equivocations. Maugham was admitting what can be said generally about the British side of the exchanges with Palestinians, that vagueness and ambiguities left HMG free to pursue its desires of the moment. (One may also ask why, if McMahon's words were so “vague”, Samuel could have maintained in the House of Lords on 20 July 1937 with no breath of a doubt that “it was never the intention that Palestine should be included in the general pledge given to the Sherif.”²⁸⁶⁶)

In any case the Committee had laudably opened the long-suppressed files and subjected every word in them to minute scrutiny. But the indigenous case had never been, and throughout the United Nations deliberations of 1947 would not be, *primarily* based on British pledges, but rather, as Tom Suárez succinctly puts it, on “the rejection of all ideas of conquest and recognition of the right of self-determination.”²⁸⁶⁷ They had again and again and again stood simply on their historical and moral possession of the country and their accompanying “natural” political rights.

Therefore, notwithstanding the great emotional value to most Arabs of the Committee's revelations, their potential value in legal argumentation, and their potential to give some Britons a guilty conscience, I believe the amount of time and energy spent on this controversy by scholars and partisans has been out of proportion to its logical place in the

²⁸⁶⁴ Also Barbour 1946, pp 199-200; Smith 1996, p 104.

²⁸⁶⁵ CO 733/409/13, p 5.

²⁸⁶⁶ Hansard 1937, c630.

²⁸⁶⁷ Suárez 2016, p 239.

argument. For *even if* Palestine had been excluded from the areas promised independence, the case for independence and against colonialism would remain untouched: such exclusion would be inconsistent with the inalienable right to self-determination. That said, it is true that politically, *if* the Arab interpretation of McMahon had earlier, say in the 1920s, been clearly publicly proven and acknowledged by Britain to be correct, it would have helped the Palestinians' case immensely – in fact perhaps crippled Britain's case. But there was some truth in Maugham's perhaps self-serving closing point that "what matters to-day is the existing state of affairs". (Annex B §44) But analysing the Correspondence in detail today yields no benefits.

It was principally the Committee's consensus that Britain had had no right to disregard the well-known popular will (§22) – whatever the Hogarth and other letters and leaflets had said – which in 1939 indicated a significant change in the weather in favour of the Palestinians. Another such indication would be the content of the MacDonald White Paper two months later which, despite certain shortcomings, was far closer to granting Palestinian self-determination than ever before thinkable. But as we shall see from PM Chamberlain's backtracking [*see just below*, >402], the Palestinians were still far from victory.²⁸⁶⁸

Also during this year, 1939, J.M.N. Jeffries in his book *Palestine: The Reality* gave a hilarious account of Churchill's treatment of the same correspondence now being wrestled with by the Maugham-Antoniou committee. He noted that Churchill in 1922 had played fast and loose with the Ottoman concept of a 'Vilayet', and to describe this phrase and others such as 'Jewish national home' Jeffries coined a general category: "terminological inexactitude".²⁸⁶⁹ In such cases as the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, that is, the less powerful side was repeatedly in the situation of not even being able to know what it was up against.

Even Lacy Baggallay, who had written the Foreign Office draft ("The Juridical Basis of the Arab Claim to Palestine"²⁸⁷⁰), concluded:

So far at any rate as the McMahon-Hussein correspondence is concerned, the counter-memorandum [of HMG] is likely to be dependent on a forced line of reasoning, and... the case of His Majesty's Government in regard to this correspondence lacks that self-evident and decisive clarity which ought to form the basis of important international acts. (p 54)

According to Susan Boyle, one of Baggallay's realisations was that McMahon's motivation for excluding certain areas was to avoid conflict with French claims; and the French never claimed anything south of Naqoura.²⁸⁷¹ What Baggallay wrote internally on 18 March was that

²⁸⁶⁸ Also Abcarius 1946, p 58.

²⁸⁶⁹ Jeffries 1939, pp 489-501; Mathew 2014.

²⁸⁷⁰ CO 733/409/13, pp 20-55; Porath 1977, p 289, L. Baggallay, 'The Juridical Basis of the Arab Claim to Palestine. Views of the Lord Chancellor', 30 January 1939.

²⁸⁷¹ Boyle 2001, p 8, citing FO 371/23231, p 319.

both Sir H. McMahon and the Sharif must have meant that H.M.G. would carry out their promises to the Arabs in any territory in which French claims were found not to have prevailed when a final territorial settlement had been reached.²⁸⁷²

The loyal Baggallay also wrote that over against the hard-bargaining Arabs

The only point on which we stood adamant was that we would not go so far as they wished in admitting that the whole correspondence was so hopelessly confused and muddled that no one could legitimately say that Palestine was either excluded or included in the area of Arab independence...²⁸⁷³

What? The Arabs said all along that the correspondence was very clear. At any rate, Baggallay closed this memo by writing,

So far as the general effect of the report is concerned, I do not think it can be summed up better than in another phrase of Mr. MacDonald's, that 'we have let the ball touch one stump without removing the bails.'²⁸⁷⁴

The FO memo on the 'Juridical Basis' quoted the Peel Commission of 1936-37 as well: "It was in the highest degree unfortunate that, in the exigencies of war, the British Government was unable to make their intentions clear to the Sherif."²⁸⁷⁵ "Unable"? But did it matter? As Halifax's FO itself stated in a January 1939 memo to the Cabinet:

It cannot be denied that it is inconsistent with the independence of the Arabs of Palestine to make their country a National home for the Jews. ... [And] the Arabs are not likely to be mainly or even primarily interested in the juridical aspects of this question, and the general tenor of their case is likely to be that the Balfour Declaration is inconsistent with the whole spirit in which the Allies declared that the war was being waged.²⁸⁷⁶

For what it's worth, the United Nations Special Unit on Palestinian Rights presents a little-known document supporting the Palestinian view:

On 17 April 1974, The Times of London published excerpts from a secret memorandum prepared by the Political Intelligence Department of the British Foreign Office for the use of the British delegation to the [1919] Paris peace conference. The reference to Palestine is as follows: 'With regard to Palestine, His Majesty's Government are committed by Sir Henry McMahon's letter to the Sherif on October 24, 1915 [Letter 4, >10], to its inclusion in the boundaries of Arab independence... but they have stated their policy regarding the Palestine Holy Place and Zionist colonization in their message to him of January 4, 1918.' An appendix to the memorandum notes: 'The whole of Palestine ... lies within the limits which His Majesty's Government have pledged themselves to Sherif Husain that they will recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs.'²⁸⁷⁷

²⁸⁷² FO 371/23231, p 318.

²⁸⁷³ FO 371/23231, p 319.

²⁸⁷⁴ FO 371/23231, p 319.

²⁸⁷⁵ Peel 1937, II §9.

²⁸⁷⁶ CO 733/409/13, pp 52, 55.

²⁸⁷⁷ UNSUPR 1978a, >'Anglo-French'.

According to John & Hadawi, this memo came to light in 1964.²⁸⁷⁸ Assuming this memorandum was real (I have not found it yet), Britain's perfidy was bottomless. Had it come to light already in 1918, the Zionist Mandate would have had one less leg to stand on.

²⁸⁷⁸ John & Hadawi 1970a, pp 311-12, citing the Westermann Papers: *Memorandum on British Commitments to King Husein*, p 9.

A 'Leading Editorial' in the Iraqi newspaper *Al Nahar* dated 19 March 1939 asked "What do the Arabs expect from Great Britain now that the Palestine Conference has failed?"²⁸⁷⁹

We do not now propose to go into an analytical examination of the various proposals and counter-proposals put forward at the conference [->387#] or give an opinion on their comparative merits, since we do not believe in any proposals other than those laid down by the Arabs themselves for their own land. ... The Arabs have not been unaware of the true nature of the intentions underlying the wrongful treatment they have been receiving hitherto. ... We are unable to make out the nature of the object sought by the English in their threatening attitude towards the Arabs at the London Conference. ... If the English intend explaining away their action by their natural inclination for ambiguity of expression, such flimsy explanation is not calculated to succeed in deceiving the Arabs, who in the past were far from being deceived by such things but only appeared to be deceived in their desire to prove their loyalty to the end...

Not to have feigned "being deceived" would have meant risk of punishment by the Mandatory. In any case, this "disastrous failure" meant that "the only alternative left the Arabs is to seek the realisation of their aims by their own wisely planned measures".

March 1939 'During 1939 the Arab rebellion continued, but with gradually diminishing vigour. ... When in March 1939 Abdul Ramin el Haj Mohammed, their outstanding [G]eneral who carried the greatest reputation and commanded the respect of Palestinians, was killed in action, most of the other principal leaders left the country.'²⁸⁸⁰

24 March 1939 'Lord Eltisley presents Foreign Minister Halifax with a booklet in French, "Le Feu et les Ruines", documenting the suffering of the Palestinians at British hands.'²⁸⁸¹

²⁸⁷⁹ FO 371/23232, pp 152-54.

²⁸⁸⁰ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 292.

²⁸⁸¹ FO 371/23232, pp 26-52.

402. Post-Conference loose ends

17, 20, 21, 24 March 1939

At the Cabinet meeting of 17 March 1939, one week after informing their colleagues of their basic stance [399], **MacDonald and Foreign Secretary Halifax informed the Cabinet**, which, it be recalled, had set up its 'Palestine Committee' in January in order to conduct the St. James talks, that the US-American wish to postpone any proposals had to be met. They also clarified that

we should have had a very good chance of reaching agreement with the Palestinian Arabs but for our refusal to put a definite time limit to the transition period. The Palestinian Arabs had thought that the failure to put a time limit on the transition period would have the effect of encouraging the Jews in an attitude of non-co-operation.²⁸⁸²

According to Susan Boyle, in a letter to the *Times* dated 20 March George Antonius justified the Arabs' so-called unwillingness to compromise:

A limit was crucial, because 'to leave the duration of that period of transition unspecified would give any minority group the power to hinder or indefinitely obstruct the establishment of the fully independent state.'²⁸⁸³

I do not know the ins and outs of why the British refused to place such a time limit, but U.S. pro-Zionist pressure, evidently, was one of them.

Thus, a week after ending the talks with both the Arabs and Jews MacDonald was still trying to decide whether the Jews – as a collective, or community – should have a veto on the constitution to be worked out:

[MacDonald] hoped to find a formula which, without committing us [Britain] to a given period of years for the transition period, would not enable the Jews to hold up constitutional progress by a refusal to co-operate with the Arabs. ... [He] said that it had always been made clear that the failure of the Jews to co-operate would not delay progress during the transition period. The Government had, however, taken the view that the final establishment of the independent Arab State must depend on the Jewish and Palestine [here the word 'Arab' is crossed out and substituted by 'Palestine'] communities being ready to work in co-operation.²⁸⁸⁴

Taken together with earlier comments by MacDonald that if the Jews did not co-operate "they would be dropped" and that HMG "would not postpone" the independence process, or "would go ahead without them",²⁸⁸⁵ the position just quoted means that HMG was sorely tempted to refuse to allow the Zionists in Palestine to in effect veto ("delay", "hold up") progress towards self-government for all the people in a unified Palestine.

²⁸⁸² FO 371/23232, pp 2, 71.

²⁸⁸³ Boyle 2001, pp 15-16.

²⁸⁸⁴ FO 371/23232, pp 3, 4, 18, 75; also FO 371/23228, p 294.

²⁸⁸⁵ FO 371/23227, pp 344, 343, 372, 374; also FO 371/23232, pp 3, 4, 18, 75.

But HMG never really made up its mind, with the result that the wording of the White Paper itself would give both Arabs and Jews *indirect* veto power by making independence conditional upon good “relations”, “co-operation” and even the establishment of “peace and order”²⁸⁸⁶ [>410], and this is the basis for Ilan Pappé’s view that “Arab independence in the whole country would require Zionist consent.”²⁸⁸⁷ Yet the White Paper did not say this in so many words, and as we have just seen the Colonial Office had a few times flatly said no Jewish blockage would be allowed, so in a way the Palestinians were left with the burden of a glimmer of hope: eventually decisive would be the attitude towards the ambiguous, implicit Jewish veto of whichever British politicians happened to be in power. The White Paper’s text left them leeway, leeway they could conceivably use for the Palestinians’ benefit. But could MacDonald be trusted? And who would be in power in a year or two?

To add a bit to the confusion, Nassir Eddin Nashashibi explains that in earlier drafts an “Arab veto over Jewish immigration was to be matched by a Jewish veto on the establishment of a Palestinian state”, but that

Ragheb Nashashibi... welcomed the St James’s proposals especially later when the White Paper was published on 17 May 1939. The White Paper introduced several amendments to the original proposals, the most important of which was the omission of the Jewish veto on the establishment of the independent Palestinian state.²⁸⁸⁸

The term “omission” is too strong, but it is understandable why Nashashibi, father and nephew, could see things this way. British wavering and ambiguity was bound to continue to frustrate the Palestinian negotiators, even if when meeting with MacDonald on 21 March 1939 Ragheb Bey Nashashibi and Suleiman Bey Tuqan said that they, as “moderates”, were satisfied with the British proposals “which had at length removed the obscurity of British policy in Palestine”²⁸⁸⁹.

A month later during the 20 April Cabinet Committee meeting which put the final verbal touches on the White Paper [*also* >408], Halifax showed a typical British-Government attitude favouring a bit of language obscurity. After Prime Minister Chamberlain had pleaded for eliminating all ambiguities, Halifax countered by saying that with all due sympathy for such clarity, in the case before them of trying to find wording acceptable to everybody – the Palestinian Arabs, the neighbouring Arab states, the Jewish Palestinians (a term routinely used while MacDonald was Colonial Secretary which included both the Jewish Zionists and the older-established Arab Jews), world Jewry, the United States and the Opposition in the House of Commons –,

So convinced was he of the need for reaching agreement that he would be prepared to give the Arabs what they wanted, relying on our being able in some way or other to get out of our pledge if necessary when the time came.²⁸⁹⁰

²⁸⁸⁶ MacDonald 1939, §9, 10.

²⁸⁸⁷ Pappé 2010/2002, p 301.

²⁸⁸⁸ Nashashibi 1991, p 106.

²⁸⁸⁹ FO 371/23232, pp 12-13.

²⁸⁹⁰ CAB 24/285/11, p 97.

Nashashibi and Tuqan, that is, made a false assumption about British clarity, for ambiguity was one of HMG's crucial tools; they needed to lay a verbal path for "getting out of their pledges", as Halifax openly said when Chamberlain wanted HMG to start speaking clearly/honestly.

In the event Chamberlain, although asserting around the same time "that the Balfour Declaration 'could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish state against the will of the Arab population of the country'",²⁸⁹¹ on 20 March told the Palestinians definitively that with war approaching Britain could not afford to affront the US, which favoured Zionism; the meetings would therefore be discontinued ahead of schedule after the final gathering on 24 March where MacDonald, reportedly in a soft voice, read a statement which sounded to the Palestinians like a *volte-face* [>404]; this statement, as sent by Britain a few weeks later to the Egyptian government, foresaw independence but, unacceptable to the Palestinians, in the undetermined future rather than at a fixed date.²⁸⁹²

Taking Chamberlain to be sincere, the war which would break out five or six months later was already, via U.S. wishes concerning the future of Palestine, erasing whatever parts of the White Paper truly intended to end the construction of the Jewish national home and a begin normal independence for all the inhabitants of Palestine.

²⁸⁹¹ Marton 1994, p 45.

²⁸⁹² Abcarius 1946, pp 205-07; Furlonge 1969, p 124.

403. Defence Party and MacDonald

21 March 1939

Colonial Secretary MacDonald and officers Brocklebank and Downie **conversed** with Defence Party leaders Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, Suleiman Bey Tuqan, and Fakhri Bey Nashashibi on 21 March 1939, the day before their departure from London, about their evaluation of the St James Conference.²⁸⁹³

[Ragheb] Nashashibi commented favourably on the proposals which the British Delegation had finally laid before the Conference. ... Arab fears of Jewish domination and of Jewish designs on Moslem Holy Places would now be definitely removed, and... the great body of moderate opinion in Palestine... would appreciate this.

He

went on to deprecate any undue disappointment over the results of the Conferences. He said that there were considerable differences of opinion between the various Arab Delegations, and the fact that the Arab States had decided to associate themselves with the opposition of the Palestine Arab Delegation was no index of their real opinions. ... He was confident that when their fears had been removed by the announcement of the Government's proposals, the people of Palestine would abandon violence with relief.

Plausibly, the "opposition of the Palestine Arab Delegation" meant the Delegation members rejecting HMG's proposal.

²⁸⁹³ FO 371/23232, pp 11-15.

On 24 March 1939 the last British-Palestinian meeting took place. To my knowledge **MacDonald's message** there was more or less the content of his proposal to the Cabinet on 10 March. [^{>399}] Of this session, eyewitness Musa Alami reported:

The end of the conference was a curious affair. The Arab delegates were summoned to a meeting at which Malcolm MacDonald read out to them, at top speed and in a low voice, the contents of a paper which he held in his hand and which purported to be a statement of policy, and invited the Arabs to signify, then and there, their acceptance of its terms. Having failed to gather more than the barest outlines, they naturally demurred and asked for a copy of the text to study. To their dismay this was refused to them, and they were therefore obliged to decline acceptance. MacDonald thereupon indicated that the British Government now felt free to make their own decision on future policy without further consulting them.²⁸⁹⁴

The “paper” was surely simply a late draft of the eventual White Paper. Alami later told Bethell that

MacDonald read the proposals to us at top speed and would not even give us copies to take away. We asked him whether it was a matter of take it or leave it. MacDonald said, ‘Yes.’ We said, ‘In that case we leave it.’²⁸⁹⁵

This was one way to end three months of preparation and conferencing – no trace, anymore, of dialogue or respect.

26 March 1939 [*The Foreign Office telegraphs to Miles Lampson in Cairo on 26 March that the “following members of the Palestine Arab Delegation” would soon embark for Beirut on a ship “calling at Haifa en route”: “Alfred Rock, Fuad Saba, Musa al Alami, Yacoub Ghusein, Hussein el Khalidi, Amin Tamimi, Auni Abdul Hadi”. “They have been promised immunity provided they remain on board and do not receive visitors.”*]²⁸⁹⁶

²⁸⁹⁴ Furlonge 1969, p 124.

²⁸⁹⁵ Bethell 1979, p 65.

²⁸⁹⁶ CO 733/408/7, p 13.

Shortly after the official end of the St. James Conference on 17 March, the Arab Higher Committee wrote a 'Manifesto' which was published on 27 March in Damascus by the 'National Arab Bureau', probably written in part by Akram Zu'ayter:²⁸⁹⁷

The delegates of the Arab governments, together with those from Palestine, at the start of their conversations in London, did their utmost to persuade the British government to acknowledge the rights of the Arabs in Palestine. These rights had been infringed in order that Zionist aspirations and insatiable Zionist greed might be satisfied by laying hands on the sacred Arab home. The Arab committee is of the opinion that the essential qualities of goodwill and courage were not brought to the consideration of the just and rightful Arab claims, by which their sacred rights are menaced on the one hand by colonising ambitions and on the other by Jewish greed. (p 373)

The AHC named only one unacceptable aspect of HMG's proposal:

The British Government made certain futile proposals, such as would never satisfy the Arab demands. One of these was that the independence of the Arabs would be recognised provided the Jews would agree and would co-operate with the Arabs: a suggestion that the British Government knew was impossible to carry out. The govt would at the same time permit the continuation of Jewish immigration and allow the purchase of Arab lands by Jews in extensive areas. (p 374)

I do not know which version of MacDonald's proposals the AHC regarded as final in the days following 17 March; at times, indeed, he had suggested that independence would depend on Jewish-Zionist agreement. [see >395-397; >399; >402; >406; >410; >412; >437] At other times he had said the opposite, that intransigence of one side would not block independence.²⁸⁹⁸ However, whether or not influenced by this manifesto, i.e. by the popular will it represented, the White Paper a few weeks later contained no *explicit* Jewish-Zionist veto; but such a veto was implicit, leading to the reasonable belief that the British could appeal to §8, 9 and 10 of the White Paper²⁸⁹⁹ [>410] in order to justify postponing independence because Jewish-Arab relations were not good enough.

Note first, though, that otherwise, the wording of the White Paper fulfilled Palestinian demands except for allowing some further immigration over the next five years. Here, though, it did contain an explicit *Arab* veto over further immigration:

After the period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it.²⁹⁰⁰ [>410]

²⁸⁹⁷ FO 371/23232, pp 373-76, all citations.

²⁸⁹⁸ E.g. FO 371/23227, pp 338, 343, 344, 372, 374; FO 371/23228, p 294; FO 371/23232, pp 3, 4, 18, 75.

²⁸⁹⁹ MacDonald 1939, §8, 9, 10.

²⁹⁰⁰ MacDonald 1939, §13.ii, 14.3.

During those first five years, to be sure, Britain would force into Palestine 10,000 European Jewish immigrants per year, with 25,000 more at the discretion of the High Commissioner but several thousands less to compensate for to-date-unaccounted illegal immigrants.²⁹⁰¹

The AHC's interpretation that the Zionists could in effect veto independence through non-cooperation – or terrorism – is indeed supported by two passages in the final White Paper, first:

The establishment of an independent State and the complete relinquishment of Mandatory control in Palestine would require such relations between the Arabs and the Jews as would make good government possible. ... A transitional period will be required before independence is achieved,... while the people of the country are taking an increasing share in the Government, and understanding and co-operation amongst them are growing.²⁹⁰²

If “understanding and co-operation” did not grow, Britain *could* delay independence. Second:

His Majesty's Government will do everything in their power to create conditions which will enable the independent Palestine State to come into being within ten years. If, at the end of ten years, it appears to His Majesty's Government that, contrary to their hope, circumstances require the postponement of the establishment of the independent State, they will consult with representatives of the people of Palestine, the Council of the League of Nations and the neighbouring Arab States before deciding on such a postponement.²⁹⁰³

The “conditions” or “circumstances” named – good relations enabling good government – meant that the party opposed to pluralistic independence could prevent it by making sure good relations and co-operation did not happen. As Anthony Crossley MP would put it on 22 June while debating the White Paper in the House of Commons²⁹⁰⁴ [>411],

mere Jewish non-co-operation will deny the Arabs what have been admitted to be their legitimate aspirations. [Yet] it is a just aspiration for any subject race to go towards self-government. If so, by what point of logic, by what dictate of reason, by what principle of justice, can the non-co-operation of a minority refuse or cause to be refused the legitimate desires of a majority? (c1974)

For Crossley, the same went for the criterion that “peace and order” must first be restored. (c1975)

What's more, in the White Paper text the “independent State” would have to

be one in which Arabs and Jews share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded. ... His Majesty's Government will require to be satisfied that... adequate provision has been made for... the protection of the dif-

²⁹⁰¹ MacDonald 1939, §14.1 & .4.

²⁹⁰² MacDonald 1939, §9.

²⁹⁰³ MacDonald 1939, §10 (8).

²⁹⁰⁴ Hansard 1939.

ferent communities in Palestine in accordance with the obligations of His Majesty's Government to both Arabs and Jews and for the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home.²⁹⁰⁵

There was enough vagueness here to justify the AHC's attitude that Britain *would* somehow, ten years down the line, decide that these conditions had not been met. HMG would have the cheek, moreover, in the last Article of the White Paper to chastise former British Governments for their "vagueness" in describing its "obligations under the Mandate to both the Arabs and the Jews."²⁹⁰⁶

Before rejoicing in the fact that now, after working together at St. James, the Palestinians could be sure of support from the surrounding Arab states – and from the entire Moslem world – the AHC lamented that

the British Government have shewn that they have no wish to bring peace and security to the holy land and have made it clear that they are being guided by imperial and Zionist motives. This can only tend to render critical the relations between Britain and the whole of the Arab world. (p 375)

The Committee then "offer their profound thanks to their majesties the Arab kings and to the Arab nations and governments, and express their gratitude to the Arab delegations who have taken part in these discussions". They also "seize this opportunity to glorify the patience and firmness of the Arab Palestinian nation... and praise its endurance in suffering injury and injustice to gain its liberty and independence. ... O believers, do you patiently wait, unite and fear Allah, as you are then likely to succeed". (pp 375-76)

²⁹⁰⁵ MacDonald 1939, §10 (2), (7) & (7b).

²⁹⁰⁶ MacDonald 1939, §18.

After the rest of the Palestinian delegation had departed London, George Antonius on 30 March 1939 was **received** both by R.A. Butler MP (Under Secretary of State) **at the Foreign Office** and Frederick Downie **at the Colonial Office**. According to Butler,²⁹⁰⁷

the general tenor of [Antonius'] conversation was that he hoped we would use the coming week or even longer to try to get nearer to the Arab point of view in our final proposals. ... [T]he hurdles which remained between us were not large.

The Arab States' delegates shared Antonius's optimism, so Butler, in contrast to Jamal al-Husseini, who seemed to want to intensify both agitation in Palestine and propaganda in London. Antonius was willing to accept a slow pace in turning Departments over to Arabs, who were not yet prepared, and concerning the foreseen 75,000 European Jewish immigrants (over 5 years) he "presumed that we would drop to the figure of 50,000. I made no comments on this part of his conversation." A day later one of Butler's colleagues commented that "Many of us have known Mr. Antonius since the days when he acted as Secretary to Gen. Clayton. He is sound on some things."

To Downie²⁹⁰⁸ Antonius expressed two demands:

[Antonius] assured me that the Palestine Arabs would have come to terms and peace would have been secured in Palestine if it had been possible 1. to declare that HMG's obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration was now discharged, in which case it would not be difficult to persuade Palestine, together with the neighbouring Arab States, to absorb between them 75,000 Jewish refugees; and 2. to give something like a definite assurance of independence at the end of ten years.

Downie replied that the Zionist lobby was too strong to enable immediate stoppage of immigration, and "that the Jewish National Home must be given time to adapt itself to the new situation [i.e. to HMG's new positions that they intended no Jewish state and an Arab veto on further immigration after five years], and added that morally the Jews were entitled to reasonable notice of the stoppage of immigration."

In general,

Mr. Antonius did not regard the Conference as a failure [and] admitted that the British proposals, as they stood, represented an almost startling advance on any offer which had previously been made to the Arabs...

Downie said that the issue wasn't whether Palestinian Arabs were technically ready to head Departments, but rather that politically "an Arab or a Jewish minister (however well intentioned) would surely have the greatest difficulty in finding the just middle line be-

²⁹⁰⁷ FO 371/23232, pp 268-70; also CO 733/408/4, pp 32-33.

²⁹⁰⁸ FO 371/23232, pp 365-69 (= CO 733/391/20, pp 137-38).

tween the conflicting rights and interests of Arabs and Jews in Palestine.” Both agreed that “an intensification of disorder” was not wise, and “Mr. Antonius did not think very highly of the work of the Arab Centre.”

John Shuckburgh, Sir Grattan Bushe and S.E.V. Luke received George Antonius on 12 April after his job as Secretary of the Palestinian delegation was completed. It was probably about this meeting that CO official Baggally on 12 April commented:

Mr. Antonius' views about the undesirability of going too fast with constitutional developments in Palestine were mentioned by Mr. MacDonald to the Egyptian Ambassador during one of their conversations, and the Egyptian Ambassador... took considerable exception to the expression of such views by Mr. Antonius. Mr. Antonius' views, on the whole, seem to have been very moderate and sensible. He is a hard and rather pedantic bargainer in any negotiations, but too clever to be an extremist.²⁹⁰⁹

In the interview Antonius elaborated on the Palestinians' mixed reactions to what MacDonald, apparently, was prepared to put into his pending White Paper. He had just had two meetings with MacDonald as well, “with a view to ascertaining whether the British proposals could not be so modified as to render them less open to rejection,” his main wish being for HMG to declare “that the Jewish National Home was now established” – instead of saying only that it was “practically completed”. (pp 92-93, 95-96, 99)²⁹¹⁰ This, he claimed, was all that would have been needed to get acceptance. (I surmise that Antonius relished using the stronger statement as a legal argument to terminate both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.) Other points were that any future Jewish immigrants over the coming five years – seen as the “transition period” – would be “admitted purely as refugees” and not “as a matter of right”. (94-95) This “was in fact a practical application of his general proposal that the British Government should now admit that they regarded the Jewish National Home as fully established.” (p 95) [also e.g. >222; >242; >266]

Pressed by Shuckburgh, Antonius frankly revealed “that an agreed settlement would be impossible unless this figure [75,000 European Jewish immigrants over five years] was reduced.” (p 96) He then elaborated his stance on four further issues. 1) On the land-sales issue,

He was particularly concerned that it should be laid down that no more land should be purchased for Jewish National Home purposes [i.e.] to be held in perpetuity for the Jewish people... [see >233] [P]urchases by individual Jews should still be allowed [but] in view of [Arab] land hunger existing in certain areas, it might be as well to have a general or local prohibition for say five years. (p 97)

2) Much discussion followed as to the timing of local Arabs' taking over Palestine Government departments but in general, so Antonius, since the Palestinians were “as fit for self-government as any of their neighbours”, and since the British now foresaw Palestinian independence, the Palestinians now tended to look on these constitutional questions with some “indifference”. (pp 97-98, 100-01) 3) On whether “the Jewish minority should

²⁹⁰⁹ CO 733/391/20, pp 92-104, all further citations; also Boyle 2001, pp 268-69.

²⁹¹⁰ Also Ben-Gurion 1968, p 85; Boyle 2001, pp 267, 271.

have some special position” Antonius said they should have “special privileges” but not in the Central Government of the independent state – instead in areas where there are concentrations of the Jewish population. (pp 99-100) 4) A final barrier to acceptance was the vagueness as to the date of full independence; needed was “an assurance that independence would be achieved in a stated number of years” with no ifs and buts. (p 98) The White Paper of 17 May would not adopt any of Antonius’s suggestions.(p 98)

Susan Boyle relates that in discussions a few weeks later with Miles Lampson, British ambassador to Egypt, Antonius put his finger on the nature of the British-Palestinian ‘dialogue’, saying that even this

white paper fostered Palestinian distrust by invoking ‘the mandate as its gospel without any apparent allowance for the Arab attitude in regard to the mandate.’ He explained to Lampson that Palestinians distrusted the proposal for independence because a genuine promise of independence would not have made a distinction between Arab states and a Palestinian state or espoused the parity argument.²⁹¹¹

In the event, the Whitehall wall remained firm, and on 8 August the Foreign Office told Ambassador Lampson “to simply put Antonius ‘off with some vague oral reply’”²⁹¹²

²⁹¹¹ Boyle 2001, p 271.

²⁹¹² Boyle 2001, p 272, citing FO 371/23239, Bennett to Baggallay, 8 August 1939.

Dialogue between Britain and the non-Palestinian Arabs who had attended the St. James talks [[>]Appendix 9] warrants our attention because it was extensive and because the Arab states were proxies for the Palestinians, with whom they stayed in close touch. Also, **the Cabinet Committee's meeting** of 20 April 1939²⁹¹³ dealt largely with the Arab states' views since the Arab states' support was wished for; they would be needed as allies more than the Jews should a "great war" occur (pp 102-03), and as the Cabinet Committee saw it,

In all the circumstances of the case the Arab world thought it right to appeal to the Arabs of Palestine to be content with what they had gained. (pp 110-11)

The sincerity or extent of such appeals is beyond the scope of this book.

One issue that had arisen in talks with the Arab states concerned a White Paper draft in which MacDonald said that HMG imagined "the establishment within 10 years of an independent Palestine State, possibly of a federal nature..." (p 91) But Egyptian Ambassador to London Hassan Nashat Pasha, representing the Arab consensus view, successfully got the Colonial Office to remove the clause "possibly of a federal nature"; as related by MacDonald:

The Arab states cannot accept the idea of a Federal State and desire that reference to this possibility be omitted... [However,] not only was this attractive to the Jews but it was the view of the Secretary of State [i.e. MacDonald] that a federal solution of some kind would ultimately be found to be the only possible solution. [[>]438; [>]442; [>]463] If now, in deference to Arab wishes, we deleted this reference to federalism from the Command Paper, the Jews would be certain to notice the alteration, they would be much upset, and they would ask whether this really meant that a federal solution was in future to be ruled out from consideration. (pp 91-93)

MacDonald was no doubt referring to the four constitutional variants of bi-nationalism he had presented on 4 March to the United Kingdom-Arab Committee on Policy which had been rebutted by Jamal al-Husseini, George Antonius and Egypt's Abdulrahman Az-zam.²⁹¹⁴ [[>]395]

One Cabinet member supported the Egyptians, pointing out that

the reference to a federal solution was not very appropriate in a passage designed to emphasise the establishment in due course of an independent Palestine State and defining the external relations of that State. (p 93)

To this MacDonald replied that

by federalism was contemplated a central administration for the whole of Palestine with considerable powers of self-government for the two or more Provinces into which the

²⁹¹³ CAB 24/285/11, all citations.

²⁹¹⁴ FO 371/23227, pp 237-38.

country might be divided. ... [To be sure,] the Palestinian Arabs were anxious for the deletion of the reference because they detested the idea of partition in any form and saw in these words the possibility that we might, in some way, revive partition. (p 93)²⁹¹⁵

Instead of “provinces” he and many others had at times referred to “cantons”. The White Paper would not mention any ‘federal’ solution.

Otherwise, concerning people outside of Palestine, many politically important Palestinians were of course still exiled or being otherwise detained, and talking to the Mufti or allowing him back into Palestine was still seen as unwise. (pp 109-12) In discussions with the Arab states only (no Palestinians), aside from their opposition to federalism the Arabs insisted that independence would be in ten years maximum; along the way, moreover,

In answer to a direct question Prime Minister said that tranquillity could be restored at once in Palestine if immigration were stopped forthwith for a definite period. (pp 117-18)

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister referred to was not Chamberlain, but Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha of Egypt. For the British, the National Home was still worth more than “tranquillity”. Aside from that, it was true that an absolute stop to European Jewish, Zionist immigration – whether imposed unilaterally by Britain or indirectly by an Arab-Palestinian veto – was the key which, by cementing a two-thirds Arab majority, would have unlocked the door to independence.

²⁹¹⁵ See also FO 371/23234, p 20, Cabinet Committee minutes from 20 April 1939.

XXIII. The temporary end of the Zionist Mandate

Once the Delegations had departed and the St. James Conference petered out around 24 March 1939 [>402; >404], the Cabinet 'Committee on Palestine' had to write the final draft of the new 'Command paper' (White Paper).²⁹¹⁶ On this high-level Committee were the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Colonial and Foreign Secretaries, four further Ministers, FO Under-Secretary Rab Butler, Grattan Bushe of the Colonial Office, and John Shuckburgh. **The discussion** was partly framed in reaction to the recently-presented views of the Arab states [>407]. It touched on the broader constitutional questions that had been discussed since February, for instance safeguards for the ethno-religious Jewish minority should Palestine become a normal democracy, and whether the *yishuv* should have political parity entailing a veto over the new constitution.

As we have seen [>386ff], the lack of an unconditional deadline for giving Palestine to the Palestinians was the main bone of contention. The Palestinians might have swallowed some tens of thousands of new immigrants if after five years they could veto further immigration, and HMG was after all saying the Jewish national home was built, the Balfour Declaration no longer relevant, there would be no partition and no Jewish state and eventual independence. When – when what conditions were fulfilled?

As MacDonald told the Committee internally, "The Arab States agreed... that as soon as peace and order had been sufficiently restored, Palestinians would be placed in charge of certain Departments,...". A "gradual increase" in indigenous Department Heads would lead to an "ultimate stage when consideration would be given" to creating a "Council of Ministers"; this "proposal", which the Committee approved, would be contained in "paragraph 10 of the draft Command Paper" to be submitted to the whole Cabinet. (pp 90-91) During the St. James Conference reaching independence had always been presented as a stepwise procedure. The question now was that even beginning that procedure was contingent upon HMG's deeming the level of "peace and order" to be sufficient. And even then, the British would only "consider" going farther. How the Palestinians and Arab states must have thirsted after a simple Yes to a simple, independent representative democracy.

But Chamberlain, MacDonald and Halifax never did that. Evidence that this was due to lack of courage was that the British side ever since January 1939 [>383] had again and again shown that it could tell right from wrong. However that may have been, the Committee continued to handle the question of the ten-year deadline for independence with equivocation; they agreed only that after ten years they would "consult with" the Arabs, retaining for Britain a "free hand to decide, on the expiration of the 10 years, whether the circumstances were such as would then justify the establishment of an independent Palestine State". (pp 94-95)

All options thus left open, both MacDonald and the Chancellor of the Exchequer

²⁹¹⁶ CAB 24/285/11, all citations.

agreed that the new draft did not in fact answer the question of what was to happen if at the expiration of the 10 years period, HMG and the other parties failed to reach agreement. (p 95; also p 96)

The final text of the White Paper a few weeks later would only answer that in the case of HMG's not deeming Palestine ripe for freedom, there would be further "consultations".²⁹¹⁷ At this Cabinet meeting Foreign Secretary Halifax's 'answer' to this question was his simple claim that the British had an "implicit right to act as we might see fit" after the 10 years were up. (p 96)

As already reported [[>]402], there was then a skirmish over vague language, the vagueness now concerning the "circumstances" which would in ten years guide HMG on whether to grant independence, but Prime Minister Chamberlain touched on the deeper, chronic problem:

Many of our present difficulties in regard to Palestine were due to ambiguous language having been used in the past and he would very much regret if those whose responsibility it would be to deal with the matter in 10 years' time found themselves in similar difficulties owing to our having used language which was open to misunderstandings. (p 97)

The phrase 'national home' could not have been absent from his mind when he said this. In any case, although the White Paper would be clearer than all previous utterances aside from those of the Royal (Peel) Commission [[>]336], it failed to reach the goal of clarity so wished by Chamberlain.

Halifax even implicitly disagreed with the Prime Minister, seeing "ambiguous language" as a chance for Britain:

So convinced was he of the need for reaching agreement that he would be prepared to give the Arabs what they wanted, relying on our being able in some way or other to get out of our pledge if necessary when the time came. (p 97) [*also* >408]

Perhaps the Palestinians who rejected the White Paper knew from experience, without reading any leaked copy of these 'SECRET' minutes, that present statements of intent were not to be taken seriously.

In passing, yet presaging future Near East-British relations, MacDonald "agreed [with Foreign Secretary Halifax and future Colonial Secretary Lord Lloyd] that Palestine was the one big issue between the Moslem world and ourselves." (p 98) This would be George Antonius's analysis, as well, on 3 October 1940 in a memorandum requested by HMG.²⁹¹⁸ [[>]412] At any rate Chamberlain was evidently convinced by Halifax's argument for vagueness, coming down in opposition to appeasing the Arabs and not wanting to "tie ourselves rigidly to a time-table" or "enter into a firm commitment". (p 99)

Next, in hopes that Egypt could "approach the Mufti and his supporters with a view to calling off of the rebellion in Palestine", HMG decided it was willing to suspend Jewish immigration, but only temporarily. (pp 100-01) It was indeed this perceived need to "pla-

²⁹¹⁷ MacDonald 1939, §10.8.

²⁹¹⁸ CO 733/427/9, pp 21-29.

cate the Arabs” and the Moslem world that raised the prospect that the Command Paper would “drive the Palestinian Jews into revolt”, the dilemma being that it was “unthinkable” for Britain to put down a Jewish rebellion with violence and repression – as it had been doing to the Arab rebellion since 1933 [268] and 1936 [296-99]. (pp 102-04) This conundrum drove the Committee at this meeting to once again consider “handing over a whole colony to the Jews” – e.g. British Guiana or Honduras – for their State, to settle as they liked. (pp 107-08, 116) As if these were lands without people.

Behind the final wording of the White Paper, though, so the Cabinet consensus, should remain MacDonald’s conviction that

the policy of the White Paper was... wise and just in essentials. It was high time for us to set a limit to the more extravagant interpretations of the Balfour Declaration. (p 104)

Finally, MacDonald predicted that the Arab states would accept his White Paper and that the Palestine rebellion would end (pp 110, 111); accordingly, the Arab states meeting in Cairo (without the Palestinians) were informed per telegram of the Committee’s decisions (pp 117-18).

May 1939 [*In the allegedly rebel-friendly village of Halhul, as collective punishment villagers were put by the (British) Black Watch Regiment in cages without water or shade in the hot sun for as long as eight days, their food sometimes destroyed, with some being tortured, drowned or simply shot.*]²⁹¹⁹

6 May 1939 [*Troops invaded the village [Halhul], rounding up 116 of its male inhabitants, while searching for weapons. Eight men died from heat exhaustion after being detained in an open-air pen.*]²⁹²⁰

²⁹¹⁹ Hughes 2009, pp 339-41.

²⁹²⁰ Cronin 2017, p 51.

Knowing a bit ahead of time what the White Paper's policy would be, the ubiquitous **Herbert Samuel** in his 1945 *Memoirs* relates that he got an audience on 15 May 1939 with Malcolm MacDonald where he **expressed his opposition** to the direction of the coming White Paper:

On the critical issue it was a complete surrender. All Jewish immigration into Palestine was to stop after five years unless the Arabs agreed to its continuance. The only inducement that was offered not to use this veto was that national independence would not be conceded until an Arab-Jewish understanding had been reached. ... I said [to MacDonald] that 'the cessation of immigration except with Arab consent was a vital point.' ... There would be no adequate reason for the Arabs to agree to any immigration after five years; and they could expect that the methods which had been successful in 1939 could at any time be repeated, and would be equally successful – in 1944 or 1949. In placing the Jews in a position in which they would be compelled to accept a compromise, they [the Cabinet] had placed the Arabs in a position in which they on their side need not accept one.²⁹²¹

This was spot on: immigration was the “critical issue”; if stopped, the more so if partition was really off the table, the Jewish state was stopped.

He had also told MacDonald that he no longer advocated bi-nationalism as he had done in 1937 [>340], due to “no response having come from the Arab side” and the Jewish need for a large expansion of the Palestine Home having become far more pressing, on account of the ruthless persecution in Europe and the desperate plight of great numbers of refugees....²⁹²² He thus enunciated the big coming theme in the debate [>431ff], that the Palestinians should pay for what happens to Jews in Europe. But he did not say what he did at that time propose, if not bi-nationalism and not partition; probably he envisioned something like what he'd envisioned in 1915 [>8] – more or less what would become Israel.

²⁹²¹ Samuel 1945, pp 285-86.

²⁹²² Samuel 1945, p 286.

The **Statement of Policy (White Paper) published on 17 May 1939** consisted of eighteen sections: Preamble (§1-3); I. The Constitution (§4-11); II. Immigration (§12-15); III. Land (§16-17); and a closing appeal for “mutual tolerance, goodwill and co-operation” (§18).²⁹²³ Its 4,500 words are essential reading. It was finalised on 12 May after several revisions beginning on 24 March.²⁹²⁴ On 22/23 May it would be approved by the House of Commons (268 Ayes to 179 Naes); also on 23 May a motion to reject it, supported amongst others by Churchill, Lloyd George, Leo Amery, Herbert Morrison, and James de Rothschild, would fail (181 Ayes to 281 Noes).²⁹²⁵ [>411] It would soon thereafter be utterly rejected by the Zionists and almost accepted, or rather ambiguously rejected, by the Palestinians and surrounding Arab states [>412; >414; >417].

Sharing the analysis of and standing at the same fork in the road as had the Peel Commission almost three years earlier [>336], it took the one-democratic-state rather than Peel's two-state (actually three-state) path. During February and March 1939 negotiations had resulted in no agreement between any two of the three sides [>386ff]; therefore, seeing as “[n]either the Arab nor the Jewish delegations felt able to accept these proposals... His Majesty's Government are free to formulate their own policy”, and they would “adhere to” what had been rejected by the two other sides.

Here is an accurate thumbnail summary of the White Paper's contents by the Institute for Palestine Studies:

Colonial Secretary of State Malcolm MacDonald issues a White Paper/ Statement of Policy. The statement is drafted after MacDonald listened to Arab and Zionist delegations during the London Round Table Conference; it takes into account some of the Arab/ Palestinian concerns, lessons of the Great Arab Revolt, and fears of a possible war in Europe. It makes the following proposal: no more than 75,000 Jews would be allowed into the country within the next five years, after which Jewish immigration would be subject to “Arab acquiescence”; land transfers would be permitted in certain areas but restricted and prohibited in others; an independent unitary state would be established after 10 years conditional on safeguarding “the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home” and on favorable Palestinian-Jewish relations; participation of Arab and Jewish representatives in the government of Palestine would be gradually increased during a transitional period to start as soon as peace and order are restored. The British House of Commons votes 268 to 179 to approve the White Paper.²⁹²⁶

²⁹²³ MacDonald 1939 (=Cmd. 6019), *all citations*. The text is also CAB 24/286/11, MacDonald to Cabinet, 12 May 1939. See also Barbour 1946, pp 194-206, reprinted in Khalidi 1971, pp 461-75.

²⁹²⁴ CAB 24/285/1 is the draft of 13 April; CAB 24/285/19 lists amendments thereof of 26 April; CAB 24/ 286/ 11 is the final draft of 12 May; CAB 24/285/11 is a 30-page discussion amongst the ‘Cabinet Committee on Palestine’ on the state of negotiations with the Arab states and, indirectly, the Palestinians.

²⁹²⁵ Hansard 1939a, cc2193 ff.

²⁹²⁶ Palestinian Journeys (2) > The MacDonald White Paper.

Readers should re-consult this short summary to remind themselves of the gist of the matter.

After a brief history of the Mandate and a statement of HMG's rejection of partition ("the establishment of self-supporting independent Arab and Jewish States within Palestine has been found to be impracticable") (§2-3) the White Paper repudiated the Zionist goal of Palestine as a Jewish state. There had, it stated, been two decades of vagueness around the phrase "a national home for the Jewish people", but now:

[T]he framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country. ... [The Churchill White Paper of 1922] has not removed doubts, and His Majesty's Government therefore now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State. They would indeed regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate, as well as to the assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the past, that the Arab population of Palestine should be made the subjects of a Jewish State against their will. (§4)

Formally it is a relief to encounter the word "unequivocally" in a British document, and materially it is good to see that HMG was at long last taking seriously its "obligation" to protect "the rights and position of other sections of the population" from "prejudice", as the Mandate's Article 6 decreed [^{>146}].

Incidentally, since the Statement was rejecting partition, it did not address the question raised by any partition solution, namely, whether in a possible "Jewish State" in part of Palestine, the "Arab population" should likewise not be "subjects... against their will". Logically after all, the principle of HMG's now enunciated policy would apply equally to a Jewish state as proposed by either Peel in 1937 or the UNGA in 1947 [^{>336; >481}].

Another thing in the White Paper that weighed in on the side of Palestinian self-determination was that it came very close to declaring the Jewish national home to be now established, as the Palestinians and some MPs had occasionally argued. Most recently, for instance, on 12 April George Antonius had asked MacDonald whether his White Paper would mean the end of the Balfour Declaration in that the Jewish National Home therein "endeavoured" for had been sufficiently "facilitated".²⁹²⁷ [^{>406}] The White Paper now lauded the "growth of the Jewish National Home and its achievements", with the immigration since 1922 amounting to "more than 300,000 Jews... [thus] approaching a third of the entire population of the country". (§6) It spoke of "the extent to which the growth of the Jewish National Home has been facilitated over the last twenty years", implying that this "extent" was quite large. (§13) [*also >412*]

On immigration, also on the positive, pro-self-determination side was HMG's pledge to end it. The White Paper acknowledged that political, not only economic, criteria should be applied: The 1922 White Paper [^{>142}] and the letter which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, as Prime Minister, sent to Dr. Weizmann in February 1931 [^{>246}] established as the "sole criterion... the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals", but

²⁹²⁷ CO 733/391/20, pp 92-93, 95-96, 99; see also Theme Index, 'done and dusted'.

If immigration has an adverse effect on the economic position in the country, it should clearly be restricted; and equally, if it has a seriously damaging effect on the political position in the country, that is a factor that should not be ignored. ... If... immigration is continued up to the economic absorptive capacity of the country, regardless of all other considerations, a fatal enmity between the two peoples will be perpetuated, and the situation in Palestine may become a permanent source of friction amongst all peoples in the Near and Middle East. (§12)²⁹²⁸

Under pressure from High Commissioner John Chancellor [*e.g.* >218; >235; >255], the Shaw Commission [>220] and the John Hope Simpson Commission [>231; >233], the Passfield White Paper [>234] had seen the logic and fairness of cutting immigration, but stopped short of saying it as clearly as this White Paper now did. With regard to constitutional issues and independence, as well, this statement of policy went immeasurably further than Passfield's 1930 attempt – rendering it impossible to understand how one historian can write that “the 1939 White Paper returned Britain to the policy originally set out in the Passfield White Paper of 1930”.²⁹²⁹

Although couched in terms of Arab “apprehension” and “fears”, rather than objective, really-existing causes of apprehension and fear, limits to further immigration were also justified on the principle of consent of the governed:

The alternatives before His Majesty's Government are either (i) to seek to expand the Jewish National Home indefinitely by immigration, against the strongly expressed will of the Arab people of the country; or (ii) to permit further expansion of the Jewish National Home by immigration only if the Arabs are prepared to acquiesce in it. The former policy means rule by force. Apart from other considerations, such a policy seems to His Majesty's Government to be contrary to the whole spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations [>46], as well as to their specific obligations to the Arabs in the Palestine Mandate [>146]. ... Therefore His Majesty's Government, after earnest consideration, and taking into account the extent to which the growth of the Jewish National Home has been facilitated over the last twenty years, have decided that the time has come to adopt in principle the second of the alternatives referred to above. (§13; also §14.3)

The policy consequences were:

After the period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it. (§14.3, 13.ii) [Again, it would] permit further expansion of the Jewish National Home by immigration only if the Arabs are prepared to acquiesce in it. (§13, §15) The numbers of any Jewish illegal immigrants who... may succeed in coming into the country and cannot be deported will be deducted from the yearly quotas. (§14.4)

The sum of “75,000 immigrants over the next five years” (§14.1) was computed thus: “For each of the next five years a quota of 10,000” (§14.1.a) plus “as a contribution towards the solution of the Jewish refugee problem, 25,000 refugees will be admitted” (§14.1.b). This

²⁹²⁸ See also Peel 1937, X §7, 65, 95, *passim*.

²⁹²⁹ Sinanoglou 2019, p 152.

maximum number, by the way, was determined by back-casting from a desirable *percentage* of Jews in Palestine – “up to approximately one-third of the total population of the country” – rather than absolute numbers.

Even these numbers were subject to the condition that they did not exceed the country’s “economic absorptive capacity” (§14.1 & 14.1.a) but more importantly, because defined hard-and-fast both in terms of numbers and time, the 75,001st immigrant, within the five-year limit that would expire in May 1944, could enter only if “the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it” (§14.3). Of course even the foreseen “yearly quotas” of (a *maximum* of) 15,000 immigrants (for each of the next five years) contradicted self-determination. But the bottom line was that after the stated time and number, forced immigration was over and done with. [*see also* >405]

Into this ‘Immigration’ Section II were however inserted words pertinent to the issue of the full independence being dangled before the eyes of the Palestinians:

Moreover, the relations between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine must be based sooner or later on mutual tolerance and goodwill; the peace, security and progress of the Jewish National Home itself require this. (§13)

“Sooner or later” was ‘precisely vague’, an example of what J.M.N. Jeffries called HMG’s policy of “terminological inexactitude”. Did it mean “mutual tolerance and goodwill” would be a pre-condition of freeing Palestine (“sooner”), or that the Jews would eventually have to make peace with the Arabs after Palestine was freed (“later”)? That “mutual tolerance and goodwill” was indeed a pre-condition – one which could be unilaterally torpedoed by the Zionists – was also implied by the White Paper’s statement that the “complete relinquishment of Mandatory control in Palestine would require such relations between the Arabs and the Jews as would make good government possible.” (§9) Finally, HMG here also appealed to the self-interest of “the Jewish National Home itself”, i.e. the Zionist minority rather than the Arab majority or the whole population.

On **Land** (Section III), it was admitted that Britain had never to date restricted the sale of Arab land to Zionist Jews, but that as of 17 May 1939 “the High Commissioner will be given general powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land.” (§16) (This clause should have appeared, but didn’t, in these exact words, in the previous White Paper, that of Passfield of 21 October 1930, based on the Shaw and Hope Simpson investigations which were then fresh off the press.) Swinging back to the Zionist side, though, HMG said that, seeing as the Government would push for more agricultural productivity, and this might enable survival on fewer hectares per person, any restrictions on sales the HC may make could conceivably be loosened. (§17)

Returning to **the basic issue of independence**, or the **Constitution** (Section I), after the standard re-affirmation of the “ancient historic connection” of the Jewish people with Palestine and the loosely derived right of “the *existing* Jewish community” (as opposed to any Jew anywhere) to be in Palestine not merely “on sufferance” (§5) [*>142*], the Statement of Policy then interpreted the “self-governing institutions” of Article 2 of the Mandate [*>146*] more straight-forwardly as “self-government”, regarding it

contrary to the whole spirit of the Mandate system that the population of Palestine should remain forever under Mandatory tutelage. It is proper that the people of the country should as early as possible enjoy the rights of self-government which are exercised by the people of neighbouring countries. His Majesty's Government are unable at present to foresee the exact constitutional forms which government in Palestine will eventually take, but their objective is self-government, and they desire to see established *ultimately* an independent Palestine State. It should be a State in which the two peoples in Palestine, Arabs and Jews, share authority in government in such a way that the *essential interests* of each are secured. (§8, *emphasis added*)

The assumption was that HMG, not the citizens of Palestine, would determine Palestine's "exact constitutional form".

As to this "form", although stopping short of parity, the concept of "two peoples [who] share authority" hinted at bi-nationalism as opposed to proportional representation, i.e. took the "communal" approach to the constitution question so clearly opposed, within the 'Policy Committee' meetings in March by George Antonius and Jamal al-Husseini [*e.g.* >395; >396], but HMG hadn't yet ironed out such details. This part of the White Paper also departed from the Palestinian position in writing that the "essential interests" of each "people" had to be "secured", since it could be argued that an "essential interest" of the Zionist side was at least political parity and perhaps even their Jewish state. This phrase and the word "ultimately" provided future escape hatches for Zionism's supporters in Britain.

Thus, HMG was backtracking even from eventual or "ultimate", not just immediate, release of Palestine from "tutelage". Yes, there would be no Jewish state and strict limits on the size of the Jewish national home in terms of people and land possession, and "self-government" referred to all the inhabitants of Palestine. However, as already partly quoted just above:

1. "The establishment of an independent State and the complete relinquishment of Mandatory control in Palestine would require such relations between the Arabs and the Jews as would make good government possible." The Mandatory first wanted to see some "understanding and co-operation" between the two peoples before it would set Palestine free. (§9)
2. Again: "The independent State should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded." (§10.2)
3. During a "transitional period the people of Palestine will be given an increasing part in the government of their country. Both sections of the population will have an opportunity to participate in the machinery of government, and the process will be carried on whether or not they both avail themselves of it." That is, this first small step would happen even if at this level one or both sides were not co-operating or even sabotaging the process. (§10.3) [*also* >411; >417]
4. Somewhat in contradiction to the last part of § 10.3, the next section said that even this first "step... of giving the people of Palestine an increasing part in the government [administration]

of their country” can happen only “[a]s soon as peace and order have been sufficiently restored”. What counts as “sufficient” would of course be determined by Britain, which thereby secured for itself yet another reason for postponing independence.²⁹³⁰ (§10.4)

5. The same condition applied *a fortiori* to further steps, e.g. an “elective legislature” or constitutional assembly: “At the end of five years from the restoration of peace and order, an appropriate body representative of the people of Palestine and of His Majesty’s Government will be set up to review the working of the constitutional arrangements during the transitional period and to consider and make recommendations regarding the constitution of the independent Palestine State.” (§10.5, 10.6) The Palestinians were looking at a delay of five years, minimum.
6. HMG had also to be sure that safeguards were in place to protect “the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home”, whatever that meant. (§10.7.b)
7. Woops, the delay would be ten years *minimum*: “If, at the end of ten years, it appears to His Majesty’s Government that, contrary to their hope, circumstances require the postponement of the establishment of the independent State, they will consult with representatives of the people of Palestine, the Council of the League of Nations and the neighbouring Arab States before deciding on such a postponement.” (§10.8; also §10.1)

There were moreover, as MacDonald would point out a week later,²⁹³¹ actually two “constitutions” under discussion: one during the transitional period and one for the future promised independent state, a long process indeed.²⁹³² Note that point 3) above hints at not letting the Zionist minority block the movement towards independence by not co-operating, but this pertains only to increasing the number of locals in the Administration.

The British were not yet ready to walk the last mile. Required were prior peace and order, conditions, relations between Arabs and Jews, circumstances, understanding and co-operation. As MacDonald had told the Arabs on 6 March, “He did not see how the independent state could come into being until such co-operation [on the part of both sides] was assured,...”²⁹³³ MacDonald had of course also said Jewish non-co-operation would not be allowed to delay independence²⁹³⁴ [>397; >399; >402], but all the caveats together tipped the scales towards rejection of the White Paper for many Palestinians, who had been ignored, patronised, deceived, confused, imprisoned and killed for twenty years. The British could for example after ten years claim that one of the “conditions” or “circumstances” making postponement “unavoidable” was that the Jewish Zionists were dissatisfied or even violently rebellious, indicating both that “peace and order” did not obtain and that “relations” were not good enough to enable “good government”.²⁹³⁵

There was thus plenty of evidence in the text of this White Paper for the view that had been expressed by the Arab Higher Committee back on 27 March, namely that in the White Paper draft

²⁹³⁰ Also CAB 24/285/11, pp 90–91, discussion on 20 April 1939 in the Cabinet Committee.

²⁹³¹ Hansard 1939, cc1949–52.

²⁹³² See also Abcarius 1946, pp 208–09, 211; Lesch 1973, pp 39–40.

²⁹³³ FO 371/23227, p 241; also FO 371/23227, pp 325–26, 327 [>396].

²⁹³⁴ FO 371/23227, pp 343, 344, 372, 374; FO 371/23228, p 294; FO 371/23232, pp 3, 4, 18, 75.

²⁹³⁵ See also Hansard 1939, cc2031.

The British Government made certain futile proposals, such as would never satisfy the Arab demands. One of these was that the independence of the Arabs would be recognised provided the Jews would agree and would co-operate with the Arabs: a suggestion that the British Government knew was impossible to carry out.²⁹³⁶ [see >405]

This spectre of an indirect Jewish veto on independence, achieved through violent rebellion or simple non-co-operation, would during the next few weeks be raised also by many Arab commentators and in the House of Commons. [>412; >411]

And that spectre would be revived, and applied, by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin in official talks with Arab delegates in London on 16 September 1946, in a memo to the Cabinet in early February 1947 and before the House of Commons in late February²⁹³⁷ – “Arab-Jewish relations” had not improved enough, so the 1939 White Paper’s normal democracy wouldn’t work, and Britain now had to renounce it.²⁹³⁸ [e.g. >412; >443] That is, eight years down the road HMG would in fact go over the books and determine that its conditions for granting the Palestinians independence had not been met. And one aspect of the unimproved “Arab-Jewish relations” was certainly the Zionist terrorism – rebellion? – which took off massively on the very day the MacDonald White Paper was published, 17 May 1939.²⁹³⁹ Thus, the Zionists succeeded by 1946/1947 in obstructing what had been promised in that White Paper’s clause §10.1, namely “the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine State”. Whether they would have succeeded had the Arab Palestinians unreservedly, or at least overwhelmingly, accepted the White Paper, is a different question.

For Michel Abcarius, for instance, the White Paper was “a straggling ray of light... to rekindle the dying embers of hope.”²⁹⁴⁰ More prosaically, it has correctly been called the “best deal” ever.²⁹⁴¹ But it was still not good enough, according to Rashid Khalidi, for it

conditionally grant[ed] the principle of independence for Palestine with majority rule (to be implemented after ten years, and only if the Jewish minority was in agreement, a condition that was presumably intended to be impossible to fulfil). ... [Palestinian independence required] the approval of the *yishuv*.²⁹⁴²

Ilan Pappe similarly maintains that “Arab independence in the whole country would require Zionist consent.”²⁹⁴³

But such opinions do not do justice to the nuances, or contradictions, in MacDonald’s own stances during the many meetings at St. James as well as in the text itself. They both contained evidence that the Zionist power of veto was not for certain: HMG had used equivocation to leave itself room to go the other way and regard the degree of peace and

²⁹³⁶ FO 371/23232, p 374.

²⁹³⁷ FO 800/486, pp 2-11; CAB 129/16/49, pp 322-31; Hansard 1947. [>445; >452; >453]

²⁹³⁸ FO 800/486, pp 3-4.

²⁹³⁹ Suárez 2016; Suárez 2023, pp 62-68; Zuaytir 1958, pp 136-39; Nakhleh 1991, pp 65-230.

²⁹⁴⁰ Abcarius 1946, p 219.

²⁹⁴¹ Shlaim 1998, p 62.

²⁹⁴² Khalidi 2006, pp xxi, 114-15 (also citing Boyle 2001, p 13).

²⁹⁴³ Pappe 2002/2010, p 301; also Khalidi 2009, p 33.

co-operation as sufficient after all. It was for example a low hurdle to demand that “Arabs and Jews share government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded” if the “essential interest” of the Zionists was declared to be merely the preservation of their citizenship and of the ‘home’ that had already been built. (§8) Moreover, ‘on the ground’ the Jewish population would be capped at one-third of the total population, chiselling a non-Jewish majority in stone and thus rendering it at least embarrassing for HMG to deny power to the permanent majority. (§14.1) This point alone was arguably the Palestinians’ key to the State of Palestine, however long Britain decided the conditions for formal independence had not yet been met: Barring partition, the other alternative – Palestine as a Jewish state although two-thirds of its inhabitants were anti-Zionist non-Jews – was uncontestedly absurd.

On self-administration during the transition period, as well, neither side could block the road to self-government since both sides could choose their members “to participate in the machinery of government [but] the process will be carried on whether or not they both avail themselves of it.” (§10.3) This clause plausibly meant that HMG was *not* giving the Jewish Zionists a veto over proceedings, an interpretation which would be held by Colonial Secretary Lloyd in the summer of 1940.²⁹⁴⁴ [>417] In any case, in deciding whether or not to embrace the White Paper – the most fateful decision they would ever make – the Palestinians would have to rely on nuances whichever way they looked. [>405; >406; >412; >414; >417] In addition to judging the strength of the Zionist lobby in Britain.

Undeniably, the Colonial Office and HMG had changed over the previous two years. Serious students of this ‘MacDonald’ phase of the Mandate should at this point re-read MacDonald’s ‘Memorandum’ to the Cabinet of 18 January 1939, a document full of details showing his and the CO’s thinking – details for which a White Paper offered no space.²⁹⁴⁵ MacDonald’s words a week later in the Commons on immigration, the growth of the Jewish national home, and mandate-less independence for a Palestine of all its inhabitants were, compared to all previous Government statements, unimaginably pro-Palestinian – like night and day – and the House of Commons backed this White Paper. [>411] The *momentum* was thus with the Palestinians.

MacDonald, by the way, could not conclude the White Paper without once again telling the Arabs (as well as the Jews) that what the British were proposing was for their own good, that they “must learn to practise mutual tolerance, goodwill and co-operation”, and that “the two peoples in Palestine” were just as responsible as Britain for achieving peace and co-operation (thus shifting blame off of Britain’s shoulders). (§18) This closing paragraph began thus

In framing these proposals His Majesty’s Government have sincerely endeavoured to act in strict accordance with their obligations under the Mandate to both the Arabs and the Jews. The vagueness of the phrases employed in some instances to describe these obligations has led to controversy and has made the task of interpretation difficult. (§18)

²⁹⁴⁴ Cohen 1987a, p 189, reproducing CO 733/426/75872/85.

²⁹⁴⁵ CAB 24/282/4.

As if this White Paper had no ambiguities. Moreover, how can one adhere “strictly” to “obligations” which were “vague” and open to “interpretation”?

As we saw, HMG was under pro-Zionist pressure from the US [^{>402}], and as the next entries show, debate went on amongst both Palestinians and the British until Britain entered the war on 3 September 1939. But soon thereafter, as recalled in 1946 by Oliver Stanley MP, variously War Secretary and Colonial Secretary in the Churchill war Government, “it was the unanimous decision that the Coalition Government expressed to this House and to both Jews and Arabs that nothing in this matter should be done until the end of the war.”²⁹⁴⁶ Churchill already in October 1940, as Prime Minister, would start distancing HMG from the 1939 White Paper, though it was officially still in force. [^{>418}] Just as Jamal al-Husseini had feared at the Palestinian-British meeting on 6 March²⁹⁴⁷ [^{>396}], however well or poorly “Arab-Jewish relations” developed, a change of government could mean British abandonment of even the imperfect MacDonald White Paper. [*also* ^{>418}; ^{>424}]

17 May 1939 [*On the day the MacDonald White Paper was published, ‘the Irgun bombed the Palestine Broadcasting Service office in Jerusalem and attacked the Immigration Office. Mass demonstrations were organized within the city.’*²⁹⁴⁸]

²⁹⁴⁶ Hansard 1946b, c985.

²⁹⁴⁷ FO 371/23227, p 329.

²⁹⁴⁸ Quigley 1990, p 27; *also* Bethell 1979, p 68.

The House of Commons on 22 & 23 May 1939²⁹⁴⁹ discussed the new White Paper [>410], approving it by a vote of 281-181. Of the Nay votes “137 of them were members of the Labor Party”, including Clement Attlee, Hugh Dalton, Herbert Morrison and Emanuel Shinwell.²⁹⁵⁰ Colonial Secretary **MacDonald**’s support for it²⁹⁵¹, while still within the bounds of the ‘dual obligation’ premise, at several places did echo the Arab views of the last two or more decades:

At the time when the Balfour Declaration was made it was said that the Declaration’s purpose was to give the people who had no country a country which had no people. I wish that that phrase had been as true as it was picturesque. But it was not true. I wish with all my heart that Palestine were an empty land so that its bounds were the only limits set to the remarkable creative work of these devoted people rebuilding a National Home. But Palestine was not empty. Already in 1918 there was a population living in it of some 600,000 Arabs, whose ancestors had been in undisturbed occupation of the country for countless generations. (22 May c1940)

Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs Thomas **Inskip** supported MacDonald the following day on this point; everyone knew just after World War I that

we should provide for [the Jews] some place in which they might make a centre or, if you like, a home of Jewish aspirations. ... But surely everyone will recognise that we certainly did not contemplate the expulsion or the supplanting of the existing population of the country. These Jewish people, the new immigrants, were not going to occupy an empty land nor, surely, were they going to subject the people in the land to the domination of what was to the inhabitants a foreign race. (23 May c2182)

MacDonald then reminded the House of HMG’s “solemn promise to the Arabs”, referring not to what McMahon had written [>10] but rather to the Hogarth Message [>21] which pledged that Jewish immigration

would be allowed only in so far as it was compatible with the economic *and political* freedom of the existing population. ... Surely that Hogarth assurance must mean that a Jewish National Home in Palestine did not mean a Jewish State in Palestine against the wishes of the Arab population. (22 May c1941, *emphasis added*)

And of course “The Arabs always objected to this immigration.” (22 May c1943) That is, if given political freedom there would be no Zionist immigration at all.

Continuing,

To-day we are being accused of breaking the obligation to encourage immigration up to the limits of the economic absorptive capacity of the country. There is no such obligation in the

²⁹⁴⁹ Hansard 1939 & 1939a, *all quotations*.

²⁹⁵⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States 1945, p ?.

²⁹⁵¹ Hansard 1939, cc1937-54.

Mandate. No such words appear either in the Balfour Declaration or in the Mandate. ... We are [only] to aid in the establishment of the Jewish National Home by facilitating immigration 'under suitable conditions' and also without prejudice to 'the rights and position' of the other sections of the population. We said in 1922 that immigration should not exceed the economic absorptive capacity of the country, and in 1931 that economic absorptive capacity should be the sole criterion for measuring immigration. ... I do not think that conditions are suitable for immigration. (22 May cc1942-43, 1944)

He was right that only with the Churchill White Paper of 3 June 1922 did HMG introduce this criterion; it did not have League of Nations approval.

Further, Arab population and prosperity had increased, but:

The material improvement was overlaid by a more serious consideration. The Arabs were not thinking of material things at all. They were thinking of their freedom; they were afraid that if Jewish immigration continued indefinitely this energetic, clever, wealthy incoming people would dominate them numerically, economically, politically and in every way in the land of their birth. ... The high priests of the principle of economic absorptive capacity say that these things are of comparatively little importance, and that as long as an immigrant can be economically absorbed in Palestine it does not matter whether he can be politically absorbed. We say that it does matter. (22 May cc1943, 1944)

Palestinians' rights?

What are the rights of the Arab population? They have lived in Palestine for centuries. Do their rights give them any title to say that beyond a certain point they should not have imposed upon them a population which may dominate them, even though we do recognise that the people coming in have a historic connection with and rights in the land? Is there no point at which we, in consideration of our obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate, should pay heed to their opinions on a matter so vital to them? Let me take a simple test. Suppose that instead of 1,000,000 Arabs in Palestine there were 1,000,000 Americans, or Englishmen, or Frenchmen whose ancestors had lived in the country for generations past. (22 May c1945)

He knew it was racism, that is, which made it necessary even to discuss this. However, Zionism's foot was in the door due to MacDonald's and HMG's belief that "the people coming in" had political "rights" in Palestine. This is the central, perhaps the only, pillar on which Zionism stands.

MacDonald soon however fell into the conflation of Europe and Western Asia, of European persecutors of Jews and Near Easterners historically friendly to Jews but not to Zionism:

We propose that the influx of Jews should continue for another five years, even regardless of Arab wishes. [HON. MEMBERS: 'Why?'] Because we believe that Palestine could, and should still, make a further substantial contribution towards relieving the tragedy of the Jewish refugees in Central Europe. I say that beyond a certain point the Arabs must have their wishes observed in this matter, but I do not think we have come to that point yet, especially in the light of the world situation of Jewry. (22 May c1946)

Without the persecution in Europe, evidently, no argument would be left for letting in any more Zionist immigrants. But this stance, as also adopted by the post-World War II governments of the U.K. and the U.S., would cement Palestinian opposition to the Anglo-American, Morrison-Grady and Bevin compromises of 1946-47, clearing the path for partition and the Jewish state. [>438; >442; >452; >481]

Had the Jewish National Home now been established? Recall that already in May 1930 the 4th Palestine Arab Delegation to London had claimed it had been²⁹⁵² [>222]; if so, HMG had done its 'duty' to the League of Nations, its job would be done. In October 1930, during the final drafting of the Passfield White Paper [>234], a Colonial Office summary of the simultaneously issued Hope Simpson Report [>233] had grappled with this analysis, but rejected it on political grounds, judging that it was "politically impracticable to make declaration that settlement of Jews for purpose of Jewish National Home must be regarded as completed."²⁹⁵³ [>232]

In the then-common parlance the issue of 'crystallising' the Jewish national home was bandied about in the House of Commons debate of 17 November 1930 as well. [>242] Now, in 1939, the answer was more or less Yes, the home was built:

Under [the 1922 White Paper] the Jewish population grew from some 80,000 people in 1922 to some 450,000 to-day. ... The Jewish community is large, being composed of nearly one-third of the entire population of the country; it is self-assured and perfectly disciplined; it has an economic power which, perhaps, more than anything else makes it unconquerable. It has made many friends among the Arab people in the past, and it will make still more in the future once the fear of the Arabs of becoming a subject minority in their own land has been removed. ... It would be contrary to the spirit of the age in which we live, it would be contrary to the spirit of the Mandate system in general, and it would be contrary to the specific instruction of this Mandate in particular, if we did not begin now to work towards self-governing institutions in Palestine, and this White Paper devotes some space to the consideration of constitutional matters and proposes some first steps. (22 May cc1943, 1947, 1948)

But MacDonald's "if" soon came: "if practicable, within 10 years an independent Palestinian State should be established." (22 May p 1951) If not "practicable", that is, there would be no Palestinian State. The White Paper had said the same thing, using the same wiggle room allowed by the vagueness of the word "practicable" – namely that "postponement" of independence after ten years would be "unavoidable" under certain "circumstances", if certain "conditions" were lacking.²⁹⁵⁴ As we have seen, these conditions were peace and order as well as co-operation between Arabs and Jews, things easily sabotaged by either side. [>395-97; >405; >412]

²⁹⁵² CO 733/191/15, Document 3, Annexure I, p iv.

²⁹⁵³ CO 733/183/2, p 82.

²⁹⁵⁴ MacDonald 1939, §10.8.

In this Commons debate MPs Anthony **Crossley**, Andrew **MacLaren**, Ralph **Beaumont** and Thomas Inskip were the Palestinians' strongest supporters. Crossley started with a barb against Labour's pro-Zionist spokesman, then went on to describe the non-existence of a Palestine or Arab lobby in the Empire's capital:

[The Arabs] have been denied for 10 [sic.] years their legitimate aspirations, but it is at least surprising to hear the Labour party of Great Britain denying to a subject population the right to govern themselves. ... I do not believe that there has ever been a Debate in this House when this House would have been more justified in calling to the Bar an Arab speaker to explain the Arab point of view from the point of view of his own countrymen and his own country. I would have liked to have seen Mr. George Antonius called to the Bar. There are no Arab Members of Parliament. There are no Arab constituents to bring influence upon their Members of Parliament. There is no Arab control of newspapers in this country. It is impossible almost to get a pro-Arab letter in the 'Times.' There are in the City no Arab financial houses who control large amounts of finance. ... I found myself as violently disagreeing with parts of [MacDonald's] speech from the Arab point of view as some of them did from the Zionist point of view. There is this to be said about violence in Palestine, that in face of absolute misrepresentation, or lack of representation, the Arabs have had in this House for 20 years, it is a lamentable fact that only violence brought their claims to our attention. (22 May cc1966-68)

The Palestinians sought "what no party in the House ought to deny to them – legitimate self-government in their own land". (22 May c1976) Many of Crossley's further statements were radically pro-Palestinian.²⁹⁵⁵

As shown by this book's first few entries, MacLaren's comment was correct that "The historic facts are that for more than 150 years the Arabs have been agitating for home rule in that country and the throwing off of the yoke of Turkish tyranny." (22 May c2016) He also condemned the Anglo-French Agreement's [28] omission in November 1918 of mention of the Balfour Declaration, dated November 1917:

Although the proclamation was published a year after the Balfour Declaration, there is not a word in it about the Declaration. But the Minister replying in this House said in effect, 'Although there is nothing in this proclamation about the Balfour Declaration, you must not take it that we do not mean to get on with the Declaration.' There, again, is evidence of deceit. If the Balfour Declaration was to be carried through, the Government ought to have been honest about it when they issued their proclamation. (22 May c2022)

As for the 10-year waiting period dictated by the White Paper, it

seems to me to be quite fatuous. Many of the Arabs have held in the past highly responsible positions under the Turkish Government. They do not require the tutelage of a civil servant for 10 years in order to learn how to govern the country. (22 May c2027)

It was not true that Arabs and Jews could not work together, yet in the remarks of his fellow MPs he perceived

²⁹⁵⁵ For the full text, see the PDF at <https://blakealcott.jimdofree.com/rare-writings/>

a belief that the Arab population have an innate resentment against the Jewish people. One Arab after another to whom I have spoken has said, 'we have lived side by side with the Jews for years without any difficulty. We have no hatred against Jews as Jews. We, like most people, are sorry for them in their plight, but why should we have to face the full impact of the distress thrown upon the Jewish population if that distress means bringing distress on our own people?' I think it well that that should be said. (22 May c2028)

Returning to Crossley, his overall view of the White Paper was lukewarm:

It still continues to treat Palestine to some extent as a legitimate oasis for people from other countries, and to that extent it disregards the wishes of the native population. But, nevertheless, this compromise does at least show some regard for truth and honesty to the Arabs. For the first time the Arab case has been recognised. [But] It is not an absolutely honest document. (22 May c1975)

In similarly breaking a lance for the Arab side, Beaumont brought up several themes of this book:

Time after time reports and White Papers have favoured the Arabs, and time after time they have been shelved or ignored;... They have seen the shelving of the Shaw and Hope Simpson Reports [>220; >233] and the dropping of the proposal for a Legislative Council in 1936 [>289; >290];... We should particularly like to know what precisely is meant by the phrase in paragraph 9 about the establishment of an independent State requiring 'such relations between Arabs and Jews as would make good government possible.' The Arabs are very much afraid that Jewish collaboration will be deliberately withheld. ... I hope that the Jews will remember that racial bitterness between Arabs and Jews has existed only since the time of the Balfour Declaration, that prior to that date the two races lived happily and peacefully side by side for centuries in Palestine, and that there is no reason why there should not be a return to the former good relations, once the causes of Arab fears are removed. (22 May cc2031-33)

Rab **Butler**, like MacDonald speaking for the Government, first said, "I make bold to say that the balance of the Mandate has been upset by stressing the injunction to encourage immigration." (23 May c2053) Then, in effect admitting to some ambiguities in the White Paper:

I have been asked whether one side can restrict the progress towards self-government of the other. I would draw attention to the phrase in paragraph 10 (3), which says that both sections of the population will have an opportunity of participating in the machinery of government, and the process will be carried on whether or not they both avail themselves of it.²⁹⁵⁶ I have been asked what is meant by peace and order. That is one of the things which you recognise when you see them, but which are very difficult to define, but... there is no intention on the part of the administration to prevent the development of those self-governing institutions in the intervening period more than can possibly be prevented by the circumstances of the moment. (23 May c2054)

"Participate"? "Peace and order"? "Circumstances"? "Carry on" even if one or both sides violently resists? Section 10 of the White Paper left something to be desired when it

²⁹⁵⁶ MacDonald 1939, §10.3.

came to clarity. Only in Sections 13 and 14.3 was there an unequivocal statement, but it concerned immigration, not self-government: “After the period of five years [from April 1939], no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it”²⁹⁵⁷

Against the White Paper, on 23 May Winston **Churchill** invoked “world Jewry”, whose claims still trumped those of the locals:

[T]he provision that Jewish immigration can be stopped in five years’ time by the decision of an Arab majority... is a plain breach of a solemn obligation. ... To whom was the pledge of the Balfour Declaration made? It was not made to the Jews of Palestine, it was not made to those who were actually living in Palestine. It was made to world Jewry and in particular to the Zionist associations. ... This pledge of a home of refuge, of an asylum, was not made to the Jews in Palestine but to the Jews outside Palestine, to that vast, unhappy mass of scattered, persecuted, wandering Jews whose intense, unchanging, unconquerable desire has been for a National Home... They were the people outside, not the people in. It is not with the Jews in Palestine that we have now or at any future time to deal, but with world Jewry, with Jews all over the world. That is the pledge which was given, and that is the pledge which we are now asked to break, for how can this pledge be kept, I want to know, if in five years’ time the National Home is to be barred and no more Jews are to be allowed in without the permission of the Arabs? (23 May cc2171-72)²⁹⁵⁸

His 1922 White Paper’s text, as we have seen, had not said exactly that, remaining clearly unclear concerning which Jews had a right to be in, or come to, Palestine.²⁹⁵⁹ [[>]142] That inaccuracy aside, Churchill loudly omitted mention that the *Palestinian* “desire” for a national home was equally “intense, unchanging, [and] unconquerable”. A bit later, he added that building the Jewish National Home had been a “great experiment and bright dream”. (23 May c2178) Ever since Balfour’s House of Lords speech on 21 June 1922²⁹⁶⁰ the Palestinians were to be “experimented” with.

Churchill also clarified what the phrase in his 1922 White Paper “on sufferance” – as opposed to “as of right”²⁹⁶¹ – might mean. After quoting the 1939 White Paper’s proviso that after five years “the Arabs” had a veto over further immigration (§13 & 14.3) he noted correctly:

After that the Arab majority, twice as numerous as the Jews, will have control, and all further Jewish immigration will be subject to their acquiescence, which is only another way of saying that it will be on sufferance. What is that but the destruction of the Balfour Declaration? (23 May c2173)

That was indeed the destruction of the Balfour Declaration. So what? It is a universally accepted right of majorities – for instance the British majority in Britain – to make immigration policy at their discretion. In any case, if further immigration was a necessary

²⁹⁵⁷ MacDonald 1939, § 13 & 14.3.

²⁹⁵⁸ Also Nashashibi 1991, pp 108-09; Gilbert 2007, pp 157-62.

²⁹⁵⁹ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

²⁹⁶⁰ Hansard 1922b, cc1018-19.

²⁹⁶¹ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

condition of fulfilling the job of the Balfour Declaration of “establishing” a Jewish national home, then that Declaration, if not destroyed, would have to be declared no longer relevant.

James **de Rothschild**, who as a British officer had officially accompanied the Zionist Commission on its maiden trip to Palestine in March 1918 [^{>23}], brought up the superiority of the Jewish “people” compared to the Arabs:

I would point out that the people whom it is thus proposed to abandon are people of education and culture comparable to the British people. ... Are not these 400,000 people equal in education and culture to any people in the world? (22 May c1983)

Education and “culture”, rather than simple humanity, should evidently be relevant in the colonialists’ allocation of foreign territory. Compatibly with de Rothschild’s opinion, Josiah Wedgwood said, “The Arabs stand up and fight, and massacre. Make no mistake, they have killed as many of their own people as they have Jews, and they are murderers.” (22 May c1997)

Herbert **Morrison**, who seven years later would co-author the Morrison–Grady plan for a bi-national confederation instead of a representative democracy [^{>442}], likewise rejected MacDonald’s plan: it left the Jews as a “permanent minority, not exceeding one-third of the population,” and after quoting the relevant passage of the 1922 White Paper said that “If they are going to be there in a permanent minority and in due course under a Government in which they are a permanent minority, they will obviously be there, not ‘as of right,’ but ‘on sufferance.’” [*also >142*] Further;

The Jews, already victims of other races as a minority in certain countries, are now to be made a permanent minority in the country that has been promised to them as the Jewish National Home in Palestine. ... [MacDonald] avoided the slightest clarity as to the future protection of the Jewish minority. (23 May cc2130-31)

Morrison also threatened something which, with his and Churchill’s help, came true, namely that future Governments would not be bound by this White Paper. (23 May c2139) The White Paper would remain in effect officially, though, until the Cabinet decisions of 14 February and 20 September 1947.²⁹⁶² [^{>453; >471}]

Leo **Amery**, author or at least co-author of the final draft of the Balfour Declaration and Colonial Secretary from 6 November 1924 until 4 June 1929, contributed a long defense of Zionism, analysing all the past White Papers and making one valid point: “If all the arguments which the right hon. Gentleman used to-day for putting an end to the development of the policy of the Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate are sound and good, why were they not sound and good three years ago, or indeed many years ago?” (22 May c2002) Further, the best vision had always been a single democracy:

The policy of 1922 was one of equal rights. It neither assumed nor precluded an eventual Jewish majority; that was left to the course of development, and in the hope, not so unreasonable then, that, by the time it became a political issue, a question of government, Jews

²⁹⁶² CAB 128/9/22, p 94 and CAB 129/21/9, pp 48-56.

and Arabs would be prepared to work together in a common citizenship. That hope, unfortunately, has been frustrated by the steadily increasing intensification of a militant Arab nationalism. ... The White Paper is a direct invitation to the Arabs to continue to make trouble. (22 May cc2007, 2013)

It was the Arabs who were preventing the White Paper's envisioned independent, unified land by their "militant" behaviour.

Thomas Inskip wrapped up the entire debate, also holding high the White Paper's vision of a single democracy by quoting from HMG's 1937 Statement of Policy accompanying Peel Report [^{>337}], that "in the process of time the two races would so adjust their national aspirations as to render possible the establishment of a single commonwealth under a unitary government". (23 May c 2180) He rejected Churchill's view that all 15,000,000 members of "world Jewry" could *enter* Palestine "as of right" but once they were there, they were there "of right":

I am sure that this House, and every House that will consider the matter, will protect the Jew against any such outrage as an attempt to convert them into persons who are there by permission of the Arab population. (23 May c2185, cc2184-86)

He thus did not grant the Palestinians' political ownership of Palestine, but he also said that immigration was limited by the rights of the Arabs:

Let the House realise that in the Mandate these words about ensuring the rights and position of the inhabiting race are the controlling condition upon which alone the Mandatory Power was authorised and enjoined to provide for the close settlement of the Jewish population. (23 May c2183)

Lastly, he embraced parity, saying it was "a conflict of right with right". (23 May c2188)

This 8-page entry covers the intra-Palestinian debate over whether to accept the MacDonald White Paper and work with HMG to realise its goals. While the debate was still underway, in September 1939, Britain entered World War II. Had the Palestinians accepted it, the transition to independence might have progressed somewhat before it was put on the back burner for the duration of the War. The transition to independence would in fact not survive the next change of Government: on 10 May 1940 pro-Zionist Winston Churchill formed a new one, with Malcolm MacDonald being removed as Colonial Secretary two days later. In summary: the undeniable sea change in HMG policy was neither principled nor clear enough to garner unanimous or even effective Palestinian support, yet it is impossible for me to resist optimistically wondering what a strong partnership between the Palestinians and the Government of the Chamberlain Cabinet might have achieved before the declaration of war on 3 September.

[This entry not only relies heavily on secondary sources but also fails to offer a clear chronology, beginning a few days before the date of the previous entry (22-23 May) and covering the entire roughly two months after the White Paper's publication on 17 May 1939. I apologise for this chaos, but this most important moment in the history of the Palestinian resistance to the Mandate is simply too unwieldy for me to manage, the more so as I cannot read Arabic. I however believe that entries >383 - >414, provide enough detail to form a good picture of this true British-Palestinian dialogue and to aid in further research. A separate book on this White Paper not written through a Zionist lens has to my knowledge not been written.]

I have heard personally from several Palestinians whose parents during this time were politically active that an underlying reason for rejecting this White Paper was the basic, or background, mistrust, resentment and anger towards the British that had accumulated during the previous twenty-two years. Not only during the British repression of the Revolt had the experience with Britain been so bad that any British proposal was suspect, and to be accepted would have had to be perfect. The leading - and decisive - opponent of acceptance was Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who had under his belt years of personal mistreatment by the British. And as we have seen, even those most inclined to accept, like George Antonius and Musa Alami and some members of the Arab Higher Committee, did not see even their demand fulfilled for a lower number of immigration permits during the next five years. [>386; >387; >406]

While the Jewish-Zionist side rejected the new policy and immediately started violent subversion of the Palestine Government,²⁹⁶³ the Palestinians were divided - though they agreed on the four weaknesses of the White Paper: 1) further allowed immigration; 2) an indefinite but longish wait for full independence; 3) denial of their right to write their

²⁹⁶³ Suárez 2016, pp 60ff; Suárez 2023, pp 62-68; Nakhleh 1991, pp 65-230.

own constitution; and 4) the specter of a Jewish/Zionist veto on the whole plan. According to the June 1939 British intelligence report from the Galilee and Acre, "The White Paper still holds pride of place as a topic for discussion"; in Safad

Responsible Arabs are perturbed... by the apparent lack of Government action against Jewish outrages and illegal immigration, and by the delay in giving effect to some of the terms of the White Paper;

and in Acre the debate was in terms of the Mufti vs Nashashibi, Defence Party representative Dr. Anwar Shukeiri having been assassinated by the rebel Abu Mahmud.²⁹⁶⁴

On the day after the publication of the White Paper, 18 May 1939, the Arab Higher Committee held a first meeting in Jerusalem to evaluate it. Hajj Amin al-Husseini was in touch from his Beirut exile. According to Rashid Khalidi, Bayan al-Hout has offered conclusive evidence that a majority of the Arab Higher Committee favoured acceptance of the White Paper, with only the Mufti and a few others remaining adamantly opposed.²⁹⁶⁵ According to Porath, the six members Amin al-Husseini, Jamal al-Husseini, Fuad Saba, Hussein al-Khalidi, Izzat Darwaza and Alfred Rok rejected it while Awni Abdul Hadi, Ahmad Hilmi Abdulbaqi, Yaqoub al-Ghussein and Abdul Latif al-Salah were for acceptance.²⁹⁶⁶ Deputy Inspector-General Kingsley Heath also reported, on the basis of three meetings with Awni Abdul Hadi, that the latter thought the White Paper was good enough, something to work with rather than reject; various U.K. officials such as Downie and Parkinson at this time thought that also Yacoub Ghossein, Abdul Latif Salah and Ahmed Hilmi favoured acceptance.²⁹⁶⁷ Porath also claims that some active rebels condemned any Arab support for the White Paper, but that all in all, the Palestinian people overwhelmingly supported it.²⁹⁶⁸ Issa Khalaf, however, states that Jamal al-Husseini was ready to sign it in London in 1939 and actually initialled the document in Baghdad at Nuri Said's house in the presence of Colonel Newcombe in the summer of 1940 [417] and that Emir Faisal supported it as well, as did Hajj Amin al-Husseini for a while at least – a view shared by Walid Khalidi.²⁹⁶⁹

Izzat Tannous did not see Newcombe after the latter's just-mentioned week-long visit in Baghdad with Jamal and Amin, and thus in his detailed treatment of Palestinian reactions to the White Paper takes no stand regarding Amin's position at that particular time; shortly thereafter, though, he was told by Mr. Moody, Assistant Chief Secretary of the Palestine Mandatory Government who had been District Commissioner of the Galilee and was friendly towards the Arab case, that

²⁹⁶⁴ CO 733/406/12, pp 59-61.

²⁹⁶⁵ Khalidi 2006, p 116 and p 251 note, citing *Qiyadat*, 397 (in Arabic); Furlonge 1969, p 126.

²⁹⁶⁶ Porath 1977, p 292, citing *Akhir al-Sa'ah* (an Egyptian magazine), 25 April 1973, containing Hajj Amin's 'photocopy of the original minutes of the... meeting of 18th May 1939'.

²⁹⁶⁷ CO 733/408/15 [file without numbered pages], notes of 14 July ('Most Secret') and 25 August 1939 & *passim*.

²⁹⁶⁸ Porath 1977, pp 291, 292.

²⁹⁶⁹ Khalaf 1991, pp 77, 78, 84, 117; Khalidi 2005, pp 64-65.

'had Haj Ameen accepted the White Paper, the Government was decided to bring him back to Palestine and begin implementing the White Paper immediately. I am very sorry he did not seize the opportunity.' I have written the story of the White Paper of 1939 in full because I sincerely believe that its rejection by Haj Ameen Al-Husseini played a decisive role in the history of Palestine and in the destiny of its Arab population. It is quite possible that had Haj Ameen accepted the White Paper and had he cooperated with the British Government to implement it, it is quite likely that we would have had an independent democratic Palestine long before now.²⁹⁷⁰

According to Nassir Eddin Nashashibi, the divided AHC did in late May issue an official rejection, but the National Defence Party, led by Ragheb Nashashibi, met on 25 May in Jerusalem and announced its acceptance on 29 May.²⁹⁷¹ In his version:

The Arab Higher Committee under the Mufti's leadership met on 19 May 1939 in the town of Zoq in Lebanon and resolved to reject the White Paper. At the meeting, attended by Jamal al-Husseini, Husain al-Khalidi, Alfred Rock, Izzat Darwaza, Fuad Saba and Mu'een al-Madi, it was decided to send a delegation headed by Jamal al-Husseini to Geneva to announce the Committee's decision. However, many leaders of the rebellion – from Jaffa, Ramleh, Nablus, Tiberias and Lydda – signed a manifesto claiming that the real reason behind the rejection by the Arab Higher Committee was the provision contained in the White Paper to exclude the Mufti from Palestinian politics. Among the speakers arguing the case for acceptance were Suleiman Tuqan, the mayor of Nablus, Omar al-Bitar, the prominent community leader of the city of Jaffa, and Haj Adel al-Shawwa the distinguished personality from Gaza.²⁹⁷²

Kayyali on the other hand writes:

Only [Emir of Transjordan] Abdullah and the Defence Party came out in favour of the new British policy. Rebel Headquarters viewed the White Paper in a different light. As there was no promise of amnesty for the rebels and no inclination towards a rapprochement with the Mufti, they immediately announced the rejection of the British proposals.²⁹⁷³

According to Porath as well, rebel rejection, as revealed in a statement already on 10 April 1939, had both personal and political rationales.²⁹⁷⁴

Other 'rebels', though, seem to have favoured acceptance. A Manifesto dated early June 'To Every Arab of a Living Conscience' from 'Palestinian Mujahideen in Syria' stated:²⁹⁷⁵

While all were impatiently awaiting that the Arab Higher Committee will say its appropriate word about the White Paper, the [AH] Committee issued a manifesto rejecting the new scheme of the Government [motivated by] the personal interests of some of its members. ...

²⁹⁷⁰ Tannous 1988, pp 329-30.

²⁹⁷¹ John & Hadawi 1970a, p 321; Nashashibi 1990, p 107.

²⁹⁷² Nashashibi 1990, p 106.

²⁹⁷³ Kayyali 1978, p 222, citing CO 733/400, MacMichael to MacDonald, 31 May 1939, Enclosure, and CO 733/406, p 1, Wing Commander S.P. Ritchie's 'Appreciation of the Situation in Palestine', 31 May 1939.

²⁹⁷⁴ Porath 1977, p 291, citing Sassoon to Shertok, 11 April 1939, Zionist Archives S/25, 10095.

²⁹⁷⁵ CO 733/406/12, pp 69-81.

The majority of the noble Arab people fully agrees that the White Paper forms a good basis for the realization of the national aspirations in the cause of which we have struggled with all sincerity.

It named the Mufti, Jamal, Awni Abdul Hadi, Hilmi Pasha, Abdul Latif Salah, Yacoub Al-Ghussein, Dr. Khalidi and Alfred Rock in connection with the rejection, then continued:

If... Govt will allow the Jews 75,000 immigrants only, once and for ever, that means as indeed the Jews themselves admit that the end of the National Home has come... [Also, in their view] land sales OK ... 'national govt' ok ... We definitely believe that [Amin's 'being prevented from entering Palestine indefinitely'] was the reason which prompted the AHC to reject the new policy. ... This Committee... ignored [i.e.] the real interest of the country...

Given the demographics, there is something to be said for this view that the single fact of an end to forced immigration would spell the burial of the idea of a Jewish state – unless the partition idea, at the time firmly eschewed by HMG, were revived. That is, that was all that was needed to ensure an Arab Palestine demographically, whatever roadblocks the Zionists could erect in the way of full independence by not co-operating.

They then criticised by name Aref Abdul Razeq (Razzak) [^{>370}], Fares Al-Azzuni, Hamad Al-Zawati, Hasan Salamah Al-Julani, otherwise known as Al-Shalaf, and Abu Durra as having carried out the Mufti's commands and "desecrated the holy rebellion through exploiting it for Haj Amin's selfish aims." Haj collected money which if it had gone to protect against land sales would have solved that problem. "Jamal al-Husseini (The *Mujahid*) sold to Jews lands in Beisan in 1923, and his uncle Ismail Bey al Husseini sold to Jews *Al Nazleh* lands, and his uncle Jamil Bey al Husseini sold *Al Qastal* lands. as did the Mufti, etc."

Debunking this "alleged manifesto of exiled Arabs issued to the Press on Saturday by the British Government" as an "attack... upon the Arab Higher Committee" was a reply from the Arab Centre, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, dated 12 July 1939.²⁹⁷⁶ It blamed Britain:

We hold this document in the greatest possible suspicion; and more than that, we consider it in the highest degree hostile and unfair of the Government to accept unquestioningly, and issue to the public with their blessing, a statement of such dubious origins merely because it throws discredit on the Arab cause. ... Who are the signatories of the 'manifesto'? They are known to the British Government, who refrain from publishing their names for either of two reasons. (1) They are either fictitious, being the names of paid nobodies, or (2) They are the names of real persons of bad reputation, whose words would therefore be disregarded by the people. The Colonial Secretary has on several occasions publicly stated that the Arab Rebellion is a genuine movement of the people. How can the publicity given to this alleged manifesto be reconciled with such statements?

Nevertheless, so the Arab Centre, "Only in one particular is [the manifesto] truthful: the four [five?] rebel leaders named are guilty of the crime of being poor men of the people, and therefore fitted to represent them."

²⁹⁷⁶ CO 733/406/12, p 50.

The Colonial Office files on 'Reactions in Palestine' reported the opinion of General Officer in Command Ritchie: "Generally speaking the immediate reaction of the people of Palestine to the WP was favourable".²⁹⁷⁷ On 6 June Military Intelligence recorded the approval of the WP by Nabih Al-Bitar, Councillor; Salamah Ibn Said, Sheikh of a tribe; Selim Bseiso, Mufti; Taj Al-Din Sha'ath, Mayor; Arabi Al-Banna, Merchant; Said Bseiso, Elder; Abdul Hamid Al-Qaisi, Councillor; Rashad Al-Saqqa, for the young men; and Shafiq Mush-tahi, for the labourers.²⁹⁷⁸ Eyewitness Akram Zuaytir, for one, later simply gave a short summary of the pros and cons, indicating that he himself had not advocated strongly for either acceptance or rejection.²⁹⁷⁹

Enthusiastic acceptance by the Nashashibis and the National Defence Party was attested by the Colonial Office,²⁹⁸⁰ and a group representing that Party met with High Commissioner MacMichael on 28 August expressing their support²⁹⁸¹ – including Ragheb and Fakhri Nashashibi of Jerusalem, Suleiman Tuqan of Nablus, Farid Irsheid of Jenin, Abdel Rauf el Bitar of Yaffa and Haj Abdel Shawwa of Gaza. They stated that "Ever since the occupation [in 1918] those who now constitute the Defence Party had worked in a friendly way with Government." and would help in wartime – "their lives and property were at the disposal of Government."

Porath also adds Izzat Tannous, Ahmad al-Shuqairi and George Antonius to those urging acceptance of the White Paper,²⁹⁸² although Tannous's own story differs somewhat²⁹⁸³:

As soon as the White Paper was published, the members of the A.H.C. and all those Palestinians who attended the Palestine Conference in London gathered at Haj Ameen's residence near Jouneh, the suburb of Beirut. The two Defense Party members, Ragheb Nashashibi and Yacoub Farraj, were absent because they had resigned from the A.H.C. in 1937. The Committee met every day and the White Paper was scrutinized in detail. We were fifteen in number. The Committee met for nearly three weeks. They were day-long meetings, only broken by generous luncheons served at Haj Ameen's table. The discussion was in a familylike manner at first, sitting in a circle and all taking part. The morale was high and the expectation for a brighter future was higher. This went on for a time, dreaming of a Palestinian Arab as the head of a department, as a Minister or a Prime Minister or even at Government House, and why not?

But Amin could not agree:

²⁹⁷⁷ CO 733/406/12, pp 93-97.

²⁹⁷⁸ CO 733/406/12, p 157.

²⁹⁷⁹ Zuaytir 1958, pp 127-28.

²⁹⁸⁰ CO 733/406/12, pp 134-39.

²⁹⁸¹ CO 733/406/12, pp 28-29.

²⁹⁸² Porath 1977, p 293, citing Furlonge, p 126 and CO 733/408/75772[sic: 75872]/30/Part I, 'Notes of Interview of M. MacDonald with Izzat Tannous', 8 June 1939 and CO 733/408/75872/18, 'Baxter to Downie (enclosing a letter from Lampson to Butler in which the former reported a talk with Antonius)', 4 July 1939; also Bethell 1979, p 71, citing FO 371/23237 and FO 371/23239.

²⁹⁸³ Tannous 1988, pp 309-11, all quotations.

The discussion became more strained as some of us began to realize that Haj Ameen Al-Husseini was not in favor of accepting the White Paper. This negative stand, which gradually became more pronounced, made the atmosphere extremely tense. The arguments between Haj Ameen and the rest of the members became acute and after a fortnight of discussion it became quite clear that the only person who was against accepting the White Paper was Haj Ameen Al-Husseini. The remaining fourteen members were not only strongly in its favor, but were determined to put an end to the negative policy Arab leadership had been adopting heretofore. 'Take and demand the rest' was now their new motto. If there were excuses for our negative stands in the past, and there were, they were gone.

Amin did have some good arguments:

Haj Ameen kept repeating his arguments that the White Paper contained too many loopholes and ambiguities to be of any benefit; the 'transitional period of ten years' was too long and the 'special status of the Jewish National Home' was too much of an ambiguity to be accepted. There were other objections he raised which space will not permit me to record; but, all in all, they were not important enough to permit the total discard of policy which gives us our major demands, puts an end to our fears for the future and which our enemies simply crave to abolish!

The White Paper had indeed stated as a condition for releasing Palestine into self-determination some unquantified degree of peace, harmony and cooperation between the Arabs and the Jews: As we have seen, any step towards self-determination was contingent not only upon the restoration of "peace and order,"²⁹⁸⁴ which could more or less objectively be measured, but also upon the more subjective factor of Arab-Jewish co-operation, if not love and harmony; quoting once again the White Paper:

The establishment of an independent State and the complete relinquishment of Mandatory control in Palestine would require such relations between the Arabs and the Jews as would make good government possible. (§9) ... The independent State should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded. (§8 & 10.2) ... Moreover, the relations between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine must be based sooner or later on mutual tolerance and goodwill; the peace, security and progress of the Jewish National Home itself require this. (§13)²⁹⁸⁵

That these "essential interests" were left poorly defined could if necessary be used to ease Britain's escape from their commitment to the Palestinians, as Foreign Secretary Halifax had said openly to the Cabinet on 20 March 1939.²⁹⁸⁶ [402] After all, one of the "essential interests" of the Jewish party was the Jewish national home – to which the White Paper explicitly gave a "special position in Palestine" (§107 (b)) – but that home, as we have seen, could be seen as already built, meaning that particular "essential interest" was already duly "safeguarded". The White Paper [410] as much as said this: 1) HMG has enabled a huge increase in the Jewish-Zionist population and the strengthening of their institutions (§6, 13); 2) HMG will not "seek to expand the Jewish National Home indefinitely [un-

²⁹⁸⁴ MacDonald 1939, §10.4 & 10.6.

²⁹⁸⁵ MacDonald 1939; also FO 371/23227, p 240.

²⁹⁸⁶ CAB 24/285/11, p 97.

less] the Arabs are prepared to acquiesce in it" (§13, also 14.3); 3) the further development of the JNH does not necessarily depend on further immigration (§12); and 4) HMG "will not be justified in facilitating... the further development of the Jewish National Home by immigration regardless of the wishes of the Arab population" (§15). As usual, however, there was a 'but': the requirement for British withdrawal was no longer only that the JNH be "established", but that it was "safeguarded" or secured – an even higher hurdle.

On 3 June in Cairo, on his way home to Syria or Lebanon, George Antonius wrote down his thoughts on accepting or rejecting the White Paper.²⁹⁸⁷ He had requested to see Miles Lampson at the British Embassy, who initially wanted to refuse him because of his "to my mind quite gratuitous intransigence in London as revealed by the Conference minutes"; but "on second thoughts" did not want to leave "any possible avenue unexplored of making the White Book policy acceptable to the Arabs". (p 17) He received Antonius and sent Antonius's words to Foreign Secretary Butler and the Colonial Office. Antonius felt the Palestinian and broader Arab

reaction is by no means altogether negative. The assurance that it is not part of H.M.G.'s policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State, and the adoption of the principle that the expansion of the Jewish population by immigration must eventually be made subject to Arab acquiescence, are both regarded as a substantial advance towards the recognition of Arab rights.

He noted that the (Palestinian) Higher Arab Committee as well as "the representatives of Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia... and Yemen" had "definitely rejected" the White Paper, and that "in Palestine itself, it seems probable that the bulk of opinion will follow the Higher Committee rather than the Opposition parties" – this last indicated that for instance the (Nashashibi) National Defence Party was urging acceptance.

The White Paper contained many "comforting assurances", but the Arabs were soaked through with "distrust, which is not to be confused with the sense of disappointment at the insufficiency of the British proposals". Paraphrasing, the first cause of this distrust was that HMG in the White Paper still accepted and built on the Mandate, but – Antonius here exhibiting his "intransigence" – the whole point was that the Arabs rejected the Mandate *as such*. No good could come from anything based on the Mandate. Then,

Another cause is to be found in the conditions attached to the promise of independence. The immediate Arab reaction was that that independence was bound to be fictitious in actual fact, not only because it appears to be dependent on Jewish goodwill, but still more... because it is governed by the Government's dictum that neither race shall be allowed to dominate the other. This is interpreted in Arab circles as an espousal in disguise of the Zionist slogan of Parity and as robbing the promise relating to independence of all value, the argument being that if neither side is to be dominant there can be no room for the constitutional exercise of majority rights. In Arab minds, this is linked up with H.M.G.'s insistence on a 'Palestinian' as opposed to an 'Arab' State. [>394-397]

²⁹⁸⁷ CO 733/408/4, pp 19-22 (see also pp 5-21), all quotations.

Antonius pleaded for an “explanatory statement... to remove Arab doubts and misconceptions as far as possible”. He hoped something would be undertaken for “an improvement in the direction of abating Arab hostility”.

But HMG decided against any such additional statement clarifying or modifying the White Paper. (pp 5-6) Malcolm MacDonald’s concurrence in keeping mum seemed to reveal once again a British bottom-line allegiance to Zionism, now motivated as well by fear:

[W]e have reassured to Arabs somewhat by the suspension of the immigration quotas for six months. We have done everything we properly can to assure the Arabs, and risked a great deal in doing it. [Namely,] driving the Jews – who are thoroughly beyond reason in this matter at this time – to wholesale and very damaging resistance. ... I think we are probably in for very serious trouble with them [the Jews].²⁹⁸⁸

It was Antonius who, over a year later, in a nine-page analysis of wartime Arab feeling, dated 3 October 1940 and written at the request of the British Embassy in Cairo,²⁹⁸⁹ underlined this fact of HMG’s obedience to world Zionism:

The blackest mark against [Britain] is Palestine, and it is all the blacker as she does not seem able to shake off the Jewish hold upon her mandatory policy.

One view among Arabs, so Antonius, was that British war victory would result in

the achievement of Arab unity in the form of independent states (Egypt, Syria cum Palestine and Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Sa’udi Arabia and Yemen) closely bound to each other and to Great Britain by treaties of alliance.

Specifically concerning Palestine he urged “liberation of the remaining political internees”, ending exile for Higher Arab Committee members, and moving forward with the “administrative and constitutional changes on the lines of the White Paper of May 18 [sic.], 1939”. But in his “present memorandum” he was giving a long argument for “Anglo-Arab collaboration” and “understanding”, “notwithstanding the bitterness and resentment caused by the errors of the past and by the policy adopted in Palestine...”. Hope dies last, and George Antonius still hoped for a revival of British-Arab friendship.

The Palestinians thus knew that the White Paper contained escape clauses for HMG and that a Jewish-Zionist veto of normal democracy was possible. [>402; >405; >410] In A.W. Kayyali’s view, for instance: “Even the postponed independence was subject to a Jewish veto and made conditional on Jewish co-operation.”²⁹⁹⁰ The recent view of Rashid Khalidi is that the White Paper indeed gave the Zionists veto power:

[R]epresentative institutions and self-determination were made contingent on approval of all the parties, which the Jewish Agency would never give for an arrangement that would prevent the creation of a Jewish state.²⁹⁹¹

²⁹⁸⁸ CO 733/408/4, p 6.

²⁹⁸⁹ CO 733/427/9, pp 21-29, *all quotations*.

²⁹⁹⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 222; also Ben-Gurion 1968, pp 412-14, 422; Khalidi 2006, pp xxi, 114-15.

²⁹⁹¹ Khalidi 2020, p 48.

In my opinion, however, “approval” does not capture the complexity of the White Paper’s content because it conjures a picture of the British asking the Zionists, ‘Do you approve?’, to which the answer would certainly be ‘No.’ But, as seen in the quotations from the White Paper just above, the British had actually stated only a softer, indirect criterion, namely “such relations between the Arabs and the Jews as would make good government possible”. There could be explicit rejection by the Zionists but were HMG so inclined, it could look at those relations, always kept at least somewhat peaceful by HMG’s military and police power, and in the end deem them good enough.

Thus, those in favour of accepting the WP had the argument on their side that immigration was unequivocally (for the moment) capped at a maximum of around one-third of the total population. That part of the deal was *not* subject to the preconditions of peace-and-order, or Arab-Jewish cooperation; if the Arabs did not approve further immigration – which they of course wouldn’t – there would be no further immigration, end of discussion. In weighing pros and cons, the argument would have made sense that this rigid limitation of the *yishuv* to about one-third of the total population trumped the White Paper’s enabling future HMG dithering over real independence; an Arab majority was assured.

But they were also, I believe, necessarily banking on some degree of likelihood that the British would not *interpret* future given situations on the ground as lacking peace and cooperation. Thus the question was whether the British could be *trusted* to keep leaning towards their stated policy of fulfilling the Palestinians’ wishes, with or without a change in Government. Remember that MacDonald, at the St. James meeting with the Arabs on 6 March had said that

the British Government were anxious for co-operation between Arabs and Jews, not with any idea of giving the Jews a veto, but because they desired to see an independent Palestinian State. ... If the Jews should refuse to co-operate then he could say with fair certainty that they would be dropped. ... [T]he British Government would not postpone the first step [introducing Palestinian Ministers] if the Jews refused to co-operate.²⁹⁹² [396]

Much depended as well on judging the both power of the Zionist lobby in London and the likelihood of reversion to partition – although the White Paper in clear terms rejected partition as “impracticable” and its language assumed throughout a unified Palestine. Optimism was not without basis, something the judgments of for instance Kayyali and Khalidi, quoted just above, do not incorporate.

We do not know how HMG would have behaved had the Palestinians (and the surrounding Arab states) gotten energetically behind the White Paper. But they didn’t, and the attitudes of future Governments to the MacDonald White Paper can thus in a sense be said to vindicate the stance of those who rejected it: The Chamberlain Government, with MacDonald as Colonial Secretary (until 12 May 1940) could perhaps have been trusted, but not the Churchill Government from then until 26 July 1945.

²⁹⁹² FO 371/23227, pp 338, 344, 343, 372.

After that the Atlee Government, with Ernest Bevin as the (Foreign) Secretary responsible for Palestine, likewise did not uphold the 1939 White Paper: On 16 September 1946 Bevin would be holding talks in London with non-Palestinian Arab delegations. (The Palestinians were boycotting the talks precisely because the Attlee Government had, in supporting the Morrison-Grady bi-national proposal [^{>442}], retreated from the representative-democracy policy of the 1939 White Paper.) To his Arab audience he invoked what those who rejected the White Paper feared some future HMG would do, namely Jewish discontent, necessitating postponement of the independent democratic state.²⁹⁹³ Referring to their criticisms of the new British policy favouring bi-nationalism or federalism as outlined by the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady Commissions [^{>438}; ^{>442}], he told the Arab representatives:

In your statements much was said about the White Paper of 1939. At that time, His Majesty's Government hoped that Arab-Jewish relations would improve sufficiently in the succeeding years for a constitution to be drawn up and the independence of the country established. But as we look back now, in the light of subsequent events, particularly since the end of the war, I think we must agree that the British Government of that day were unduly optimistic. Despite the sincerity of their intentions, I doubt whether they would have found it possible, even if they had not been overtaken by the catastrophe of a world war, to carry through the programme laid down in 1939. At any rate, I am quite certain that in the present state of affairs, any attempt to extend self-government in Palestine on the lines of the White Paper of 1939, by means of a central elected legislature and a unitary constitution, would be doomed to failure. [*see also >443*]

Bevin would of course be hiding behind some *force majeure* (“doomed”) while in fact his Government was simply unwilling, for many reasons it is not my task to go into, to implement the still-in-force 1939 policy. At any rate, the loopholes left by MacDonald would be slithered through by Bevin seven years later.

Thus, Palestinian reservations are easily understood:

This multiplication of precautions, including ‘should public opinion in Palestine hereafter show itself in favour of such a development’ and ‘provided that local conditions permit,’ taken together with ‘adequate provision for the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home,’ ... seemed to the Arabs to suggest that Jewish opposition would still be allowed to block constitutional development indefinitely.²⁹⁹⁴

It was the timetable and pre-conditions for independence that remained frustratingly ambiguous, and this taken together with the further permitted immigration of 75,000 European Jews raised legitimate suspicion concerning the promise of complete independence itself. Ragheb Nashashibi, for his part, feared simply and presciently that there were only two options: the White Paper or partition.²⁹⁹⁵

²⁹⁹³ FO 800/486, pp 3-4; MacDonald 1939, §8 & 10.2.

²⁹⁹⁴ Barbour 1946, p 202 (p 471 in Khalidi 1987).

²⁹⁹⁵ Nashashibi 1991, p 107.

In order to make an attempt to clarify such ambiguities Tannous was active in Geneva and London in summer 1939, exactly one year after his meetings with MacDonald [>361; >364; >367]. In London he conferred with former Palestine Chief Justice Michael McDonnell, H.V. Morton, Colonel Newcombe and Malcolm MacDonald:

Of the many points I raised with the Colonial Secretary was one which conditioned the relinquishment of the mandate to the good relations that must exist between Arabs and Jews. 'In this case,' I said, 'the establishment of the future government of Palestine will be determined by the Jews who will never seek to have good relations with the Arabs.' 'Another loophole,' I said, 'was the following statement: "As soon as peace and order have been sufficiently restored in Palestine, steps will be taken to carry out this policy of giving the people of Palestine an increasing part in the government of their country."' 'As soon as peace and order have been sufficiently restored,' I said, 'should not be made a condition in order to give the people of Palestine an increasing part in the government of their country, for, it is obvious that the Jews will prevent the establishment of this peace so as to prevent the people of Palestine from taking part in the government of their country. This condition invites the Jews to make trouble.' The third point we discussed was the 'special status of the Jewish National home' which the Arabs had to recognize in independent Palestine. 'Special status and independence were incompatible,' I said.²⁹⁹⁶

To Tannous MacDonald replied:

'Broadly speaking, there is hardly a political document without loopholes. ... [T]he White Paper annuls the Zionist State, puts an end to the Jewish National Home policy and begins a new policy which will lead, after a transitional period, to an independent Palestine where you will always be in an increasing majority. The fear of a Jewish majority or Arab land hunger have been removed and the Arabs have nothing more to fear.' ... This golden opportunity, if lost, may never come back.²⁹⁹⁷

MacDonald was objectively correct that, despite admitted loopholes, the White Paper offered the Palestinians much more than ever, including fulfilment of their basic constant demands concerning immigration and land sales. [>410]

Overall, Rashid Khalidi offers a balanced appraisal of the White Paper, which to its credit "called for a severe curtailment of Britain's commitments to the Zionist movement" in the realms of immigration, land sales, and representative institutions:

The Palestinians might have gained an advantage, albeit a slight one, had they accepted the 1939 White Paper, in spite of its flaws from their perspective. [His uncle] Husayn al-Khalidi, for one, did not believe that the British government was sincere in any of its pledges. He stated acidly that he knew at the St. James's Palace conference, which he was brought out of exile in the Seychelles to attend, that Britain 'never seriously intended [to grant self-determination]'. ... He nevertheless came around to favoring a flexible and positive response to the White Paper, as did other Palestinian leaders such as Musa al-'Alami and Jamal al-Husayni, the mufti's cousin.

²⁹⁹⁶ Tannous 1988, pp 312-13.

²⁹⁹⁷ Tannous 1988, p 313.

Hajj Amin did remain opposed, while Jamal al-Husseini and Musa Alami, on the other hand, in the end favoured acceptance.²⁹⁹⁸

To go back a bit in time: After agreeing on the Protocol of late 1938 with MacDonald [^{>380}], Musa Alami had told the members of the Arab Higher Committee that the Protocol was “just about all that the Arabs could hope for at that time”; and the White Paper did not fall behind the Protocol.²⁹⁹⁹ As Abcarius wrote in 1946,

Twenty-five years of poverty, of misery and the sacrifice of life ... and at long last a straggling ray of light seemed to pierce the thick clouds around it and to re-ignite the dying embers of hope. That was the 17th day of May, 1939.³⁰⁰⁰

Many Arab leaders did appreciate the White Paper’s strong positive points, as evidenced during their July 1939 negotiations with Colonel Newcombe [^{>417}] and by their testimony before the Anglo-American Committee in March 1946 [^{>436; >437}].³⁰⁰¹

I am hungry for two or three PhD theses covering MacDonald’s two years as Colonial Secretary with focus on relations with the Palestinians.

‘Arab casualties in the 1936-1939 rebellion were 5,032 killed and 14,760 wounded. In 1939 there were 5,600 detainees.³⁰⁰² *‘If we accept a total of 3,832 Arabs killed by British, this results in percentages of 0.36% non-Jewish killed. Khalidi [1986/1971] shows that the comparable percentages [i.e. 0.35% of the U.K. and U.S.A. total populations] for Britain and the US, taking the higher total of 5,032, would have resulted in 200,000 British and 1,000,000 Americans killed.’*³⁰⁰³

²⁹⁹⁸ Khalidi 2020, p 48.

²⁹⁹⁹ Furlonge 1969, pp 120.

³⁰⁰⁰ Abcarius 1946, p 219; also Tannous 1988, pp 330-31.

³⁰⁰¹ Hutcheson 1946, Ch. VI §4.

³⁰⁰² Khalidi 1987, pp 848-49 (Appendix IV).

³⁰⁰³ Hughes 2009, p 349.

Malcolm MacDonald went to Geneva to fulfil the Colonial-Secretary's yearly job of **answering the questions of the Permanent Mandates Commission** (PMC). According to the PMC records, he defended his White Paper:

An Arab population that had been resident in Palestine for generations had seen an alien population settled among them, Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald told the commission in 1939; if they were now willing to lay down their lives to stop that immigration in a movement that bore 'the undeniable stamp of a wide, patriotic national protest,' Britain could not forever ignore their views. The mandatory power might now be 'compelled to slay large numbers of Arabs' to uphold the mandate, but it would not agree to do that indefinitely. As MacDonald posited, 'If the Arabs of Palestine, alone among all the populations of territories under mandate, were to be deprived of normal political rights, it would amount to saying that the Palestine mandate contradicted the spirit of the mandates system.' The British government, he insisted, was not willing to accept that. 'It was impossible to set one's face against the whole spirit of the twentieth century, which in many countries was a steady movement towards self-government.'³⁰⁰⁴

Even if MacDonald was despicably willing to "slay large numbers of Arabs" (for a little while longer), no other Colonial Office emissary had ever spoken such upright words to the PMC.

Defensively, MacDonald said further that the national home was

now established, and while the mandate did not preclude its further development into a Jewish State, it did not require such a development either, and it was not a violation of the mandate for Britain to refuse to impose such a state on Palestine against the will of its Arab inhabitants.³⁰⁰⁵

He then vaguely described to the PMC an "independent State [that was] a federal State" before going into the various possible constitutions:

Again, supposing there was no federal State, but a unitary State: nothing in the White Paper [p.410] compelled a two-to-one proportion of the Arabs either on the Executive or in the Legislature of that State. Those concerned with framing the Constitution might also discuss the proposal, which had often been advanced, for parity in representation, and regard the Arabs and Jews as communities possessing equal status, and consequently entitled to equal representation in the Legislature. But supposing... that it was found desirable that representation should be on a strict population basis, and that the Legislature should contain ap-

³⁰⁰⁴ League of Nations 1939, use Search function; Pedersen 2005, pp 121, 125-127; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 129-30; Kattan 2009, p 253.

³⁰⁰⁵ League of Nations 1939, use Search function; Pedersen 2010, p 62.

proximately two Arabs for every Jew, the provision might be made in the Constitution under which, on any matter of importance, no decision would be taken unless a majority of the Arab representatives and a majority of the Jewish representatives were in agreement.³⁰⁰⁶

He had laid out these options at the 2nd joint Arab-British ‘Committee on Policy’ meeting on 4 March 1939³⁰⁰⁷ [>395], the last formula being parity in all but name on “matters of importance”.

HMG still did not know what to do with the Jewish-Zionist *collective* making up 30% of the population. The Cabinet Committee on 30 January 1939 had embraced parity [>385] while the White Paper left it out in favour of majoritarian democracy with proportional representation, but the desire to protect the permanent Jewish minority from the tyranny of the majority prodded them to find constitutional safeguards that went beyond provisions protecting individual human rights which were a standard feature of democratic constitutions in many countries, where for instance individual freedoms of expression, assembly and association were deemed to sufficiently guard against repression of minorities.

The White Paper itself, as well as MacDonald’s testimony before the PMC, was non-committal on the constitution, leaving the Palestinians once again without clarity and having to weigh many vague factors: a further 75,000 European immigrants, vagueness as to when independence would arrive, and whether the Zionists had the power to block progress were seen against a background of three years of extraordinarily intense autocratic repression, much loss of life and continued exile of the leadership. In the event, neither the PMC nor the Council of the League of Nations definitively judged whether the new policy conformed with the Mandate.³⁰⁰⁸ According to Bethell, the PMC was divided 4-3 narrowly against agreeing to alter the Mandate in the 1939 White Paper’s sense – in favour were Lord Hankey, the Portuguese Count de Penha Garcia and the Frenchman M. Giraud: the League of Nations *Council* was to meet on 18 September for the final decision, but by that time the war situation in Europe was such that the Council meeting was indefinitely postponed.³⁰⁰⁹ The MacDonald White Paper would remain formally in force until the Command Paper of February 1947³⁰¹⁰ [>453], resp. the Cabinet decision of 20 September 1947³⁰¹¹ [>471], abrogating it and relinquishing the Mandate.

It was at these PMC hearings, by the way, that Grattan Bushe of the Colonial Office urged dialogue with the banished and defamed Mufti, even if he were an “instigator of murder”, seeing as “peace in Ireland”, for instance, had been achieved by dialogue with Ireland’s “murderers”.³⁰¹² PMC member Baron van Asbeck, by contrast, supported by Rappard, Orts, “and, in retirement, Lord Lugard”, believed the British had been too soft during the

³⁰⁰⁶ FO 800/486, p 108.

³⁰⁰⁷ FO 371/23227, pp 237-38.

³⁰⁰⁸ Shaw 1946, p 56.

³⁰⁰⁹ Bethell 1979, p 70.

³⁰¹⁰ Cmd. 7044.

³⁰¹¹ CAB 128/3/2.

³⁰¹² Pedersen 2010, p 61.

Revolt, failing to “impose martial law immediately”, disarm Arabs, arm Jews, and use unbending repression, censorship, the death penalty, and threats of village destruction to suffocate it early on; van Asbeck’s quite accurate argument was that Britain had no “dual obligation” in Palestine, but rather only the job of “creating a Jewish state in which non-Jews would be protected as minorities”.³⁰¹³ Actually, Ormsby-Gore as Colonial Secretary from 28 May 1936 until 16 May 1938 (at which time Malcolm MacDonald took over) did do in Palestine pretty much what van Asbeck was now saying should have been done, and he had indeed given a detailed description of HMG’s repressive, pro-Zionist intentions in the House of Commons on 19 June 1936.³⁰¹⁴

Speaking of the Mufti, what if, as Grattan Bushe advised, he had been included in the 1939 St. James talks? During those talks his shadow was cast even on competent and relatively powerful figures such as Jamal al-Husseini, George Antonius, Awni Abdul Hadi and Musa Alami. Would the White Paper have been a few inches closer to Palestinian demands? Would the Palestinians have unified themselves in acceptance of it? But political and personal animosity between Britain and Hajj Amin won the day, an animosity which as late as 1948 and 1949 led HMG to explicitly reject both a Palestinian West Bank (some part of the “Arab state” recommended by UNGA Resolution 181 [1948]) and a Palestinian Transjordan, both seen as “Mufti states”, in favour of Transjordanian control over the West Bank:

[British High Commissioner in Transjordan Alec] Kirkbride’s main worry was that the large Palestinian majority would undermine Britain’s position in Greater Transjordan. Kirkbride warned that the Palestinians’ demands for a greater share in Jordan’s political affairs would turn this absolute kingdom into a constitutional monarchy. Such a process according to Kirkbride, would have ended in the Palestinisation of Jordan.³⁰¹⁵ ... [The overriding consideration was] the need to prevent the creation of what is called ‘a Mufti state’.³⁰¹⁶

The mutual enmity during the entire Mandate would outlive the mandate.

13 July 1939 *The Secretary of State [MacDonald] announced in the House of Commons that as a result of the increase in Jewish illegal immigration the immigration quota for October, 1939, to March, 1949, would be suspended.*³⁰¹⁷

³⁰¹³ Pedersen 2010, pp 58, 55.

³⁰¹⁴ E.g. Hansard 1936b, cc1313-96; Pedersen 2010, p 55; see also Tibawi 1977, p 146.

³⁰¹⁵ Pappe 1988, p 210.

³⁰¹⁶ Pappe 1988, p 14, citing FO 371/68364.

³⁰¹⁷ Shaw 1946, p 56; also Bethell 1979, pp 82, 166, 203.

Hajj Amin al-Husseini's unequivocal acceptance of the White Paper, as leader of the largest political party, was not forthcoming [^{>412; >417}] even after Izzat Tannous, who had found only "bewilderment" amongst the Palestinians' friends in Parliament at the AHC's rejection, **went to Geneva** along with Jamal al-Husseini and Musa Alami in search of further clarifications from Christopher Eastwood of the Colonial Office and Lord Halifax, who as Foreign Secretary had been the second-highest-ranking member of the British St James delegation. In what was another narrow escape for Zionism, other events in September took precedence:

Eastwood, in a joking manner, and looking at Jamal, said: 'Jamal, you are going to be the first Prime Minister for Palestine,' and we all smiled. ... [The] Pro-Arab Parliamentary Committee [now headed by Clifton Brown MP] were set to go to Beirut and Palestine to convince Hajj Ameen, and a League of Nations meeting was set, but when war broke out in September all that was cancelled.³⁰¹⁸

Geographically and ideologically the 'leadership' was broken apart:

Unable to convince Hajj Ameen by any means to alter his position and thus start a new life in Palestine, the remaining members of the Arab Higher Committee had no other resort but to dismiss themselves and disperse. The other alternative was to confront Hajj Ameen and declare their acceptance of the White Paper, but, unfortunately, they did not have the courage to do that because of the state of mind of the Palestinian masses.

At that point, except for Amin, Jamal and Amin Tamimi, the AHC members went back to their respective home towns in Palestine.³⁰¹⁹

Whoever was for or against, and in whatever points the British were failing to satisfy the Palestinians' demands as expressed for more than two decades, the war provided ample time for them to reconsider their stand. After the war they would renew in even more detail their traditional demands for immediate independence, a constitutional democracy and an end to Jewish immigration. The White Paper was still officially in force, but Malcolm MacDonald was far away, and the debate started to center around revived partition or bi-national proposals and the concrete demand, forcefully made by the U.S., that the Palestinians immediately accept 100,000 more immigrants. [^{>426; >438ff; >448; >455; >464; >472; >476}]

September 1939 *Even before the outbreak of the Second World War, it was quite evident that after years of rebellion, the Arabs' power and ability to resist Britain and Zionism by the force of arms had been weakened and exhausted. ... Soon after the declaration of war, the rebellion started to peter out, and MacMichael was able to report that "as a whole the*

³⁰¹⁸ Tannous 1988, pp 314-17.

³⁰¹⁹ Tannous 1988, pp 323-24.

Arab community has declared its support for the Government in the war with Germany in no uncertain fashion.”... The outbreak of the War eclipsed local politics and disorders; the great Palestine rebellion had ended “not with a bang but with a whimper”.³⁰²⁰

After 1939 ‘The [Palestinians] had recently emerged from the revolt of 1936-39, during which the British had treated them with the greatest severity. Military tribunals had sentenced to death anyone with whom or near whose houses were found arms and ammunition, even if it were only a bullet; and the British had collected whatever arms remained with the Arabs after the revolt. Moreover, emergency laws and military tribunals were still functioning because of the war. As a result of the attitude of the British toward them and because of their own feelings, the Arabs abstained from volunteering in the British Army.’³⁰²¹

³⁰²⁰ Kayyali 1978, p 223.

³⁰²¹ Alami 1949, pp 377-78.

According to Weizmann, speaking privately to Churchill, who would succeed Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister on 19 May 1940, he got Churchill's approval of his plan, when the war was over, to make a Jewish state in Palestine with three or four million additional Jewish immigrants.³⁰²² To the Chamberlain War Cabinet Churchill, then one of its members as First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote on 25 December 1939 emphasising the importance of the "influence of American Jewry" during the war and that "The Ambassador [to the U.S.] should be instructed to use softer and smoother processes" when talking to the Americans about the 1939 White Paper;

The one thing he ought not to say is that with the world in flux and the life of every European nation and the British Empire hanging in the balance, the sole fixed, immutable inexorable fact was that Jewish immigration into Palestine would come to an end after five years in accordance with the [MacDonald] White Paper.³⁰²³

On 16 January 1940 the full Cabinet then considered, without taking a decision, Churchill's wish to back away from the White Paper, with Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald saying that while the implementation of his White Paper's provisions on land sales "would arouse controversy", the immigration numbers were acceptable to the Zionists and one shouldn't worry about the "constitutional issue" (of independence for a normal-democratic Palestine), because "there was no question, under the White Paper, of any changes until peace and order had been established in Palestine".³⁰²⁴ Behind the Palestinians' backs he was saying what they and the Arab states had said nine or ten months previously, namely that the U.K. could invoke the 'peace and order' (and inter-community co-operation) clause of the White Paper to postpone even first steps towards the promised independence.

The land-sales provisions MacDonald spoke of were then being codified as the 'Palestine Land Transfer Regulations' submitted by High Commissioner MacMichael to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations on 28 February 1940³⁰²⁵ as the concrete application of the White Paper's policy on land sales³⁰²⁶. Justifying the Regulations by Article 6 of the Mandate [>146] and by the John Hope Simpson and Woodhead Commission Reports [>233; >376], two Zones, A and B, were set aside within which Arab-owned land could not be bought by Jews. HMG were

convinced that it would be dangerous to ignore any longer the clear warnings from a series of authoritative and impartial Commissions as to the serious and growing congestion of the Arab population in certain areas. ... [T]hese Commissions... have all been consistent and

³⁰²² Weizmann 1949, p 514; Cohen 1987a, p 68.

³⁰²³ CAB 67/3/51, p 365 (document-page 2); Cohen 1987a, pp 74-75.

³⁰²⁴ CAB 65/5/15, p 58 (document-page 84); Cohen 1987a, p 78; also CAB 733/410/15; Cohen 1987a, p 86.

³⁰²⁵ Cmd. 6180; Cohen 1987a, pp 98-106, reproducing Cmd. 6180 with two explanatory Enclosures; also Zuaytir 1958, p 131.

³⁰²⁶ MacDonald 1939, §16.

unanimous in urging the necessity for control of land sales. ...Finally, it cannot be too often repeated that somehow and at some time the Jews and Arabs in Palestine will have to learn to live together in peace.³⁰²⁷

After two decades, Regulations with teeth were in place. But as we saw just above and will see [>418; >424], Prime Minister-in-waiting Churchill and the Zionists with whom he would people his War Cabinet were on a different page altogether, dismissive of the Mandate Article 6, the White Paper's §16, and the Shaw, Hope Simpson and Woodhead Reports. And as the world would see up to the present day, it was by no means the case that Jews and Arabs would "have to" live together in peace.

1939-45 *'In keeping with the 1939 White Paper the purchase of land by Jews was restricted; it was for instance allowed only on about 5% of Palestine's territory.'*³⁰²⁸

8 February 1940 *At their first meeting, Roosevelt suggests to Weizmann bribing the Arabs, asking 'What about the Arabs? Can't that be settled with a little baksheesh?'*

spring 1940 *'In 1940 the Mufti became such a grave threat to British interests that Winston Churchill approved his assassination.'*³⁰²⁹

³⁰²⁷ Cohen 1987a, pp 105, 106.

³⁰²⁸ Bethell 1979, pp 82-83, 201.

³⁰²⁹ Mattar 1988, p 148; probably FO 371/24568/367, Leo Amery to Secretary of State, October 5, 1940.

416. British statement through killings

April-June 1940

A non-verbal, non-written 'statement' by the British involved "certain Arabs" who had been sentenced to death for political dissent. The Mufti had asked the Turkish government to intervene with the British to commute the sentences, but the Turks declined, only passing on the Mufti's wish to the British. The Afghan Ambassador to London did protest against the pending executions, though, and the British tweaked their regulations so that death sentences should henceforth only be spoken by civil, but not by military, courts. A telegram to this effect was to be sent to various Middle Eastern cities, but the officer in charge (signature illegible) noted that "We do not want to encourage too many more people to interest themselves in Palestine and I have therefore slightly amended the draft telegram (Angora telegram No. 588 of June 18)." In addition, "We must hope that the Afghan Ambassador will not now wish to play a part as unofficial mediator between the Mufti and ourselves."³⁰³⁰

March or May 1940 [*There is some evidence that Churchill approved the kidnapping and assassination of the Mufti.*]³⁰³¹

26 June 1940 *The Irgun ... splits into Avraham Stern's Lehi, which sees the British as the main enemy, and David Raziel's Irgun ... whose main targets are Arabs.*

³⁰³⁰ probably FO 371/24568/367, pp 31-39, April-June 1940.

³⁰³¹ FO 371/24568 [probably /367], pp 110-159, particularly p 122, note by [semi-legible] Vansittart; Mattar 1988, p 82.

417. Newcombe's Intervention

July & August 1940

The major attempt to gain clear Palestinian acceptance of the MacDonald White Paper was **the overture of Colonel Stewart F. Newcombe** in July 1940. [*also >347; >412*] Already on and around 27 June the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner had identified several Palestinian leaders who were “moderate”, i.e. tended to accept the 1939 White Paper – for instance Shukri Bey Taji and Suleiman Bey Tuqan, Mayor of Nablus, but not Sheikh Abdul Qader al-Muzaffar (Muzzafar); evidently a group of Palestinians speaking in Amman with Trans-Jordan High Commissioner Kirkbride could cite the White Paper chapter and verse and pushed for its implementation.³⁰³² Writing to Baghdad on 20 August, the Foreign Office would describe the “moderates in Palestine” as those who were “less unwilling than others to accept the practical compromise contained in the White Paper”.³⁰³³ At issue was whether HMG should give the Palestinians something in the specific form of taking “the first steps up the constitutional ladder” foreseen by the White Paper, even “while the war is on”.³⁰³⁴ This meant at least putting locals into high Administration posts, but perhaps also some work on the Palestine constitution.

Newcombe was sent to Baghdad by Arabist Lord Lloyd, Colonial Secretary in Churchill's new war government and a sympathiser with the Arab cause, to meet with Musa Alami and Jamal al-Husseini (who were still exiled) with a proposal for the “immediate setting-up of a Palestine Government in which Arabs and Jews would participate in proportion to the numbers of their communities, to which there would be a phased transfer of powers until the country became fully self-governing, though not yet independent”; the key term was “immediate” and the key principle was not parity or bi-nationalism but proportional representation.³⁰³⁵ Other improvements on the White Paper were that the High Commissioner would be replaced by an elected Palestinian six months after war's end, and the *maximum* length of the transition period would be ten years.

Specifically, Newcombe wrote to Lloyd on 2 August conveying what was “requested by the Arab Higher Committee”:

(1) 75,000 Jewish immigrants will not be exceeded by illegal immigration. (2) Amendment of Land Laws to accord with the Woodhead report. (3) Start of self-governing institution as soon as possible. (4) Amnesty, as given in Iraq for all. ... I [Newcombe] believe that the committee will co-operate genuinely if the above points are met.³⁰³⁶

A document entitled ‘Musa Alami's Statement’, evidently enclosed in communications from Baghdad to Colonial Secretary Lloyd but in need of closer research, read in part:

³⁰³² Cohen 1987a, pp 136-49.

³⁰³³ Cohen 1987a, p 178, reproducing FO 371/24549 FO 921/151.

³⁰³⁴ Cohen 1987a, p 172, reproducing FO 371/24549.

³⁰³⁵ Furlonge 1969, pp 127-28; see also Storrs 1937, pp 182-83.

³⁰³⁶ Cohen 1987a, p 182, reproducing FO 371/24549 FO 921/151.

A paper was finally drawn up and initialled by Jamal and Newcombe to the effect that the Palestine Arabs bound themselves to accept the White Paper with one alteration, – that the constitutional clauses be implemented immediately instead of at the end of the first five year period. ... Nuri Said Pasha and Shaikh Yusuf Yasin [of Saudi Arabia] were present at the meetings as observers and guarantors... The Mufti was at first strongly opposed to the agreement and went so far as to warn the two Palestinians that if they persisted they would probably be assassinated. Seeing, however, his position weakening he gave a reluctant consent. The two Palestinians were actually waiting [on] a plane to go to the U.K. when Newcombe was recalled and nothing further materialised.³⁰³⁷

The Colonial Office and Newcombe were for sticking to the White Paper, interpreting it to mean that HMG had

pledged ourselves in the White Paper to appointment of Palestinian Heads of Departments during transition period and to appointment after five years of Conference with free hand to devise form of constitution of independent Palestinian State... Paragraph 10(3) of White Paper precludes us from using Jewish abstention as ground for delay...³⁰³⁸

This last point is relevant to the question of whether HMG was giving the Jewish Zionists a veto over steps towards independence, the White Paper indeed holding that

Both sections of the population will have an opportunity to participate in the machinery of government, and the process will be carried on whether or not they both avail themselves of it.³⁰³⁹

In Walid Khalidi's rendering, Newcombe and Nuri Pasha as-Said, then between two of his some dozen stints as Prime Minister of Iraq, got Hajj Amin al-Husseini, then in exile in Baghdad, to agree to the White Paper "as part of a larger package", namely: The Arabs would help fight the Axis militarily if Britain would agree to strictly enforce the 1939 White Paper.³⁰⁴⁰ Churchill however, since May 1940 Prime Minister, overruled Lloyd and Newcombe, cutting off contact with Nuri Said, Musa Alami, and Jamal al-Husseini and binning the proposal. Newcombe had travelled from Iraq to Cairo, and as the Foreign Office wrote to Baghdad on 20 August, "it has now been decided that Colonel Newcombe should not return to Iraq".³⁰⁴¹

This was surprising, because during the talks Nuri had committed the Iraqi Government to declare war on the Axis powers if and when agreement was reached with the British Government over Palestine, and he had to know how matters stood; so he [Nuri] too went off to Cairo, but returned crestfallen a few days later saying that 'it was all off' and that he 'did not understand the British'. What had happened seems clear from Churchill's memoirs and other sources; Lloyd's proposals, involving as they did an even greater measure of satisfaction to the Arabs than the White Paper and being correspondingly more unacceptable to

³⁰³⁷ Cohen 1987a, p 183, reproducing FO 371/24549 FO 921/151.

³⁰³⁸ Cohen 1987a, p 189, reproducing CO 733/426/75872/85.

³⁰³⁹ MacDonald 1939, §10.3; also >411.

³⁰⁴⁰ Khalidi 2005, pp 64-65.

³⁰⁴¹ Cohen 1987a, p 176, reproducing FO 371/24549 FO 921/151.

the Jews, had proved equally unacceptable to a Prime Minister who prided himself on having been one of the authors of the Balfour Declaration, and had been shelved on his instructions.³⁰⁴²

Newcombe, and with him the draft for an improved White Paper, disappeared temporarily into the sunset.³⁰⁴³ But on 2 November he penned a further 'Memorandum' saying what Colonial Secretaries MacDonald and Lloyd both knew:

The obstacle to full co-operation [of the Arab states in the war effort] is mistrust caused by the Palestine question: and until we implement the White Paper to prove that we intend keeping strictly to our promise, no co-operation is probable. Arabs say this mistrust was created by our enforcing a Mandate, the terms of which were more or less drawn up by Dr. Weizmann, without consulting the people of the mandated country, which the Covenant of the League enforced on us: by the action of our Government in 1931 [p.246] and other occasions: and now they fear our inaction to fulfil the White Paper means again that the Government is under the influence of Dr. Weizmann and the Zionists.³⁰⁴⁴

He then urged HMG to move ahead with the self-government promised by the White Paper in §10.4 because "Peace and order have been restored: no one can deny it." He added that §10.4 and §10.6 still leave a loophole for a more pro-Zionist "future form of Government to be considered after 5 years".³⁰⁴⁵ Finally, Foreign Secretary Halifax and Colonial Secretary Lloyd on 20 November in a 'Joint Memorandum' to the War Cabinet argued against postponing the White Paper's steps toward independence

until after the war. ... The improvement in the internal situation in Palestine has now been maintained for a considerable period, and it is no longer possible to maintain with conviction that peace and order have not been sufficiently restored for the purpose of implementing paragraph 10(4) of the White Paper... [O]ur delay in proceeding with this part of our policy is widely attributed, in Arab eyes, to Jewish influence.

If HMG would implement the "constitutional" parts of the White Paper,

we shall, in our approaches to them [the Arabs] be free of the imputation that we are failing to carry out the policy to which [HMG] are committed and which Parliament has approved.³⁰⁴⁶

HMG however, under Prime Minister Churchill, could not accept anything less than a majority-Jewish state somewhere in Palestine; it was only with the next, Labour, Government that parity and bi-nationalism, rather than an exclusively Jewish state as wished by Churchill's Government, was again deemed acceptable.

4 August 1940 *Death of Vladimir Jabotinsky, right-wing founder of the Zionist Revisionist movement.*

³⁰⁴² Furlonge 1969, p 128; also Abcarius 1946, pp 212-13; Khalidi 2006, pp 189-190; Khalaf 1991, pp 77-84, 117.

³⁰⁴³ Tannous 1988, p 329.

³⁰⁴⁴ See also CO 733/427/9, pp 21-29, Antonius's memorandum of 3 October 1940; also p.418.

³⁰⁴⁵ Cohen 1987a, pp 192-93.

³⁰⁴⁶ Cohen 1987a, pp 203-06, reproducing FO 371/24565.

August 1940 *[From Baghdad, after the Newcombe negotiations] Haj Amin and Jamal both fled to Iran where the latter was arrested by the British and exiled to southern Rhodesia; he was not allowed to return to Palestine until February 1946 [or November 1945].*³⁰⁴⁷

³⁰⁴⁷ Khalidi 2005, p 65.

According to Nassir Eddin Nashashibi,

On 2 October 1940, Churchill informed his Cabinet that he wanted the 1939 White Paper scrapped. Ragheb [Nashashibi] was attending an official dinner at Government House in Jerusalem when he heard the news. He told the High Commissioner in a sarcastic tone of voice: 'Now Mr Ben-Gurion will be able to fight Hitler without worrying about the White Paper. His wish has come true. The White Paper was dead before reaching the age of seventeen months.'³⁰⁴⁸

He adds that while High Commissioner MacMichael was opposed to the White Paper, Malcolm MacDonald, who had however been replaced in the Churchill Cabinet on 12 May 1940 by George Lloyd, continued to support it. A few months later, on 3 October, George Antonius would observe in a solicited memorandum to the British Foreign Office that the

present composition of Mr. Churchill's Cabinet, with its high percentage of proved Zionist sympathisers, is such that due recognition of our rights and aspirations is scarcely to be expected at their hands.³⁰⁴⁹

According to Bethell,³⁰⁵⁰ during his reign as Prime Minister Churchill often reiterated the opposition to the MacDonald White Paper he had expressed in the House of Commons on 23 May 1939 [>411]; he felt bound by it, but sought to supercede it with a partition, or two-state, solution, and generally sought to swing the pendulum back towards the Zionists. He for instance wanted to replace British divisions with Jewish ones "armed in their own defence" and supported the Haganah and Palmach financially. Most importantly, because the anti-Zionist 1939 White Paper was definitely out of favour, on 2 July 1943 his War Cabinet set up a Cabinet 'Committee on Palestine' to write a pro-Jewish-state White Paper to replace MacDonald's, made up of long-time promoter of Zionism Leo Amery, Archibald Sinclair, Herbert Morrison, Oliver Stanley, Richard Law and often Lords Cranborne and Moyne [>424; >430]; around 25 October 1944 it had decided to prefer partition to MacDonald's unitary Palestine³⁰⁵¹. According to Bethell, its new map of the future Palestine showed a "Jewish State/Arab Areas" division similar to that of the 1937 Peel Commission [>336] and the later 1947 UNGA Resolution 181 [>481], but with a large third entity, the "Jerusalem State" embracing Bethlehem, Ramallah and Lydda; this was to be announced, without further consultation with either the natives or the immigrants, only at war's end.³⁰⁵²

³⁰⁴⁸ Nashashibi 1991, p 115.

³⁰⁴⁹ CO 733/427/9, p 22; also >417.

³⁰⁵⁰ Bethell 1979, pp 89, 102-03, 132, 135, 144, 180.

³⁰⁵¹ CAB 65/35/2; Bethell 1979, pp 147-48, 150, citing FO 371/40129 (perhaps pp 94, 98, 108, 141, 162); also Gilbert 2007, p 224.

³⁰⁵² FO 371/40133, pp 38ff, 48-49, 59-63 (the maps), 86-89; Bethell 1979, pp 176-78.

Churchill also several times turned a blind eye to illegal immigration, for instance in the case of 793 passengers on the ship *Darien* in February 1942 or in the case of Romanian Jews fleeing by train through Istanbul in autumn 1944.³⁰⁵³ It is moot whether his decades-long love of Zionism was dulled when the Stern Gang on 6 November 1944 assassinated his close friend Lord Moyne, then Deputy Resident Minister of State in Cairo.³⁰⁵⁴ But his support for a Jewish state in Palestine was undiminished on 1 August 1949 when he spoke at length in the House of Commons.³⁰⁵⁵ [>443]

According to Christopher Sykes, Churchill's decision of 2 October 1940 (see just above) was put into effect some two years later:

After the disasters in Malaya, Singapore and Burma, there was a Cabinet reshuffle in the summer of 1942, and this resulted in Lord Moyne being replaced as Colonial Secretary by Oliver Stanley, one of the most brilliant men in the Conservative party. Stanley shared Winston Churchill's [pro-Zionist] view on Palestine and before the autumn of the next year he had begun work on a new scheme to replace the White Paper at the end of the war.³⁰⁵⁶

The Attlee Government, with Ernest Bevin as Foreign Minister, on 7 February 1947 would replace it with the bi-national Morrison-Grady or 'Bevin Scheme' solution.³⁰⁵⁷ [>442; >452]

3 October 1940 [George Antonius in a memorandum to HMG pleads for Anglo-Arab "collaboration" and "understanding" and denounces the "ruthless" colonial regimes of Germany and Italy, but notes wryly that those two colonial powers would at least "give very short shrift to the Jewish national home and rid us of that incubus".]³⁰⁵⁸

10 October 1940 The British Government authorizes the Jewish Agency to recruit 10,000 Jews to form Jewish units within the British Army.

9 November 1940 Fakhri Nashashibi, organizer of the 'peace bands' which collaborated with the British, is assassinated in Baghdad; supporters of the Mufti are believed to be responsible.

January 1941 "Through an intermediary to Hitler Hajj Amin al-Husseini prophesised "the well deserved defeat of the Anglo-Jewish coalition". He proposed a German-Arab alliance to achieve Arab independence.³⁰⁵⁹

28 February 1941 'Secret Committee' established by Haj Amin Al-Husseini in Baghdad.

29 May 1941 British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden expresses his government's sympathies with Arab hopes that 'an entity' will one day gather them. This is a declaration which will later be seen as the beginning of the process which led to the creation of the Arab League.

³⁰⁵³ Gilbert 2007, pp 188, 226.

³⁰⁵⁴ See Gilbert 2007, p 229.

³⁰⁵⁵ Hansard 1946c, cc1246-55.

³⁰⁵⁶ Sykes 1965, pp 250, 301.

³⁰⁵⁷ Cmd. 7044, pp 3-8, 15.

³⁰⁵⁸ CO 733/427/9, p 22.

³⁰⁵⁹ Bethell 1979, p 105.

6 November 1941 [*The Mufti, after escaping from Baghdad and Teheran to Rome and being received by Mussolini, arrived in Berlin where he in various ways, including radio broadcasts, urged the defeat of Britain and Zionism.*]³⁰⁶⁰

³⁰⁶⁰ Bethell 1979, pp 107-08.

On 14 August 1941 U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and Churchill **released a statement** called the 'Atlantic Charter' which resembled Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' of 1918 [>20; also >42].³⁰⁶¹ These two allies fighting the Axis Powers said that they

deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world. ... They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned; ... they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them...

We have read more or less this before, *inter alia* in the League of Nations' Covenant [>46], and here, too, the concept "peoples" opened up room for various interpretations: To which 'self, or 'people', in Palestine, did Palestine belong? The "people" concept was used time and time again during the Mandate to argue that the Arab 'people' had their "freely expressed wishes" for sovereignty and self-government in the form of the Near Eastern countries and kingdoms *outside of* Palestine; that the wishes of the Arabs living in Palestine were denied could by means of this concept be plausibly presented as a minor wound, a mere scratch on the Arab body.

According to Martin Gilbert, when Roosevelt presented Churchill with this text,

Churchill supported such a promise, but not with regard to the Arabs of Palestine, explaining to Roosevelt that 'the Arabs might claim by majority that they could expel the Jews from Palestine, or at any rate forbid all future immigration.' Churchill added, by way of explanation of his concern: 'I am strongly wedded to the Zionist policy, of which I was one of the authors.'³⁰⁶²

Did the "Zionist policy" Churchill had married include the opposite, namely that the Jews "might claim by majority that they could expel the [Arabs from Palestine]" – the thing that in reality would happen?

According to the United Nations³⁰⁶³ two months earlier, on 12 June, fifteen countries at war with Germany gathered at St. James Palace to sign an 'Agreement' that included a 'Declaration' that "the only true basis of enduring peace is the willing co-operation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security;..." Four months later, on 1 and 2 January 1942, the 'Declaration of the United Nations' was signed in Washington by 26 countries; again, like the St. James Palace declaration and indeed the League of Nations Covenant, the signees were the ones who either had been or would be victorious in war against other countries. Basing itself on the Atlantic Charter, it was officially a declaration of war on the countries of the

³⁰⁶¹ 'Atlantic Charter' 1941.

³⁰⁶² Gilbert 2007, p 184, citing 'Prime Minister's Personal Minute, 20 August 1941': Churchill papers, 20/36.

³⁰⁶³ UN History, *current*; UN Yearbook 1946-47.

“Tripartite Pact” [Germany, Italy, and Japan], pledging “complete victory over their enemies”, but the purpose of the war, they intoned, was to “defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice...” The three documents mentioned in this entry contained wording which could arguably give hope to the Palestinians, as well as other colonised peoples, and they are the precursors to the United Nations Charter signed on 26 June 1945 [341].

But what if the drafters were thinking only of Europe? Did the concept “peoples” to which the “common principles” applied include *all* people, namely also those who resided in the Powers’ various colonies in Asia and Africa? According to Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, Roosevelt and Churchill argued about this on their ship in the Atlantic, Churchill taking the line that their statement applied only to the formerly Nazi- and Fascist-ruled areas and peoples and Roosevelt saying No, no “race of people on earth” could deny “any nationality... its own nationhood”.³⁰⁶⁴ About a month after the Atlantic Charter, on 9 September 1941, Churchill would clarify his position on this in the House of Commons:

At the Atlantic meeting, we had in mind, primarily, the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the States and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke, and the principles governing any alterations in the territorial boundaries which may have to be made. So that is quite a separate problem from the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown.³⁰⁶⁵

The phrase “progressive evolution of self-governing institutions”, as we have seen throughout this chronology, as applied to Palestine, was code for the slowness needed to give the Jewish national home time to grow.³⁰⁶⁶ It also served to obfuscate, in Palestine, which “self” or “people” was to govern itself.

Churchill’s aim was made clear at a War Cabinet meeting a few weeks later:

The Prime Minister said that, if this country and the United States emerged victorious from the war, the creation of a great Jewish State in Palestine would inevitably be one of the matters to be discussed at the Peace Conference.³⁰⁶⁷

28 October 1941 *Jamal [al-Husseini], Ameen At-Tamimi and ... three others were captured by the British troops at Ahwaz (Iran) and were banished to Rhodesia. Ameen At-Tamimi died in exile; but Jamal Al-Husseini and the three others returned to Palestine on November 29, 1945.*³⁰⁶⁸

28 November 1941 *Haj Amin (arrived in Germany on 6 November) is received by senior Nazi officials and welcomed in Germany as a leader of anti-British nationalism.*

As of 1941 *‘Since 1941 [Haj Amin] had been supervisor of Arabic programmes broadcast from Berlin, Athens and Rome.*³⁰⁶⁹

³⁰⁶⁴ Ngcukaitobi 2018, pp 264–67.

³⁰⁶⁵ Hansard 1941, p 69.

³⁰⁶⁶ See from among dozens of examples >9; >16; >106; >136; >149; >192; >217; >327; >342; >425.

³⁰⁶⁷ CAB 65/19/35, p 190; Gilbert 2007, p 184.

³⁰⁶⁸ Tannous 1988, p 361.

³⁰⁶⁹ Bethell 1979, p 225.

420. Biltmore Declaration

6-11 May 1942

Not strictly within my scope but crucial to the context is the ‘Extraordinary Zionist Congress’ at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City which **openly redefined** the Balfour Declaration’s Jewish ‘home’ as a “commonwealth”, a term much closer to, but still falling coyly short of, ‘state’.³⁰⁷⁰ In resolving “that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth” reliance was given to the key phrase in the Mandate and the Churchill/Samuel White Paper of 1922 “recognizing the historical connexion of the Jewish people with Palestine”. [>146; >142] And the grammatically shaky but honest phrase “Palestine be established as” was chosen over the mendacious phrase “established in Palestine”. [>16; >146] It expressed its “unalterable objection to the White Paper of May 1939 and denies its moral or legal validity”, and called on the “United Nations” to recognise the Jews’ right to create a “Jewish military force”. Since “the White Paper of May 1939” had been painstakingly negotiated and written over a period of four months, and approved by the League of Nations-approved Mandatory in the form of its passage by the Cabinet and the House of Commons vote of 22/23 May 1939 [>41], it is hard to imagine what was not “legal” about it – assuming the legality of the entire Mandates set-up, that is.

‘Biltmore’ further:

The Conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for up-building the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.³⁰⁷¹

Also in the U.S., later in the year on 5 December, thirteen U.S. Senators and 181 Congressmen would write to President Roosevelt “favouring the restoration of ‘the Jewish national homeland.’”³⁰⁷² On 23 April 1947 Lord George Hall, who had been Colonial Secretary 3 August 1945 – 4 October 1946, would recall:

I was faced at once with this very grave and important problem. I met a very important deputation of the World Jewish Organization, which was then meeting in London, and I was faced with the Biltmore Resolutions which, as the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, rightly said, had been accepted by the Zionist Organization. I must say that the attitude adopted by the members of the deputation was different from anything which I had ever before experienced. It was not a request for the consideration by His Majesty’s Government of the decisions of the Conference, but a demand that His Majesty’s Government should do what the Zionist Organization desired them to do.³⁰⁷³

³⁰⁷⁰ Abdul Hadi 1997, p 118.

³⁰⁷¹ Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-biltmore-conference-1942>.

³⁰⁷² John & Hadawi 1970a, p 343, citing the *New York Times*, 5 December, p 9.

³⁰⁷³ Hansard, 1947a, c107.

In dealing with British public opinion as well as in direct exchanges with HMG, the Palestinians as well as the increasingly active neighbouring Arab states were “faced with” a strong lobby in Britain supporting the Biltmore Declaration, and it was very much on the minds of military officials in Palestine in determining the potential for Zionist violence in reaching the Declaration’s goals.³⁰⁷⁴ All the while, during the war, the Arab Palestinian population was on the side of Great Britain, something especially true of their newspapers³⁰⁷⁵.

21 May 1942 *George Habib Antonius dies aged 50. ‘We carried his body from his house to a hearse. We carried him out, Sariyy, Musa al-Alami, Rajai al-Husseini and I. It pained us so much to do so. ...We chose a grave for him next to the grave of Hanna al-Isa, who was also a hero of the Arab renaissance and welfare. It is fitting that these two should lie next to each other in death.’*³⁰⁷⁶

³⁰⁷⁴ E.g. FO 208/1705, pp 46, 54, 63; also Suárez 2023, e.g. Ch.7.

³⁰⁷⁵ Kabha 2007, p 269.

³⁰⁷⁶ Boyle 2001, p 286, quoting Khalil al-Sakakini.

Walter Guinness (Lord Moyne), a close friend of Churchill who had been his Colonial Secretary 8 February 1941 – 22 February 1942, **stated in the House of Lords** on 9 June 1942:

The Zionist claim has raised two burning issues: firstly, the demand for large-scale immigration into an already overcrowded country; and, secondly, racial domination by these newcomers over the original inhabitants. ... If a comparison is to be made with the Nazis it is surely [to] those who wish to force an imported regime upon the Arab population ... [The] proposal that Arabs should be subjugated by force to a Jewish regime is inconsistent with the Atlantic Charter, and that ought to be told to America.³⁰⁷⁷

Along with Palestine High Commissioner Harold MacMichael, Moyne opposed the partition which Churchill wanted to revert to.³⁰⁷⁸ On 30 September 1941 he expressed his anti-Zionism in a note to the War Cabinet, saying that with both Jewish immigration and the “natural increase” in the Arab population, “Palestine is far from being an empty land”, and employing everybody in industry was well-nigh “insoluble”; he asked rhetorically whether Britain should throw its soldiers and arms into Palestine so that “3,000,000 Jews” could settle there; also, a joint Arab-Jewish Advisory Council should be set up.³⁰⁷⁹ As for “Dr. Weizmann’s proposal that Jewish [military] contingents should be raised”, he judged that only the Zionists, and not Great Britain, would profit politically; the decision should be made on military grounds alone.³⁰⁸⁰

Zionists led by Yitzhak Shamir would assassinate Moyne on 6 November 1944 in Cairo when he was Resident Minister of the Middle East – as the related Stern Gang would assassinate United Nations Special Representative, or ‘Mediator’, Count Folke Bernadotte on 17 September 1948 after he advised honouring the right of return for Palestinian displaced persons. There was cruel irony, even cruel justice to Churchill, in the assassination of his friend Moyne, no friend of Zionism. On 17 November 1944 Churchill in the House of Commons would bemoan such assassinations, not because they killed, for instance, Lord Moyne, but because they would kill “our dreams for Zionism”:

If our dreams for Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins’ pistols and our labours for its future to produce only a new set of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many like myself will have to reconsider the position we have maintained so consistently and so long in the past.³⁰⁸¹

His own “dream for Zionism” survived Moyne’s demise intact, as shown for instance by his words in the House of Commons on 31 August 1946.³⁰⁸² [443] The British moreover

³⁰⁷⁷ Hansard 1942, cc196, 199; Suárez 2016, pp 97-98; Bethell 1979, p 181.

³⁰⁷⁸ Khalaf 1991, p 105.

³⁰⁷⁹ PREM 4/52/5, pp 1374-76.

³⁰⁸⁰ PREM 4/52/5, pp 1377-79.

³⁰⁸¹ Hansard 1944, c2242; John & Hadawi 1970b, p 85, citing Shaw 1946, Vol. I, p 73; Bethell 1979, p 183.

³⁰⁸² Hansard 1946c, cc1246-55.

reacted more mildly to such occasions of Jewish-Zionist terrorism than it had to Arab violent resistance during the 1936-39 Revolt, for instance through house demolitions and collective punishment; not even after the kidnapping of five British officers and the bombing of the King David Hotel in June and July 1946 was the Jewish community punished by more than mass arrests and a handful of executions. Nor were Zionist leaders deported as had been the Arab Higher Committee, nor was the UN partition plan, which would finally give the Zionists a Jewish state and which was opposed by HMG at the time, fought against³⁰⁸³.

31 August 1942 *The British army under General Bernard Law Montgomery defeats Rommel's Afrika Korps in the Battle of Alam Halfa in Egypt. Rommel's army is driven back.*

³⁰⁸³ Also Hansard 1946b, cc958-60, 1009-11; Hansard 1946c, cc1314-15; Bethell 1979, pp 183-85; Suárez 2023, *passim*.

This 8-page entry consists of every word of a letter from a Haifa attorney whose thoughts reflect to a "T" the attitudes of the Palestinians dealt with in this book.

The letter's context: In late 1942 British intelligence reported that "Balfour Day 2nd Nov. 42 did not produce any demonstration from the Arab population who completely ignored it" and that "Generally speaking the Arabs have been commendably restrained" during wartime; this did not however indicate Arab satisfaction, because, for example,

declarations made by Field Marshal SMUTS on 2nd Nov., by Mr. Wendell WILLKIE on 5th Nov., and by Mr. GREENWOOD and Mr. AMERY aroused indignation [amongst the Arabs] and took some of the kick out of news of Allied successes in the Western Desert. The immediate reactions being 'What is the use of Arabs helping the Allies to win the war if Palestine is to be handed over to the Jews when they win?'³⁰⁸⁴

The Palestinians were also aware of the Biltmore Declaration.³⁰⁸⁵ Willkie, a top member of the U.S. Republican Party, in his speech "advocated Jewish immigration into Palestine", and moreover, so warned the intelligence report, the "Axis Arabic propaganda platform" included the conviction that Allied victory would mean Zionist success.³⁰⁸⁶

From these forebodings sprang Elias Koussa's letter. Although written by only one person, it put into words the dissatisfaction of almost all Palestinians and captured as well most aspects of the general British-Palestinian relationship in both political and psychological terms. Four days after the 25th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration Koussa, who as a lawyer from Haifa who had worked many years for the Palestine Government, wrote **this letter to High Commissioner MacMichael**.³⁰⁸⁷

ADVOCATE

Telephone 341 P.O.B. 14

His Excellency

The High Commissioner for Palestine

Jerusalem

Haifa, 6th November 1942

Your Excellency,

1. I have the honour to state that on Sunday the 1st. instant, an aeroplane flew over the town of Haifa and threw printed pamphlets purporting to be an appeal from the Arab and Jewish Chambers of Commerce and from the Rotary Club of this town urging the inhabitants to enlist

³⁰⁸⁴ WO 169/4334, pp 34a, 'Cipher message 24/11, I/186'; & 37a, 'Weekly intelligence summary no. 41... for week ending 11 Nov. 42'.

³⁰⁸⁵ WO 169/4334, pp 37a-39a, 'Weekly intelligence review no. 42 for week(s) ending 11 Nov. [&] 25 Nov.' & 'GSI HQ Palestine Base & L of C, 1-30 November, 1942 (Summary No. 13)'.

³⁰⁸⁶ WO 169/4334, p 37a.

³⁰⁸⁷ CO 733/443/21, pp 10-23.

in His Majesty's Forces. I have read this pamphlet with interest; and my memory went back to the days of the declaration of the Great War in 1914, when the whole Arab nation was not only an enthusiastic and sympathetic supporter of the British Empire, but was also an active participant in its cause. In those days the Arab rushed, whenever the opportunity afforded them a means, to join the British forces and to fight against the common enemy. Every person, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, prayed from the very depth of his heart to the Almighty Providence to lead Great Britain and its Allies in the path of victory. This was a genuine, true and sincere feeling. It was not the result of any propaganda, but the natural consequence of the respect and admiration which every individual Arab held for His Majesty's Government and for the British people as a whole. There was no need to urge the Arabs to join the Forces. They did so of their own accord and free will. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in the present world conflagration for it is evident to every observer that the enthusiasm, the sympathy, and the support which characterised the Arabs' attitude in the Great War of 1914 are manifestly absent in the present war.

2. As an Arab who has got not only the interests of his own people at heart, but who has also held the British Government and people in admiration and who, in response to this sense of respect and admiration, deserted from the Turkish Army in order to join the British Forces in the last war, and actually served with those Forces from 1915 to 1920 when he was transferred to the Government of Palestine, I venture to submit to Your Excellency this memorandum actuated by nothing save a sincere desire to see the relations between the British and Arab peoples placed on a solid foundation of mutual understanding and respect. I trust, therefore, that Your Excellency will consider the statements herein set out in the same spirit by which they are animated.
3. Your Excellency has, doubtless, noticed the failure of the Arab community of Palestine to respond cheerfully and whole-heartedly to the numerous appeals for volunteers. Apart from the spontaneous rally in the early days of the war, the appeals which have been made have not had satisfactory results. The change of attitude is remarkable. One need not enquire deeply in order to ascertain the real causes which have brought about this demeanour, especially in the case of Palestine. The all important question which every Arab individual who has read the pamphlet referred to in the first paragraph hereof, or heard of the call for Arab recruits asks himself is "why should I join? Would I be serving the cause of the Arabs of Palestine by so doing? If so, how? What will the Arabs of this country get in return for their joining the cause of the Allied Nations? Would it mean independence or, at least, self-government, or, would I be helping to defeat my own interests and existence and the interests and existence of my compatriots by such enlistment". This is the problem for which every Arab probes for the true answer. The absence of a convincing answer is principally responsible for the reluctance of the Arabs to enlist, or to make any effective contribution to the war effort. The only answer that has been received from official quarters or from the authorities responsible for the campaign to encourage recruitment among the Arabs is "if you join you will support the cause of democracy". In addition, the Arabs are reminded of the atrocities and brutalities committed by the Nazis and their Associates in the territories which they have occupied with a gentle hint that these acts of savagery and barbarism will be committed in Palestine if it is overcome. I respectfully submit that this answer is not sufficient, because the natural and immediate question that follows is "how will the success of democracy help the cause of the Arab inhabitants

of Palestine". The Arab cause is clear and simple. It is complete independence and absolute freedom. It is, however, irreconcilable with the Jewish ambitions and aspirations. In the eyes of every Arab the question is shrouded with considerable doubts and suspicion because of the vagueness and generality of the answer and because of the irreconcilability of the natural right of the Arab inhabitants of this country to enjoy complete and unfettered independence with the Jewish endeavours to make of Palestine an independent Zionist state.

4. I ensure Your Excellency that it is useless to press the answer described above on the Arabs. They are inclined to be deaf to it. They are blind to the spectacle of an Allied victory because they are thinking of something else. They are thinking of their own freedom, of their own independence. They entertain grave doubts as to whether such a victory will not lead, with the determined assistance of His Majesty's Government, to the political, economical and commercial domination of their country by the Jews. They are alive to the obvious fact that without such assistance the Jews can never constitute a political entity possessing an overwhelming majority entitling them to rule Palestine. This being so, it is difficult to convince them that by making adequate contribution to winning the war they will serve the cause of their people and their country. They are unable to accept the afore-mentioned answer to the question that persistently arouses their anxious consideration and unabated apprehension for it is unconvincing and chimerical. It is unconvincing because they are unable to understand why they should help democracy to seal their own doom. It is chimerical because democratic principles require that the government of every country should be from the people, by the people and for the people, while the present administration of this Arab country is from the English and Jews, by the English and Jews and for the English and Jews. Again, the elementary principles of democracy dictate that there should be no taxation without representation. In Palestine, the Arabs have no representative body to voice their desires and wishes, and taxes are imposed upon, and collected from, them and disposed of without they having the slightest shred of right to vote on the propriety of the taxes, or the manner in, or the purposes for, which they are utilised. The Palestine Government which is the creation of His Majesty's Government is, therefore, fundamentally opposed to the democratic doctrines. It is ludicrous to ask an Arab to assist democracy when the dictates of democracy are deliberately discarded by those who claim to be the champion of democracy.
5. It is, indeed, too much to ask an Arab to sacrifice his life, his property, the interests of his family and every thing that is dear to him in order to help winning the war for the British Empire when he is fully satisfied and convinced that such sacrifice will be in direct conflict with his own interests and with the interests of his Arab compatriots. The British Government has done nothing since the commencement of the present hostilities to allay the apprehensions and misgivings of the Arabs of Palestine. On the contrary, there has been a great number of speeches and utterances by prominent personalities and leading statesmen to the effect that it is the firm intention of the Allied Nations, when victory is won, to give their active support to the Zionist cause. Indeed, it is amply evident from the recent statements made by President Roosevelt, by General Smuts, and many members of Parliament and other British and American politicians as well as by Zionist leaders that a democratic victory will definitely involve the conversion of Palestine into a one hundred percent Jewish state. Palestine will be as Jewish as England is English. This is the conviction deeply rooted in the heart and mind of every Arab. The justification for this conviction is to be found in the conduct of His Majesty's

Government and in the utterances of many imminent persons that “the promise of the National Home should be carried out to the letter, and the situation after the war will give added force and opportunity to the fulfilment of that promise”, and that “the Balfour Declaration was a great act of restitution for the countless wrongs done to Jews by Christians”, and that “the British Labour Party would do all in its power to restore the authentic spirit of the Balfour Declaration, and secure for the Jewish people a well-earned place among the peoples of the world”. These are quotations taken from the press, and simple illustrations of the many declarations which go to confirm the doubt entertained by the Arabs of Palestine as to whether it will serve their own interests and the interests of their country to respond to the call for recruits. Apart from these alarming utterances and provocative declarations which give the Arabs a considerable amount of anxiety about their future, they see every day signs and indications which are inimical to their national aspirations. They see that the Zionist Organization in London and the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem are in constant consultations with His Majesty’s Government and with the Governments of the Allied Nations as well as within the Government of Palestine with a view to ensuring that nothing shall be done which may hinder the development of the National Home according to the aspirations of the Zionists. They are aware that no measure whatsoever is taken by the mandatory government before the views of those Jewish representative bodies are taken, considered, and given every sympathetic acceptance. They remark that many important government posts have been filled by Jews vested with effective authority and responsibility surpassing the highest degree, if any, of authority and responsibility hitherto given to any Palestinian Arab officer. As against these evidenced facts, the Arabs find, to their deep regret and profound consternation, that they are deprived of any political body which can represent their views before His Majesty’s Government or the Palestine Government, and that the mandatory authorities refuse to allow them to elect such a body on the flimsy pretext that it would not be safe and wise to agree to such an election having regard to the exigencies of the war. They know that even the Arab councillors in the municipal corporations do not possess that true representative character and independent will which may enable them to protect their compatriots’ interests for they have been installed in their honorary chairs by the Government of Palestine without regard to the wishes of the people whom the Government pretends that they represent, and, in certain instances, irrespective of their qualifications and suitability to perform the duties of a municipal councillor. They feel that in consequence of the action of the mandatory authorities there is no Arab representative body that can express their views, advocate their wishes, and safeguard their national aspirations, and that they are left to the combined merciful consideration of His Majesty’s Government, the Palestine Government and their avowed enemy, the Zionist Jews. It is true that there has been an appreciable amount of assurances calculated to remove the apprehensions from which the Arabs suffer, but they are hesitant to accept them as sufficient and adequate guarantee that their motherland will not be given to the Jews. Experience – dire experience – has taught them not to attach any importance to, or place any confidence on, such assurances when made in their favour. They did in the past act upon such enticing promises, but found that they were too impetuous. They are, therefore, determined not to make the same mistake again for “the faithfull will not err twice”.

6. I assure Your Excellency that despite every discouragement, absence of faith and lack of constructive work which have characterised the British rule in this country since the establish-

ment of the civil administration I remain a convinced adherent of friendship between the British and Arab peoples. This friendship is traditional. It was the outcome of mutual understanding, and, on the one part, in the faith in the honesty of word and sincerity of purpose of His Majesty's Government, and, on the other part, of the loyalty and faithfulness of the Arabs. Unfortunately, the Palestine problem has given rise to a mutual sentiment of mistrust between His Majesty's Government and the Arabs of this country. The Government is fully aware of the existence of this sentiment for it complained of it in unequivocal language in the White Paper of 1930 published in consequence of the report made by the Shaw Commission. But it has hitherto failed to take any reasonable measure to remove it. On the contrary, the administrative acts done since the Shaw Commission were of such a nature as to make it amply evident that there was no honest desire on the part of His Majesty's Government to do any justice to the Arabs. Hence, it is not unnatural that they should refrain from giving any effective support in this world conflagration and remain wholly passive. In the very depth of their hearts the Arabs of this country would rejoice to co-operate whole-heartedly and effectively with the British Empire in this struggle for the freedom, liberty and independence of the world nations if tangible evidence be forthcoming to ensure that the result of such co-operation will not involve the actual substitution in their motherland of the Jewish people for their own. It is the fear that they will be transplanted from the soil on which they were born which stands in the path of their full participation in the war effort, and unless that fear is eliminated it is difficult to persuade them to volunteer in any force.

7. This is not all. Under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations the Arabs of Palestine were deemed to have reached a state of development entitling them to enjoy provisionally the benefits of independence subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. This international obligation has been discarded, and His Majesty's Government has failed to discharge its mandatory obligations towards the Arabs. Under the Ottoman rule they enjoyed the same rights and privileges as were enjoyed by any other Turkish subject. There was no discrimination in favour of a pure Turk as against an Arab. Grand viziers, ministers, ambassadors, members of parliament, generals and other high dignitaries, civil and military, were nominated, appointed or elected from the Arab race on equal terms with the pure Turks. There was no question of preference of a Turk over an Arab, and in the eyes of the law and administrative regulations all Ottoman subjects were equal without the slightest shred of discrimination in favour of one as against the other. It is an established fact that prior to the Great War of 1914 the Arabs in Palestine, as in all other parts of the Ottoman Empire, enjoyed full rights and privileges similar to those enjoyed by the subjects of any European state. On the conclusion of hostilities they were discovered to be minor and not fully matured to assume the responsibilities of a free nation. They were, therefore, placed under the tutelage of Great Britain. They have been under this tutelage for more than 22 years. It is painful to feel that in the eyes of His Majesty's Government the Arabs are now more minor than they were in 1919. In other words, by its own conduct and behaviour His Majesty's Government admits that it has utterly failed in the proper administration of the country according to the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Mandate, for it has not only been unable to lead the Arabs during this long period of guardianship one step forward in the path of freedom and independence but has actually dragged them backwards into the unfathomable depth of inefficiency, ignorance and minority. The Arab of-

fficers of the Government have been deprived from every vestige of authority or responsibility. They are mere puppets. From 1920 – 1929, they shouldered an appreciable degree of responsibility and exhibited every possible zeal, diligence and efficiency in the performance of their duties. But these prospects have been denied to them after a long period of loyal service and honest discharge of duty, for in innumerable instances British Junior Officers were promoted over the head of superior Arab officers in utter disregard of the rights, the qualifications, and the ability of the latter, not to mention the wide experience they acquired during their long term of employment as regards the administrative machinery, the conditions of the country, and the divergent habits, customs and traditions of its people. Those Arab officers consider themselves aggrieved by the flagrant and unjust discrimination in favour of their subordinate British Officers who do not possess the same experience, qualifications or length of service.³⁰⁸⁸ The unfairness of the whole question becomes abundantly clear when the present number of British Officers in Government service is compared with their number from 1920 to 1929. During this period, and particularly during the term of office of the first High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, there was a handful of English Officers in every department, the remaining posts being occupied by Palestinian Officers. Apart from the District Governor and his Assistant all the administrative officers were either Arabs or Jews. It was the policy of the Government to dispense with the services of as many English Officers as possible and appoint Palestinians in their stead. The policing of the country was in the main the duty of Arab Police Officers. A careful scrutiny of the archives of the secretariat will satisfy Your Excellency that in the early years of the Administration the country was in a deplorable state of disturbance. Heinous crimes were committed almost daily by the numerous brigands scattered throughout the country, and highway robberies were the rule and not the exception. These records will also establish that it was very dangerous for any person to be on the high ways at night. It was the Arab Police Officers, and nobody else, under the guidance of a handful of British Officers, who rounded up all these brigands, put an end to their criminal activities, ensured public security and stability throughout the country, and established complete safety on the highways. There is still a good number of these Arab Police Officers in the Force, and I regret to say that three of those distinguished Officers are ignored, and no proper use is made of their knowledge and experience. Many junior officers were promoted over their heads. They, like many other Palestinian officers, suffer profoundly from this unjustifiable discrimination in favour of many British Officers who were subordinate to them. There has been a large number of promotions in the Palestine Police Force whereby British Constables were promoted over the head of their Arab superior officers. In many cases simple British Constables were dragged up the ladder of advancement in preference to Palestinian Inspectors, and, in certain cases, over the heads of Palestinian Assistant Superintendents of Police with the disgusting result that the subordinate officer became superior and the superior subordinate. Moreover, in other departments Britishers who were in the junior or unclassified service of the Government have been promoted to posts of considerable responsibilities and importance over the head of Palestinian Officers who were in the senior service when those Britishers were in the employment of the Government as clerks or drivers. In no part of the world, save in Palestine

³⁰⁸⁸ See Boyle 2001, pp 136-42; Sinanoglou 2019, p 95.

under the British rule, can such anomalies occur for no person with any sense of justice or fair play, or with a conscience not tainted with selfishness or perversion will approve of such a method of administering justice.

8. Another illustration of this unwarranted disregard of the interests of the inhabitants of the country in general, and of the Arab Officers of the Government in particular, may be found in the continuous action of His Majesty's Government to appoint additional British Judges and Magistrates. The first attempt to increase those appointments [of Britons] was made during the term of office of the late Chief Justice [1921-27], Sir Thomas Haycraft, who strongly objected to it on the ground, to quote his own words as much as possible, that "If His Majesty's Government was honest in the discharge of its obligations under the Mandate, Palestinians must be appointed whenever a vacancy occurred, or a post was created in order to render them fit to assume responsibility, and eventually become a free and independent nation." Nevertheless, the greatest part of the appointments involving lucrative salaries and emoluments not only in the law department but also in every other government department have been reserved for British Officers. The number of such officers has been augmented beyond any actual requirement of the country, and by a mere desire to absorb in the service as many English officers as possible. It is thus obvious that the treatment meted by the Government to its own Palestinian servants who are required to administer justice among the inhabitants of this country without bias, partiality or discrimination is itself biased, partial and discriminative, and is consistent with a desire to foster in the hearts of those servants a spirit of complete dissatisfaction and disappointment, and, perhaps it will not be an exaggeration to say, a spirit of hatred and antagonism, for it requires a superhuman being to countenance it with a feeling of sympathy and confidence. The augmentation of the number of British Officers did not lead to the improvement of the administrative machinery or to the better administration of justice. It is common knowledge that corruption and abuse of office have crept into the government in alarming degree. These evils were not so prevalent. It is true that in the early days of the civil administration when the number of British Officers was scanty corruption did occur on rare occasions. The reason is very simple. The Palestinian Officers knew that they were under constant supervision of their British Superior Officers, and that any complaint made against them by any member of the public will be investigated carefully, minutely and impartially by those officers, and that they are liable to severe punishment if the evidence were sufficient to establish their guilt. At present, however, this sense of security against corruption has vanished for the Arab Officers have been deprived from every authority. And the British Officers feel secure against any such investigation if a complaint be forthcoming. There is no control over them. They do whatever they like. Their nationality is adequate primary evidence that they are in the right, and that whatever they say is the truth. Hence, these evils are the order of the day. In view of all these circumstances, it is not unnatural that the Arab population of Palestine is not inclined to be sympathetic or helpful.
9. The remarks set out in the preceding paragraph apply with equal cogency to the appointments made in the service of the government since the outbreak of hostilities. If Your Excellency will be kind enough to go through the Palestine Gazette since that date you will remark that those appointments are almost one hundred percent either English or Jewish. The department of food control is simply swarming with such employees, and there is no important post in the offices created for the control of foodstuffs, light and heavy industries, import and export,

road transport, censorship, and for the many other controls imposed under the Defence Regulations, which is occupied by a Palestinian Arab. This is not only discouraging but also the cause of considerable grievance, particularly in view of the fact that a great number of Jewish Officers have been entrusted with the actual performance of the duties relating to those controls. It is a common knowledge that an Arab Senior Officer has resigned from the Government because he was informed that he had been appointed as Controller of Prices, and the appointment was withdrawn upon the representations of the Jewish Agency, notwithstanding the fact that the officer concerned is highly capable, honest, faithful and loyal. The grievance is also accentuated by the fact that wives of British Officers of the Government receiving exorbitant salaries have been employed in government offices at high salaries to the detriment of many Palestinian Arabs who are not only fit to perform the duties allotted to these ladies, but have also a stronger claim. These and the like appointments burden the shoulders of the Palestinian population and the Arab tax-payer with a load which he cannot carry without infusing into his heart a spirit of great grudge and disappointment. The Arabs of this country feel the more disappointed and aggrieved when they compare their present condition with that of their brethren in Syria and Lebanon where the sphere of influence of the British Government is very limited, and where the inhabitants govern their own country, manage their own affairs and determine their own welfare.

10. There is a further reason why the Arabs of Palestine feel reluctant to give any active support in the war effort. It is the fact that they see with their own eyes a huge number of robust Englishmen rambling about the country enjoying the benefits and privileges of government employment, and of commercial enterprises under the auspices and protection of the Government, while they should be in uniform fighting at the front for their king and country. The Arabs feel, in the circumstances described above, that if there is any person who should fight for democracy and should sacrifice his life, his property and his family to win the war, that person is first and foremost every able-bodied Englishman, because the recent statements and declarations made by British, American and Allied statesmen make them believe that they have nothing to gain when victory is won. This is the belief which makes them shrink from any effective participation in the war, and compels them to assume an entirely indifferent and passive attitude. And it is this belief which His Majesty's Government must eliminate from their hearts and minds by persuasiveness based on irrefutable acts, and not by the demonstration of force and power or by widespread propaganda, in order to convince them to give their honest, sincere and heartfelt assistance. I assure Your Excellency that if adequate assurance be given to the Arabs that under no circumstances whatsoever will the policy set out in the White Paper of 1939 be deviated from, or altered, or amended to their prejudice or detriment, a large number of young Arabs will rush to join the colours to fight against the enemies of democracy. The number of such volunteers who will be too anxious to go to the front lines of the battlefields, and not to remain in the rear of the army, or in cities, towns and villages, will, doubtless, exceed the number of the Jewish recruits who join His Majesty's Forces unwillingly and involuntarily. It is common knowledge that in spite of the help, protection and sponsor[ship] accorded by His Majesty's Government to the Jews at large, and in spite of the effort and endeavour made by that Government to establish for the Jews in Palestine not only an asylum where they may find a peaceful refuge from the atrocities committed upon them in Christian Europe, but also a free and independent state, the greatest number of Jewish volunteers

were driven to enlist by force, molestation and other devices. Contrast this fact with the simple truth that spontaneously upon the outbreak of war 5000 Arabs enlisted of their own free volition notwithstanding the many injustices done to them and to their kin by His Majesty's Government. These volunteers fraternised with the British soldiers although on the eve of the war those same British soldiers had killed many of their kinsmen and perhaps some of their relatives. Nevertheless, they enlisted. Their enlistment was actuated by that true and traditional feeling of loyalty and friendship which marked the relations between the two peoples. They believed that the policy outlined in the White Paper of 1939 will be enforced without any delay. They, therefore, forgot the bitter sentiment of animosity arising from the unfortunate disturbances that commenced in 1936, and hurried to submit their services to His Majesty's Forces to fight with them side by side, and to die for their cause. Their fellow countrymen now refuse to do so because it is abundantly clear to them that there is no desire on the part of His Majesty's Government to abide by that [1939] policy. It is hardly necessary for me to emphasize the fact that an Arab soldier is an asset, and not a liability, to the British Army for he is brave and courageous. The past history and traditions of his race make it incumbent upon him to either to die gloriously on the battle field, or to return crowned with the laurels of victory. For him there can be no retreat or withdrawal, but death or victory.

11. Your Excellency, I write this lengthy memorandum because I feel it my duty to place the true and real sentiments of the Arab Community in this country before His Majesty's Government. I am aware that occasionally you seek the advice of some of the Arab notables on current matters of importance, but I am not aware of any person who has hitherto expressed to you in writing the true feelings of the Arab population. I do so with the sole honest and sincere desire to bring to your notice these sentiments, and venture to suggest that if Your Excellency were to follow the example of the Khalif Omar the Great and clandestinely visit the various departments and listen to the Arab inhabitants you will at once discover that I have not misrepresented the true feelings of my compatriots, nor exaggerated the true state of affairs. Your Excellency will also ascertain that the prestige not only of the Government of Palestine but also of His Majesty's Government has lost much of its weight among the Arab community.
12. I shall be grateful if Your Excellency will be kind enough to transmit a copy of this memorandum to the British Minister for the Middle East, and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I trust that something will be done to remove the grievance from which the Arabs of this country suffer and to eliminate the apprehension under which they labour so that they may joyfully and whole-heartedly participate in this world war.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Excellency's Most Obedient Servant, Elias N. Koussa"

Aside from my respect for this man, who evidently toiled four days to write his heart out, I will note only two things. 1) Koussa condemned British refusal to let the Palestinians elect a representative legislature. (§5) 2) The disappointment and outrage over Britain's betrayal of the spirit of the League of Nations Covenant was so deep that it had for over two decades not abated. (§7) Despite his great heart and great legal mind, Koussa however, for instance in §7, implicitly accepted the authority of the Covenant, even though it was no more than a statement of intent of a group of (powerful) states.

Regarding Koussa's statement that 5,000 Arabs from Palestine had enlisted in the war, according to Tom Suárez,

By the end of the year, about 9,000 Palestinian Arabs had enlisted with the Allied forces, notwithstanding reluctance to join a battle that would not bring them their own freedom.³⁰⁸⁹

At the time the Arab population of Palestine was 1,069,044.

2 January 1943 *The US Congress and President Roosevelt insist on the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, encouraging immigration of Jews to Palestine.*

³⁰⁸⁹ Suárez 2016, p 77.

On 28 November High Commissioner MacMichael **replied to Elias Koussa** by acknowledging receipt of his letter [422]. On 4 January he wrote to Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley indirectly confirming Koussa's analysis and enclosing **other similar letters of protest** from Nablus, Tulkarm, Jenin, Jerusalem and Gaza signed by Suleiman Abdel Razzak Tuqan, Hashem Jayyoushi, Tahseen Abdul Hadi, Shibly Jamal, Ahmad Hilmi, George Khadder and Rishdi Shawa. In his cover letter to Stanley forwarding Koussa's entire letter, dated 12 January 1943, MacMichael mentioned that Koussa had co-signed two earlier "memoranda".³⁰⁹⁰ MacMichael himself, after (and before) surviving numerous assassination attempts by the Stern Gang for adhering to the 1939 White Paper's immigration quotas, would leave Palestine in August 1944.³⁰⁹¹

Officials at the Colonial Office in London debated on 8-10 February how to respond to "Mr. Koussa's effusion" and the other letters of protest.³⁰⁹² "Sir Harold MacMichael suggests that the Secretary of State should make no reply to these protests unless it can be of a reassuring nature." Such a "reassuring" reply would be to "reassert the validity of the principles of the 1939 White Paper", including of course the crucial cap on numbers of immigrants, but this solution was rejected; it was suggested that at most the White Paper's paragraph §4 be sent

as follows: 'H.M. Government... declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State [or] that the Arab population of Palestine should be made the subjects of a Jewish State against their will.' [This paragraph] does not necessarily preclude a reversion to the earlier partition proposals...

This too was rejected, as it would cause many unwanted Parliamentary questions and uproar within the Jewish community. The decision was for 'London' not to reply and

to inform the H.C. that it is left to his discretion to inform these persons that their communications have been received by the S.S. or that these communications should go unanswered.

The final non-word was Stanley's reply to MacMichael on 22 February:

I shall be glad if you will inform him [Koussa] that I have received his memorandum.³⁰⁹³

19 March 1943 *Haj Amin Al-Husseini broadcasts from Rome to the Arab World on the religious feast day of the birthday of the Prophet, warning that 'the Jews have a dangerous aim by which they challenge four hundred million Muslims, and [it] is their express wish to occupy the holy Islamic institutions including the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, under the pretext that this mosque is the Temple of Solomon.'*

³⁰⁹⁰ CO 733/433/21, p 27.

³⁰⁹¹ Cohen 1981; Suárez 2016, pp 93-94, 202, 288-89.

³⁰⁹² CO 733/433/21, pp 2-6, all quotations.

³⁰⁹³ CO 733/433/21, p 8.

30 March 1943 Egypt's Prime Minister Mustafa Nahhas takes the first step in bringing Arab states together to discuss plans for an Arab organization in Cairo. Prince Abdullah follows the example, holding a similar meeting in Amman on 18 April.

11 April 1943 The British facilitate the transfer of land in Palestine to the Jews by replacing the old Ottoman tax laws with new ones. **Also 1943:** The 'Land Ordinance' (Acquisition for Public Purposes) is issued, granting the treasury minister power to expropriate land when there is a 'public need'.

November 1943 The five-year limit on Jewish immigration (due to end in April 1944) stipulated in the White Paper of 1939 is extended by Britain because 31,000 visas are still unused.

late 1943 'Awni Abdul Hadi returned from exile in 1943 and revived Hizb Al-Istiqlal, with help from Rashid Alhaj Ibrahim and Ahmed Hilmi Abdel Baqi, and even started a national fund.'³⁰⁹⁴

12-16 December 1943 '[T]he African National Congress conference... produced... a comprehensive statement prepared by the Africans' Claims Charter Committee. It was headed 'The Atlantic Charter: From the standpoint of Africans within the Union of South Africa'. ... A specific demand regarding colonisation was made: 'self-government for colonial people [i.e.] the right to form one's own government, or the right to self-determination, whose genesis could be traced to the "Fourteen Points" of President Woodrow Wilson in 1918.'³⁰⁹⁵

³⁰⁹⁴ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 90.

³⁰⁹⁵ Ngcukaitobi 2018, pp 268-69.

XXIV. Democracy No

Tom Suárez summarises the British return to the partition idea:

The British, indeed, after abandoning Partition as unworkable several years earlier, had decided upon it as their escape plan by early 1944 but withheld the news because it could not spare the troops to handle the violent reaction it expected. They were keenly aware that the ‘extremists dominating the [Jewish] Agency’ would resist Partition ‘with the forces at their disposal – forces which past experience and recent intelligence (on the HAGANA) has shown to be both fanatical and well disciplined’.³⁰⁹⁶

Churchill’s views were hinted at at a lunch on 25 October 1943³⁰⁹⁷ with his nephew Randolph, Mr. and Mrs. Weizmann, Balfour’s niece Mrs. Dugdale, Lord Portal, a Mr. Linton, Mr. and Mrs. Clement Attlee, and the five prominent British-Jewish Zionists Brodetsky, Namier, Bakstansky, Lady Reading and Lord Melchett:

When Mr. Churchill mentioned partition, Major Randolph and Dr. Weizmann demurred, and Mr. Churchill replied that he had been against it originally, but now they had to produce something new instead of the [MacDonald] White Paper. He had not meant partition in the literal sense – he then mentioned something about the Negev and Transjordan.

Twenty-one years after he had assured the world that the Jewish national home would not be Palestine, but rather be *in* Palestine³⁰⁹⁸ [^{>142}], he had now, as Prime Minister, moved to the position that a Jewish *state* must be in part of Palestine – which any partition plan entailed. Also according to the minutes of the luncheon taken by Attlee, the pro-Zionist who would succeed Churchill as Prime Minister roughly two years later,

Mr. Churchill quoted, during the talk, the saying that ‘God deals with the nations as they deal with the Jews.’ Mr. Churchill also said that of every fifty officers who came back from the Middle East, only one spoke favourably of the Jews – but that had merely gone to convince him that he was right.

Whether partition, a Jewish Palestine or ‘Drink tea and carry on’, for Churchill anything was better than the democratic state foreseen by the 1939 White Paper which, he wrote on 18 April 1943, he had

always regarded as a gross breach of faith committed by the Chamberlain Government in respect of obligations to which I was personally a party. ... My position remains strictly that set forth in the speech I made in the House of Commons in the Debate on the White Paper [^{>411}].³⁰⁹⁹

In that Commons debate of 23 May 1939 he had said the Balfour pledge “was not made to those [Jews] who were actually living in Palestine. It was made to world Jewry and in par-

³⁰⁹⁶ Suárez 2016, pp 94–95, citing KV 5/34 and CO 733/456/2.

³⁰⁹⁷ Cohen 1987b, pp 83–84.

³⁰⁹⁸ Cmd. 1700, p 18.

³⁰⁹⁹ Cohen 1987b, p 10.

particular to the Zionist associations. ... They were the people outside, not the people in.”³¹⁰⁰
At the War Cabinet meeting of 2 July 1943 Churchill had again mobilised the language of the “solemn undertaking” of the Jewish national home.³¹⁰¹

This “position” would guide his War Cabinet in planning the abrogation of the 1939 White Paper, which was still legally in force. The first step was to include Secretary of State for India Leo Amery, former Colonial Secretary and co-author of the final draft of the 117-word Balfour Declaration [16], in the new ‘War Cabinet Committee on Palestine’ set up in July and August 1943 with the following “terms of reference” dated 20 August:

The Committee’s task is to consider and report to the War Cabinet on the long-term policy for Palestine. The Committee should start by examining the Peel Commission’s Report [336], and considering whether that scheme, or some variant of it, can now be adopted. Among other matters, the Committee will take into consideration – (a) The possibilities of development in the Negeb. (b) The suggestion that satellite Jewish Settlements should be established in other areas, e.g., Cyrenaica, Tripolitania or Eritrea.³¹⁰²

This was the same task profile that had been given to the Woodhead Commission six years earlier, on 23 December 1937 [353; 376]. The Committee’s core members were India Secretary Amery, Colonial Secretary Stanley, Secretary of State for Air Archibald Sinclair and either Richard Law or Anthony Eden from the Foreign Office. I do not devote much attention to this pro-partition interlude because it was short-lived and because Britain’s opinion on Palestine’s constitutional structure was becoming less and less important as the war went on. Those interested will find that the National Archive online file for this committee, 427 pages long, has a detailed table of contents and is clearly presented.³¹⁰³

Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden had objected to Amery’s inclusion,³¹⁰⁴ but Churchill needed the staunchest possible opponent of the 1939 White Paper to be on the Committee. Back on 29 April Amery had written to “My dear Winston” that he was “very glad that you have raised this question of the White Paper about Palestine”, and

It seems to me that we are driven to the alternative, little as you liked it at the time, of a partition which would give the Jews a definite area in which they would be responsible for immigration up to the limit of whatever that area, however small, could support...³¹⁰⁵

On 2 July, again addressing “My dear Winston”, HMG could not

simply say that the White Paper is scrapped and that Palestine as a whole is now to be open to Jewish immigration. I think we have got to have a clean cut, leaving the Jews to take the most – and they will make a good most – of whatever area is assigned to them; on the other hand letting the Arabs stew contentedly in their own juice (with not much fat to it) in their

³¹⁰⁰ Hansard 1939b, cc2171-72.

³¹⁰¹ Cohen 1987b, pp 55-56.

³¹⁰² Cohen 1987b, p 127, reproducing Cab. 95/14. P. (M) (43) 4th meeting, 10 December 1943; also Fieldhouse 2006, pp 203-05; Sinanoglou 2019, pp 159-63.

³¹⁰³ CAB 95/14.

³¹⁰⁴ Cohen 1987b, p 63.

³¹⁰⁵ Cohen 1987b, p 25.

part. ... Also at the end of the war I think we can afford to be more drastic than the Peel Commission ventured to be in carrying out exchange of populations between the Jewish and Arab units in Palestine. We shall, I imagine, be pushing Germans out of East Prussia and Upper Silesia and a good deal of that sort will be happening elsewhere, whether we like it or not. So we shall have our precedents.³¹⁰⁶

The usual “precedent” invoked by opponents of population transfer in Palestine was that of the Turkish-Greek exchanges of twenty years earlier (monitored by then League-of-Nations employee John Hope Simpson [^{>230; >233}]).³¹⁰⁷

At any rate, Herbert Morrison would chair this usually six-man committee from start to finish, through the change of government in July 1945 and including its last meeting on 10 October 1945. The long Cabinet file³¹⁰⁸ recording its nine meetings and the papers considered by it, most of them re-inventing the wheels invented by the Peel and Woodhead Commissions of 1937-38 [^{>336; >376}], indeed aimed at making “clean cuts” with as few Arabs as possible in the planned Jewish state – the most-favoured scheme being 46.6% Arab and giving the Jewish state thousands of dunams of Arab-owned land³¹⁰⁹. Against the lone anti-partition voice of Eden’s Foreign Office,³¹¹⁰ the pro-partition forces were led by Amery, who was also responsible for much of the paper-pulp required in order to argue for this ultimately successful project [^{>481}]. He wrote thus of the pawns residing in Palestine:

The one thing that can make a judgment of Solomon possible is the swift and clean cut. What we cannot afford to do is to saw away slowly at a squealing infant in the presence of two hysterical mothers and amid the ululations of a chorus of equally hysterical relatives in the Arab and Jewish worlds.³¹¹¹

Whatever the alternative, the White Paper was hated by both the Conservative and Labour Parties – an estimation shared by the U.S. State Department’s Near Eastern and African Affairs desk, namely by Loy Henderson and William Yale (one of the top advisers on the King-Crane Commission two dozen years earlier).³¹¹²

To recapitulate, the mixed Conservative-led government of Neville Chamberlain (1937-40) [^{>377; >386ff}] had rejected partition, as would the Labour government of Clement Atlee (1945-51) [^{>431}], but Churchill’s Conservative-led government (1940-45) wanted a Jewish state, officially only in part of Palestine, and Churchill and his close associates had always strongly opposed the 1939 White Paper [*e.g.* ^{>411; >415; >418; >443}] mainly because it so clearly ruled out a Jewish state in any part of Palestine; again: as Churchill wrote on 12 January 1944, “I have always considered the White Paper a disastrous policy and a breach

³¹⁰⁶ Cohen 1987b, pp 58, 60.

³¹⁰⁷ Also Cohen 1987b, p 51.

³¹⁰⁸ CAB 95/14.

³¹⁰⁹ Cohen 1987b, pp 132-33; also El-Eini 2006, pp 344-55.

³¹¹⁰ *E.g.* Cohen 1987b, pp 46-48, 88-90, 106-12, 162-73, 201-07, 242, 261-67.

³¹¹¹ Cohen 1987b, p 150.

³¹¹² Foreign Relations of the United States 1945, Document 1345, 30 July.

of an undertaking for which I was prominently responsible.³¹¹³ On 15 January 1947 Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin would tell the Cabinet that “since the latter part of the late war... [t]he Coalition Government had... favoured Partition as a solution” but did not unilaterally impose it; in Bevin’s view that two-state solution was by 1947 dead³¹¹⁴, but the democratic 1939 White Paper was also being buried. [*also >426*]

Because it knew that announcement of partition would lead to bloodshed, the Committee operated in secret, but it also thought a lot about British, Arab and Jewish military strength, the latter deemed, for instance by the Palestine military command on 2 May 1943, to be by some margin the strongest³¹¹⁵. The various two-state variations all kept at least Greater Jerusalem for the U.K. and assumed that the Palestinians could be induced to accept union with some combination of Syria, Transjordan and Lebanon. The Committee also often fretted over the position of the U.S., realising that any change of policy would have to be jointly approved by the two North Atlantic powers. Colonial Secretary Stanley on 4 November rounded off his description of what any scheme must do for “the Jews” by observing that

The viability of the Arab residue of Palestine depended on whether it could be merged with one or more of the adjoining Arab States. The Arab portion of Palestine was poor, the possibility of further development was small, and the taxable capacity also small.³¹¹⁶

Unsurpassed: “The Arab residue of Palestine”.

Except insofar as the U.K. needed good relations with the Arab world both during and after the war (its oil resources were often mentioned), the Palestinians were conspicuous by their absence in these documents, in which I have nowhere found any attention paid to the wishes of or justice for the indigenous population. The only sympathetic words were those of Foreign Office official Charles Baxter on 7 December 1943:

From the Arab point of view, the whole scheme will be regarded as a breach of good faith on the part of H.M. Government. When we wanted them to keep quiet, in 1939, we produced the White Paper, but when, after the war, our international difficulties were eased, we decided to betray Arab interests by reverting to our original ideas of partition.³¹¹⁷

But Baxter’s colleague Maurice Peterson, back on 1 April 1943, had written,

The question, again with all respect, is to my mind not whether we owe the Arabs a debt of gratitude, but whether or not we have important interests centering in the Arab world.³¹¹⁸

To make a long story short, the Committee itself endorsed some sort of partition as did the full War Cabinet on 25 January 1944.³¹¹⁹

³¹¹³ PREM 4/52/5, p 1029, *also* pp 977, 992, 995, 1019, 1135, 1327; *but see* pp 1026-27; *also* Bethell 1979, pp 145-51, 166.

³¹¹⁴ CAB 128/11/12, p 12.

³¹¹⁵ Cohen 1987b, pp 31-35; *see also* WO 208/1705, pp 46-47.

³¹¹⁶ Cohen 1987b, p 88.

³¹¹⁷ Cohen 1987b, p 79.

³¹¹⁸ Cohen 1987b, p 47.

³¹¹⁹ Cohen 1987b, *e.g.* pp 129, 154, 197, 218-41.

The deadline for the end of Jewish immigration was coming up; spring 1944 would be the limit of the 5 years prescribed by the White Paper for the entry of 75,000³¹²⁰, and the British were bent on allowing the remaining permits to be used³¹²¹. High Commissioner MacMichael, to be sure, would on 7 August 1944 telegram to Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley that

If any normal conception of economic absorptive capacity were applied, it would preclude the admission of any substantial contingents of Jewish immigrants, now or in the near future.

Yet, apparently applying an “abnormal” conception, although the 5-year deadline had passed, he went on to say that “physical vacancies at 1st July were 20,000”, and he broke down the numbers to determine a rate of immigration and from where in Europe they would likely come.³¹²²

For his part Stanley, Colonial Secretary 22 Nov 1942 – 26 July 1945, on 31 July 1946 in the House of Commons [[>]443] would object to Labour Government plans for federation or cantonisation being proposed by Herbert Morrison, who had been Chair of the Cabinet ‘Committee on Palestine’ on which Stanley himself served [[>]438, [>]442], and look back to describe HMG’s shift during the war years back towards support for partition:

Year by year we have seen the nationalistic feeling growing. We have seen this gulf widen, and I am forced back on the conviction that it is idle any longer to base our attempts to solve this problem on the belief that in any reasonable period of time these two people can ever come together in the way in which the English, Welsh and Scottish peoples have come together in this country, and themselves share the Government of a unitary State. For that reason, when I was at the Colonial Office, I gave a considerable amount of time to trying to work out some scheme of partition.³¹²³ All of us with any interest in this problem are familiar with the Peel Report [[>]336], and we are familiar with the theoretical case for partition. No one pretends that partition is an ideal solution, but because it is not the ideal solution, it does not mean that it may not be the only solution. ... All I need say is that during the Coalition [wartime] Government, I, and some of my colleagues, worked out a plan on those lines, which I thought was practicable and which many of my colleagues thought was practicable, and it was accepted as practicable by many people who were authorities on Palestine. ... I am convinced that if everyone once came to the conclusion that there was no alternative to partition, and that it was the only policy to adopt, then, somehow or other, these practical conclusions would be found to work themselves out. We have heard today the Government’s scheme. As I understand it,... it is now called federation. During my time, some work was done at the Colonial Office on a scheme of this kind as an alternative, in case the final defi-

³¹²⁰ MacDonald 1939, §14.1.

³¹²¹ WO 208/1705, pp 38, 39, 63; CAB 95/14, *passim*, e.g. Cohen 1987b, p 57.

³¹²² WO 208/1705, pp 39-40.

³¹²³ See CAB 95/14.

nite scheme of partition, for some reason or other, proved unacceptable. I always regarded this scheme as a second best. It is, at any rate, some step towards cantonisation, towards giving some separate life to Jew and Arab, but it is far from going the whole way.³¹²⁴

Although the indigenous “authorities on Palestine” – numbering about 1.3 million souls and living in the land – were to be ignored, “somehow or other” two ethnically-defined states could be set up. During this same 1946 Commons debate [^{>443}] Thomas Reid, who had been a member of the Woodhead Commission that had found all partition plans sorely wanting [^{>376}], would argue against partition as well as against anything suggesting a Jewish state in Palestine, even if part of a ‘federation’. But Stanley was evidently in a position to disprove the findings, logic and ethical values of the Woodhead Commission: partition simply had to be “practicable”.

Stepping back for a generalisation, this very last phase of the Mandate and early post-Mandate evidenced still another instance of the fundamental British-Mandatory principle

that the denial of representative government and democracy to the Arab Palestinians was the founding facilitation of British rule in Palestine and subsequently one of the key building blocs in the creation of Israel and the eventual ethnic cleansing of Palestine. ... Representative government in Palestine was a threat to the British-Zionist project and as such needed to be forestalled.³¹²⁵

As Lloyd George had told Churchill way back on 22 July 1921, “You mustn’t give representative government to Palestine.”³¹²⁶ [^{>114}] Now, in 1944, abandoning the officially-in-force 1939 White Paper meant that, if any sort of Jewish state were to be founded, the once-rejected idea of partition was all that was left, so, ‘back to the drawing board’.

1944 *‘Under pressure from the Zionist movement and with support from the British prime minister Winston Churchill, a Jewish Brigade Group of the British army was formed in 1944, providing the already considerable Zionist military forces with training and combat experience, offering a vital advantage in the conflict to come.’*³¹²⁷ [*also >443*]

January 1944 US Congress introduces a joint resolution endorsing the Biltmore Program [*supported by both political parties*].

February 1944 *‘US President Roosevelt and HMG agree to each take in 150,000 mostly Jewish displaced persons, but the plan is defeated by US Zionists.’*³¹²⁸

16 March & 15 October 1944 *President Roosevelt issues a statement on Jewish immigration in which he declares ‘the US never agreed on the British White Paper of 1939 and is pleased that the doors of Palestine are open to Jewish immigration.’*

³¹²⁴ Hansard 1946b, cc982, 984-85.

³¹²⁵ Al-Wahid 2011.

³¹²⁶ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 103-06; Al-Wahid 2011, quoting Randolph Churchill’s *Churchill Documents*, Vol. 4 Part 3, p 1559.

³¹²⁷ Khalidi 2020, p 59; Suárez 2023, *passim*.

³¹²⁸ Suárez 2016, p 125.

425. Labour Party Report

May 1944

On the topic of ‘The International Post-War Settlement’ **the National Executive** of the Labour Party, which at that time was chaired by pro-Zionist Emanuel Shinwell MP and which would form His Majesty’s Government as of 26 July 1945 and throughout the final Mandate months of 1948, in May 1944 wrote:

There is surely no hope nor meaning in a Jewish National Home unless we are prepared to let Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority. There was a strong case for this before the war, and there is an irresistible case for it now, after the unspeakable atrocities of the cold-blooded, calculated German-Nazi plans to kill all the Jews of Europe. In Palestine surely is the case, on human grounds and to promote a stable settlement, for the transfer of the population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully organized and generously financed.³¹²⁹

What form such “encouragement” should take was not stated, and to my knowledge the Labour Party Executive did not simultaneously resolve that Great Britain should admit, say, 500 thousand or a million European displaced persons into Great Britain. Perhaps influenced by materialist Marxism, the emphasis was on paying the transferees well. Two years later, while debating in the Commons the Anglo-American Committee’s bi-national plan [^{>438}] and the Labour Government’s “provincial autonomy” plan [^{>442}], Harry Morris MP stood by this document, which he said was resolved by the Labour Party *Conference* of December 1944, in arguing for pushing the Arabs into Transjordan, Syria and Egypt.³¹³⁰

Together with the Biltmore Program’s call on 6-11 May 1942 for a Jewish “Commonwealth”, which was supported in the US in the party platforms of both Democrats and Republicans [^{>420}], this definition of ‘National Home’, requiring an ethno-religious Jewish majority in Palestine, achieved by population transfer,³¹³¹ became the mainstream international Zionist narrative, thus framing partition as a Zionist compromise position. As we will see Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in the post-war Labour government under Attlee, to his credit did not support his party’s National Executive on the policy stated just above.³¹³² [*also >445; >452*]

Summer 1944 *‘Both the Republican and Democratic conventions, for the first time ever in a [U.S.] Presidential campaign, adopted platform planks expressing support for the Zionist position.’*³¹³³

³¹²⁹ PASSIA 2001, p 71; Weizmann 1949, p 585; Said 1979, pp 99-103; *also* Foreign Relations of the United States 1945, Document 1345, 30 July.

³¹³⁰ Hansard 1946b, c1031.

³¹³¹ Republican Ex-President Herbert Hoover, who had been defeated by the now-ruling Democrats in 1932, around this time publicly supported population transfer. (John & Hadawi 1970a, p 49)

³¹³² See also Bethell 1979, p 202, *citing* Foreign Office official Harold Beeley, personal communication.

³¹³³ Weir 2014, p 162 *quoting* Wilson, Evan, 1979. *Decision on Palestine*. Hoover Institution, Stanford, California, pp 44-45.

20 September 1944 *The War Office in London decides on the establishment of a Jewish regiment including 'Jews of Palestine' to be recruited through the Jewish Agency.*³¹³⁴

³¹³⁴ Also Zuaytir 1958, p 136.

426. The Alexandria Protocol

25 Sept-7 Oct 1944

The governments of Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt met in Alexandria from 25 September through 7 October 1944, signing an agreement to form a “League of Arab States”.³¹³⁵ That League would be founded in Cairo half a year later on 22 March 1945, and **the Alexandria Protocol** is not to be confused with the League’s founding document [427]. The five-state group – the “Preliminary Committee of the General Arab Conference” – would of course expand, the goal being good mutual economic and other relations and help when in need of defence; no member state would be allowed the “adoption of a foreign policy... prejudicial to the policy of the League...”.

One “special resolution” of the five governments supported the borders and independence of Lebanon, “which the Government of that country announced in its program of 7 October, 1943”, and another dealt with Palestine:

The [Preliminary] Committee... is of the opinion that the pledges binding the British Government [the MacDonald White Paper, >410] and providing for the cessation of Jewish immigration, the preservation of Arab lands, and the achievement of independence for Palestine are permanent Arab rights whose prompt implementation would constitute a step toward the desired goal and toward the stabilization of peace and security.

The claim that implementation of the MacDonald White Paper was a necessary condition for “peace and security” in these six Arab territories/states was prescient even if it required no crystal ball.

The Committee also declares that it is second to none in regretting the woes which have been inflicted upon the Jews of Europe by European dictatorial states. But the question of these Jews should not be confused with Zionism, for there can be no greater injustice and aggression than solving the problem of the Jews of Europe by another injustice, i.e., by inflicting injustice on the Arabs of Palestine of various religions and denominations.

Palestine’s representative at the meeting was Musa Alami, and this resolution reflected his often-stated view that “Why Arabs should have had to suffer for Nazi crimes is [hard] to explain.”³¹³⁶ Two wrongs don’t make a right. The signing took place at Farouq University.³¹³⁷

Membership, for some reason, would be open only to “independent Arab States”, and thus closed, for now, to Palestine, but Musa Alami, one of the only Palestinians in attendance, made a “special proposal” initiating practical steps for the League’s support of Palestine:

³¹³⁵ Alexandria Protocol 1944, *all quotations*.

³¹³⁶ Furlonge 1969, p 157.

³¹³⁷ Also Quigley 1990, p 29.

The special proposal concerning the participation of the Arab Governments and peoples in the 'Arab National Fund' to safeguard the lands of the Arabs of Palestine shall be referred to the committee of financial and economic affairs.³¹³⁸

According to Walid Khalidi, at the meetings Alami, who had had to fight hard to gain admittance³¹³⁹,

explained that Britain was contemplating four options for post-war Palestine: partition into two states, partition into cantons, the creation of a Jewish numerical majority, or the creation of a numerical parity between the two communities. All these options constituted a repudiation of the 1939 White Paper.³¹⁴⁰

About a year later Abdulrahman Azzam of Egypt, in conversation with Colonial Secretary George Hall, would point out that thus repudiating the 1939 White Paper, whose content he had personally co-negotiated [→386ff], was a step not to be taken lightly, as it "was not an *ad hoc* or *ad interim* measure but the studied outcome of twenty turbulent years ... a compromise solution between the Palestinians and the Jews."³¹⁴¹ This analysis proved correct: neither the Anglo-American [→438] nor the Morrison-Grady [→442] committee entertained the vision of a representative democracy based on citizenship alone, as propounded by the 1939 White Paper and by all Palestinian statements since 1918.

23 November 1944 *Following the murder of Lord Moyne [by Stern Gang militants on 6 November]... the Secretary of State for the Colonies [Oliver Stanley] submits a memorandum to the War Cabinet on various proposals for action to be taken including [punitive] measures affecting [suspending] Jewish immigration, disarmament, registration and deportation.*

12-16 December 1944 *The first Arab Women's Conference is held in Cairo.*

1944-45 *'[S]ecurity expenditure in 1944-1945 amounted to 4,600,000 Palestine Pounds as compared with 550,330 L.P. spent on health affairs and 700,000 spent on education...'*³¹⁴²

³¹³⁸ See also Khalidi 2020, p 68.

³¹³⁹ Also Furlonge 1969, pp 132-37.

³¹⁴⁰ Khalidi 2005, p 66; Khalidi 1986, p 107.

³¹⁴¹ Khalidi 1986, p 108, citing Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Second Ordinary Session of the Arab League Council, November 5, 1946.

³¹⁴² Zuaytir 1958, p 155.

Planning for an Arab league had begun in 1942, when Iraqi Foreign Minister Nuri Said Pasha was in Cairo complaining to British authorities that the UK had apparently “repudiated” the MacDonald White Paper, seeing as Colonel Newcombe and Lord Lloyd’s proposal for its immediate implementation [^{>417}] had been dropped [*also* ^{>418, >424}]; Nuri had arranged for Egypt to be left in charge of organising the Arab states, a task they finally took in hand in Alexandria in late September 1944, resulting in the Alexandria Protocol [^{>426}].³¹⁴³ On 22 March 1945, **the League of Arab States** was finally created, composed initially of Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt and Yemen.³¹⁴⁴ According to its twenty Articles it was to pursue “the goal of the welfare of all the Arab states” and look after their “close ties” and “independence and sovereignty”.³¹⁴⁵

After first having been excluded from this Arab League founding meeting, Musa Alami was accepted after all as the Palestinian representative, with official Palestinian membership conditional on the formation of a new Palestinian Arab Higher Committee. The founding League document also included an “Annex on Palestine”:

At the end of the last Great War, Palestine, together with the other Arab States, was separated from the Ottoman Empire. She became independent, not belonging to any other State. The Treaty of Lausanne [24 July 1923] proclaimed that her fate should be decided by the parties concerned in Palestine. Even though Palestine was not able to control her own destiny, it was on the basis of the recognition of her independence that the Covenant of the League of Nations [^{>46}] determined a system of government for her. Her existence and her independence among the nations can, therefore, no more be questioned *de jure* than the independence of any of the other Arab States. Even though the outward signs of this independence have remained veiled as a result of *force majeure*, it is not fitting that this should be an obstacle to the participation of Palestine in the work of the League.³¹⁴⁶

The rule that members must be “independent” was thus relaxed, and Palestine’s effort for self-determination strengthened.

At Musa Alami’s insistence Arab Offices, supported to some extent by the Arab League, were established in the U.K. and U.S. which would until 1949 publicize the broader Arab and the narrower Palestinian cause.³¹⁴⁷ Izzat Tannous, who had run the Arab Centre in London from 1938 into the early 1940s, took charge of the London office in May 1945,

³¹⁴³ Abcarius 1946, pp 213-14.

³¹⁴⁴ Zuaytir 1958, pp 140-207.

³¹⁴⁵ http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp; also Mattar 1988, pp 112-13.

³¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* (avalon); Zuaytir 1958, p 141; also Fieldhouse 2006, pp 173-74, 205-06.

³¹⁴⁷ Abcarius 1946, pp 214-15; Furlonge 1969, pp 133-38; Lesch 1973, pp 40-41; Rickenbacher 2017, pp 129-46, 192-216.

working with Major General E.L. Spears; he praised the work of those in the Jerusalem office, such as Rajai al-Husseini, Khalil al-Sakakini, Walid al-Khalidi, Albert Hourani, and Burhan Dajjani.³¹⁴⁸

March-April 1945 Musa Al-Alami creates a special fund to help Palestinian farmers retain their land.³¹⁴⁹

25 April 1945 At the UN Conference on International Organization in San Francisco, representatives of 50 countries begin drawing up the UN Charter, which is signed on 26 June.

22 May 1945 'On 22 May, a general strike proclaimed by the Arab parties of Palestine in sympathy with the Levant States following the attack on Damascus, passed off quietly.'³¹⁵⁰

³¹⁴⁸ Tannous 1988, pp 237-329, 370- 72.

³¹⁴⁹ Also Furlonge 1969, pp 137, 158-61, on the Arab Development Society which he founded.

³¹⁵⁰ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 19.

Musa Alami was head of **the Arab Office**, founded during 1945, headquartered in Jerusalem and financed in large part by Iraq at Nuri Pasha as-Said's insistence, but officially an organ of the Arab League.³¹⁵¹ Already in April 1945 Hajj Amin, who had returned to the Near East from exile, formed a parallel 'Arab Office' controlled by the Arab Higher Committee under his control; it was largely made up of family members and supported as well by Hussein al-Khalidi, Mueen al-Madi, Rafiq al-Tamimi, Izzat Darwaza, Ishaak Darweesh and Sheikh Hasan Abu Saud.³¹⁵² According to Rashid Khalidi, the work of the Alami-led Arab Office was much superior to that of the one of the same name set up by Hajj Amin and the Arab Higher Committee.³¹⁵³ Other members of the several Arab Higher Committees in 1946 and 1947 included Jamal al-Husseini, Faris Sirhan, Sami Taba, Ahmed Shuqairi, Anton Atallah, Izzat Tannous, Henry Cattar, Dr. J. Attallah, Kamil Dajani, Ragheb Nashashibi, Awni Abdul Hadi, Abdul Latif Salah, Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, Sheikh Freih Musadder, Dr. J. Haykel, Anwar Khatib, Emil Ghoury, Omar el-Khalil, and Yusef Sahyoun.³¹⁵⁴

Musa first went to New York to found the U.S. office, during which visit he spoke characteristic words to U.S. Senator Claude Pepper:

Pepper mentioned that the Jews had brought great prosperity to Palestine. The Arab answered: "While Senator Pepper, being a richer man than he, could undoubtedly embellish the house of el-Alami and clothe the el-Alami children in finer raiment, certainly the Senator would agree that this was no reason why el-Alami should be willing to relinquish his house and his children to the distinguished Senator."³¹⁵⁵

In connection with his Arab Office work another encounter with a U.S. official occurred in early 1945, whom he told:

'Our solution is both broad-minded and just. I can put it in a few words. We stand on the British White Paper [*>410*].' He explained how the Jewish population of Palestine had risen from 55,000 in 1919 to 400,000 in 1945. Those recent immigrants should be allowed to stay in Palestine, said Musa el-Alami, but only on the understanding that no more would come without Arab consent. ... [T]hey must play their part as nationals of the new Palestinian state, which would be ruled, as was only proper, by the elected Arab majority.³¹⁵⁶

Back from the U.S., in early May 1945 he recruited Izzat Tannous to open the London Arab Office, to be joined by Edward Attiyeh (of Lebanon), Anwar Nashashibi, Anwar Nusseibeh and Samir Shamma; in the fall of 1945 he recruited Walid Khalidi to work in the Jerusalem office under Ahmad al-Shukayri and Albert Hourani, who in turn would head the London

³¹⁵¹ Khalidi 2005, pp 66-67.

³¹⁵² Qumsiyeh 2011, p 91.

³¹⁵³ Khalidi 2020, pp 64-65; Rickenbacher 2017, pp 132-33.

³¹⁵⁴ Nakhleh 1991, pp 37-39, *in part citing Shaw 1946.*

³¹⁵⁵ Bethell 1979, p 195, *citing Washington National Archives 867N. 00/10-945.*

³¹⁵⁶ Bethell 1979, pp 194-95, *citing Washington National Archives 890F. 00/1-2645.*

Office as of May 1946.³¹⁵⁷ The Arab Offices received help in London from John Martin, Royal Commission Secretary during 1936-37 [>336], Cosmo Parkinson (“Permanent Secretary of the Colonial Office for 25 years”) [>268; >312; >364; >373; >386], Colonel Douglas Clifton Brown (“Chairman of our Pro-Arab Parliamentary Committee of 1939”) [>290; >342; >359; >414], the Saudi Arabian Hafez Wahba and the Lebanese Camille Chamoun, Victor Khoury and Nadim Dimishkiyeh.³¹⁵⁸ The Arab Office worked closely with Miss Frances Newton’s ‘National League’, in Palestine, and with Mrs. Steuart Erskine and A.S. Husseini.³¹⁵⁹

The Arab Office was important enough in the eyes of the British Academy’s ‘Anglo-Palestinian Archives Committee’ to warrant an entry in its 1979 encyclopaedia *Britain and Palestine 1914-1948*, compiled by Philip Jones, but this was one of only a dozen or so entries, in an encyclopaedia containing hundreds of entries, that even mentioned Arabs or Palestinian people or entities³¹⁶⁰; this Archives Committee was a perfect Orientalist entity, its twelve members including not a single Palestinian or Arab, but only Isaiah Berlin, C.P. Cook, A.G. Dickens, Martin Gilbert, E. Kedourie, Bernard Lewis, John Martin, A.D. Momigliano, A.N. Newman, Lucy Sutherland, Hugh Trevor-Roper, P.J. Vatikiotis, and N.H. Williams³¹⁶¹.

Palestinian efforts to justify their political positions in the West were very small in comparison with those of the Zionists. However, as Anbara Khalidi observed:

We were always being told that our propaganda was inadequate, and this tune was repeated by those who came to visit us. [To one such person I said,] ‘But don’t you see that this argument can also work in our favor? We live in our own land and feel confident about our natural right to the land. Does a citizen living in his own country need propaganda to prove his right to that country? Do you in Britain engage in propaganda to prove your right to Britain?’³¹⁶²

In their relations with their British interlocutors, the Palestinians perhaps shared this sentiment and just couldn’t believe it was necessary to expend great effort for something so obvious.

summer 1945 Musa Al-Alami opens an Arab Information Office in London, assisted by Edward Attiyyeh, Albert Hourani, Burhan Dajani, Rajai Husseini and Wasfi At-Tal.

May 1946: Al-Alami opens Al-Maktab Al-Arabi [in Jerusalem] to promote the Palestine Question.

³¹⁵⁷ Khalidi 2005, pp 74-77.

³¹⁵⁸ Tannous 1988, pp 371, 373.

³¹⁵⁹ Mattar 2000, p 144, citing MEC, St. Anthony’s College, Oxford, papers of the Jerusalem and the East Mission.

³¹⁶⁰ Jones 1979, p 144.

³¹⁶¹ Jones 1979, overleaf Table of Contents.

³¹⁶² Khalidi 1978, p 145.

summer 1945 *Jamal al-Husseini is 'released from internment in Southern Rhodesia... But the order excluding him from Palestine was not revoked by the British authorities, and he was forced to proceed to Beirut.'*³¹⁶³

³¹⁶³ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 4.

Herbert Samuel, progenitor of applied Zionism and High Commissioner from 1 July 1920 until 30 June 1925, devoted pages 139-79 of his **Memoirs**, published in July 1945, to his years of service to the Jewish National Home in Palestine.³¹⁶⁴ Instead of integrating those 40 pages into entries covering mainly the decade between 1915 and 1925, I will treat them in this separate entry as his statement to all concerned about his and Britain's wider Anglo-Zionist achievements. In 1945, with the 1939 White Paper still officially in place but having virtually no support within Government, policy was up for grabs and Samuel seemed intent on influencing it.

He first recalled his pre-World War I disinterest in Zionism, due to its high unlikelihood of realisation, but then:

The moment Turkey entered the war [in October/November 1914] the position was entirely changed. If Palestine was to be given a new destiny, Great Britain, with her important strategic interests in the Middle East, was directly concerned. ... For myself the matter had an additional and special interest. The first member of the Jewish community ever to sit in a British Cabinet, it was incumbent upon me at least to learn what the Zionist movement was and what it was doing. (p 139)

Among other things, the conflation of Jewishness and Zionism is here visible. Further, for some reason in Samuel's mind Palestine needed a "new destiny" and it was portrayed as passive – to "be given" its political character. As all previous entries concerning Samuel show, for him the Palestinians did not have political agency.

On 9 November 1914, infused with his new knowledge of and admiration for Zionism, he spoke at length with Foreign Minister Edward Grey (co-signer of the Sykes-Picot Agreement [>12]). According to the notes he made at the time, from which he quoted, considering that Turkey's days as ruler might be numbered,

Perhaps the opportunity might arise for the fulfilment of the ancient aspiration of the Jewish people and the restoration there of a Jewish State. ... If a Jewish State were established in Palestine it might become the centre of a new culture. The Jewish brain is rather a remarkable thing, and under national auspices, the state might become a fountain of enlightenment and a source of a great literature and art and development of science. (p 140)

At the time, that is, not only when writing in 1945, he had desired a "State", the term which up until nearly the end of the Mandate had to be strategically avoided in favour of the weaker and ambiguous phrase 'Jewish national home in (perhaps only part of) Palestine', as he and Churchill had phrased it in their 1922 White Paper [>142]. The term "aspiration", as we have seen [>16], would make its way into the Balfour Declaration as "Jewish Zionist aspirations", and the racist idea of the superiority of the Jewish brain would find its way into his soon-to-be-penned 'The Future of Palestine' [>8].

³¹⁶⁴ Samuel 1945, all citations.

The building up of a new state from the foundations was, of course, an undertaking of the most formidable character, especially in view of the elements which were to be found in the present population of Palestine. But I felt sure it could be accomplished. An appeal to the Jewish communities throughout the world would certainly provide sufficient funds to buy out existing interests of individuals and to lay the foundations of the state. (p 141)

The existing, residing Palestinians were not people but “elements” who would become the “non-Jewish community” of the Balfour Declaration [16], thoroughly unconnected with the “foundations” of this “new state”; they were “individuals” with “interests” rather than political rights, and could be “bought out” because, as Samuel literally put it, his fellow Jews had “sufficient funds”. He added that on the same day, 9 November 1914, he spoke with fellow Cabinet member Lloyd George, who “said to me that he was very keen to see a Jewish state established there.” (p 142)

He then related the story of his drafts of ‘The Future of Palestine’, noting that his March 1915 draft received wide support in the Cabinet and recording the formation of an Anglo-Zionist group around Lloyd George, Lord Reading, Bryce, and Balfour, John Maynard Keynes, Weizmann, Sokolow, two Rothschilds, Claude Montefiore, Lord Milner, Mark Sykes, and his own brother Stuart Samuel, President of the Jewish Board of Deputies – a dream lobby. Further,

Opinion was crystallizing in favour of something in the nature of a British Protectorate. But the more the situation was explored, the clearer it became that the idea of a Jewish State was impracticable. At some future time, perhaps, it might come about in the course of events; but so long as the great majority of the inhabitants were Arabs it was out of the question. To impose a Jewish minority government would be in flat contradiction to one of the main purposes for which it had been declared that the Allies were fighting. (pp 144-45)

These noble Allied declarations – not any innate rights – meant one had to hold off until at “some future time” a Jewish *majority* government would earn the accolade ‘democratic’; for now a British “Protectorate” was all that could be hoped for, but in the event Samuel would work tirelessly for that majority to “come about” through immigration, for his own “Jewish Zionist aspiration” was for a “Jewish State” (in Palestine).

At the same time it was not necessary to accept the position that the existing population, sparse as it was, should have the right to bar the door to the return of a people whose connection with the country long antedated their own; especially as it had resulted in events of spiritual and cultural value to mankind in striking contrast with the barren record of the last thousand years [in Palestine]. (p 145)

This short passage brings up several of the themes we have encountered concerning British and Anglo-Zionist attitudes towards HMG’s Palestinian colonial subjects: 1) the political and emotional factors important to the indigenous people did not count and they would never be polled; 2) the locals had no “right” to set their own immigration policy, which would be a negatively-phrased “barring of the door”; 3) the to-be-settled Jews, although Europeans, were “returning” to Palestine; 4) the “connection” with Palestine of

the people whose majority presence in Palestine had “antedated” and postdated that of the Jews themselves, were merely an “existing population”; and 5) Jews were spiritually and culturally superior to the locals.

Two and a half years after his tract, in 1917,

The Balfour Declaration marked the end of one stage and the opening of another. The time had already come for active preparations for giving it practical effect. ... I was not a member of the Zionist Organization, but in the years 1918 and 1919 was closely co-operating with its leaders. I acted as chairman of a Committee which drew up a statement of political proposals for submission to the Government; and of another Committee on the future finances of the movement, and of the National Home itself. ... I went to Paris also for consultations with the section of the Peace Conference dealing with Palestine. (p 148)

Samuel was downplaying his key pre-Mandate role.

A High Commissioner for Palestine who had never been to Palestine was evidently not a good look, so in late January 1920, on a suggestion by General Allenby who was then High Commissioner for Egypt, Samuel made his first visit to Palestine, staying for two months [>70; >73] hosted by General (and Chief Administrator) and Mrs. Louis Bols [*also* >84]. His opinions formed on this study trip, and the opinion expressed to Prime Minister Lloyd George by Political Intelligence Officer Richard Meinertzhagen [>65; >74] that “Allenby was not carrying out in Palestine the policy of the Foreign Office in pursuance of the Balfour Declaration”, resulted in the replacement of Bols’s military by Samuel’s civil regime on 1 July 1920. (p 149)³¹⁶⁵

After some debate amongst Lloyd George, Samuel, Weizmann, Sokolow and Foreign Minister Curzon, it was decided that Samuel’s being a Jew, although certain to raise doubts among the locals as to British fairness in treating the two unequal communities, was no hindrance to his appointment as High Commissioner. (pp 150-52) Samuel himself memoired that he had been appointed by HMG “with full knowledge... of my Zionist sympathies, and no doubt largely because of them.” (p 168) It was true that to implement the one-sided Balfour Declaration a Zionist, if not a Jewish-Zionist, HC was a *sine qua non*.

Samuel wrote not a word about the fundamental Arab opposition to the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, once referring merely to “propagandists” (p 169). He wrote only one sentence on the opposition to Zionism of many British officials at the time he took over the new civil regime: “One or two of the officers resigned, being out of sympathy with the policy of the Balfour Declaration and honourably preferring to leave.”³¹⁶⁶ (p 155) On Bols’s turning power over to him he wrote only:

He had a fund of humour. ... When he was about to leave, Bols said that he wanted me ‘to sign a receipt’. I asked for what. ‘For Palestine,’ he said. ‘But,’ I replied, ‘I can’t do that. You don’t mean it seriously.’ ‘Certainly I do,’ he said; ‘I have got it typed out here.’ And he produced a slip of paper – ‘Received from Major-General Sir Louis J. Bols, K.C.B – One Palestine,

³¹⁶⁵ Also Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 66-67, 80-81, 84, 86-88.

³¹⁶⁶ E.g. Colonel E. L. Popham, >105.

complete', with the date and a space for my signature. ... I signed; adding, however, the initials which used often to appear on commercial documents – 'E. & O.E.', meaning 'Errors and Omissions Excepted'. (p 154)³¹⁶⁷

While Bols was a defender of the Palestinians,³¹⁶⁸ this was for Samuel evidently simply very amusing; after all, nothing more serious was taking place than, like so many commercial goods, the people of Palestine were changing owners.

In the greater scheme, indeed, the political fate of the non-Jewish "elements" in Palestine was without import:

No one with any historical sense could approach without emotion the task which had now so unexpectedly devolved upon me. The past of Palestine is a panorama of civilizations. This little country, so small but so famous, had been conquered and ruled in turn by Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, by Greeks and Romans, by Saracens, Crusaders, Turks. Now in these latter days, through events strange and unforeseen, a people from a far-away island in the North Sea had taken a place in this perennial succession. With the assent of the nations of the world, Great Britain had assumed control. (p 156)

Despite having worked on it rationally and assiduously for five or six years, Britain's and Samuel's accession was "unexpected" and "strange and unforeseen"; "Saracens" and Christians had "conquered and ruled", but Jews evidently had not; legitimacy was bestowed by "the nations of the world".

Turning personal:

Whoever might be chosen by the British Crown to lay the foundations of a new State in this ancient land had been given a most honourable task and an unexampled opportunity. But for one whose ancestors had dwelt in this very land for a thousand years [sic.], and during that time in that place had helped to engender religious and ethical ideas of immeasurable value to mankind; who now, after another two thousand years had passed, was charged with the special duty of preparing for the return that had been longed for through all that time, and never with a yearning more intense than in these days – for one such as myself it was a high privilege and an inspiring call. (p 156)

Jewish "ethical ideas", *pace* Samuel, apparently did not include respect for non-Jews who had been rooted in the land for millennia. In his own words, as a Jewish person he could pre-eminently discharge the duties with which he had charged himself, namely of setting up a "State" where his ancestors had lived 2,000+ years previously. Gone was the pretense that he was working to set up a mere Jewish "home". This passage erases any doubt as to Samuel's and/or HMG's usually-hidden true goal ever since Samuel formed the racist, philo-Semitic ideology expressed in his tract of exactly 30 years previous [8]. Also shown by this passage, written by the Briton who along with Churchill, Weizmann,

³¹⁶⁷ See also Segev 1999.

³¹⁶⁸ See >61; >70; >77; >84; >124; but see >68; >82.

Lloyd George, Leo Amery and Balfour made up a sort of Gang of Six³¹⁶⁹, was that the distance between British Zionism and Palestinian political aspirations had been, at any rate up until 1938-39 [>410], unbridgeable.

Samuel then went on to relate the several letters he wrote during the early 1920s to his own King and to Curzon attesting to the tranquility and satisfactory political atmosphere in the land (pp 159-61) – unaware of the mood of the non-Jews although alarms had been repeatedly sounded by British officials and intelligence reports [e.g. >15; >31; >34; >42; >58; >88; >103; >126; >265; >362] as well as by the King-Crane Commission [>59] and most importantly by numerous leading Arab nationalists and their newspapers for the last dozen years [>4; >5].

Neither the uprising of spring 1920 nor the Palin Report investigating it (although it was published the very same day Samuel 'received' Palestine from Bols) [>88] got a *Memoirs* mention, and the next uprising of spring 1921 [>103; >122] must have taken him by surprise. When at one of the "harmonious" 9 December anniversary celebrations of Allenby's "entry" into Jerusalem, Samuel pointed out to Jerusalem Governor Storrs that the symbol of peace, an olive tree, was standing behind the group of religious luminaries being photographed, it fell to Storrs to point out, "Yes, sir, but perhaps you haven't observed that at the other end is a pepper tree!" (p 166)

Samuel's book likewise contained no mention of the various Palestine Arab Congresses and Delegations to London during his five years as HC, or even of the Haycraft Report in autumn 1921 [>122], all of which could have informed him of what was going on. His Advisory Council had eleven seats for British officials, four for Moslems, three for Christians and three for Jews – although Moslems outnumbered the former by about 9 to 1 and the latter by about 7 to 1. (p 167) None of this was worth mentioning in 1945. *The Palestinians* were not worth mentioning; he had not cared to dialogue with them.

Given the great power Samuel possessed to work towards replacing the Palestinian polity by a Jewish "State", it seems to me appropriate to explicitly mention some elements of the conceptual and normative framework within which his new non-Jewish subjects registered only as an afterthought. For example:

Palestine had for centuries been almost derelict, politically and materially. We had to build, from the very beginning, a modern state. (p 161) [*also >242*]

That the local people had experience, at least since the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876), of states, elections, democracy and administration, counted for nothing – or had escaped Samuel's cognizance. He had planted himself not into a country of some 700,000 native inhabitants with millennia of life and culture behind them, but into a political *terra nullius*. He did not so much erase the Palestinians as not even see them. Samar Attar comments more generally on this aggressive intrusion by colonialists such as Samuel:

One of the reasons for their aggression is that they do not see themselves as equal to their fellow human beings. Their superiority is taken for granted. ... One wonders whether the 'noble cause', or the 'moral purpose' that Conrad's Marlow speaks about as something that

³¹⁶⁹ William Ormsby-Gore, James de Rothschild, Richard Meinertzhagen, Sidney Webb and Ramsay MacDonald were among their lieutenants.

redeems colonialism can justify in this instance the displacement of Palestinians as a nation, and the destruction of their history and culture in order to help the persecuted European Jews. Historians... highlight the intrinsic relationship between the brutal persecution of the Jews and international sympathy for the Zionist cause, dropping the Palestinians altogether from the equation...³¹⁷⁰

Economically as well, Palestine was not good enough for Samuel, a hole of “dereliction”: railways, communications, education, agriculture – all became his duty to build or improve. (pp 161-64)

As for the two tasks set by the Balfour Declaration, Samuel thought the two not “irreconcilable”. As a “convinced Liberal” he was against all oppression, and “as a Jew” he was worried about the good name of the Jews:

Nothing could be worse than if it were to appear that the one thing the Jewish people had learnt from the centuries of their own oppression was the way to oppress others. On the contrary, I was sure that the only course by which the National Home could give satisfaction to the Jews themselves, win credit in the eyes of the world, or satisfy the Mandatory Power, would be if it resulted, not merely in tolerance for the Arabs, not merely in a formal recognition of existing legal rights, but in opening for them the doors to better standards of living, in giving them access to higher levels of comfort and of culture. (p 168)

Samuel, long-time leader of the Liberal Party, did not admit what he, as a liberal, had to have known, namely that his plan of denying sovereignty to the 89-percent majority in his colony was *illiberal*. It amounted to the “oppression” he so abjured. Moreover, it was what “appeared” to be the case that counted, and it was the Jews, in their projected and nascent power, who should “tolerate” the indigenous dwellers, a case perhaps of *noblesse oblige*. The Palestinians were to be “given” things, moreover things of a material rather than political nature (“comfort”), but also things raising the Arabs’ “low level... of culture”.

After relating his key role in the 1922 Churchill White Paper’s words of reassurance to the Arabs [^{>142}] (pp 169-70) and presenting his view that McMahon had not promised independence for Palestine [^{>10; >400}], for which view he cited as evidence only the extremely slim fact that at the Paris Peace Conference Emir Faisal did *not* make that claim (pp 172-73), and after touching on his parts in the 1923 Cabinet Committee hearings [^{>165}] and 1924 meetings of the Permanent Mandates Commission [^{>178}], he came to Balfour’s 1925 visit to Palestine; Balfour “evidently enjoyed” it, with the two men playing several sets of tennis, but he omitted any mention of the widespread local strikes and opposition to Balfour [^{>181}] (pp 173ff).

Samuel was satisfied with the National Home’s foundations and, apparently, with himself personally:

The most moving ceremony that I have ever attended was on my first visit, after my arrival in Jerusalem, to the old and spacious synagogue in the Jewish quarter of the ancient city. ... Now, on that day, for the first time since the destruction of the Temple, [the congregation] could see one of their own people governor in the Land of Israel. To them it seemed that the

³¹⁷⁰ Attar 2010, pp 1-2, 4.

fulfilment of ancient prophecy might at last be at hand. When, in accordance with the usual ritual, I was 'called to the Reading of the Law', and from the central platform recited in Hebrew the prayer and the blessing, 'Have mercy upon Zion, for it is the home of our life, and save her that is grieved in spirit, speedily, even in our days. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who makest Zion joyful through her children'. ... – the emotion that I could not but feel seemed to spread throughout the vast congregation. Many wept. One could almost hear the sigh of generations. (p 176)

What was Palestinian self-determination compared to the sigh of generations?

Samuel ended his account of his time in the Holy Land by quoting from attestations from Chaim Weizmann, Leo Amery, T.E. Lawrence and the Zionist Organizations in London and America that he had done an excellent job in the “completion of the first stage in the establishment of the Jewish National Home” (pp 178-79) – but not before giving a description of his “farewell tour” on horseback “from Dan even unto Beersheba”, the last night of which was crowned by the presence of “a crowd of Beduin who had ridden out to meet us... and a band of gipsies... entertained us, as night fell, with Romany dances and music, in the midst of a great circle of silent Arabs sitting on the ground.” (p 177) Everything was OK: The Arabs were silent, and on the ground.

21 August 1945 *'Harry Truman announces the end of the lend-lease program which had supported the British economy throughout the war, partly in order to pressure the Attlee Labour Government to admit 100,000 European Jews into Palestine in violation of the 1939 White Paper.'*³¹⁷¹

31 August 1945 *President Truman asks British Prime Minister Clement Attlee to grant immigration certificates allowing 100,000 Jews into Palestine. Attlee rejects.*

³¹⁷¹ Khalidi 2005, p 69.

430. Cabinet ponders things

11 September 1945

The still-in-effect MacDonald White Paper approved by Parliament on 23 May 1939 [⁴¹¹] promised two things about immigration: 1) A maximum of 75,000 would immigrate; and 2) “After the period of five years, no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it.”³¹⁷² [⁴¹⁰] The Cabinet of the brand-new Labour majority on 11 September 1945 – six years and three months after those promises and one year and three months after the five-year maximum had run out – **pondered the report of the ‘Palestine Committee’** still headed by Lord President of the Council Herbert Morrison [⁴²⁴; also >442].³¹⁷³ The Committee’s core members were no longer Leo Amery, Oliver Stanley and Archibald Sinclair, but rather Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, Colonial Secretary George Hall and Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton.³¹⁷⁴

Only 72,000 had to date immigrated, and after the remaining 3,000 were let in, what should be “long-term policy”? It “seemed essential” that they stick to the “pledge” that further immigration required the “acquiescence of the Arabs in Palestine”, but for the Jews a mere 3,000 more was not enough: the “Jewish Agency... had flatly rejected this and had demanded a figure of 100,000”. (p 3) Hall confirmed that indeed the Jewish Agency was “primarily concerned to make it clear that the White Paper was dead”. (p 5)

But the newly-peopled Palestine Committee had just unanimously recommended

that we should continue to conform to the existing arrangements, as prescribed in the White Paper, in respect of immigration during the interval between the exhaustion of the quota therein prescribed and the promulgation of a long-term policy, every effort being made to persuade the Arabs to agree to a continuation of immigration during the interval at the rate at present permissible. (p 4³¹⁷⁵)

What were the “existing arrangements, as prescribed in the White Paper”? Could that phrase refer to anything but the absolute caps, in the absence of Arab “acquiescence”, on number of immigrants (75,000) and number of years (five)?³¹⁷⁶ If that’s what it meant, and the Committee insisted on “conforming” to it, then concerning immigration there was nothing left to discuss. 100,000 more, demanded by whosoever, would simply be illegal. What a dilemma! How could the hard-and-fast numerical and temporal limits set by Parliament on 23 May 1939 be somehow circumvented? (The report also mentions the “military problems involved in the handling of the Palestine issue” (pp 4 iii, 6, g-i) perhaps meaning that any lacking Arab “acquiescence” might be overcome by means other than “persuasion”.) As we will see, Bevin and Attlee did continue to refuse to let in the 100,000 up until 25 February 1947. [⁴³⁹; >448; >452; >453]

³¹⁷² MacDonald 1939, §13, 14.3.

³¹⁷³ CAB 128/3/2, pp 3-7, *all citations*.

³¹⁷⁴ Cohen 1987b, pp 271, 288.

³¹⁷⁵ Cohen 1987b, pp 287, 279.

³¹⁷⁶ MacDonald 1939, §14.1.

The Palestine Committee whose report was being considered by the Cabinet had on 6 September 1945 quit considering partition altogether, in effect reversing the decision of the technically same Committee – but now with far different personnel – to ditch the 1939 White Paper in favour of partition.³¹⁷⁷ [424] That coalition war-Government Committee had

reported in September last year [1944], but no decision on its recommendations was reached. It advocated a plan of partition and the setting up of an independent Jewish State.³¹⁷⁸

The “Jewish State”, of whatever size, was the bone of contention and the big and decisive prize for the Zionists who held vastly more power in London and Washington than those wanting a fair deal for the Arab Palestinians.

A bit later, on 10 October, the newly-constituted Committee started giving serious consideration to a joint Anglo-American Committee to go over the books once more with a view to coming up with something acceptable to the United Nations.³¹⁷⁹ [438] What it never did was revert to the 1939 White Paper’s *constitutional* provisions for independence for the State of Palestine within ten years. All three HMG plans of 1946-47 were complicated, imprecise bi-national schemes rather than the simple, exact democratic one favoured by 85% of the *citizens* of Palestine and 70% of the current *population* of Palestine, the remaining 30% being overwhelmingly made up of recent immigrants, only roughly half of them citizens. [438; 442; 452; Appendices 7 & 8]

The Cabinet, at any rate, on 11 September discussed whether a temporary “suspension of immigration until after the forthcoming Mecca Pilgrimage”, as had been suggested, would only “encourage Arab truculence”; furthermore, a “complete suspension might well be represented as being inconsistent with” not the actual wording of the White Paper but its “spirit”; furthermore, “While full justice should be done to Arab claims, it was possible to exaggerate their importance”. (p 4) An ungenerous interpretation of this is that what His Majesty’s Government itself had laid down as policy was being degraded to mere Palestinian “claims”. That said, “complete suspension” for the remaining 3,000 immigrants would indeed be a violation of the White Paper, depending perhaps however on the official numbers of illegal, uncounted immigrants who should be deducted from the 75,000 total figure.

It is easy to forget while counting dates and numbers of immigrants that for the Palestinians, *any* immigration at all had been a violation of their rights for the last twenty-five years. Now, their hands tied by the clear words of the 1939 White Paper, the Cabinet left short-term immigration policy undecided, merely expressing HMG’s “intention in due course” to “refer this policy to the World Organisation”, i.e. to what on 24 October 1945 would become the United Nations. (pp 4 ii, 5 c, 7 ‘X’) This intent to leave Palestine would become reality only in 1947 with Bevin’s announcement in Parliament on 25 February

³¹⁷⁷ Cohen 1987b, pp 272-77, 278, reproducing CAB 95/14. P. (M) (45) 8.

³¹⁷⁸ Cohen 1987b, p 278.

³¹⁷⁹ Cohen 1987b, p 289.

[>453] and the Cabinet's final decision on 20 September [>471]. In between there would be further conferences, inquiries and reports [>431; >438; >442; >444; >447], all largely boycotted by the Palestinians but not by the surrounding Arab states.

22 September 1945 *The British Government issues Defense (Emergency) Regulations authorizing military rule in Palestine.*

1945-1947 [*The United States of America took in only about 25,000 European Jews in the years 1945-47.*]

Debate geared up over Truman's insistence that 100,000 European Jews be allowed to emigrate immediately to Palestine, as indicated for instance by the U.S. President's remarks as early as 31 August 1945.³¹⁸⁰ In this Truman was rejecting the advice of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs in his own State Department, which was warning that the U.S. should only advocate such mass immigration if it were prepared to bear the financial burden and the economic and political fallout in Palestine itself.³¹⁸¹ His close friend Morris Ernst, the great Jewish American Civil Liberties Union lawyer, in 1945 similarly rejected Zionist separatism and wrote that the "Jewish people now should go back to Europe to live [and] replant their feet on their old soil..."³¹⁸²

In a **telegram** dated 25 October 1945 Attlee in turn rejected Truman's conflation of the problem of the Jews in Europe with the problem of Palestine, which was only one of the possible "countries of disposal".

The fact has to be faced that since the introduction of the Mandate it has been impossible to find common ground between the Arabs and the Jews. The differences in religion and in language, in cultural and social life, in ways of thought and conduct, are difficult to reconcile. ... [B]oth communities lay claim to Palestine, one on the ground of a millennium [sic.] of occupation, and the other on the ground of historic association coupled with the undertaking given in the first world war to establish a Jewish home.³¹⁸³

This statement could not make up its mind: if not finding "common ground" was due to religion, language, culture, etc., then what had that to do with the "introduction of the Mandate" which caused the *political* clash?

In October Arab newspapers had answered the U.S. and Zionist demand for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews from Europe by saying that if the U.S. and Britain were so concerned about these refugees they should open their own borders to them.³¹⁸⁴ According to Daniel Rickenbacher,

On October 3, 1945, a delegation of the Arab League... visited the State Department to protest President Truman's support for admitting 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine. ... [Their] statement argued that with the defeat of Nazi Germany there was no longer a need for a 'Jewish haven' in Palestine. Instead of a Jewish state, the statement promised the establishment of an Arab democratic state, in which the rights of the minorities would be protected.³¹⁸⁵

³¹⁸⁰ PREM 8/89, p 37; see Bethell 1979, pp 206, 207, 281-82, citing e.g. FO 371/45380 [a 393-page file "closed until 1972"]; also U.S. Senate 1945, p 12169.

³¹⁸¹ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 10-11, citing Truman, Harry, 1956. *Years of Trial and Hope*, Vol. 2, pp 136-37.

³¹⁸² Ernst 1945, pp 60-61; also Suárez 2023, 135-36, 147, 277.

³¹⁸³ Hansard 1945, c1928.

³¹⁸⁴ Bethell 1979, p 211; also Suárez 2023, e.g. pp 122, 129-36.

³¹⁸⁵ Rickenbacher 2017, p 196, citing CZA Z4/31551.

This was of course the standard Palestinian position.

Yet although resisting Truman's demand, Attlee continued to deny the policy demand of the locals, articulated for thirty years, that Zionist immigration from Europe simply cease. According to Francis Williams, Attlee said that immigration would continue at its present rate, but not to the amount of 100,000 immediate immigrants demanded by the Zionist-backed US.³¹⁸⁶ That would of course have been an easily demonstrable violation of §14 of the MacDonald White Paper which was still the law of the land. HMG just didn't know what to do: On 13 November 1945 Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin would announce in the House of Commons the formation of the Anglo-American Committee [see >436-39] to investigate the entire 'Palestine question', enabling *inter alia* a postponement of the decision concerning the admission of the 100,000 European Jews into Palestine demanded by Truman in a letter made public that same day.³¹⁸⁷

1945 *'In 1945, the 17 branches of the Arab Workers Union had 15,000 dues-paying members. This left-leaning union made alliances with the People's Party (Hizb Asha'ab, led by Musa al-Alami) against the Arab Party (Al-Hizb Al-Arabi, the Mufti group), which was led on the ground by Jamal al-Husseini (their newspaper was Al-Wahda - Unity).'*³¹⁸⁸

31 October/1 November 1945 *'On the night of 31 October/1 November, the Palmach-Hagana blew up the railways in 153 places, completely disrupting the system, and destroyed three boats used for intercepting illegal immigrants. The Irgun Zvei Leumi attacked the railway-yards at Lydda causing serious damage and some casualties, and the Stern Group attempted to blow up the oil refinery which had been built with British capital at Haifa.'*³¹⁸⁹

³¹⁸⁶ Williams 1961, pp 565-67.

³¹⁸⁷ Khalidi 2005, pp 69-70; also Bethell 1979, pp 206-07, 210-12; Khalidi 1986, pp 109-10.

³¹⁸⁸ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 92.

³¹⁸⁹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 13; Suárez 2023, pp 121-22.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of early 1946, following in the procession of investigative commissions those of Palin (1 July 1920, >88), Haycraft (October 1921, >122), Shaw (19 March 1930, >220), Hope Simpson (21 October 1930, >233), Peel (7 July 1937, >336), Woodhead (9 November 1938, >376) and MacDonald (February–May 1939, >386ff), not to mention the ignored and buried report of the King–Crane Commission (28 August 1919, >59), was thought to be necessary four or five months after the end of World War II and Churchill's defeat by Clement Attlee, in whose Cabinet Ernest Bevin became Foreign Secretary. According to Walid Khalidi,

Ernest Bevin, an erstwhile Zionist, began to see the Middle East in a different light once in charge of policy. ... In Palestine, his challenge was what to do with the 1939 White Paper, Britain's statement of intent on its Palestine policy issued by the Neville Chamberlain Government... which Ben-Gurion was bent on burying. ... [T]he White Paper had stipulated that after the admission of 75,000 immigrants, further Jewish immigration would be contingent on Arab 'acquiescence,' which clearly would not be forthcoming.³¹⁹⁰

On 13 November 1945 in the House of Commons Foreign Secretary **Bevin announced**.³¹⁹¹

Having regard to the whole situation and the fact that it has caused this worldwide interest which affects both Arabs and Jews, His Majesty's Government decided to invite the Government of the United States to co-operate with them in setting up a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, under a rotating chairmanship, to examine the question of European Jewry and to make a further review of the Palestine problem in the light of that examination. (c1929)

Inviting the U.S. to “co-operate” was purely political: the U.K. was not obliged to split responsibility with the more pro-Zionist Truman Administration. In any case the “question of European Jewry” was now unabashedly in the center and firmly, if illogically, tied to Palestine. Its “terms of reference” named the main concerns: “To examine the position of the Jews in those countries in Europe where they have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution” and “to meet the immediate needs arising from conditions subject to examination” including “emigration to, and settlement in, countries outside Europe”. This new commission would investigate “the problems of Palestine as such problems are affected by conditions” pertaining amongst the Jewish victims in Europe. (cc1929–30) The “political, economic and social conditions of Palestine” were relevant only “as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein”.³¹⁹² Not only were “the [Near-Eastern] Palestine question” and European persecution of Jews thus conflated, but the latter controlled the agenda.

³¹⁹⁰ Khalidi 2005, pp 62–63; MacDonald 1939, §13.ii & 14.3.

³¹⁹¹ Hansard 1945, pp 1927–35, *all citations*; also Zuaytir 1958, pp 144–48; John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 14–15, 52, *citing* Shaw 1946, Vol. I, Chapter II, pp 99–102 and a High Commissioner announcement of 30 January 1946; also <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statement-on-palestine-by-british-foreign-secretary-bevin-november-1945>

³¹⁹² Also PASSIA 2001, p 74; Suárez 2023, p 131.

Indeed, HMG

will consult the Arabs with a view to an arrangement which will ensure that, pending the receipt of the *ad interim* recommendations which the [Anglo-American] Committee of Inquiry will make on the matter [^{>438}], there is no interruption of Jewish immigration at the present monthly rate. (c1931)

The present monthly rate was 1500. The still-valid 1939 White Paper pledged

to permit further expansion of the Jewish National Home by immigration only if the Arabs are prepared to acquiesce in it. (§13ii) [And:] After the period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it. (§14(3))

The latter clause stated the five-year limit (17 May 1944) without reference to how many had immigrated during the five years. Furthermore, to merely “consult the Arabs” violated the condition of Palestinian “acquiescence”. HMG was thus uncontestedly violating its own Statement of Policy, but never mind. Social rectitude was routinely foreign to HMG in its dealings with its rightless subjects.

This statement was public and thus visible to the Palestinians, and was also “communicated... to the Arab Governments”³¹⁹³, although the White Paper text referred to “the Arabs of Palestine”. The message, at any rate, was that MacDonald’s White Paper was expendable. The uninterrupted immigration practice would indeed not change during consultations with the Arabs or the Committee’s investigations.

Furthermore, the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration was to be adhered to (c1931), although both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office had at least since the Royal Commission report of 7 July 1937 [^{>336}] concluded that it was contradictory and unworkable³¹⁹⁴, although the reigning 1939 White Paper had declared the ‘national home’ part of the Mandate to be fulfilled³¹⁹⁵, and even though Bevin himself seemed to have shared that view (c1928).

That said, Bevin’s statement also argued that if possible, Jews should remain in and be re-integrated into the European countries where they had suffered, saying that

Palestine, while it may be able to make a contribution, does not, by itself, provide sufficient opportunity for grappling with the whole problem. ... The fact has to be faced that since the introduction of the Mandate, it has been impossible to find common grounds between the Arabs and Jews. (cc1927, 1928)³¹⁹⁶

This statement muddled the fact that at the time of “the introduction of the Mandate”, let’s say 1922, there was zero evidence that the “Arabs” would ever relinquish their political sovereignty; in that year they told HMG that there was only one “common ground”: Jews as normal citizens of an Arab Palestine. [^{>133-145}] For British Zionists such as Richard

³¹⁹³ Zuaytir 1958, p 147.

³¹⁹⁴ Also Abcarius 1946, p 215.

³¹⁹⁵ MacDonald 1939, §13.

³¹⁹⁶ Also John & Hadawi 1970b, p 15.

Meinertzhagen, however, such words, despite their affirmation of the Zionist Mandate and further immigration, meant that Bevin's speech signalled a final betrayal of British promises to the Jews of the world.³¹⁹⁷

Bevin also, after asking for MPs' commiseration, made the by-now standard move of putting the Arabs and Jews, rather than Britain, in the driver's seat:

The House will realise that we have inherited in Palestine a most difficult legacy, and our task is greatly complicated by undertakings given at various times to various parties, which we feel ourselves bound to honour. ... We have confidence that if this problem is approached in the right spirit by Arabs and Jews, not only will a solution be found to the Palestine question, just to both parties, but a great contribution will be made to the stability and peace in the Middle East. (c1931, 1932)

If that failed, then as Bevin said, "the problem is clearly an international problem". (c1932)

22 November 1945 *The new Arab Higher Committee for Palestine is formed to replace the one disbanded by the British in 1937.*

³¹⁹⁷ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 199-201.

This entry depends solely on secondary sources. I have not yet sorted out how many new Arab Committees were formed in anticipation of the Anglo-American Committee hearings, what their exact titles were, and who officially belonged to each. Help from readers is needed.

According to Izzat Tannous, on 22 November 1945 the First Arab 'National' Committee was formed, with 12 members representing all parties and regions of Palestine: Abdul-Hamid Shoman (head of the Arab Bank), Faris Serhan, Emil Ghoury, Henry Cattan (legal scholar), Fuad Saba, Izzat Tannous (medical doctor), Yousuf Haikal, Ahmad Al-Shukayri, Kamel Abdulrahman, Sami Taba, Kamel Dajani, and Muhammad Abdul-Baqi.³¹⁹⁸ Walid Khalidi, writing about what was evidently a different Committee, called the 'Higher' Committee, reports it as emerging at the insistence of Jamil Bey Mardam (representing Syria and the Arab League) and gives this list of personnel:

[The] formula was a committee of twelve members: five for al-hizb al-'arabi [Palestine Arab Party]; one each for the five parties—Defense ([Ragheb] Nashashibi), Reform ([Hussein Fakhri] Khalidi), National Bloc ([Abdul Latif] Salah), Youth Congress ([Yacoub] Ghussein), and Istiqlal ([Awni] Abdul Hadi); and two independents, Musa Alami and Ahmad Hilmi Pasha.³¹⁹⁹

The main tasks of this group, or these two groups, were to analyse and respond to Bevin's statement of 13 November [432] and prepare for the arrival in Palestine for hearings of the Anglo-American Committee – which happened on 6 March.³²⁰⁰

Yet another, slightly different version is given by Mazin Qumsiyeh, according to which sometime in 1946 a separate 'Arab High Committee' was formed at the instigation of Amin al-Husseini, within which

All seven key positions were from the Al-Husseini family; others – Hussein Al-Khalidi, Mu'een Al-Maadi, Rafiq Al-Tamimi, Izzat Darwaza, Ishaak Darweesh and Sheikh Hasan Abu Saud – were sympathetic.³²⁰¹

This Arab Higher Committee is apparently the same one which, according to Walid Khalidi (*see also just above*), was the old AHC now reconstituted by Jamal al-Husseini on or around 25 March 1946, in time for the arrival of the Anglo-American Committee on 6 March. It had five representatives of the Palestine Arab Party he presided over plus seven independents close to the PAP; those left out formed an alternative committee consisting of Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, the 5 Party leaders named just above, and Suleiman Bey Tuqan

³¹⁹⁸ Tannous 1988, pp 375-76; *see also* >428.

³¹⁹⁹ Khalidi 2005, p 71; *see also* palquest, > Chronology, 'Attempt to Reconstitute the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine' and 'Arab League meets in Bludan...'

³²⁰⁰ Tannous 1988, p 376; Khalidi 2005, p 71.

³²⁰¹ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 91.

of Nablus.³²⁰² Further confusing matters is that, according to Furlonge, the Arab League under de facto Egyptian leadership set up 'Arab Offices' in London, New York and Washington as rivals to those headed by Musa Alami.³²⁰³

Whatever the make-up of the various committees, and whichever one had Jamal al-Husseini as its official President, Tannous reports that offices were rented at the Lower Bak'aa in Jerusalem by Hajj Amin and Jamal al-Husseini, Hussein Al-Khalidi, Ahmad Hilmi Abdul-Baqi and Emil Ghoury under the leadership of Jamal; when the office moved to Cairo, where Hajj Amin al-Husseini had returned from Germany, the group was joined by the members listed just above by Qumsiyeh.³²⁰⁴ In the summer of 1946 a bank, *Beitul-Maal al-Arabi*, was set up by many of the same people with "branches in Jaffa, Haifa, Nablus, Nazareth and Gaza."³²⁰⁵

29 November 1945 or February 1946 [*Jamal al-Husseini and three other Palestinians return to Palestine from exile in Southern Rhodesia.*]

2 December 1945 During its 2nd session held in Cairo, the Arab League issues a resolution entitled 'The Boycott of Zionist Goods and Products', and sets up a special office to prevent such goods from being smuggled into Arab countries.

December 1945 'As the maximum number of (legal) European Jewish immigrants allowed by the MacDonald White Paper (75,000) had been reached, the British authorised another 1,500 more Jewish immigrants a month.'³²⁰⁶

³²⁰² Khalidi 2005, p 73; also Khalidi 1986, p 112.

³²⁰³ Furlonge 1969, p 150.

³²⁰⁴ Tannous 1988, pp 385-86.

³²⁰⁵ Tannous 1988, p 388.

³²⁰⁶ Suárez 2016, p 117.

434. Arab reaction to Bevin

early December 1945

On 15 November 1945 the Arab states received Foreign Secretary Bevin's 13 November House of Commons statement on Palestine [^{>432}], and they could not go along with continued immigration in violation of the terms of the 1939 White Paper, whose limit of 75,000 over the five years 1939-44³²⁰⁷, according to Palestine Chief Secretary J.V.W. Shaw, had anyway already been reached³²⁰⁸. §14 (3) of the White Paper legally in force moreover, now that five years had passed, banned any and all immigration without the "acquiescence" of "the Arabs of Palestine". [^{>410}]

A reply rejecting any further immigration came also from a (Palestinian) 'Arab Higher Committee', five of whose twelve members were members of the Palestine Arab Party. On 27 November it

informed the High Commissioner that it had been established 'to assume responsibility for political and national affairs in the name of the Arab population of Palestine' and asked for the High Commissioner's 'support and recognition of it as representing the Arab population of Palestine.' They added that 'neither this Committee nor its composition is the same as the Arab Higher Committee which was founded in 1936.'³²⁰⁹

A few days later, on 2 December, the Council of the League of Arab States enacted a boycott of Jewish goods from Palestine.³²¹⁰

The AHC rejected any further immigration, and concerning the announced Anglo-American Committee said:

The Arabs of Palestine are tired of the policy of committees of inquiry and do not view with satisfaction the sending to Palestine of one more such committee. They consider the Palestine question as one between them and Great Britain and consequently do not recognize the right of any other party to interfere in this question nor do they agree that any people, or government, have the right to determine their fate and the fate of their country. ... The Arabs cannot accept the Bevin statement and declare their adherence to their national and human demands.³²¹¹

Involving the United States can arguably be booked under Britain's shirking its responsibility.

The Arab League, for its part, addressed **its reply to Bevin** in Egyptian Arabic newspapers on 6 & 7 December 1945 and in Palestinian papers on 12 December, rejecting further immigration:

³²⁰⁷ MacDonald 1939, §14.1 a & b.

³²⁰⁸ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 17, 49, 106, 122, 162.

³²⁰⁹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 20.

³²¹⁰ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 21.

³²¹¹ Zuaytir 1958, p 148.

The Committee [of the Arab League] ... appreciates the distinction you make between the Jewish question and the Zionist question, as well as your desire to help European and other Jews who have been persecuted during the Nazi and Fascist regimes so that they may be able to live in their respective homelands in peace and without anxiety... but an old injustice cannot be cured by a new injustice and persecution cannot be removed by the substitution thereof of another persecution. If Zionism were to achieve its aims the Arabs would be deprived of their homeland, of their national rights and of the democratic principle which gives them the right of self-determination in the land which they inherited from their fathers from time immemorial. ... The dispute between Arabs and Zionists may well lead to one between Arabs and Jews, a thing unknown to Arabs and Moslems who throughout history have been the most tolerant of Jews. ... The Committee hopes that these democratic principles will be confirmed by allowing the majority to determine the fate of Palestine and to realise the independence of the country in accordance with the undertakings and promises given. ... The Arab League is confident that right is indivisible and that the democratic principles on which the constitution of the United Nations... is based, leave no room for doubt that the Arabs of Palestine have the right to shape their life and the political destiny of their country as they wish. They desire the independence of Palestine, and they expect its realisation as soon as possible.³²¹²

In fact now, after World War II, *persecution* of Jews in Europe was perhaps at its lowest ever, thus removing the central 'safe haven' argument for the Jewish state in Palestine. The Arab League was praising HMG's intention to "help" the Jews' re-integration into their European countries.

When on 5 January 1946 HMG, now under the Labour Party, rebuked the Palestinians and the Arab States by permitting new immigration in violation of the still-valid 1939 White Paper, an 'Arab Higher Committee' wrote to the High Commissioner (now Viscount Gort) on 19 January elaborating

the principle that immigration should be stopped, irrespective of the number proposed. ... What the Jews desire in Palestine is not merely a refuge and habitation but to become a majority. Their object, which they declare openly and for which they are working, is to occupy a homeland and establish a State. [see e.g. >420; >429] Thus any Jewish immigration, great or small, is of political significance, and the entry of every immigrant brings them a step nearer [to] obtaining a majority and is a factor helping in the occupation of the country and the establishment of the State.³²¹³ [see also >436]

This was a clear statement that the European immigrants did not come (only) for the common reasons of economic improvement or flight from war or persecution, but had a political purpose. According to Bethell, the Palestinians had an ally in Gort and also in Moyne's replacement in Cairo, Edward Grigg, who were convinced that "any Jewish state whatever would be a disaster. 'I feel bound to state my conviction that partition offers no real solution,' wrote Grigg to the War Cabinet on April 4th."³²¹⁴

³²¹² Abcarius 1946, pp 235-37, Appendix IV (his translation into English).

³²¹³ Abcarius 1946, Appendix V & p 238.

³²¹⁴ Bethell 1979, p 197, citing CO 733/461.

late 1945 or early 1946 *'Before the Anglo-American Committee had arrived in Palestine the British High Commissioner issued a statement in which he said that... as the British Government could not abandon their duties and obligations under the Mandate... [they] had, for weighty reasons, decided in favour of continuing immigration at the... rate of 1500 immigrants per month'*³²¹⁵

³²¹⁵ Zuaytir 1958, p 150.

Concurrent identical **Resolutions** in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate (S.Con.Res. 44) for “The Restoration of Palestine as a Home for the Jewish People” had been introduced in early 1944, then postponed, finally passing both chambers in December 1945:

Resolved that the United States shall use its good offices to the end that the doors of Palestine shall be opened for free entry of Jews in that country, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonisation so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth.³²¹⁶

This revived the pre-Balfour Declaration vision of a Jewish Palestine entirely “reconstituted” rather than a Jewish home, or even state, *in* Palestine. This vision and language had at the time been toned down and made more palatable to the public in the version of the 1922 ‘Churchill’ White Paper which declaimed that HMG “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*.”³²¹⁷ In the Mandate text this soft-pedaling took the form of stating that what was to be “reconstituted” (or, somewhat imprecisely, “restored”) was not “Palestine” but rather *the Jews’* “national home” (in Palestine). [*see* >15; >16; >72; >94; >116; >146] Now, it seems, the gloves were off; one could speak freely.

U.S. President Truman, as well, weighed in on the side of Zionism, writing to Churchill and Attlee that he “hoped that the British Government ‘may find it possible without delay to lift the restrictions of the [1939] White Paper on Jewish immigration into Palestine’”; Attlee put him off, but Truman persisted in demanding Britain open Palestine to 100,000 Jewish refugees then displaced in Europe.³²¹⁸ The joint Congressional Resolution— in any case a message to the announced Anglo-American Committee — justified itself by referring to U.S. support for the Balfour Declaration ever since its delivery to Rothschild, to the plight of the Jews in Europe both during and now after the war, and to the supposed economic progress brought by Zionism: “Whereas the influx of Jewish immigration into Palestine is resulting in its improvement in agricultural, financial, hygienic, and general economic conditions;...” A single Senator, Thomas Hart, argued, in vain, for giving equal consideration to the rights of the Arabs.³²¹⁹

February 1946 *Palestinians strike in protest against the British decision to allow Zionist mass immigration to continue at a rate of 1,500 per month in spite of the exhaustion of the 1939 White Paper quota.*

³²¹⁶ U.S. Senate 1945, p 12138 (for the whole debate, see pp 12138-42, 12165-73, 12189); Sykes 1965, pp 323-24, 341.

³²¹⁷ Cmd. 1700 (= Churchill 1922), p 18.

³²¹⁸ Khalidi 2005, pp 68-69.

³²¹⁹ U.S. Senate 1945, pp 12165-66.

XXV. U.S. power

The Palestinian leadership that came together in the 'Arab Higher' or 'National' Committees from January 1946 to January 1947, and which also represented Palestine at the UN in New York, distributed from its office in Jerusalem on 8 March 1946 **its 400-page statement to the Anglo-American Committee** [^{>438; see its membership >Appendix 10]} two days after that Committee's arrival in Palestine.³²²⁰ At that time the leadership – including Musa Alami, Albert Hourani, Ahmad al-Shuqairi and three members of the Palestine Arab Party – also publicly described its plan for giving coordinated testimony for the Arab case; in the end those testifying were Jamal al-Husseini and Awni Abdul Hadi for the 'Arab Higher Committee' and Ahmad al-Shuqairi and Albert Hourani for the 'Arab Office'.³²²¹ The long statement was written and/or reviewed by Musa Alami, Albert Hourani, Walid Khalidi, Burhan Dajani, Yusuf Sayigh and Charles Issawi, and consisted first of an

overview of the Palestine problem, including a critique of solutions 'proffered or contemplated by the British and the Zionists, as well as an exposition of the Arab solution and its rationale' and 'some thirty appendices (of 2,000-3,000 words each) on specific aspects of the Palestine problem...'.³²²²

Musa Alami had hired Hourani as "head of research at the Jerusalem office", and

strongly believed in the absolute necessity of a powerful presentation of the Palestinian case to the committee. He was haunted by the poor performance of the Palestinians before the Peel Commission in 1936, when the AHC had not decided to appear until the last moment and then was ill prepared [^{>322}]. He was determined to avoid a repeat performance and had already asked Albert to start work on the Palestinian testimony. ... On the eve of the Anglo-American Committee's arrival in Jerusalem, the AHC met, with Jamal [al-Husseini] present, in extraordinary session to discuss whether or not to appear before it. [Hussein Fakhri] Khalidi inexplicably did not reaffirm his opposition, but Hilmi Pasha spoke out against it (to spite Musa?). Nevertheless, the AHC decided in favor of testifying before the committee.³²²³

Albert Hourani was a British citizen born in Manchester, of Lebanese descent, and a graduate of Magdalen College, University of Oxford. [*see also next entry*]

Izzat Tannous, who was then at the Arab Office in London, recalled:

The most important endeavor of the Jerusalem Office was the publication of what was called 'Mashkhalat Falastine' or 'The Palestine Question,' in 3 volumes. This distinctive publication dealt with all aspects of the Palestine Question, including its solution. The second volume was presented to the 'Anglo-American Commission [Committee] of Inquiry' which came to Palestine in 1946, for enlightenment, consistent with the publication given to them by the

³²²⁰ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 121-25.

³²²¹ Khalidi 2005, p 73; also Allen 2017, pp 404-08.

³²²² Khalidi 2005, p 76.

³²²³ Khalidi 2005, pp 68, 72-73.

Palestine Mandatory Government [under] the name of *A Survey of Palestine, 1945-1946*.³²²⁴
Those who took part in the achievements of the Arab Office in Jerusalem were mostly college graduates of high standing such as Walid Al-Khalidi, Burhan Dajjani, Albert Hourani, Siril Khalil Sakakini, Wadie Tarazi and Abdzul-Hamid Yaaseen.³²²⁵

The 'Evidence submitted by the Arab Office, Jerusalem' to the Committee, insisted on the usual points:³²²⁶

The whole Arab people is unalterably opposed to the attempt to impose Jewish immigration and settlement upon it, and ultimately to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Its opposition is based primarily upon right. The Arabs of Palestine are descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, who have been in occupation of it since the beginning of history; they cannot agree that it is right to subject an indigenous population against its will to alien immigrants, whose claim is based upon a historical connexion which ceased effectively many centuries ago. Moreover they form the majority of the population; as such they cannot submit to a policy of immigration which if pursued for long will turn them from a majority into a minority in an alien state; and they claim the democratic right of a majority to make its own decisions in matters of urgent national concern... (§1)

It named many economic and cultural problems that had resulted from their colonisation-cum-tutelage, and bemoaned its unique continuation compared to other colonies/mandates:

In addition to the question of right, the Arabs opposed the claims of political Zionism because of the effects which Zionist settlement has already had upon their situation. ... Quite apart from the inconvenience to individuals and the dislocation of trade which [Palestine's] separation [from its "sister countries"] has caused, it has prevented Palestine from participating fully in the general development of the Arab world. [W]hile the other Arab countries have attained or are near to the attainment of self-government and full membership of the UNO, Palestine... has taken no step towards self-government... This is unacceptable on grounds of principle, and also because of its evil consequences.... (§2)

All these evils are due entirely to the presence of the Zionists and the support given to them by certain of the powers; there is no doubt that, had it not been for that, Arab Palestine would now be a self-governing member of the UNO and the Arab League. ... The entry of incessant waves of immigrants prevents normal economic and social development and... is bound moreover to arouse continuous political unrest and prevent the establishment of that political stability on which the prosperity and health of the country depend. ... The superior capital resources at the disposal of the Jews, their greater experience of modern economic technique and the existence of a deliberate policy of expansion and domination have already gone far toward giving them the economic mastery of Palestine. ... Nor is the evil economic only. Zionism is essentially a political movement, aiming at the creation of a state: immigration, land purchase and economic expansion are only aspects of a general political strategy. (§3)

³²²⁴ = Shaw 1946.

³²²⁵ Tannous 1988, p 370.

³²²⁶ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 121-25, further citations.

“Had it not been for” Britain’s pro-Zionism, “Arab Palestine would now be a self-governing” state.

The problem was broader than Palestine:

[T]he first task of the awakening Arab nation is to come to terms with the West; to define its relationship with the Western Powers and with the westernized world community on the basis of equality and mutual respect, and to adopt what is best in Western civilization to the needs of its own genius. ... In fact Zionism has become in Arab eyes a test of Western intentions towards them. So long as the attempt of the Zionists to impose a Jewish state upon the inhabitants of Palestine is supported by some or all of the Western Governments, so long will it be difficult if not impossible for the Arabs to establish a satisfactory relationship with the Western world and its civilization... (§4)

There followed an analysis of the economic situation which noted that other Arab countries were progressing quite well “without the example and capital of the Zionists”;

the Arab world has been in direct touch with the West for a hundred years, and has its own reawakened cultural movement, and thus it has no need of a mediator [which the Zionists claim to be]. ... In a deeper sense the presence of the Zionists is even an obstacle to the understanding of Western civilization, in so far as it more than any other factor is tending to induce in the Arabs an unsympathetic attitude towards the West and all its works. (§5)

This emphasis on a desire to understand and get along with “the West” had not been a feature of most previous statements by the Palestinian leadership when addressing Britain.

Furthermore,

Opposition to the policy of the Zionists is shared by all sections of the Palestinian Arab people. ... It is not an invention of the educated class; if that class have seen the danger more clearly and sooner than others, and if they have assumed the leadership of the opposition, that is no more than their duty and function. (§6)

Indeed, as eyewitness Walid Khalidi recalled, when Jamal al-Husseini returned from exile in Rhodesia, overland from Lebanon to Jerusalem, he was welcomed in every town and village with maximum enthusiasm.³²²⁷

The future of Palestine, envisioned by... Palestinians?

In the Arab view, any solution of the problem created by Zionist aspirations [→16] must satisfy certain conditions: (i) It must recognize the right of the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine to continue in occupation of the country and to preserve its traditional character. (ii) It must recognize that questions like immigration, which affect the whole nature and destiny of the country, should be decided in accordance with democratic principles by the will of the population. (iii) It must accept the principle that the only way by which the will of the population can be expressed is through the establishment of responsible representative government. (The Arabs find something inconsistent in the attitude of Zionists who demand the establishment of a free democratic commonwealth in Palestine and then hasten to add that this

³²²⁷ Khalidi 2005, pp 72-73.

should not take place until the Jews are in a majority.) (iv) This representative Government should be based upon the principle of absolute equality of all citizens irrespective of race and religion. (v) ... In other words it should be a Government which the whole community could regard as their own, which should be rooted in their consent and have a moral claim upon their obedience. (vi) The settlement should recognize the fact that by geography and history Palestine is inescapably part of the Arab world; that the only alternative to its being part of the Arab world and accepting the implications of its position is complete isolation, which would be disastrous from every point of view; and that whether they like it or not the Jews in Palestine are dependent upon the goodwill of the Arabs. ... (viii) The settlement should take into account that Zionism is essentially a political movement aiming at the creation of a Jewish state and should therefore avoid making any concession which might encourage Zionists in the hope that this aim can be achieved in any circumstances. (§8)

In accordance with these principles, the Arabs urge the establishment of a democratic government representative of all sections of the population on a level of absolute equality;... Pending the establishment of a representative Government, all further Jewish immigration should be stopped, in pursuance of the principle that a decision on so important a matter should only be taken with the consent of the inhabitants of the country and that until representative institutions are established there is no way of determining consent. (§9)

The Arabs are irrevocably opposed to political Zionism, but in no way hostile to the Jews as such nor to their Jewish fellow-citizens in Palestine. Those Jews who have already entered Palestine, and who have obtained or shall obtain Palestinian citizenship by due legal process will be full citizens of the Palestinian state, enjoying full civil and political rights and a fair share in government and administration. There is no question of their being thrust into the position of a 'minority' in the bad sense of a closed community, which dwells apart from the main stream of the state's life and which exists by the sufferance of the majority. ... It is to be hoped that in course of time the exclusiveness of the Jews will be neutralized by the development of loyalty to the state and the emergence of new groupings which cut across communal divisions. This however will take time; and during the transitional period the Arabs recognize the need for giving special consideration to the peculiar position and the needs of the Jews. (§10)

The offer of normal citizenship was to *all* "Jews who have already entered Palestine", not just the Arab Jews and European Jews who had immigrated before, say, the start of the Mandate, but only if they had become *citizens*, as only perhaps half the Jewish immigrants had. The status of the rest was not clarified.

Recall that Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, during the St. James talks in February 1939 with some of these same Palestinians, had balked at their desire for a single "Arab" state. [>389; >390; >393] Now, they clarified:

The Palestinian state would be an Arab state not (as should be clear from the preceding paragraph) in any narrow racial sense, nor in the sense that non-Arabs should be placed in a position of inferiority, but because the form and policy of its government would be based on a recognition of two facts: first that the majority of the citizens are Arabs, and secondly that Palestine is part of the Arab world and has no future except through close cooperation with the other Arab states. (§11)

Finally, in favour of a normal representative democracy they rejected both partition and bi-nationalism:

[1] The idea of partition and the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine is inadmissible for the same reasons of principle as the idea of establishing a Jewish state in the whole country. ... Moreover, as the Woodhead Commission [^{>376}] showed, there are grave practical difficulties in the way of partition;... [2] Another proposal is for the establishment of a bi-national state, based upon political parity,... The Arabs would reject this as denying the majority its normal position and rights. (§14)

They were also so cheeky as to assert that

The Holy Places can be most satisfactorily and appropriately guarded by a Government representative of the inhabitants, who include adherents of all three faiths and have every interest in preserving the holy character of their country;... the need for such a regime does not involve foreign interference in or control of Palestine;... (§12)

Concerning the Holy Places, countless British statements had been issued assuming the need for British or international sovereignty over them, the local Moslem majority not being trusted.³²²⁸

Those to whom this stance was addressed were representatives of democracies, steeped from birth in the constitutional principles here being outlined by the Arab Office and the Arab Higher Committee. Is it even conceivable that they did not recognise the fairness, the pedigree and the logic of the Arabs' message? No, it is not. There must have been a strong force pushing them to deny this simple message, a message well-formulated and fully in accord with Western political principles, in favour even of granting citizenship to all recent arrivals who had taken Palestine citizenship but had no long-term, enduring relationship to the land. Yet the Anglo-American Committee on 20 April and 1 May 1946 would reject the message in favour of parity and an undemocratic bi-nationalism. [^{>438}] Since neither ethical principles nor the Anglo-Americans' *own political principles* left any room for the Committee's rejection of the normal, straightforward democracy that had thus been spelled out to them, this strong force could have only been the combined U.K./U.S. domestic lobbies for the Zionist movement.

22 March 1946 [A new Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty is signed with Abdullah to be proclaimed King.]³²²⁹

³²²⁸ See Theme Index and Irfan 2017.

³²²⁹ Khalidi 1986, p 114.

After internal debate the new Arab political committees decided not to boycott this North Atlantic inquiry, and in addition to its 400-page written statement of the Palestinian position **four people made personal presentations** to the colonialists: Jamal al-Husseini and Awni Abdul Hadi for the Arab Higher Committee, and Ahmad al-Shuqairi and Albert Hourani for the Arab Office.³²³⁰ [^{>436}] This entry relates the testimony in Jerusalem on 25 March 1946 of Hourani, a British citizen of southern Lebanese, i.e. Greater Syrian, descent who had just been demobilised and who was later an Oxford University professor. It was very similar to that of the Arab Office covered in the previous entry, criticising the partition and federal (parity) versions and refuting Jewish collective historical claims to special political rights in Palestine.³²³¹ He began:

I shall use my time in order to reply to certain questions which have been raised in the course of your inquiry and to deal with certain considerations which may be present in your minds. But before this, speaking as a member of the Arab Office – and I believe as the last witness who will appear on the Arab side – I think it is right to emphasize, without elaborating what needs no further elaboration, the unalterable opposition of the Arab nation to the attempt to impose a Jewish State upon it. This opposition is based upon the unwavering conviction of unshakeable rights and a conviction of the injustice of forcing a long-settled population to accept immigrants without its consent being asked and against its known and expressed will; the injustice of turning a majority into a minority in its own country; the injustice of withholding self-government until the Zionists are in the majority and able to profit by it. (p 80)

The Arab solution was old and well-known:

The Arab people, speaking through its responsible leaders, has again and again emphasized that the only just and practicable solution for the problem of Palestine lies in the constitution of Palestine, with the least possible delay, into a self-governing state, with its Arab majority, but with full rights for the Jewish citizens of Palestine. A state which should enter the United Nations organization and the Arab League on a level of equality with other Arab states; a state in which questions of general concern, like immigration, should be decided by the ordinary democratic procedure in accordance with the will of the majority. (p 81)

The polar opposite of the Arab proposal had been presented:

It has been made clear to the Committee that what the Zionists want is a state and nothing else. I make reference to Mr. Ben-Gurion's answer when he was asked whether he would save the lives of 100,000 German Jews at the cost of giving up his ideal of a Jewish State, and he said no. (p 81)

³²³⁰ Khalidi 2005, p 73.

³²³¹ Hourani 1946/2005, all citations; also Khalidi 2020, pp 61-62.

(For the last year or so the Zionist and U.S. demand, resisted by Britain, had been for exactly this number of European Jews to be permitted immediate immigration to Palestine. [>431; >435])

Between the polar-opposite proposals of a normal democratic state and a Jewish state lay three other options: partition, Judah Magnes' parity/bi-nationalism [*see* >438; >442; >463], and a vague scenario of business as usual after the 100,000 Europeans had arrived in Palestine. (p 81) The "fundamental Arab objection to partition was one of principle. ... The size and the extent of the Jewish State is irrelevant to the question of principle." (p 81) Ten months later, on 15 January 1947, Foreign Secretary Bevin would correctly locate this principle in the Arab demand for "an independent unitary state, which they would defend as being in accordance with established democratic principles".³²³² In addition to this matter of principle, to paraphrase Hourani, there were the practical problems definitively adumbrated by the Woodhead Commission [>376], viz., that the Arabs would get the poorer and hillier land and that within any conceivable borders the Jewish state would have a huge Arab minority, raising impractical and immoral calls that they be "transferred forcibly". (p 82) Moreover, the "establishment of a Jewish State in part of Palestine would not satisfy [the Zionists], but would strengthen their position and encourage them to ask for more"; Hourani then accurately predicted a long and bloody fight between a Jewish state against its Arab neighbours. (p 82)

Doctor Magnes' "bi-national state" alternative to partition, so Hourani, entailed the usual objectionable things: further European-Jewish immigration, the "weakening of the Arab character of Palestine" and "admitting the principle of the National Home". He then observed that while Magnes had always put his proposal forth as something making "a dream possible and force unnecessary", in his testimony before the Committee he had admitted that force would be necessary to assure the level of immigration immediately foreseen; and this "destroys the moral basis of his proposals". (pp 82, 83) [>463]

But was Magnes really proposing parity?:

[T]he parity which Doctor Magnes suggests is not so complete as it appears. As we understand his proposals, the Arabs ought to make an immediate concession of a number of immigrants, in return for the granting of self-government some time in the future. Again, self-government is not to be granted absolutely, but conditionally upon the Jews and Arabs having already found a way of peace.³²³³ And again, when and if this self-government is established, it will be incomplete. The veto, as we understand Doctor Magnes's plan, is to lie in the hands of the head of state, and the constitution is not to be drafted by representatives of the people, but by the United Nations organization,... (pp 83-84)

Magnes' plan echoed that of the British 1939 position with regard to non-immediate self-government, the condition of Jewish-Arab harmony, and non-Palestinian drafters of the future constitution. [>394-97; >410]

³²³² CAB 128/11/12, p 12.

³²³³ See also >402; >405; >410; >412; >414; >452.

Having given the reasons for rejecting partition and bi-nationalism, Hourani turned to the vague third vision of keeping the status quo following the arrival of 100,000 immigrants:

The number of immigrants to be brought in is irrelevant. The Arabs can never acquiesce in any immigration imposed upon them, and they cannot even begin to consider the question of immigration profitably so long as they are denied all responsibility for their own fate. The first condition about their even thinking of immigration as a possibility is that they should be given responsibility for their own national affairs. (p 85)

On top of this basic denial of their natural right to freedom and self-determination,

the Arabs do not understand by what right Great Britain and the United States demand of them that they should bear the main burden of solving the problem of refugees. The guilt for creating that problem does not rest upon the shoulders of the Arabs, but on those of Europe. The Arabs have already been compelled to bear more than their fair share of solving the Jewish problem. (pp 84-85)

He read them a lesson in ethics:

Until the Arabs are satisfied that Great Britain and the United States have done all that they can to solve the refugee problem at their own expense, they are of the opinion that the British and American governments should refrain from urging, still more from coercing, the Arabs to solve the problem, or at least if they do so they should do so with the deepest possible sense of guilt and shame. (p 85)

Softer than “urging” would be “asking”, but not even Bevin respected the Arabs enough for that.

He put the immigration issue into its historical context:

The question of immigration into Palestine must be seen in its general political framework. It must always be remembered that what the Zionists are aiming at is not to solve the refugee problem for its own sake, but to secure political domination in Palestine, and that their demand for immigration is only a step towards dominating Palestine. The first essential is therefore to convince them that they can never hope to achieve their aim by pressure or in any way. (p 85)

Recall once again James de Rothschild’s intervention in the Commons’ debate over the Passfield White Paper of 17 November 1930, that “we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews.”³²³⁴ This was a direct appeal to the dozen Committee members from the two countries within whose power lay the grant of self-determination to the millennia-long residents of the territory. Hourani repeated that immigration could not now be decided “simply on humanitarian grounds [but rather] in its general political framework”. (p 85)³²³⁵

Note as well that Britain, especially, still with the decisive power over Palestine, did not *have to* yield to domestic Zionist pressure, as the MacDonald White Paper [410] had

³²³⁴ Hansard 1930a, c179.

³²³⁵ Also Allen 2017, p 407.

shown; especially now that Churchill no longer called the shots, it did not *have* to turn the question over to the United Nations, as it however would do on 25 February 1947 [>453]. But alas, not even Zionist terrorism in Palestine would dilute the pressure capable of being exerted by the well-educated, respectable, powerful Christian and Jewish Zionists in the two Anglo-Saxon countries.³²³⁶

Hourani reminded the Committee of the spectre of forcible population transfer:

The Arabs are bound to remember that in the past few years responsible Zionists [including the Royal Commission³²³⁷ (>336) and the Labour Party (>425)] have talked seriously about the evacuation of the Arab population, or part of it, to other parts of the Arab world. It may be that their statements have been disowned by the Jewish Agency or by other responsible bodies, but nevertheless the possibility does exist, and the Arabs are bound to accept it very seriously. Again it must be emphasized that what the Zionists want is a state, political domination, and they are therefore prepared to do anything to get it. (p 86)

He then countered the argument that the Arab proposals are “one of two extreme positions”:

In reality [they] are a compromise. For twenty-five years the Arabs have been protesting violently against the attempt to impose Zionist immigration upon them. Immigration has been forced upon them against their will and without their consent. Now, speaking through their responsible leaders, they declare again and again their willingness to accept those Jews who have entered Palestine legally and acquired Palestinian citizenship legally as full members of the political unity they wish to form. They declare their willingness to enter into full community with their Jewish fellow-citizens of Palestine to try the dangerous experiment of people of different races and ideals living together. The generosity of this offer should not be underestimated. If it is not a compromise, what is? (pp 86-87)

After referring the Committee to the testimony of Jamal Effendi al-Husseini at the 1939 St. James conference [>386ff], he addressed a possible counterargument to the Arab pledge that the Jews would be welcomed as full citizens in an Arab state; it might be argued that

the whole point of Zionism... is that the Jews should be in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance, [>142] and that this is impossible so long as they are in a minority and have not a state. The antithesis of right and sufferance is meaningless. The true antithesis is between goodwill and force... What the Arabs are asking is not that the Jews should be here on sufferance in the bad sense, but that they should recognise their need for Arab goodwill. (p 87)

As to the risk of Jewish violence should the Arab proposals be adopted, this can only increase, so it was better to risk it now:

Under the Mandatory rule and with the acquiescence of the Mandatory Authorities, the [Jewish] Agency is preparing to seize power. There can be no lasting peace in Palestine until the teeth of this monstrous organization are drawn. (p 88)

³²³⁶ Suárez 2016 & 2023.

³²³⁷ Peel 1937, XXII §36, 39-43, also IX §64.

As relevant today as it was in 1946 or in 1920 [e.g. >88] is Hourani's exposure of the illogic of viewing the problem as one of ethical or political parity:

There is a certain inclination in Great Britain and America to state the problem in terms of the conflict between two races and two nationalisms, and to picture the British and American governments as impartial peacemakers and judges in no way involved in the conflict, but holding the two antagonists apart and doing justice between them. This is not the correct view. You will never understand the problem aright unless you realize that Great Britain and America are essentially involved in it. They are not only judges, they are also actors in the tragedy. (p 88) [see also >242; >452]

Declaring the conflict to be an ethno-religious one, rather than a political one caused by the U.K.'s support for Zionism, was an old British ploy which had however failed to convince not only the Palestinians but most of the British committees of enquiry. Hourani did not state the obvious, that these two "actors" caused the tragedy.

Finally,

In closing, I should like to emphasize what must be present in all our minds, that ultimately this is not a political or an economic problem to be decided only by political or economic criteria; ultimately and inescapably it is a moral question. (p 89)

He then recalled that "the Jews have been well-treated throughout history in the Arab world. ... If there is tension in various parts of the Arab world, if relations are not so good as they were or as we all should like them to be, that is entirely due to political Zionism." (p 89) (The historically peaceful relations between religions and ethnicities in the Near East, by the way, had also been attested for the case of Iraq, for instance, by Lt.-Col. Humphrys in secret session before the Peel Commission on 12 March 1937.³²³⁸) Hourani then finished by denying that Zionism can solve the "Jewish Problem" in Europe, and urged the West to encourage those Arabs who are open to the West and to democracy – a process that is impossible "so long as the grievance, the intolerable grievance, of Zionism exists." (pp 89, 90)

As an aside, Zionists testifying before the Anglo-American Committee in January 1946 repeated the argument made on 4 October 1917 by Claude Goldsmid Montefiore, namely that independence for a non-partitioned Palestine was a good thing, but only once Jews were in the majority.³²³⁹ [16]

29-30 March 1946 [Ikhwan] organized a conference for the branches of the Ikhwan in Palestine, which convened in the city of Jerusalem from 29 to 30 March 1946 with the aim of unifying and coordinating the efforts of the branches to confront the Zionist project.³²⁴⁰

18-20 April 1946 The League of Nations is dissolved. [The technical legal details of the status of the still-mandated territories, in relation to the United Nations system of 'trusteeships', are beyond my scope.]³²⁴¹

³²³⁸ FO 492/20, p 497.

³²³⁹ CAB 24/4/14, p 44; John & Hadawi 1970b, p 30; also Cmd. 1700, pp 26-27.

³²⁴⁰ Hamas Political Bureau, June 2000, quoted in Tamimi 2011, p 271.

³²⁴¹ See UN Charter, Article 76 and CAB 128/11/12, pp 11-18.

Proposed by the Cabinet 'Palestine Committee' on 6 and 19 October 1945 and announced in the House of Commons on 13 November [^{>432}], the Anglo-American Committee on 4 January 1946 began its work of finding a way to salvage some Zionist political sovereignty in Palestine without too obviously denying Palestinian Arab sovereignty. [*also >436*] Harry Truman had agreed to the Committee on the condition that Palestine, rather than any number of other countries, should be the destination of choice when considering the plight of the 100,000 Jews singled out as seeking refuge outside of Europe.³²⁴² To put this in demographic perspective: Debating the Committee's report in the House of Commons on 1 August 1946 M. Philips Price MP would ask: "Is it realised by those advocating the bringing of 100,000 Jews into Palestine that this is equivalent to asking for permission to send 8,000,000 persons into the United States of America? In proportion that is the position. What America has offered is 52,000 persons now, and not all Jews."³²⁴³ Akram Zuaytir moreover offers the view that

[t]he claim of the Committee that Palestine was the only haven to which persecuted Jews could go was contrary to the well-known fact that the British Empire and the United States contained vast areas that could accommodate all Jews desiring to leave their normal place of residence in Europe.³²⁴⁴

Co-chaired by U.S. Judge Joseph Hutcheson and Sir John Singleton of the U.K.,³²⁴⁵ its Report was published in Lausanne on 20 April 1946.³²⁴⁶ Its members Richard Crossman MP and Mervyn Manningham-Buller MP would reveal details about the deliberations of the Committee in the Commons debate of 31 July 1946. [^{>443}] Its remit was "To examine political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein and the well-being of the peoples now living therein." (Preface.1) [^{>432}] Once again, the language leaned towards material well-being, flouting the Palestinians' right to define and pursue in their own way their economic progress – a right Oliver Stanley MP, for instance, had eloquently defended only a month earlier in Parliament during its debate on Palestine and this new Commission:

I am not denying for a moment the great material advantages which Jewry in the last 20 years has brought to Palestine and to the Arabs, too. But not all peoples in the world—and certainly not the Arabs, I think—measure everything by material standards. You may be offered considerably increased prosperity by Western standards, but it may be at the cost of

³²⁴² John & Hadawi 1970b, p 12, citing Truman, Harry, 1956. *Years of Trial and Hope*, Vol. 2, pp 140-42.

³²⁴³ Hansard 1946c, c1301.

³²⁴⁴ Zuaytir 1958, p157.

³²⁴⁵ For the membership of this joint committee of the two English-speaking Powers, see Appendix 10.

³²⁴⁶ Hutcheson 1946, *all citations*.

something that you value very much more: Your own mode of life [which], we may think, is lazy, inefficient and backward, but it may be the mode of life that you like, believe in and want to continue.³²⁴⁷

Perhaps the “well-being” of the populace, perhaps not only in material terms, was more than an afterthought, despite being second-mentioned, but the centerpiece of the Anglo-American investigation was its analysis of “the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement” starting with Chapter II, “The Position of the Jews in Europe”. Although active anti-Semitism had at that time disappeared from Europe, the Jews have

a moral claim on the civilized world. ... Even though many might be glad to join relatives and friends in other countries [than Palestine], the doors of those countries at present appear to be closed to them. ... It seems to them that the only real chance of rebuilding their shattered lives and of becoming normal men and women again is that offered by the Jewish people in Palestine. (Ch. II §15)

Partly *because* two of those “closed” (and “civilized”) countries were the ones writing the Report, the Jews’ “only real chance” was emigration to Palestine.

While urging the U.S. and U.K. to “endeavour to secure” that the European countries where the Jews now were would give them full rights and freedoms, the Committee did not presume to “suggest that any country should be asked to make a permanent change in its immigration policy”; rather, the civilized world should discharge its moral duty by immediately sending to *Palestine* 100,000 European Jews “as rapidly as conditions will permit”. (Ch. I Recommendations 1 & 2) In other words, the only country being “asked” to change its immigration policy was Palestine. (Foreign Secretary Bevin would detail the history of the demand, from Truman and the Zionists, for the entry of the 100,000, and the failure of other countries to open their borders, in a Cabinet paper dated 15 January 1947.³²⁴⁸)

Chapter III continued with analysis, but was not analogous to Chapter II; that is, it did not deal with the position or well-being of the Palestinian Arabs in Palestine, but rather with ‘The Political Situation in Palestine’. After briefly noting the Arabs’ “intransigent” nationalism, it mainly praised the “Jewish Agency for Palestine” as “one of the most successful colonizing instruments in history”, which had enabled the thoroughly justified “Jewish national home” (Ch. III §9-12; *also* Recommendations 3 & 6). Its “intransigence” was not mentioned.

The report correctly related that both Christian and Moslem Arabs wished with one voice

the immediate stoppage of Jewish immigration, the immediate prohibition of the sale of land to Jews, and the concession of independence to a State in which the Arab majority would be dominant (Ch. III §5) ... [T]he Arab case is based upon... a denial of the Jewish historical claims to Palestine. ... They consider the Mandate a violation of their right of self-determination since it is forcing upon them an immigration which they do not desire and will not tolerate – an invasion of Palestine by the Jews. (Ch. VI §2)

³²⁴⁷ Hansard 1946a, c1421.

³²⁴⁸ CAB 128/11/12, p 12.

Presumably, in Britain the British and in Spain the Spanish were similarly “dominant”.

The Arabs went

much further [sic.] [than] the White Paper of 1939 [and demand] the final cessation of Jewish immigration and... the prohibition of all land sales by Arabs to Jews. (Ch. VI §9) ... The Arabs of Palestine believe themselves to be as fitted for self-government as are their neighbors in Syria and Lebanon who obtained their independence during the Second World War, and in Trans-Jordan which has since become an independent State. The formation of the Arab League [^{>426}; ^{>427}] has given Arab leaders in Palestine a greater confidence. (Ch. III §7) ... The suggestion that self-government should be withheld from Palestine until the Jews have acquired a majority seems outrageous to the Arabs. They wish to be masters in their own house. (Ch. VI §5)

The Committee remained silent on whether such treatment of indigenous people was in fact “outrageous”, or merely “seemed” so to “the Arabs”.

It also recommended doing away with *restrictions on land sales to Jewish Zionists* (Ch. I, Recommendation 7).³²⁴⁹ This recommendation, along with the permitted 100,000 immigrants, led one of the half-dozen leading British Zionists of the Mandate era, Richard Meinertzhagen [*also* ^{>58}; ^{>61}; ^{>65}; ^{>74}; ^{>116}; ^{>165}; ^{>204}; ^{>429}], to approve the report, the underlying reason being that these changes in policy would bring closer the British-Zionist goal which had always stood in the way of Palestinian independence, namely a Jewish majority:

My own opinion is that if the Jews get their 100,000 certificates and the repeal of the land laws, they should get an opportunity to attain a political majority eventually.³²⁵⁰

(Meinertzhagen then went straight on to attack Attlee’s statement on the Report, made on 1 May 1946, which – incorrectly – said that the 100,000 immigration permits were contingent upon the disarming and disbanding of the Jewish terrorist groups; in fact, the report only mildly criticised the Haganah, the Irgun and the Stern Group as “a sinister aspect of recent years”, not demanding their disarming but merely calling them “illegal” (Ch. IX).³²⁵¹)

Not only was partition rejected, but likewise the established Palestinian solution of a normal, single democracy:

Palestine shall be neither an Arab nor a Jewish State [since] Palestine cannot be regarded as either a purely Arab or a purely Jewish land... Palestine, then, must be established as a country in which the legitimate national aspirations of both Jews and Arabs can be reconciled, without either side fearing the ascendancy of the other. In our view this cannot be done under any form of constitution in which a mere numerical majority is decisive, since it is precisely the struggle for a numerical majority which bedevils Arab-Jewish relations. (Ch. I Recommendation 3)

³²⁴⁹ Also Zuaytir 1958, p 154.

³²⁵⁰ Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 209-10, *also* p 147.

³²⁵¹ *But see* Lesch 1973, p 41.

The argument of this last sentence against a democracy based on proportional representation – or against democracy *per se* as being possible only in ethnically pure societies? – is too wily for me to untangle, but at any rate the Commission was advocating the parity or bi-national solution which assumes the two groups' claims are of equal ethical and political validity – or rather that the Jewish-Zionist claim was more valid, because it was regarded as strong enough to justify parity for the *minority*. Because self-government would necessarily thwart this political parity, self-government was a no-no. Ironically, the Committee was granting parity status, which necessitated rejection of “mere numerical majority” principle, to a Zionist group which itself was openly working for a “numerical majority”.

This main recommendation – some sort of hard-to-define parity between two collectives – would be endorsed not only by the Morrison-Grady Committee at the end of July 1946 [442], but also by the so-called ‘Minority Plan’ of the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) presented to the General Assembly on 3 September 1947 by UNSCOP’s three dissenting members India, Iran and Yugoslavia. [469] Subcommittee 2 of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine, as well, would on 11 & 19 November 1947 recommend a solution with “bi-national” elements but was much closer to the simple one-democratic-state wish of the Palestinians and other Arab states. [478]

Further, for the Anglo-American team the “form of government ultimately established” should be subject to “international guarantees” and rule over Palestine should be “continued as at present under mandate pending the execution of a trusteeship agreement under the United Nations... – a long period of trusteeship”. (Ch. I Recommendations 3 & 4; Ch. X §3, 4) Thus, although the Report acknowledged the Arabs’ desire for self-government in Palestine (Ch. VI §2-5), and tacitly granted they were fit for self-government, the interests of the Jews made this and the cessation of immigration undesirable: it “would result in the Arab dominating the Jew” (Ch. I, Recommendation 6).

Was the Committee biased? It was not simply pro-Zionist. Texas judge Hutcheson for one, at the London hearings in late January, challenged one Zionist witness’s wish for a Jewish state: “This [Britain] isn’t an English, Scotch or Welsh state. Why then in Palestine should we have a Jewish state? Why don’t you have a Palestine state?” It was also Hutcheson who was asked sometime during the hearings by Fares el-Khoury of Syria, “Why don’t you give the Jews part of Texas?”³²⁵² British member Crick asked the president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, “When excessive nationalism has made the world bankrupt, what is your justification for setting up another national status for people like the Jews? You will simply be compounding the position we are already in.” Bevin himself, Britain’s Foreign Minister, told the Committee he was against “setting up racial states in Palestine”.³²⁵³ These were U.S.-Americans and Britons at the top of their

³²⁵² Bethell 1979, p 223.

³²⁵³ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 31, 33, citing Crossman, Richard, 1947, *Palestine Mission*, pp 63, 57; also Bethell 1979, pp 217-39.

countries' politics, rejecting the very idea of an ethnically-defined state in Palestine and leaning towards the Palestinian/Arab position. Why then did their Report support parity for an ethnically-defined group?

John Quigley ties together the concepts of independence, non-sectarianism and trusteeship when analysing the Report's firm conclusions that there should be no partition and that the single state "shall be neither an Arab nor a Jewish State":

UN Charter Article 77 did not require Britain to place Palestine under a trusteeship, but Britain was obligated by Covenant Article 22(4) [^{>46}] to bring Palestine to independence. Its obligation upon the demise of the League [of Nations] thus would seem to have been either to bring Palestine to independence itself, or, if unable to do so, to place it under a UN trusteeship that would bring it to independence. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, to which Britain referred in its statement to the League Assembly, called for a trusteeship. ... [T]he best way to bring about a nonsectarian state was that 'the Government of Palestine be continued as at present under mandate pending the execution of a Trusteeship Agreement under the United Nations.'³²⁵⁴

This path would be rejected by the UN General Assembly in the fall of 1947 [^{>478}; ^{>481}] but would be championed by the U.S. State Department both in June 1947 [^{>461}] and in March and April 1948 [^{>487}].

The Report also re-stated the routine economic arguments for the positive Jewish-induced "impact of Western science and Western technology upon a semi-feudal civilization" (Ch. VI §10), thereby showing that it had not listened to the Palestinians' declarations that their demands were of a political and cultural, not an economic, nature. In its final two paragraphs it then once more, in compliance with its remit, pushed the plight of European Jews to the forefront. (Ch. X §6) It moreover repeatedly implied that the local Arab majority could not be trusted with sovereignty over the Holy Places of three 'world religions', thus necessitating international oversight. (Ch. I, Recommendations 3, 4 & 5; Ch. VII §5; Ch. X §4)³²⁵⁵ This, although the Jerusalem Arab Office had politely informed the Anglo-American Committee in March that the people of Palestine were perfectly capable of taking care of places of interests to the "three faiths". [^{>436}]

In support of the bi-national position, which would also be supported by the Morrison-Grady plan a few months later [^{>442}], the Committee called on Judah Magnes, a Zionist immigrant from California who represented the small 'Ihud' group of almost exclusively Jewish Palestinians, according to whom there would be

a bi-national Palestine based on the parity of the two peoples. The draft Constitution thus worked out would be presented to a Constituent Assembly of Jews and Arabs equally rep-

³²⁵⁴ Quigley 2010, p 88, citing Cmd. 6808 [=Hutcheson 1946] and US Dept. of State Publication 2536, Near Eastern Series 2, pp 4-5.

³²⁵⁵ See Irfan 2017.

resented. [T]wo National Communities, the Jewish National Council and the Arab National Council, [would have] powers of taxation. Their practical province would be cultural.³²⁵⁶ [also >463]

In discussions with Musa Alami, Magnes by the way had at times advocated final political quotas of 2/3 Arabs, 1/3 Jews, at times 60% Arabs, 40% Jews, and at times more vaguely “political equality” without any numbers.³²⁵⁷

The Committee was also aware of a “striking pamphlet in support of bi-nationalism” put out by the group ‘Hashomer Hatzair’ (Ch. V §4), but it realised that neither side actually wanted its solution – parity or bi-nationalism (Ch. III §2). Even if the introduction of the ideas of parity and bi-nationalism did entail rejection of Jewish constitutional domination (also Ch. I Recommendation 3), thereby ensuring the Report’s rejection by the Zionists, the Report did not support a single wish of the Arab Higher Committee [>436; >437] and might as well have been written in 1919. Meanwhile, by the way, in various communications of May and June 1946 Attlee continued to reject Truman’s demand that 100,000 European Jews be let into Palestine, arguing mainly that this would cause bloodshed.³²⁵⁸

According to John & Hadawi, in early March 1946, in Cairo, the Committee took testimony from Abdul Rahman Hassan Azzam (‘Azzam Pasha’), secretary-general of the Arab League, who gave a broad political and cultural analysis which was however in the end identical to the three-decades-old view of the Palestinians:

The Zionist, the new Jew, wants to dominate and he pretends that he has got a particular civilizing mission with which he returns to a backward, degenerate race in order to put the elements of progress into an area which has no progress. Well, that has been the pretension of every power that wanted to colonize and aimed at domination. ... [T]he Arabs simply stand and say ‘No’ ... Even if we are ignorant, the difference between ignorance and knowledge is ten years in school.³²⁵⁹

In October 1945 Azzam, who had negotiated brilliantly during the St. James talks of 1939, had met and had a favourable impression of Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin and Colonial Secretary George Hall³²⁶⁰ – men who in 1946 and 1947 would let the Palestinians down fatally.

Also in Cairo, an anti-Zionist Arab Egyptian Jew, Cattawi Pasha, presciently told Committee members that a Jewish state in Palestine would endanger Jews in the Arab states, and Maitre Habib Bourguiba, who would become the first President of Tunisia, added this advice: “Keep the persecuted Jews of Europe where they are now and induce those who persecute them to reform and change themselves.” Finally, a group of “teachers of the

³²⁵⁶ Magnes 1947/1983, pp 22-24.

³²⁵⁷ Furlonge 1969, p 103.

³²⁵⁸ Williams 1961, pp 569-71.

³²⁵⁹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 38, citing Crossman, Richard, *Palestine Mission*, pp 100-06.

³²⁶⁰ Khalidi 1986, p 108.

Arab trade unions and the Arab cooperatives... said that Zionism was the instrument of British imperialism and the Zionist invasion an act of national and economic oppression of a colonial people".³²⁶¹

In the verdict of Walid Khalidi, who then worked in the Arab Office in Jerusalem,

in exchange for the committee's not recommending an Arab or a Jewish state and for strong criticism (but not disbandment) of the Haganah, the British yielded on the 100,000 certificates. The winners were Truman and Ben-Gurion. The [1939] White Paper was trashed.³²⁶²

Khalidi wrote later more critically of British support for the *yishuv* military, noting that the 100,000 British troops in Palestine in the last years of the Mandate could have easily crushed both the Haganah and the paramilitaries.³²⁶³

After the Report's publication "most British officials in Palestine condemned the report as a sell-out to the Americans and of the British promise to the Arabs in the 1939 White Paper"; and on 3 May the Palestinians held a general strike.³²⁶⁴ For his part, Bevin would tell the Labour Party Conference on 12 June 1946 that if Truman's and the Anglo-American Committee's wish were met for 100,000 immediate immigrants, Britain would have to send another entire division of soldiers to Palestine.³²⁶⁵

3 May 1946 *'A general strike on May 3, 1946 and further boycotts of international commissions came in response to the Anglo-American Commission [Committee] recommendation of April 20, 1946 to admit 100,000 Jewish immigrants.'*³²⁶⁶

³²⁶¹ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 39, 41, 43.

³²⁶² Khalidi 2005, p 74; also John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 65, 68.

³²⁶³ Khalidi 2009, p 35.

³²⁶⁴ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 65; also p 68

³²⁶⁵ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 69.

³²⁶⁶ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 93.

439. Cabinet delays approval

29 April 1946

On 29 April 1946 the Cabinet considered Foreign Secretary Bevin's analysis of the just-published **Anglo-American Report** [^{>438}], deciding to neither approve nor reject it.³²⁶⁷ Bringing 100,000 more Europeans into Palestine, as the Anglo-American Committee advised, so the Cabinet, would be costly in both financial and military terms, and these costs as well as political implications should be more precisely measured by HMG; but it was already clear that the Report

contained many recommendations which we could not carry out without the help of the United States Government; and it was essential that we should ascertain at once to what extent we could rely on their assistance. It followed that His Majesty's Government should not define their attitude towards the report as soon as it was published. For the moment it would suffice to say that the report was being considered by the two Governments in consultation. ... [T]he Foreign Secretary should endeavour to ascertain how far the United States Government would be prepared to give, not only political support, but also active military and financial assistance, in giving effect to the policy recommended in the Report. (pp 301, 304)

In other words, applying the Anglo-American scheme would require guns and money; bloodshed and further impoverishment of Britain was part of the price. The Palestinians were only in the equation at the end of the bayonet. As for other Arabs,

In any event we should not be unduly alarmed by some initial clamour from the Arab States. (p 301)

Even at this late date, the British were manifesting what Ilan Pappé calls their "Palestine Syndrome", i.e. "the effect the Mandatory years had on the British readiness to be involved directly in the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine, which had cost so many British lives and so much effort in the Mandatory period."³²⁶⁸

As for the above-mentioned North Atlantic "consultations", on 11 June the U.S. Government put together its team, to be headed by diplomat Henry F. Grady, which would be "dispatched to London to discuss details with the British."³²⁶⁹ It should be made clear to the U.S., said the Cabinet, that "the whole world shared responsibility for the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution" but if the talks with the U.S. were not satisfactory, the matter should perhaps be referred to the UN General Assembly or Trusteeship Council (rather than the Security Council). (p 302) In the event, discussions did take place in the form of the Morrison-Grady Committee, Britain's team headed by Lord President of the Council Herbert Morrison. [^{>442}]

May 1946 [*General Evelyn Barker arrives in Jerusalem as General Officer Commanding, dealing mainly with Jewish-Zionist terrorism.*]

³²⁶⁷ CAB 128/5/38, pp 301-04.

³²⁶⁸ Pappé 1988, p 124.

³²⁶⁹ Cohen 1982, p 117, citing FO 371/52528, E5352, Inverchapel to FO, 12 June 1946.

28 May 1946 [*The three always-reiterated Palestinian demands are re-stated by a conference at Inshas in Egypt... attended by the Kings of Egypt and Jordan, the Presidents of the Republics of Syria and Lebanon, the Regent of Iraq, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and the son of the King of Yemen.*]³²⁷⁰

³²⁷⁰ Zuaytir 1958, p 160; Khalidi 1986, p 110.

440. Arab League Council

8 June 1946

A meeting of the Arab League Council on 8 June 1946 in Bludan, Syria, attended *inter alia* by Jamal al-Husseini and Emil Ghoury, decided to fight the Anglo-American report [438] and “threatened to suspend the ‘oil concessions’ granted by the Arab governments to the United States and Great Britain as well as to generally boycott them economically if they insisted on implementing the recommendations.”³²⁷¹ According to Akram Zuaytir “each member state” sent memorandums to Britain and the U.S. withholding recognition of “the legality of the Anglo-American Committee”; they

regarded the implementation of their recommendations as an unfriendly act intended to destroy the integrity of the Arab people of Palestine [and] invited the United Kingdom Government to enter into negotiations with the Arab States with a view to settling the Palestine question before the next session of the United Nations General Assembly...

They also organised a “boycott of Zionist goods”, rejected “all forms of partition” and formed “Palestine Defence Committees in all the Arab countries...”³²⁷²

On 10-12 June, following the Council’s 4th session in Bludan, where Egyptian Abdulrahman Azzam played a central role, **an Arab League memorandum** to the US Legation at Damascus argued that the Anglo-American Committee’s recommendations were not binding and decried the U.S. confusion of the humanitarian plight of Jews in *Europe* with political Zionism in *Palestine*.³²⁷³

³²⁷¹ Tannous 1988, p 384; also Khalidi 1986, p 111.

³²⁷² Zuaytir 1958, pp 162-63.

³²⁷³ Mattar 1988, p 121.

The United Nations Charter,³²⁷⁴ signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco after meetings between almost 50 countries where Britain was represented by Anthony Eden and Lord Halifax, built on the Atlantic Charter [419] and succeeded the League of Nations Covenant as the widely-approved international document on which the Palestinians would (have to) rely during the next few years until Israel, Jordan and Egypt succeeded Britain as rulers over their country. In its opener it said:

We the peoples [are] determined... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained,...

The wording was, shall we say, open-ended: What counted as a “people”, why were the two words “faith in” inserted, what counted as a “nation”, and what “treaties” would form parts of what was called “international law”?

The pledge was to “practice tolerance and live together in peace” and to “ensure... that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,...” To bring its use of “armed force” in Palestine into line with this, denying democracy in that country would have to be argued to be “in the common interest”.

We are by now familiar with the omission of *political* advancement or independence, but some of the Charter’s passages did promise some relief from British-imposed Zionism:

- the united nations aimed at “the prevention and removal of threats to peace” and “the suppression of acts of aggression” (Article I.1);
- it promised “respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” (I.2);
- it dedicated itself to “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (I.3);
- but, “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state... but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.” (Article II.7).

Britain’s “acts of aggression” in Palestine and elsewhere were those of a colonial power and thus, apparently, exempt from Article I.1. Concerning Article I.2 the usual fight could begin as to who was a “people”. Article I.3 evidently did not apply to Britain’s making “distinctions” in Palestine between various races and religions. And of course if Britain owned its colonies, what it did there was within its “domestic jurisdiction”. In addition Chapter VII (Articles 39–51) gave the United Kingdom, the United States, France, China and the Soviet Union the power to do pretty much what they wanted regarding “enforcement

³²⁷⁴ Google it.

measures". In any case, none of the above prevented UNGA Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 recommending partition into a Jewish state, an Arab state and some international enclaves [481].

22 July 1946 *Members of the Stern Gang blow up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, part of which houses several government departments. Over 90 people are killed, about one-third of them Jews. (Among those murdered was Freddie Blenkinsop, who each year on 2 November would 'circulate among his British colleagues a refutation of the Balfour Declaration on the anniversary of its issuance.)*³²⁷⁵

July & August 1946 *[After the bombing of the King David Hotel and other acts of terrorism] arrested Jews were released, the Jewish Agency building was handed back and the authorities paid the cost of the repairs necessitated by the damage that had been caused to the building during the army search. Partiality to the Jews was in no way affected and a flagrant example of that partiality was the Light Industries Department of the Government of Palestine, which employed 240 Jews out of a total staff of 250.*³²⁷⁶

³²⁷⁵ Khalidi 2005, p 61; see also Hansard 1946b, cc958-60, 1009-11; Hansard 1946c, cc1314-15; Suárez 2023, pp 155-58.

³²⁷⁶ Zuaytir 1958, p 165.

See also >443 for the Commons debate on the Anglo-American Report [^{>438}] and the Morrison-Grady plan.

The Anglo-American Committee Report [^{>438}] had swung away from the relatively pro-Palestinian MacDonald White Paper back towards the Zionist position which had been made clearer than ever before at the Biltmore Conference in 1942 [^{>420}]: that the Jewish people, wherever they lived, had a right to a 'commonwealth' (state) – no longer just a 'home' – in Palestine. The British Cabinet on 29 April 1946, when dealing with the Anglo-American report [^{>438}], had in effect put off swallowing this shift, making its agreement with the Report's recommendation that 100,000 Europeans should more or less immediately be allowed into Palestine contingent on getting U.S. financial and military help with that mission.³²⁷⁷ [^{>439}]

Fuelled by Bevin's anger at Truman for sabotaging the 1939 White Paper and insisting on the influx of 100,000 immigrants into a British colony, HMG made one last stab at reaching agreement with the US by putting together **yet another joint US/UK study group** to make amendments to the Anglo-American Committee's recommendations [^{>438}]. The resulting Morrison-Grady Plan, written between mid-June and early July 1946 under the co-chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Herbert Morrison and US diplomat Henry Grady, nevertheless likewise could not bring itself to endorse self-determination or democracy as they were understood in the West. It became known as **the 'Provincial Autonomy Plan'** and was well and concisely described by Morrison in the House of Commons on 31 July 1946.³²⁷⁸ Its solution was a quadri-national scheme – with "an Arab Province, a Jewish Province, a District of Jerusalem and a District of the Negeb". (c965/p 4) Recall that Morrison had for about two-and-a-half years chaired the five- or six-man Cabinet 'Committee on Palestine' under both the previous (Churchill) and present (Atlee) Governments. [^{>424}; ^{>430}]

The remit of the just-preceding Anglo-American Committee had been "To examine political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein and the well-being of the peoples now living therein." (Preface.1) [^{>432}; ^{>438}] That is, the focus was on Jewish immigration from Europe, with the locals' "well-being" in second place. Morrison therefore started his assessment of the Anglo-American recommendations by noting that

³²⁷⁷ CAB 128/5/38, pp 301-04.

³²⁷⁸ Hansard 1946b, cc957-71. Citations refer sometimes to both the Hansard record ('c' or 'cc') and to Cmd. 7044 ('Preface', 'p' or 'pp'), sometimes to one or the other. Hansard cc 962-71 = Cmd. 7044, pp 3-8, 15 (verbatim); also Zuaytir 1958, pp 166-68; John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 89-93; Quigley 2010, pp 88-89.

The events of recent years, after Hitler's rise to power, have given a special emphasis to the character of the Jewish National Home as a sanctuary for those who could reach it from among the tragically few survivors of European Jewry. It is the pressure of immigration from Europe that has so intensified the difficulties of the Palestine problem. (c962/p 3)

He however said to Parliament that HMG had

accepted as a basis the principles laid down in the third recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee, that Palestine as a whole can [should] be neither a Jewish nor an Arab State, that neither of the two communities in Palestine should dominate the other... The political aspirations of the two communities in Palestine are irreconcilable. ... The only chance of peace, and of immediate advance towards self-governing institutions... [is] the establishment of Arab and Jewish Provinces, which will enjoy a large measure of autonomy under a central government. (cc964-65/p 4)

For the Arab and Jewish 'states' of the Peel and Woodhead Commissions [>336; >376] the term "provinces" was inserted – a sort of 'partition lite' lying in the middle on the spectrum from separate sovereign states to a single sovereign state – a spectrum covering various degrees of local autonomy, devolution, cantonisation and 'federation'. Concerning the irreconcilability of the two groups' political aspirations, HMG and the Anglo-American group were thus precisely in agreement with the Peel Commission of ten years previous.³²⁷⁹ Why "provincial autonomy" would for instance circumvent Peel's and Woodhead's problem that any Jewish state acceptable to Zionists would have at least a 40% non-Jewish minority, never became clear; the "provinces" were geographically, demographically and economically more or less the same as the previously-proposed "states". [>336; >376]

As for the newer Morrison-Grady plan being explained by Morrison in the Commons, for the time being there would not be a federal *state* but an "instrument of government" under a "trusteeship agreement":

In the long term, the plan leaves the way open for peaceful progress and constitutional development either towards partition, or towards federal unity. The association of representatives of the two Provinces in the administration of central subjects, may lead ultimately to a fully developed federal constitution. On the other hand, if the centrifugal forces prove too strong, the way is open towards partition. Our proposals do not prejudge this issue either way. We believe that this plan provides as fair and reasonable a compromise between the claims of Arab and Jew as it is possible to devise,... (c970/p 8)³²⁸⁰

Morrison was unabashedly saying that this most recent committee was sitting on the fence. The third option – the normal representative democracy demanded by the Palestinians – did not get a hint of a mention, and it is noteworthy that the Morrison-Grady discourse so closely resembles that of the two-state solutions avidly discussed by the Peace Process Industry in the years since the Oslo Accords.

³²⁷⁹ Peel 1937, XVIII §13, XIX §3, 9, XX §13, 17; see also >361; >383; >422.

³²⁸⁰ See also Cmd. 7044, pp 13-14.

This new plan would leave the British High Commissioner in charge of defense, foreign relations, police, the court system, customs and immigration, and with a veto over all other legislation; over immigration policy, in particular, the Provinces would have “a large measure of control”, but “final control” would stay with the “Central Government”. (cc966-967/pp 5-6) At least in the medium-term, that is, this plan – which would be the basis of the coming talks in London between HMG and the Arab states in September 1946 and January–February 1947 [⁴⁴⁴⁻⁴⁵²] – had nothing at all to do with an independent Palestine because Britain would still be in charge; as its name clearly said, it was merely a plan for ‘Provincial Autonomy’.

The Committee also continued the tradition of conflating the plight of European Jews with the area in the Near East known as Palestine, and in the end overthrew the Cabinet decision of 29 April 1946³²⁸¹ by after all supporting the immigration of 100,000 Jewish Europeans (c967/p 6).³²⁸² Further:

The Jewish Province would include the great bulk of the land on which Jews have already settled and a considerable area between and around the settlements. ... The Jews will be free to exercise a large measure of control over immigration into their own Province, and to forward there the development of the Jewish National Home. The Land Transfer Regulations [restricting sales] will be repealed. It will be open to the Government of the Arab Province to permit or to refuse permission to Jews to purchase land there, but the area of the Jewish Province will be larger than that in which Jews are free to buy land at present. (c965, 970/pp 4-5, 7)

Of the Jewish province’s approximately 750,000 inhabitants about 300,000 would not be Jews.³²⁸³

The Report, in Morrison’s rendering before the Commons, continued in the tradition of, for instance, the Passfield White Paper [²³⁴] of placing responsibility for peace or bloodshed on the Jews and Arabs, not on the British who had been calling the shots for almost 30 years:

The world is weary of this senseless strife of Jew and Arab, and sickened by its barbarous incidents. It calls upon them to end a sordid chapter of history, and join with the civilised nations of building the foundations of a nobler and happier world. Their friends everywhere will anxiously await their verdict. (c971/p 8)

The person describing the situation a-historically as “senseless strife of Jew and Arab”, was the blameless Morrison, the “civilised”, non-“barbarous” British ‘Lord President of the Council’, oblivious to the genesis of the “strife”, which was anything but “senseless”.

Britain had moreover made an official statement to the Morrison–Grady Commission in which it underlaid its attribution of blame to its subjects with a false bit of history-writing:

³²⁸¹ CAB 128/5/38, pp 301-04.

³²⁸² Also FO 800/486, p 102; but see Williams 1961, p 571; John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 89-90.

³²⁸³ Cronin 2017, p 62.

Throughout the period of mandatory rule in Palestine, it has been the object of HMG to lay the foundations for an independent Palestinian State in which Arabs and Jews would enjoy equal rights. The state of tension between the two peoples which has existed hitherto has continually thwarted the attempts of the mandatory Power to progress towards this end. HMG are not prepared to continue indefinitely to govern Palestine themselves merely because Arabs and Jews cannot agree upon the means of sharing its government between them. (p 14)

As we have seen, though, the British had not acted in accordance with the principle of “equal rights” for each group. And again, the picture of the “two peoples” who had always “thwarted” the U.K. contradicts the truth that it was HMG which, by introducing Zionism against the clearly-expressed will of the ‘mandated’ indigenous people, i.e. by knowingly pitting the two groups against each other, had caused the mess and the hate and the violence in the first place. This Commission thus fell far behind all earlier British investigative commissions.

The recommended “Provinces” to be regulated by a central-government structure, differed only slightly from the “States” connected by “economic union” which on 29 November 1947 would be recommended by UNGA Resolution 181 [^{>481}]. That is, neither proposal foresaw truly sovereign Arab or Jewish ‘states’. The Arabs would have their Province, and Morrison claimed before the House of Commons that the scheme was a great boon for the indigenous:

The Arabs will gain, in that the great majority of them will be freed once and for all from any fear of Jewish domination. (c970/p 7)

But at most only the Arabs in the Arab “province” would be “freed” of their “fear”. In the event, to my knowledge neither the Anglo-American nor the Morrison-Grady plan was ever approved by the House of Commons, thus leaving the MacDonald White Paper of 1939 officially in place. Foreign Secretary Bevin would nevertheless use these plans as the British starting-point in talks from August on with both Arabs (initially and largely boycotted by the Palestinian Arabs) and Jewish Zionists. [^{>444-452}]

On 31 July and 1 August 1946 the Commons debated³²⁸⁴ the Anglo-American as well as the Morrison-Grady proposals for some sort of “federation” wherein certain policy areas devolved to Arab and Jewish entities while others resided with a central government – but for the near- or mid-range future leaving power in British hands. (cc965-67) As we just saw [^{>438}; ^{>442}] these bi-national proposals wrested large chunks of sovereignty away from the indigenous people and, within the Jewish entity, did not solve any of the problems of two-state (partition) propositions deriving from the huge non-Jewish minority. As H.J. **Delargy** MP perceived, any proposal for “two States” meant “There would be again a new frontier problem and a new minority problem.” (c989) He thereby laudably took seriously the problems of an Arab minority in any proposed Jewish state whereas all British Governments, including MacDonald’s when he was Colonial Secretary, had taken the problems of a Jewish minority in an (un-partitioned) Arab state so seriously – or fearfully – that such an Arab-Palestinian state was in the end off the table. The Majority (partition) Plan of UNSCOP a year later would manifest the same double standard and fail to address the question of why an Arab minority would be safe in a Jewish state while Jews would not be safe in a single, Arab Palestine. [^{>468}]

Like all bi-national schemes, both were complicated, lying mid-way between the clear poles of two or more totally separate states (which not even UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 would propose [^{>481}]) and the single constitutional, democratic state consistently demanded by the Palestinians over a good 25 years.

Herbert **Morrison** led off with a discussion of Jewish terrorists’ lethal bombing of the King David Hotel a week earlier:

This Debate takes place in the shadow of a tragedy that must have moved the most war-hardened among us. In the destruction of the Government offices at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, 84 men and women – Arabs, Jews, British – were killed, and 46 injured, while 22 are still missing. ... Immediate action was taken to pursue the perpetrators of the outrage and 446 Jews were arrested, whose records showed association with the terrorist organisations. (cc958-59)

Details of this famous bombing, including the response of commanding officer General Evelyn Barker, who was in the building but survived the attack, have many times been adequately documented.³²⁸⁵

Morrison then summarised his own and the Anglo-American Committee’s bi-national proposals through the prism of the Jews displaced within Europe:

It is the pressure of immigration from Europe that has so intensified the difficulties of the Palestine problem. ... First, ... our two Governments should seek to create conditions

³²⁸⁴ Hansard 1946b, all further quotations.

³²⁸⁵ See e.g. Hansard 1946b, cc959, 974, 997-1002, 1013-15, 1039, 1056-60. 1070-72; Bethell 1979, pp 240-87; Wikipedia > Evelyn Barker.

favourable to the resettlement of a substantial number of displaced persons in Europe itself, But, when all that is possible has been done in Europe, it is clear that new homes must be found overseas for many whose ties with their former communities have been irreparably broken. ... [W]e are taking urgent and practical steps to ensure that other countries as well as Palestine will contribute to the resettlement of those displaced persons, including Jews, who must look elsewhere than to Europe for their permanent homes. (cc962-64)

Henry **Legge-Bourke** doubted HMG's sincerity about finding new homes for the European Jews:

The one thing which the Arab cannot understand is why he should be made to take Jews when nobody else will take them, and I am certain we shall never make the Arabs agree that, until we show, first of all, that we have it cut and dried that we will take so many, and America and the Empire and the Commonwealth—let them all come in, if they will. (c1006; also c1035)

Departing from the MacDonald White Paper also in regard to land sales, Morrison re-assured his listeners that “the area of the Jewish Province will be larger than that in which Jews are free to buy land at present.” (c970)

The eternal problems of immigration and land sales sort-of dealt with, he got to the constitutional part:

In formulating a new policy for Palestine, the expert delegations accepted as a basis the principles laid down in the third recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee, that Palestine as a whole can be neither a Jewish nor an Arab State, that neither of the two communities in Palestine should dominate the other, and that the form of Government should be such as to safeguard the interests in the Holy Land of both Christendom and the Moslem and Jewish faiths. ... The experts believe that, in present circumstances, this can best be secured by the establishment of Arab and Jewish Provinces, which will enjoy a large measure of autonomy under a central Government. (cc964-65)

Morrison, or more exactly the Morrison-Grady ‘provincial autonomy’ proposal, had walked through the loophole left by the 1939 White Paper saying that the U.K. would delay independence even beyond the stated ten-year limit if Jews and Arabs weren't being nice to each other. (c965)

Oliver **Stanley**, who had been one of Churchill's Colonial Secretaries (22 Nov 1942-26 July 1945), led criticism of Morrison-Grady's work. While he rejected continued application of the 1939 White Paper – because its condition for a unified Palestine (peace and co-operation between Arabs and Jews) had not been fulfilled (cc981-82) – he also rejected this new ‘White Paper’:

Can we really leave 600,000 Jews as a permanent minority in an Arab State? I do not believe anyone could contemplate doing that, and still be faithful to the pledges that we have given. Certainly, we could not contemplate doing that without bloodshed on a terrible scale. If that is not so, if immigration is to stop and the number is always to be fixed as it is now, and there is to be no Arab State in accordance with the Arab majority, what is the alternative before us? If this country has forever to rule Palestine as a sort of police State, and is able to hold out no hope to two progressive peoples—make no mistake that the Arabs today are

becoming progressive as well—of ever really having any effective say in the government of the country in which they live, I do not believe that that is a prospect which this country can look forward to with any belief that we shall be able to carry it through to the end. (cc981)

Stanley can be forgiven for thinking Morrison-Grady had recommended an “Arab State” covering all of Palestine, because as with all bi-national schemes it was hard to make sense of the language mix of provinces, states, cantons, nations and federation. (*also* c986)

Most of the discussion was then about the Jews in the U.K., those in Palestine, the terrorists among them, anti-semitism, and the Palestine Government’s recent record in dealing with Zionist violence, producing along the way this gem from staunch Zionist Richard **Crossman**, who had been a member of the Anglo-American Committee and supported partition (cc1015-16):

Palestine is a land with a history of violence. We cannot judge it by the standards of law and order of this country. We are in consultation with the members of the Arab Higher Committee, every one of whom has crimes of violence on his conscience, extending over no fewer than the three years of Arab revolt. (c1012)

He then shifted the focus away from Zionist violence to the Arab violence of the past and to General Barker’s letter commanding his troops to avoid all contact with the *yishuv*.

Mervyn **Manningham-Buller**, who along with Crossman had been a member of the Anglo-American Committee, recalled some facts:

The scheme before us would have covered, I think, in the Jewish province 301,000 Arabs and 451,000 Jews. It would have taken into the Jewish Province 68 per cent. of the Arab citrus plantations, and 70 per cent. of the plain lands which might be irrigated if water can be taken there. (c1025)

He revived the arguments of 1930 made by High Commissioner Chancellor and investigators Shaw and Hope Simpson [^{>218; >220; >230; >233; >234}] that Palestine was, given present means of cultivation, too “thickly populated” for even the expanding Arab population. (c1021) He also used the hoary language of the “domination” of the minority by the majority – either of Jew by Arab or Arab by Jew (cc1021-22) – which, if applied to Britain, would mean that Christians ‘dominated’ the Jews, Moslems and Hindus amongst its citizens.

Harry **Morris** defended the Labour Party policy of 1944 advocating the transfer of the Arabs out of the mandated territory into surrounding areas [^{>425}]: “The Arabs have many wide territories of their own; they must not claim to exclude the Jews from this small area of Palestine less than the size of Wales.” (cc1029-32) He also condoned Zionist terrorism (c1029) and thought the provincial autonomy plan was giving the Jews a raw deal (cc1032-33). Henry **Raikes**, like almost all speakers, fretted over the irreconcilability of HMG’s parallel promises to Jews and Arabs, tending toward the non-solution to “retain the idea of a Jewish National Home, and assure the Arabs that, for all intents and purposes, they will still have a reasonable say in their own land.” (c1037)

The speech of Scotch-Irish Communist William **Gallacher** (cc1037-44) [see also >342] was an antidote to the colonialists' bent for shoving colonial subjects into racial and religious categories:

Mr. Stanley... was in favour of partition. He thought that we should keep these people in two separate compartments. What sort of people are we? An hon. Member who sits behind me said that God was anxious to get the Jews into Palestine—I do not know much about that; it is the hon. Member's business and not mine—but [Mr. Stanley] seems to be taking on the attributes of a god, saying "We will put some people in this compartment, and some people in that compartment." What an attitude to adopt, and what an opinion we have of ourselves. ... There is the simple direct solution—and there is no other. One can play about with cantonisation, federalisation and partition, but there is one solution only, and that is independence for Palestine.

He echoed the long-standing Palestinian message:

When I make that suggestion, I am told that if we give independence to Palestine, take away the British troops, and, instead of letting them be killed there, bring them home—and why should they not be brought home to their mothers and families?—the Arabs and Jews will slaughter one another. But I am also told that if the troops are brought away from India the Muslims and Hindus will slaughter one another. The same in Ireland, if the partition is removed Catholics and Protestants will tear one another to pieces. Is it not a very significant and a very sinister thing that where British Imperialist influence is predominant, these murderous impulses exist? I say take away this unsavoury influence, and ordinary people will find ways and means of living together in harmony and cooperation. That is the solution.

After calling for General Barker to be sent home due to his anti-semitic remarks, sweeping aside the argument that a Jewish state in Palestine was OK because many nations said it was, and correctly naming Churchill as the Zionists' greatest British promoter, he chastised the Palestine Jews in general and the Jewish labour unionists there for not supporting the Arabs in their work for independence.

William **Teeling** summed up both the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady proposals in one sentence: "All that was told us there is that the Jews will have control of certain parts of the country in which there are a large number of Arabs." (c1045) Using Teeling's voice, the colonialist, Christian-Zionist id next spoke:

There has been very little reference to the Christians in Palestine. Why should not the Christians be in control of the country? We went there and fought in the Crusades in the old days in order to take that country from the Arabs and keep it for Christianity. We have now got it. Many of us were proud when Allenby marched in early after the last war; today everybody is talking about giving the country to the Arabs and the Jews. I maintain that it is our Christian duty to keep that country, to look after it, and to make it possible for Jews to go there. (c1048)

So much for Arab-Jewish parity, but once again the indigenous Palestinians were erased.

Thomas **Reid**, who had been one of the anti-partition members of the Woodhead Commission [>376; >481; >486], said first of all that in 1938 he had spent “seven months..., working ten hours a day” on the problem. He then laid out the basic Palestinian position which has been cited and quoted throughout this chronology:

[B]efore the Balfour Declaration was issued the political Zionists placed before the British Government various drafts in which they explicitly demanded a Jewish State or Commonwealth. The British Government rejected these drafts and passed the Balfour Declaration, which gave a promise of a Jewish National Home. ... [T]he Balfour Declaration was illegal and immoral if anything ever was. It was made without the knowledge of the Arabs, who were the inhabitants of Palestine and our loyal allies in the war, but worse still the people who framed the declaration had purposely concealed their intention that the Jews were to be allowed in until they formed a majority and thus to set up a Jewish State in fact. ... [F]rom 1938 up to date, I have opposed in and out of season the proposal to set up a Jewish State in Palestine [and] indeed the British Government had no right to make promises about Jewish emigration to Palestine, and we have no right to try to set up a Jewish State in Palestine because Palestine never belonged to us and does not belong to us today. (cc1049, 1050)

He then argued for the good of Jews as well:

Apart from the illegality and immorality of the thing, in my opinion the worst thing we can do to the Jews of the world is to set up a Jewish State in Palestine. ... As a friend of the Jews I appeal to all Jews in this House, some of whom are prominent in Jewish public life and take part in Zionist meetings, to throw in their lot with the Arabs in Palestine, and evolve a Palestinian state in which they would have an immense power for good. ... [Previous speaker Oliver Stanley] stated that conciliation between Arab and Jew was impossible. I beg to state that I entirely disagree with that view. ... [T]he ordinary people of Palestine are longing for peace [but w]hile the plan for a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine, or in only a part of Palestine, is under consideration, there can be no peace in that country. ... If Governments of this country in the past had consulted the Arabs at every stage, instead of enunciating a doctrine and imposing it upon Palestine without consulting the Arabs, Palestine would have been saved a lot of bloodshed. (cc1050, 1051)

In December 1947 he would similarly condemn Resolution 181 which recommended a Jewish state on about half of Palestine whose inhabitants, if the semi-nomadic Bedouins were counted, were slightly *over* 50% non-Jewish. [>481]

Tufton **Beamish** spoke to the conflation of Palestine with the Jews' problems in Europe:

I believe the terms of reference of the Committee were wrong, in that they confused the plight of the Jews in Europe—for which we all feel very much—with the actual future of Palestine under British mandate. The two problems cannot be entirely separated, but they should not be confused to that extent. (c1065)

Actually, both Committees – the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady – took this confusion as their very premise. Beamish then supported the Arab Centre's statement to the former, first quoting it:

‘The Arabs of Palestine are descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, who have been in occupation of it since the beginning of history; they cannot agree that it is right to subject an indigenous population against its will to alien immigrants, whose claim is based upon historical connections which ceased effectively many centuries ago.’ To my way of thinking, that is hard to controvert. It puts it concisely. (c1068)

Exactly this had repeatedly been explained to the British by the Palestinians for at least the last twenty-seven years. [see e.g. >45; >143]

Finally, anti-Zionist Harold **Lever** said (paraphrasing) HMG should quit regarding the lives of British soldiers in Palestine as expendable and asked, “Why are we in Palestine?” He was sick of the “mealy-mouthed” speeches saying Britain was there for the good of the people of Palestine and urged HMG to give up trying to be a “trustee” for them and turn Palestine over to the United Nations. (cc1070, 1073-74) An opponent of partition, he however only thought Jews and Arabs could get along politically because he held an inaccurate view of “the essential minimum Arab demand in Palestine”, saying “It is that the Arabs should enjoy political equality,…” (c1075) But at least he had had the decency to open his remarks by saying, “It is with some diffidence that I join with other non-experts on this subject in the Debate…” (c1069)

The next day, on 1 August,³²⁸⁶ past and future Prime Minister **Churchill** weighed in in support of Lever’s suggestion that Britain should hand control of Palestine to the United Nations – arguing that Britain “evacuate the country with which we have no connection or tradition…” (cc1255-56)³²⁸⁷ Why would Churchill say such a thing, at odds with all he had said and done for the last quarter of a century, if not because he now believed Zionism had a better chance in the hands of that US-dominated body than those of the present Labour-dominated HMG? It is at any rate fun to imagine his having said it – admitted it – to the delegation of the 3rd Palestine Arab Congress with whom he met personally in Jerusalem on 29 March 1921 [>99; >100].

He led off by unspooling the standard line about “our obligations to the Zionists under the Mandate for Palestine entrusted to us by the League of Nations” and extolling for the final time in the Commons, in white-man’s-burden mode, the Jewish immigrants:

Tel-Aviv expanded into the great city it is, a city which, I may say, during this war and before it, welcomed and nourished waifs and orphans flying from Nazi persecution. Many refugees found a shelter and a sanctuary there, so that this land, not largely productive of the means of life, became a fountain of charity and hospitality to people in great distress. Land reclamation and cultivation and great electrical enterprises progressed. Trade made notable progress, and not only did the Jewish population increase but the Arab population, dwelling in the areas colonised and enriched by the Jews, also increased in almost equal numbers. The Jews multiplied six-fold and the Arabs developed 500,000 [sic.], thus showing that both races gained a marked advantage from the Zionist policy which we pursued and which we were developing over this period. (c1247)

³²⁸⁶ Hansard 1946c, *all further quotations.*

³²⁸⁷ Also John & Hadawi 1970b, p 93.

There was no budging people of Churchill's ilk away from the paternalistic, materialistic, willingly deaf treatment of the natives. (A bit later he mentioned India as "territory over which we possess unimpeachable sovereignty", yet where "all the work we have done in the last 200 years" was on the verge of being abandoned. (c1256))

The last 25 years had been the "kindest", "happiest" and "brightest" ("full of hope") of Palestine's history; evidently the thousands of lives, millions of pounds and millions of pain-hours in terms of humiliation – the costs of the Zionist Mandate – did not mean anything to this man, or very little, since a few minutes later he said

We have never sought or got anything out of Palestine. We have discharged a thankless, painful, costly, laborious, inconvenient task for more than a quarter of a century with a very great measure of success. (c1253)

He was right about Britain's selflessness and about "success" if he meant success for Zionism.

He then even waxed warmly about the possibility of a military test of strength amongst Palestine's residents: During the last war,

At my desire, the Jewish community and Palestine was armed, encouraged to organise and, in fact, to play a part in the defence of the Holy Land, to liberate British units there. ... [By then] the Jewish community had developed strong, well-armed forces, and the highest military authorities reported to the Cabinet during 1941–42 that if the continued bickerings between Jews and Arabs grew into serious conflict, the Jews could not only defend themselves, but would beat the Arabs in Palestine, though that was, of course, the very opposite position from that which existed at the time of the Mandate, in 1919. (cc1248, 1249)

That was "success": The military precondition for a Jewish state had been erected. And I venture the opinion that Churchill would have liked to see this bloodshed.

Speaking for the Government that day, Stafford **Cripps** followed the middle-of-the-road narrative of parity, the conflation of Europe with Palestine, and the denial of Britain's responsibility:

There are *two claimants* to Palestine, both of whom have a good case to put forward. ... There would indeed be no one who could resist the claim of the Jews were it not for the claims put forward with equal strength by the Arabs. ... Our sympathies [for the Jews] do not entitle us to act unjustly to others. To the Arabs in Palestine, it is of course a part of their homeland too. They have inhabited it for generations, and they see themselves liable to be driven out, or to be subjected to the rule of alien immigrants introduced against their wishes, and despite their protests. It is small comfort to the possessor of property, that some one else can make *better use* of it than he can himself. ... History has been hard upon Palestine, attempting as it has done to satisfy those two directly opposed and inconsistent claims. (cc1233-34, *emphasis added*)

The Palestinians would be dealing more and more with the U.S.:

That is not only because of our general desire to work side by side with them upon these world problems, but also because of the special interest which they have taken in the Palestinian problem owing to their own large Jewish population. (c1235)

The Palestinians were in a sense diluted in the larger “world”, and indeed their decades-long alternative solution was not even on the table as far as HMG was concerned:

[T]here are three possible alternatives for Palestine in the future—partition, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) preferred; the present scheme, or something of that character; and, thirdly, the return to the *status quo*. (c1237)

The Palestinian and 1939 White Paper “unitary scheme” was both dead and unmentionable. (cc1238-39)

Finally, to Britain’s two quarrelling children he gave the usual a-political talking-to:

I would beg the two peoples to pause a moment and consider, not putting aside, of course, their strongly held opinions, but realising how much both may gain by the avoidance of war, and by agreement on a way of sharing the prosperity which cooperation alone can bring to their country. We have put forward this plan because it seems to us to hold within it the seeds of a hopeful future. It is not perfect, but it provides a method by which the two races can live side by side, enjoying a large measure of immediate self-government without sacrificing the benefit of a united Palestine. (c1245)

Talk of “the two races” was in the grand tradition of de-politicising the conflict, painting it as ethno-religious. He also announced that Jews and Arabs, indeed everybody except the Mufti, had been invited to the imminent talks in London. (cc1241, 1242) [>444]

12 August 1946 ‘HMG announces that the immigrant numbers foreseen by the 1939 White Paper have been reached and that it will therefore become very strict in refusing entry of illegal immigrants.’³²⁸⁸

28 August 1946 ‘The Stern Gang, probably working with the Irgun, plots to assassinate British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin.’³²⁸⁹

August 1946 ‘In August 1946, [Izzat] Tannous was tasked by the Arab Higher Committee to set up and administer a national fund, Beiti-Maal Al-Arabi (Arab national treasury), for Palestine, a monumental task that came too late, as he himself admitted.’³²⁹⁰

September 1946 The Palestine Round Table Conference in London [attended by neither Palestinian nor Zionist leaders] rejects the Morrison-Grady plan. Delegates from Arab states propose a united state of Palestine, preserving the current Arab majority, in which Jews will have full civil rights.

³²⁸⁸ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 106.

³²⁸⁹ KV 2/3428 (‘Kew Vestry’, The National Archives); Suárez 2023, p 140; also <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/may/22/past-politics>

³²⁹⁰ Qumsiyeh 2011, p 93.

On 24 August 1946 Truman rejected the Morrison-Grady plan [>442] in favour of “an alternative plan put up to him by the Jewish Agency” including the Zionist wish for the immediate immigration of the by-now famous 100,000 European Jews.³²⁹¹ The Americans rejected the Morrison-Grady wording allowing Jewish refugees to go “to other countries outside of Europe”, changing the text to “to Palestine or other countries outside of Europe” while Foreign Secretary Bevin steadfastly and to his credit “envisaged a Palestinian state, not a Jewish one, arising under a United Nations trusteeship awarded to Britain.”³²⁹²

The Palestinians (as well as the Jewish Zionists) refused to attend the penultimate talks ever between Britain and Arabs on the ‘Palestine problem’ which were in the works for September 1946, records for which are in the ‘Private Papers of Mr. Ernest Bevin, PALESTINE, 1946 – September–December.’³²⁹³ The last talks would be in February 1947.³²⁹⁴ [>450] The U.S., through its power over Britain and in the United Nations, was taking over the future of Palestine, and a Foreign Office/Colonial Office summary of the Palestine problem was prepared for U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes in the form of Bevin’s **record of the September talks** at Lancaster House in London, dated 23 November 1946 and marked “top secret”.³²⁹⁵ It was a 27-page analysis of the history of the Mandate, the history of developments in 1946, and the options presently on the table.

The review anticipated the consequences of the enhanced U.S. role:

It is not surprising that the Zionist case should meet with a greater response in the United States than in the United Kingdom. The large Jewish population, numbering approximately 5,000,000, must include many families with surviving relatives in the ex-enemy countries of Europe. Among the American Jews the Zionists are by far the most powerful group. They have ready access to statesmen, journalists and other leaders of public opinion. In New York and other cities, where Jews are concentrated in large numbers, Zionism is a political force which cannot be ignored. (§18)

To my knowledge the U.S. never held any talks with Palestinians.

But the Arab states could not be ignored, either, for in the United Nations, “to which any major change in Palestine policy must eventually be referred”, they had five votes. “Also they are now organised in the Arab League, which derives much of its harmony and vitality from the dominance in its proceedings of the Palestine issue.” (§21) Thus, as the relevant Colonial Office document a few months earlier had recorded,

³²⁹¹ Williams 1961, p 572.

³²⁹² Smith 1996, p 129.

³²⁹³ FO 800/486 (Cmd. 7044, pp 9-11).

³²⁹⁴ Cmd. 7044, pp 11-14.

³²⁹⁵ FO 800/486, pp 93-120, all citations.

The States Members of the Arab League, on receiving from His Majesty's Government and the United States Government requests for their views on the Report of the Anglo-American Committee [^{>438}], had met in conference at Bludan in Syria [^{>440}]. Each of the Arab Governments subsequently addressed to His Majesty's Government, in addition to a note containing comments on the Committee's recommendations, a further note inviting the British Government to negotiate 'for the conclusion of an agreement which will put an end to the present situation in Palestine and transform it into one in conformity with the provisions of the [UN] Charter [^{>441}] and agreeable with its aims'. The Arab Governments further suggested that the Conference should be convened in time 'to conclude a complete and satisfactory agreement before the next Session of the General Assembly to be held in September, 1946'. (§34)

On 25 July 1946 and a bit thereafter, HMG invited all concerned to London – seven Arab States, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the "Arab Higher Executive in Palestine" and "other Palestinian Arabs, the Secretary-General of the Arab League and representatives of Jewish opinion in the United Kingdom and Palestine".... (§35) (The Palestinians were boycotting these meetings but of course stayed in close touch with the Arab States' delegations.³²⁹⁶) 'Palestine Conference' meetings 1 – 7 were in September 1946, while meetings 8 – 12 were in January and February 1947. [^{>450}] In the background was Truman's proposal to London on 14 August (reiterated on 2 October) of a new, Zionist-backed partition scheme, incompatible with Bevin's and Morrison-Grady's preferred, if vague, federation scheme.³²⁹⁷

While the Arab States might have excelled in such things as talking to Bevin, the Palestinian most intimately involved with them, Musa Alami, would soon make clear how worthless, or worse, the Arab League was for the Palestinians:

What of the League of Arab States? It is true that we attempted to achieve a kind of co-operation and grouping together by forming this League as a step toward Arab unity. But the attempt failed; the evils of partition remained, and the Arabs continued to meet and disagree. More than that, they split into two rival camps, and the League was unable to remove the causes of rivalry – it was, indeed, itself one of the causes. ... The League itself has no kind of sovereignty and no operative executive power.³²⁹⁸

The "Arab states [failed to] collect themselves and continue the war without listening to the UN and the Security Council", so "we lost the battle and we lost Palestine, and with it we lost the self-respect of the Arab nation; until the European press referred to the Arab states as the 'seven zeroes'."³²⁹⁹

In preliminary soundings preceding Foreign Minister Bevin's speech to the assembled Arabs on 16 September [^{>445}], Arab objections to the Morrison-Grady plan for Provincial Autonomy had become obvious: like its predecessor, the Anglo-American plan, it would lead to partition; and because the Arabs "expressed inflexible opposition to the establish-

³²⁹⁶ See John & Hadawi 1970b, p 95.

³²⁹⁷ Khalidi 1986, pp 113-14.

³²⁹⁸ Alami 1949, p 389, also p 386.

³²⁹⁹ Alami 1949, p 384; Furlonge 1969, p 152.

ment of a Jewish State in Palestine”, the U.S./U.K. ideas were, for the Arabs, non-starters, and should a Jewish state materialise, they would fight it militarily. (§37-39) Facing this obvious Arab rejection, Bevin at least publicly retreated from full backing of the Provincial Autonomy Plan: “The British Delegation had at the outset stated that His Majesty’s Government were not finally committed to the provincial autonomy plan and were willing to consider alternative proposals...” (§40)

Before asking the Arabs for their alternatives, HMG inflexibly set down conditions any plan “must take account of”:

1. There is already in Palestine a highly organised population of 600,000 Jews, who will insist on their political rights not only as individuals but as a community.
2. Although it is clear that Palestine cannot provide a complete solution for the problem of Jewish refugees, no settlement of the Palestine problem which did not admit of further Jewish immigration could be regarded as acceptable.
3. Palestine cannot remain indefinitely under tutelage, but must begin to make progress towards independence.
4. Therefore institutions must be created which will enable both peoples to govern themselves to a steadily increasing extent.
5. The condition of tension in which the people of Palestine have lived for the past ten years is no longer tolerable. It must be brought to an end, not only because it makes self-government impossible, but also because it menaces the peace of neighbouring countries. (§40)³³⁰⁰

Regarding point 1), note that every Palestinian statement of the last quarter-century had sworn to respect the “political rights... as individuals” of the Jews in Palestine; it was the phrase “Jews... as a community” that caused problems because it implied ethno-religious political rights in the spirit of the 1922 White Paper fundamentally rejected by the Palestinians [[>]142]. Unless granted such rights, which arguably entailed the right to immigrate into Palestine, Jews could never become a majority or even have the parity status which both the Anglo-American and the Morrison-Grady plans would give them. The Palestinians’ invariable pledge that the Jews as individuals would be normal, equal citizens, wasn’t good enough for HMG.

But both the Palestinians and the Arab states had invariably stated their views on all this. Regarding point 2), more immigration was non-negotiable. Regarding points 3) and 4), British “tutelage” had for over twenty-five years consisted of freezing any “progress towards independence”, and thus nothing at all should “begin”: freedom should take place immediately. Finally, point 5) once again showed British obliviousness to the fact that British Zionist policy was the cause of the “tension” declared to be “no longer tolerable”. Given these facts, Bevin’s Foreign Office, which had taken the reins from the Colonial Office (now under George Henry Hall and a bit later Arthur Creech Jones), appears ignorant of the documentary history of the Mandate. Bevin was the seventeenth (or nineteenth, if you count Balfour and Curzon) Cabinet minister in charge of Palestine, and the above five points reveal a man burning the midnight oil in order to acquaint himself with a few basics concerning Palestine.

³³⁰⁰ Also FO 800/486, p 11.

The Colonial Office memo then gave a good summary of the 1939 position of MacDonald's Colonial Office [>410], including the quotation from MacDonald's testimony before the Permanent Mandates Commission [>413] wherein he outlined the possibility that while the legislature would be on a numerical basis, "on any matter of importance, no decision could be taken unless a majority of the Arab representatives and a majority of the Jewish representatives were in agreement". [see >395] But the memo rejected this because the Jews could never reach numerical parity and under MacDonald's proposal there would be too many "deadlocks"; however, to be sure, "A constitution of this type would, perhaps more than any other, provide effective security for each people against domination by the other." (§53-55) For the current British Government, that is, security of life and limb, which could be gotten by MacDonald's compromise, was not worth the Jewish Zionists' having less than 50% of the power in *all* "matters".

445. Bevin to Arab States

16 September 1946

During the second week of September the two sides merely presented their “general attitude”, but in a “secret... speech to be made on behalf of the United Kingdom on Monday, 16th September, 1946”³³⁰¹ Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was seeking the best “practical solution”. At the beginning of his message to the seven assembled Arab states – Syria (represented by Fares Al-Khoury), Lebanon, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Egypt, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. – Britain retreated once and for all from the 1939 White Paper’s solution of an independent representative democracy in ten years [>410]. (p 2) In trying to justify this, Bevin underlined that the practical solution would have to “commend itself to world opinion” – that is, to the powerful states with veto power in the United Nations. But to the extent that the Arab states were being listened to, the first issue for Bevin was their opposition to the “British plan”, i.e. the Morrison-Grady scheme [>442], which for the British was not a “bargaining position” but rather something objectively “consistent with the principles of justice”. But he immediately backtracked, saying of course he was open to “modifications” of this “basis for discussion”. (p 2)

One can sympathise with whoever in his audience was wondering whether the plan was negotiable or not, but it wasn’t: Britain would continue to reject both partition and unitary democracy up until its withdrawal from Palestine on 15 May 1948 – abstaining when voting on both the representative–democracy plan of UN Subcommittee 2 on 25 November 1947³³⁰² [>478] and the partition-with-economic-union plan (UNGA Resolution 181) of 29 November³³⁰³ [>481], and failing to support the U.S. State Department proposal of March 1948 in the Security Council rejecting partition in favour of representative democracy³³⁰⁴ [>483; >487].

Bevin emphasised the need to take into account “the international situation in general” – a euphemism for the problem of dislocated Jewish Europeans – and each Arab state (or “any government”) wishing to strengthen the United Nations must therefore

make some sacrifice of its own exclusive interests, and to examine even those problems which directly concern itself from a wider point of view than that dictated by nationalist feeling. (pp 2-3)

Concretely, Bevin said “I do not want to leave you under any misapprehension” that the Palestinians must *not* take in more European Jewish immigrants. (pp 7-8)

The Foreign Secretary then used the vague language of the 1939 White Paper with regard to Jewish-Arab ability to politically co-operate in order to abandon it, exactly as many

³³⁰¹ FO 800/486, pp 2-11, *all citations*.

³³⁰² UNGA 1947p, §29.

³³⁰³ UNGA 1947q.

³³⁰⁴ Office of the Historian, U.S. Government <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/creation-israel> ; also Boling 2003.

Palestinians in the spring and summer of 1939 had feared [e.g. >395ff; >412]; hiding as well behind the chaotic intervening war years, he said that even after seven years the time was not yet ripe for democracy:

We still feel that it is too soon to foresee the form which the final constitution of Palestine will take. It would be rash to let constitutional forms crystallise now when the conditions to which they should be adapted are still so fluid. What we are proposing therefore is a new start with the period of transition leading to independence. The final form of the constitution must be dictated by the social and political forces now at work in Palestine, and it will obviously take some time for those forces to reach a state of equilibrium after the vast upheaval caused by the war. There must be some experience of self-government before independence is granted, and it seemed to us that this experience could not be better gained than under the plan which we have presented to the conference. ... There must be a period and an opportunity for the cooling of tempers and for attention to constructive tasks. (pp 3-4, 6)

“Conditions” were still not ripe for a State of Palestine – too many hot tempers, too many non-“constructive” subjects.

Referring more closely to their criticisms of the bi-nationalism or federalism the British were now peddling [>438; >442], Bevin continued:

In your statements much was said about the White Paper of 1939. At that time, His Majesty's Government hoped that Arab-Jewish relations would improve sufficiently in the succeeding years for a constitution to be drawn up and the independence of the country established. But as we look back now, in the light of subsequent events, particularly since the end of the war, I think we must agree that the British Government of that day were unduly optimistic. Despite the sincerity of their intentions, I doubt whether they would have found it possible, even if they had not been overtaken by the catastrophe of a world war, to carry through the programme laid down in 1939. At any rate, I am quite certain that in the present state of affairs, any attempt to extend self-government in Palestine on the lines of the White Paper of 1939, by means of a central elected legislature and a unitary constitution, would be doomed to failure. (pp 3-4)

He added a close paraphrase of the still-valid White Paper's §8 & 10:

The objective of the 1939 proposals was the setting up of an independent State in which Arabs and Jews would share in Government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community would be safeguarded. (p 4)³³⁰⁵

That these “essential interests” were left poorly defined eased Britain's escape from its solemn commitment to the Palestinians. Even the 1939 White Paper had included the Jewish National Home as one of the Jews' “essential interests”, but had also said, somewhat unequivocally, that that Home had been successfully erected.³³⁰⁶ Bevin was now, in 1946, reverting to the position that the JNH had after all *not yet* been established or, if established, not “safeguarded”.

³³⁰⁵ See >394-397; >402; >405; >407; >410; >412; >414.

³³⁰⁶ MacDonald 1939, §10.7 & §8.

Evidently not taking for granted the thoughtfulness of his listeners, and despite the fact that all Near Eastern Arabs had been reflecting carefully on the problems caused by British Zionism for at least 28 years, Bevin enjoined them:

I hope therefore that you will reflect very carefully before you decide to reject our proposals in principle. I can assure you that when our plan was being drafted and examined, very careful thought was given to the need for safeguarding Arab interests and so far as possible satisfying Arab feeling. (p 3)

The paternalism aside, only “interests”, not rights, were in play, and the Arabs were not granted the latitude to decide for themselves what their interests and feelings were. Another thing that stands out regarding Bevin’s lecture is the contrast in experience of Palestine between the two parties: Bevin was a newcomer to the subject, a freshman undergrad, while the non-Palestinian Arabs were qualified Lecturers and the Palestinians, waiting to speak with them when the meeting was over, were full Professors. It even appears likely that when the Foreign Office took over Palestine from the Colonial Office some of the latter’s expertise had gone lost.

Bevin treated the “needs of both communities” or “both parties” with parity, regardless of their size, length of inhabitation or type of claim on the territory – the Jewish claim “cannot be denied”. (p 3) He then anticipated one Arab objection:

But, you will say – and indeed you have said – the fact remains that the Jews are a minority and democratic principles demand that they should submit themselves to the will of the majority of the population. [However,] Such a proposition would never be accepted either by the Jews or by a very large body of world opinion. ... The Jews... would be condemned to the status of a permanent minority... (p 5)

Aside from the fact that Bevin was not actually offering an argument, but rather just reformulating his conviction, the beacon of democracy which was Britain was once again ditching democracy in Palestine because of “world opinion” and evidently on the premise – the word “condemned” says it all – that the political rights of Jews counted more than the political rights of others. At any rate, these considerations were why “both communities must acquiesce” in this quasi two-quasi-state “federation” with “provincial autonomy” wherein each would have a veto over the borders and details of any partition plan. (pp 6, 7) [see also >452]

Finally, Bevin read out the “five essential elements” – listed in the previous entry – necessary for a successful plan (p 11).³³⁰⁷ First and foremost,

There is already in Palestine a highly organised population of 600,000 Jews who will insist on political rights not only as individuals but as a community.

Their insistence trumped all else, even if Bevin knew that the Arabs were perfectly willing to grant those Jews – or at least those who took Palestinian citizenship – full political rights “as individuals”. Secondly, “no settlement of the Palestine problem which did not admit of further Jewish immigration could be regarded as acceptable.” Third and fourth,

³³⁰⁷ Also FO 800/486, §40.

3. Palestine cannot remain indefinitely under tutelage, but must begin to make progress towards independence. 4. Therefore institutions must be created which will enable both peoples to govern themselves to a steadily increasing extent.

Fifth, the [British-caused] “tension” in Palestine was “no longer tolerable”.

All in all, Bevin was indicting his own country for failing to make any progress “towards independence” in the 25 years during which his government, according to Article 2 of the Mandate [146], had been duty-bound to “secure... the development of self-governing institutions”, the upshot being that the Arab Palestinians now had to “make some sacrifice of its own exclusive interests”.

On 18 September 1946 Iraq's Foreign Minister, Dr. Muhammed Fadhel al-Jamali, commented to U.K. Foreign Secretary Bevin concerning Palestine that

the key to the discussion here was the question of immigration. If it was a question of settling the constitution of a Palestinian State and looking after and absorbing the Jews already in Palestine, the Arabs were prepared to go a long way to meet [Britain]. But if it meant acceptance of outside pressure for all time, singling out this territory as proposed by the United States, then he was afraid there would be the most stubborn resistance.³³⁰⁸

On the same day **Bevin received Musa Alami**, who put his finger on the deeper “key” to the situation, namely the granting of political rights (in Palestine) to the Jewish *people*. Bevin's minutes of the meeting³³⁰⁹ relate that Musa, “obviously in close touch with the Arab position”, began this “top secret... long discussion” with a historical review of “the situation created between Jews and Arabs by the Balfour Declaration; how it had disrupted the customs between the two populations who hitherto had lived happily together in Palestine for many centuries...” Seeing as “Jews, Moslems and Christians” lived peacefully together in many other countries, “if outside influence were withdrawn,... the same thing would happen in Palestine.” Musa asked Bevin to imagine how difficult it would be for Britain if it had to take in 600,000 immigrants who “would not be absorbed into the local population but would remain a completely isolated community.” (pp 14-15) It was not the Jews and Arabs, that is, but the British, through “the Balfour Declaration” (which had promised the “national home for the Jewish people” [→16]), who had caused the conflict.

As for immigration, “[E]very Arab believed, in fact knew, that this movement into Palestine was a spear-head. Whether there was partition or not the Jews would not remain within the borders of Palestine.” Musa did evidently make a concession:

Musa Bey thought he could commit the Arabs to the view that they would withdraw their opposition to the Balfour Declaration provided the Powers gave a newly created independent Palestine State powers over immigration and supported them in maintaining their independence. Such a State would consist of the existing population of Palestine together with the Jews who had already been admitted. ... The Arabs believed that [Bevin's] British Labour Party would look upon this problem as democrats and not with the narrower conceptions of the Jewish Agency. (pp 15-16)

He seems to have been giving away little – some acquiescence in the Balfour Declaration, whose ‘home’ was now built – in return for both (immediate?) independence and help in defending that independence (from the Jewish Agency). As for his good opinion of the

³³⁰⁸ FO 800/486, p 13.

³³⁰⁹ FO 800/486, pp 14-17, *all citations*.

Labour Party, perhaps he did not know about its pro-Zionist position of May 1944 which included population transfer [425]. He was envisioning automatic citizenship for all resident Jews, not just those who had taken Palestinian citizenship. And he added that he

had no objection to communes. But in partitioning, you left Jews under Arabs or Arabs under Jews. A series of communes might give both communities the protection they needed without splitting the country.

Whether he was including the “provincial autonomy” scheme [442] under “partitioning” is not stated, but individual “communes” were for him definitely not separate provinces, much less separate states.

Bevin seemed to take the bait, asking, if such a unified state were granted, “would the Arabs make a grand gesture to the European problem by agreeing to admit however many thousand Jews might be suggested?” Noteworthy is the honest phrase “European problem” and the fact that a simple ‘Yes’ from Musa would literally include Zionist plans for the immigration of hundreds of thousands. In answer Musa pleaded lack of authority to make any promises but added that

he personally thought the generosity of the Arabs might be appealed to. But he said that our plan put forward 100,000 immigrants with the Jews having control over immigration. The Arabs knew what that meant and he thought the [Palestine] Conference [in London] would break up if it was pressed. (pp 16-17)

Bevin then thanked him for the talk and “asked him to keep in touch....” According to Furlonge, Alami had a high opinion of Bevin, but in the matter of the substance of the issue held that “no tinkering with formulae could serve so long as the British continued to resist the basic Arab contention that Palestine was their country”.³³¹⁰ It is possibly due to such contacts between Musa and the British that some other Palestinians regarded him with suspicion, as related in Rashid Khalidi’s overly critical treatment of Alami.³³¹¹ George Antonius similarly was suspected by some other Palestinians of being a British spy, perhaps due to his activities with the Institute of Current World Affairs, but Antonius won a libel suit regarding such claims in February 1932 against the Nashashibi-related newspaper *Mir at al Sharq*.³³¹²

³³¹⁰ Furlonge 1969, pp 141, 144.

³³¹¹ Khalidi 2020, pp 65-67.

³³¹² Boyle 2001, p 197.

Foreign Secretary Bevin had asked the Arabs for “alternatives” to the Morrison–Grady plan [>445; >442], but HMG was not “open” to the one presented by the Arab delegates on 29/30 September 1946, which they had crystallised on 19 September, namely the ‘Constitutional proposals put forward by the Arab Delegations’; the Colonial Office called the Arab file a ‘Draft, Confidential’, from which I here quote and which seems to be a (thorough) paraphrase of “paper P.C. (A) (P) 3” submitted by “the Arab Delegations”.³³¹³ It was simply the well-elucidated Palestinian alternative for a democracy of Palestinian citizens, which however did not fulfil the British preconditions listed in the previous two entries.[>445; see also >450; >452]. To my knowledge these “constitutional proposals” were, or are still, contained in file FO 800/486/1 – but according to the National Archives, “This item has been extracted from the main piece because it is subject to extended closure under section 5(1) of the Public Records Act, 1958.”

The draft began with “the first step”, which

Would be for the High Commissioner to establish, by nomination, a Provisional Government consisting of six Arab and three Jewish Ministers. The legislative and executive powers of the present administration in Palestine would be progressively transferred to the Provisional Government. ... The High Commissioner would retain a power of veto throughout the transition period.

Second,

the High Commissioner would initiate the preparation of an electoral register on the basis of adult male suffrage. As soon as this register was prepared, the Provisional Government would hold elections for a Constituent Assembly. This would consist of 60 members,... 40 seats being allotted to Arabs and 20 to Jews. [T]he country [would be] a single constituency, Arab electors voting for Arab candidates and Jewish electors voting for Jewish candidates.

The proportions in any future “Legislative Assembly” might be different.

It would be the job of the Provisional Government to “prepare and submit to the Constituent Assembly a draft constitution for Palestine” within six months; should “the two peoples” in that Assembly not come to agreement, the Provisional Government would consult the Assembly’s debates, draw up a revised constitutional proposal, and “submit it to a referendum” (to the entire adult male electorate). The Provisional Government and the Constituent Assembly could not draft just anything, but were rather bound by certain “directives issued by the High Commissioner”, who in turn would be bound by the following parameters, quoting:

1. Palestine should be a unitary state.
2. It should have a democratic constitution, with an elected legislature.

³³¹³ CO 537/1778, pp 10-14, all quotations. Also FO 800/486, pp 109-11 (§56-58); Cmd. 7044.

3. The constitution should provide guarantees for the sanctity of the Holy Places,...
4. The constitution should guarantee... freedom of religious practice throughout Palestine...
5. The constitution should provide guarantees for the rights of the Jewish population, including
 - (a) The normal rights of residence for all Jews living in Palestine at the beginning of the transition period;
 - (b) Full rights of citizenship for all Jewish citizens of Palestine;
 - (c) The right of Jews to apply for and acquire Palestinian citizenship on the same terms and conditions as non-Jewish applicants;
 - (d) The right of the Jewish community to maintain its own schools and universities, subject to the compulsory teaching of Arabic in the schools and to Government control for the purpose of maintaining educational standards and preventing subversive teaching;
 - (e) The right of Jews to employ the Hebrew language in the courts and in their dealings with Government Departments (and in the Legislative Assembly);
 - (f) The right of the Jewish community to a minimum number of seats in the Legislative Assembly proportionate to the number of Jewish citizens in Palestine; and to adequate representation in the administrative services.
6. Amendments to the Constitution, and legislation concerning immigration and transfer of land, should require a two-thirds majority of the Legislative Assembly.
7. [Palestine would have to officially promise the United Nations to enforce the guarantees concerning the Holy Places.]
8. The guarantees concerning the rights of the Jewish population should not be subject to amendment without the consent of the Jewish community in Palestine as expressed by a majority of the Jewish members of the Legislative Assembly.
9. [A Supreme Court, to which “any citizen of Palestine” would “have recourse”, should judge the consistency of legislation with the constitution.]

Once either the Constituent Assembly or the people, through a referendum, had adopted a constitution, “the Provisional Government would proceed forthwith to hold the first parliamentary elections”. Once a Head of State had been determined according to the pertinent constitutional provisions,

The High Commissioner would transfer his authority to the Head of the State by means of a Treaty, which would also define the future relations between His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Palestine.

An almost identical rendering of these proposals is given in the Bevin-papers file.³³¹⁴ The CO file has an additional, almost identical summary by Conference Secretary Armstrong.³³¹⁵ Much secondary literature deals with this important document.³³¹⁶ During deliberations at the UN General Assembly on 10-12 May 1947 over the remit and composition of the Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) Syria, Iraq and Lebanon submitted a motion to include this Arab-States proposal on UNSCOP’s agenda.³³¹⁷ [>455; >459]

The six-month time limit for drafting a constitution was to prevent blockage by the Jewish minority, overcoming the problem that had been contained in the 1939 White Paper’s

³³¹⁴ FO 800/486, §56-58.

³³¹⁵ CO 537/1778, pp 4-8.

³³¹⁶ Zuaytir 1958, p 168; Khalaf 1991, p 112 & Ch. 5 note 98; Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 142-43; also Sykes 1965, p 360; Khalidi 1992, p 57.

³³¹⁷ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, 6.b.8.

failure to state a definite time limit for independence. Note that *residency* was not sufficient for *citizenship*, and that in fact only 40-50% of Palestine's Jewish residents had become citizens under the Citizenship Order in Council of 1 August 1925 [→186]. The Foreign Office added some commentary to its rendering, e.g.:

Finally, it is part of the Arab plan that Jewish immigration into Palestine should cease forthwith; and that the question whether there should be any further immigration in the future should be left for decision by the Arab members of the Legislature when it had been established. (§58)

What the Arab states were proposing was at this time fluid, i.e. there were additions and changes in some of the details.

Britain could have done all of this, or something similar, at any time during the Mandate, but in case it needed tutelage as to exactly how to go about it, here was the blueprint, a blueprint by the way very similar to what was wished for by the Palestinian and Arab Delegations, supported by Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, at the St. James talks in February and March 1939. [→387ff]

The Palestinian Arabs had no *official* part in this proposition in the sense that they were boycotting the talks with Bevin, but they participated unofficially, and everyone knew the stance of the Palestinians, anyway. It is remarkable for its detail. Some Palestinians like Musa al-Alami supported it. But according to Khalaf, Hajj Amin al-Husseini and his Arab Higher Committee rejected it, demanding immediate independence and wanting to restrict citizenship for Jews to those who were living in Palestine (and their descendants) in 1917.³³¹⁸ As opposed to this Arab-States proposal, such a restricted-citizenship constitution would create the problem of whether or not the Jews who did not qualify could remain as residents. Apparently, one contentious issue was that of timing, the other of qualification for participatory citizenship.

Alas, already as of late September, according to Francis Williams,

the [‘Round Table’] conference was doomed. Conscious that they could rely upon American support however intransigent their attitude, the Zionists announced through their official organisation, the Jewish Agency, that they would not even sit down with the British to discuss their proposals. In reply the Arab States insisted that Palestine was and must always remain an Arab State.³³¹⁹

Further talks were thus postponed until December and January. [→450-52]

³³¹⁸ Khalaf 1991, p 131.

³³¹⁹ Williams 1961, p 573.

This entry picks out some of the details of U.S.-U.K. conflict over Palestine from the Foreign Office collection of Foreign Minister Bevin's papers.³³²⁰ **Truman's first public cry** for 100,000 European Jews to go to Palestine had come on 30 April 1946 just at the time of the publication of the Anglo-American report [>438], and included a U.S. rejection of the U.K. 1939 White Paper [>410]:

I am very happy that the request which I made for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine has been unanimously endorsed by the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry. ... I am also pleased that the Committee recommends in effect the abrogation of the White Paper of 1939 including existing restrictions on immigration and land acquisition to permit the further development of the Jewish national home... (p 101)

The U.K. Ambassador to the U.S. was then Lord Inverchapel, a staunch Zionist. (pp 74, 89, 124, 126, 145, *passim*) The electoral importance of the strong Jewish community numbering approximately 5,000,000 was well known. (p 98) [>444] In a **November 1946 summary** for Prime Minister Attlee of political events Foreign Secretary Bevin, often working in New York, wrote that

It was quite clear in discussions with [U.S. Secretary of State James] Byrnes that this matter has become so competitive here that really it is a contest for the New York vote as between Truman and [his rival New York Governor Thomas E.] Dewey... (p 128)

Palestinians and other Arabs had no such power.

As just quoted, the U.S. liked the Anglo-American Committee's call for the immigration of 100,000 in the near future. [*see* >431; >439; >442; >445; >447] But it did not sign on to the constitutional contents of the entire Report. On 18 August 1946 **Attlee had telegraphed** Truman saying how disappointed he was that the US rejected the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady schemes and saying he was setting his hopes on further Arab-Jewish talks without US participation. He also sent sharp words to Truman about the latter's refusal to await the outcome of the talks between Britain and the Arab states [>444-447] – which however would soon be halted by a Jewish boycott of those talks.

Truman's replies to Attlee dated 3 & 10 October 1946 were conciliatory in tone, but he insisted, also in a public statement of 4 October, that against the will of both the British and around 80% of the citizens of Palestine 100,000 displaced Jewish persons in Europe should immediately be sent to Palestine – at US expense. Also on 4 October, Bevin officially and unequivocally told the U.S. that "His Majesty's Government could not in any event allow the movement of 100,000 Jews into Palestine to begin during this adjournment [of the trilateral London talks, >444-447], or commit themselves to any such change

³³²⁰ FO 800/486, all quotations.

of policy before the end of the Conference.” Attlee repeated this clear message on 11 October. (pp 23-32, 39-41, 46)³³²¹ Truman, aside from the immediate-immigration question, on 5 October 1946 expressed himself publicly in favour of a Jewish state.³³²²

The basic conflict was that the only U.S. concern was the Jews in Europe while the U.K. faced the problems of cost, commitments to the populace, and political unrest in Palestine – unless it simply withdrew. The U.S. was pressuring the U.K. to admit the 100,000, as revealed in Truman’s reply of 3 October after it became clear that the tri-lateral ‘conference’ would be delayed. Truman informed Attlee that he would publicly announce that both the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady expert groups had supported the 100,000’s immediate emigration to Palestine, and that he [Truman] had formed a “Cabinet Committee on Palestine and related problems”. In short:

In view of the fact that winter will come on before the Conference can be resumed, I believe and urge that substantial immigration into Palestine cannot await a solution to the Palestine problem and that it should begin at once. ... In light of the terrible ordeal which the Jewish people of Europe endured during the recent war and the crisis now existing, I cannot believe that a programme of immediate action... could not be worked out... (pp 28-29)

Because neither joint US/UK committee [^{>438; >442}] allowed for a Jewish *state* in Palestine, Truman supported the Jewish Agency’s latest partition plan, i.e. a plan with a smaller Jewish state.³³²³ While the two above-named plans had haltingly criticised the Western countries’ advocating immigration to Palestine but not to their own countries, the Truman telegrams show no such self-awareness, even if he did vaguely promise a “recommendation to the US Congress” to “liberalize... the admission of displaced persons”.³³²⁴ Completely absent from this U.S.-U.K. skirmish was any input from Palestinians.

23 November 1946 *Fawzi Darwish Al-Husseini is murdered as a warning to any Palestinian not to enter negotiations with the Zionist movement.*

³³²¹ Also Bethell 1979, p 282.

³³²² *Washington Post*, 5 October 1946, p 1.

³³²³ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 143-45, Truman/Dean Acheson to Attlee 3 October 1946.

³³²⁴ Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 144-145.

The “**top secret**” survey written on 23 November 1946 by the British Foreign and Colonial Offices for the edification of U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes³³²⁵ commented on the Arab States’ proposal [447]:

Advantages: (i) It is claimed for the Arab plan that it is founded on normal democratic principles, since the will of the majority will prevail. (ii) Adoption of the plan would win the friendship of all the Arab countries, and ensure their continued co-operation with us in the strategic field. (§59)

Everyone knew what “normal democratic principles” were and that they were not being applied in Palestine. “Disadvantages”:

The plan would be bitterly opposed by the Jews since they would become a permanent minority in an Arab-controlled Palestine. It would subject the national home, with its highly organised European population and its extensive commercial and industrial interests, to control by a backward Arab electorate, largely illiterate [sic.] and avowedly inimical to its further progress.

Jews were superior to Arabs, that is, but the survey also noted that adhesion to the Arab plan would result in violent *Jewish* opposition. (§60) In the minds of Britain’s foreign-policy functionaries it was “progress” that the “backward” and “illiterate” Arabs were against, not the denial of their right to define what progress was.

CO and FO also asserted that

Jewish immigration is the real crux of the Palestine problem... Under the Arab plan, Jewish immigration would be subject to Arab control and it may be assumed that very little – if indeed any – would be permitted. This fact alone renders the Arab plan repugnant to Jewish opinion. ... [A]n attempt might be made to persuade the Arabs to agree to a considerable initial Jewish immigration as a condition of the acceptance of the remainder of the plan. It may well be doubted, however, whether the Arabs would acquiesce in any such compromise; they accepted a similar undertaking in 1939 only to see it unilaterally suspended. (§75-77)

They did not even know that “the Arabs” had not accepted the 1939 “undertaking”.

The survey closed thus:

Any policy, to be acceptable, must meet the following requirements: (1) It must accord with the principles of justice and have regard to past British recognition of the rights of both Arabs and Jews. (2) It must be consistent with the principles of democracy. (5) It must be such as to secure the approval of the General Assembly of the United Nations... (§83)

In point 1) HMG was the definer of “rights” and “justice” and in point 2) they were implying without blushing that their rejection of the admittedly democratic scheme of the Arabs was “democratic”. They were also premising that the UN (or the U.K.), rather than

³³²⁵ FO 800/486, pp 93-120, all quotations.

the actual inhabitants of Palestine, held rightful power. The basic criterion was acceptability to "Jewish opinion", upon which the verdict of the General Assembly would in turn depend.

1946 *'During 1946 more British servicemen and civilians were killed (73) by Jewish terrorists than by the Arabs in the peak year of the Arab Rebellion (69) in 1938.'*³³²⁶

Late 1946 *'The Arabs of Palestine continued their activities in connection with the boycott of Zionist goods, publicity for the Palestine case and the collection of contributions for the national cause. Delegations were sent to London, New York, the Islamic countries and the South American republics.'*³³²⁷

4 January 1947 *'On 4 January 1947, the Arab League formally asked the British Government to readmit the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem to Palestine, and the Secretary-General Azzam Pasha announced they would unite against any partition scheme or continued Jewish immigration.'*³³²⁸

³³²⁶ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 110, citing Kirk, George E., 1959, *A Short History of the Middle East*, p 217.

³³²⁷ Zuaytir 1958, p 170.

³³²⁸ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 114, citing the *New York Times*, 5 January 1947, p 17 and 6 January 1947, p 4.

450.* **Palestinians at the Round Table Conference** Jan/Feb 1947

This 7-page entry covers much of the last-ever talks between Palestinians, Arabs from neighbouring countries, and HMG.

Representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan, Yemen, and the “Palestine Arabs” took part in the 8th through the 12th meetings of the ‘Palestine Conference’ in London between 27 January and 14 February 1947.³³²⁹ The Palestinians were no longer boycotting meetings with the British usurpers, as they had the first seven meetings held in September. [444-447] But HMG had “given very careful attention to the proposals which the Arab Delegates left with us when the Conference last met.” (p 1, 8th meeting) [447] As of mid-January the Arab delegates prepared their positions at various hotels in London, the Palestinian delegation, at the Ritz, consisting of Jamal Effendi al-Husseini, Dr. Hussein Khalidi, Mouin Effendi Maadi, Sami Eff. Taher, Dr. Omar al Khalil, Yusuf Eff. Sahyoun and M. Emil Ghoury – basically the Arab Higher Committee.³³³⁰ The substance of HMG’s position had not changed since September, with Foreign Secretary Bevin stating exactly what had been written in the Foreign Office/Colonial Office memorandum to U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes dated 23 November 1946³³³¹ [445; >449].

Opening, Bevin said,

We are now beginning what must be, as far as His Majesty’s Government is concerned, a final effort to settle the Palestine problem. Since the close of the 1914-18 war, HMG have endeavoured to carry out their undertakings throughout the Arab world and have helped to create, as I think you will acknowledge, a number of independent States. The one exception has been Palestine, the most intractable problem of all. ... Since that time many attempts have been made to find a solution of the Jewish-Arab problem... (p 1, 8th meeting, 27 January)

The “Palestine problem” was said to be “Jewish-Arab”, not one between the Palestinians and Bevin’s country, which bore sole responsibility for its alleged “intractability” – a condition which had always been remediable in one stroke by granting the entire populace of Palestine self-determination.

Bevin upped the pathos:

It is no longer a question merely of the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. I feel myself that the whole future of the Middle East is at stake and I hope that we shall all approach the problem in a statesmanlike manner without prejudice and with a sense of responsibility. ... The present situation cannot be allowed to continue. I do not think Great Britain deserves it. The part she has played in two wars and the price she has paid in blood and money and tears entitles her to the most serious consideration. (p 2)

³³²⁹ CO 537/2324, *all citations*. Since these 100 pages are not consecutively numbered, citations are to pages within the notes of *each* meeting.

³³³⁰ FO 371/61746, pp 23, 28, 30, 55, 76-77, 79 [“closed until 1978”]; also e.g. CO 733/408/15, ‘Resolution Published by the Arab Higher Committee after the Meetings at Zuq Michael’, ca. 18 January 1939, pp 1-2, 1-7.

³³³¹ FO 800/486, pp 93-120.

The Foreign Secretary was feeling sorry for his country although, since his country was self-determined, it had itself decided what it wanted every step of the way. Somehow, British losses in two World Wars were a claim on Palestinians.

He then gave the floor to the “Palestinian Arab representatives”. The Arab Higher Committee rejected all of the three British-U.S. schemes of 1946, variously called ‘federal’, ‘cantonisation’, or ‘provincial autonomy’. They had been the work of the Anglo-American Committee [^{>438}], the Morrison–Grady Committee [^{>442}] and the combined British Foreign and Colonial Offices seeking to keep the U.S. happy [^{>444}; ^{>445}]. They all amounted to quasi-partition, with the requirement of Jewish-majority agreement to key laws and the further non-negotiable immigration of 100,000 Europeans.

Reacting to decades of debates and humiliation over the same few basic issues, AHC representative Jamal al-Husseini once again adumbrated:

The Palestinian case is simple and self-evident. It is that of a people who desire to remain in undisturbed possession of their country and to safeguard their national existence in freedom. This natural right happily coincided with the high principle of self-determination and of a series of promises and pledges which were given to the Arabs by the Government of Great Britain, who occupied Palestine after having declared to the world that they entered the Holy Land as allies and deliverers of its people, and not as conquerors. During the last 25 years, however, Palestine has been denied the right to self-government, in violation of those rights and pledges as well as the Covenant of the League of Nations. An autocratic administration was set up with the primary aim of assisting the Jews in their invasion of Palestine. The Balfour Declaration on which this policy was based was a vague and one-sided encouragement made by Great Britain to alien Jews in the absence and complete ignorance of the Arab owners of the country. (p 3)³³³²

Indeed, by rights one would have thought it a “happy” matter that the self-determination *Zeitgeist* and liberation from the Ottomans had “coincided”. He added details such as the increase since 1918 of the Jewish population “by enforced migration from 7 per cent to 33 per cent of the entire population” and of Jewish possession of the “cultivable area” of Palestine from 1 per cent to 30 per cent. (Of all land, Jews possessed about 6%.)

After further reviewing the history of the conflict and noting that “through the Jewish Agency, Jews in Palestine have enjoyed the privileges of a state within a state, while the Arabs have had no say whatever in the government of their country”, and:

During this period [of the Mandate] Jewish political claims had inflated from a modest spiritual home to the establishment of a Jewish state, which they seek to enforce by the present campaign of terrorism.³³³³ This state of affairs has driven the Arabs to the point of exasperation, for they beheld that all the apprehensions they entertained 25 years ago were being rapidly justified. Certain quarters had proposed that justice may be done if the country were

³³³² Also PASSIA 2001, p 80.

³³³³ Nakhleh 1991, pp 65-230; Suárez 2016; Suárez 2023.

partitioned between Arabs and Jews. We believe that such a proposal is an easy pretext for overlooking the fundamental issues of the controversy, and for evading the difficulties of a problem that has been created by a gross injustice. (p 4)

The two-state solution was then and still is today the “easy” way out – despite both its girth and its sharp analysis, the Royal Commission Report had not gotten down to the “fundament” – and the accusation was of British irresponsibility, echoed and embellished by Syrian representative Fares Bey Khoury at the 10th meeting on 4 February. (p 17)

Further regarding partition, so Jamal,

The futility, injustice, and impracticability of partition have been proved by a special commission of experts that was sent over to Palestine by the British Government to study the subject on the spot. [Woodhead, >376] (p 4)

Looking once again at unpartitioned Palestine,

Homogeneity in race has always been the natural basis for mutual understanding and community of interests. The creation of an alien Jewish state in Palestine means the destruction of... territorial and national homogeneity and the creation of a running sore that will undoubtedly become a permanent source of trouble in the Middle East. (p 5)³³³⁴

To be sure, arguing from “homogeneity in race” was a dangerous flirt with the ethno-nationalism so unabashedly espoused by the Palestinians’ Zionist enemies.

Replying to Jamal, Bevin first shirked personal responsibility:

Mr. Bevin said that he was not in a position to express the views of HMG at this stage. He would be quite frank and say that representatives of HMG would meet the Jews in the course of the next day or two. ... HMG would stand condemned in the eyes of the world if they did not give the fullest consideration to every point of view. (p 6)

Materially, though,

There were two major difficulties inherent in the Arab Plan; the first was that it denied further immigration to the Jews, and the second, that it put the Jews in a permanent minority in Palestine. (p 6)

To be able, when pressed as he had been by Jamal, to claim that one is not authorised to give an answer, was a luxury reserved for the more powerful party. Despite his disclaimer, however, Bevin in identifying these “two major difficulties” was in fact doing nothing if not “expressing the views of HMG” as well as siding already with one of the “points of view”: immigration couldn’t be touched and the Jews must be given the chance to become a majority.

Bevin then added that the Swiss “cantonisation” system was workable, apparently in ignorance of the fact that the Swiss constitution with not a single word mentions citizens’ religion or ethnicity or ‘nationality’. He also said that the United Nations would not “agree to a solution which meant the expulsion either of Jews or of Arabs from the country”. The

³³³⁴ Also John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 117-18; Bethell 1979, pp 292-97.

first-named “expulsion” was a straw man, as the Palestinians had usually and increasingly explicitly embraced all Jewish citizens, or even all present Jewish residents, in their envisioned representative–democracy state.

He then returned to his framing of the “problem”: “The irreconcilable differences which had developed over the last twenty–five years between the two communities in Palestine was the problem which HMG had to solve.” Here, too, he did not acknowledge that Britain itself had been responsible for framing Palestinian politics in terms of communities and even *millets*.³³³⁵ Finally, he hid behind ‘international law’: the British Mandate could not be given up until “authorised by the United Nations or the Trusteeship Council”.³³³⁶ (pp 6–7) [see >487]

At the 9th meeting, on 30 January, Bevin began with an assurance that “This is after all a Conference”, not a one–way street “simply to communicate to you the final decisions of HMG”. (p 1) He contrasted the “unitary democratic State... with an Arab majority” proposed by the Palestinians with both “partition”, which was not yet out of the running, and the Jews’ “initial claim” during the past few days “that the whole of Palestine should become a Jewish State”; the Palestinian proposal floundered on its certain rejection by the Jews, presented as an ineluctable fact of nature; he then denounced any solution that would have to be “imposed by force”, oblivious to the fact that that was what Britain had been doing for 25 years and was still doing as he spoke. (pp 2–3; also 10th meeting, pp 17, 41) The Jews, furthermore, wanted and should get “a greater degree of self–government than is provided for in your proposals”; he then reiterated his bi–national solution before preparing the path for Britain to exit Palestine with its prestige intact, stating, “Palestine is not a British possession;...” (pp 5, 6) – a sophism serving his shirking responsibility which then became explicit:

World opinion now saw two peoples in Palestine and it was felt strongly in many quarters that restitution of some kind should be made to the victims of Hitler’s persecution, and that the answer was Palestine. The problems present in Palestine went back for many thousands of years and HMG were not responsible for their creation although they were now responsible for a solution. (p 8)

The particular “problem... in Palestine” he was addressing most decidedly did *not* go back “thousands of years” but dated from Britain’s embrace of Zionism. This assertion concerning the previous “thousands of years” was shamefully evidence–free and differed completely from the view of all concerned – yes, including all British investigators – that for centuries there had almost always been peace between Jews, Christians and people who became Moslems.³³³⁷ Bevin’s words up to this point certainly caused his Arab listeners’ hearts to sink, for they were miles behind HMG’s wisdom when Malcolm MacDonald had been in charge of Palestine policy.

Bevin then slightly revised his take:

³³³⁵ Robson 2011.

³³³⁶ UN Charter, Ch. XII.

³³³⁷ See also Robson 2011, pp 158–59.

He admitted that the situation was not one created by the Arabs. The Jews had behaved in a most misguided way and they had been encouraged in their misdemeanours not by the Arabs or by Great Britain but mainly by the United States of America. He could not conceive what had led the Germans to indulge in such extreme persecution of the Jews but the fact remained that the Jews had lost more people during the war than almost any of the belligerents. He appealed to the characteristic generosity of the Arabs to help Great Britain to solve this problem. A satisfactory solution would enhance the reputation of the Arabs in the whole world. (p 9)

Reacting to this appeal by the colonial power to the generosity of the colonial vassal, Iraqi representative Fadhil Jamali said he “hoped that the Arabs would not be expected to pay for Hitler’s guilt”, to which Bevin replied that “the difficulties which Hitler had created in Palestine were very minor compared with the widespread difficulties created by him throughout the world.” (p 10) It is difficult to identify any conceptual space in the British position for even a coherent discussion, because Bevin kept changing the subject.

Egyptian representative Abdel Rahman Hakki Bey said “it was impossible to reconcile the ambitions of the Jews and the legitimate desires of the Arabs” and that the “Arab Plan, which was submitted in September to the Conference [447], went a long way to appease the Jews in Palestine”. (pp 11-12) Using the term “legitimate” delegitimised the Jews’ “ambitions”. During further skirmishing between future Lebanese President Camille Bey Chamoun, Bevin, Fares Bey Khoury and Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones, Dr. Jamali of Iraq

said that a fundamental aspect of the Arab approach to the problem was that the Arabs had never acknowledged the legality or the morality of the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The idea that the Jews should be regarded as being the equals of the Arabs in Palestine was unfair and unjust. (p 17)

Even parity, much less a Jewish state, was unjust.

As this ninth meeting drew to a close Jamal al-Husseini again “said that the Palestinian Arabs rejected any idea of a Jewish State in any part of Palestine”, prompting Bevin to “acknowledge that the establishment of a Jewish State would be a step beyond the requirements of the Mandate” (pp 20-21); a solidly-constructed non-national ‘home’ was perhaps enough. Khoury reminded the British that the Arab Plan was offering the Jews “political rights as a community; the use of Hebrew as an official language in Jewish areas; and the establishment of Jewish Courts. If HMG were to accept the Arab Plan they should have no difficulty in obtaining international support for it.” (p 21) He did not even mention the offer of (individual) citizenship to all resident Jews, but then of course Jewish “political rights” as an ethno-religiously defined *community* had been the largest bone of contention since the beginning of Zionist ideology.

Jamal then returned to the nuts and bolts, charging that further immigration violated HMG’s own, still valid 1939 White Paper’s immigration restrictions [410] and HMG “should honour that obligation”. (p 22; also p 7, 12th meeting) The discussion turned to “whether it could be said that a Jewish National Home had already been established in Palestine” [see

>221; >222; >232; >243; >266; >287; >326; >349; >364; >365; >392; >406; >411-13], evoking from Creech Jones not an answer but the remark that “this proposition had never been endorsed by the Mandates Commission [or] the League of Nations.” (p 22)

Creech Jones, according to a 16 January 1947 Memorandum to the Cabinet,³³³⁸ actually held that “the only reasonable solution of the Palestine problem is that recommended by the Royal Commission of 1936”. This despite his realising that the contrasting “Arab Plan [was] founded on normal democratic principles since the will of the majority will prevail” and that it was arguably

in conformity with the provisions of Article 76 of the Charter of the United Nations in that it spells progressive development towards self-government for every country according to ‘the freely expressed wishes of the [majority of the] people concerned’..

The Arab Plan, in short, “incorporate[d] every feature of the White Paper of 1939...”. But alas, applying this democratic principle to Palestine would

spell the cessation of immigration, the arrest of Jewish development in Palestine, and the permanent subjugation of the national home, with its highly organized European population and its extensive commercial and industrial interests, to a backward Arab electorate, largely illiterate and avowedly inimical to its further progress.

The ‘backward Arab’ trope was alive and well, economics trumped politics, and “progress” trumped “self-government”.

The 10th ‘plenary’ meeting on 4 February, attended again by Palestinians Jamal Bey al-Husseini, Dr Hussein Khalidi, Emil Effendi Ghoury, Sami Effendi Taher, Dr Omar al Khalil, and Yusuf Effendi Sahyoun, opened with Fares Khoury restating:

1. The Arabs are the lawful owners of Palestine, and as such are entitled to self-determination and to all the freedoms for which the two world wars were waged. To deprive them of those rights is neither moral nor just. ...
2. The Arabs... were not responsible for Hitler's acts, and there is no reason why they should be asked to pay and suffer for them. If any compensation is to be given to the Jews, it should be given by those who have made the suggestion, and at their own expense. Moreover, Hitlerism has been crushed and there is nothing to prevent the Jews once more living peacefully in Europe. ...
3. [T]he British Government should honour its pledges, given in the White Paper of 1939, which declared that Great Britain's obligations in regard to the establishment of a Jewish National Home had been fulfilled, and that immigration should be finally ended. ...
5. The Arabs know the aggressive imperialistic nature of Zionism, and insist that the danger from it be eliminated once and for all.
6. There are hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Arab world, who have always lived at peace with their neighbours, but now the problem of Palestine is embarrassing them, rendering their position difficult. ...
7. We submit that it is not morally right to regard the Arabs of Palestine as standing on the same level as the Jews. The Arabs have a natural right to the country, while the Jews have been forced upon them. ...
8. The Arabs wish to live in a Palestine which is a single undivided unit, and to lead therein an independent and democratic national life. The rights of those Jews who have acquired citizenship legally will

³³³⁸ FO 371/61764, pp 3-7.

be guaranteed in the same way as those of the Arab inhabitants. The Jews need have no fear of the Arab majority, for the whole course of Arab history demonstrates the liberality of the Arabs towards those who live amongst them, to whatever race or faith they may belong. (pp 1-6)

To **this unsurpassed summary of the indigenous position** he added that the Arabs would resist further partition and immigration.

Lebanese delegate Chamoun's long (pp 9-17) speech included a plea that the British put themselves in the Palestinians' shoes:

In order to facilitate understanding of the gravity of the injustice done to Palestine, I would ask the British Delegation to substitute for a moment the words 'Great Britain' for the word 'Palestine' and to say what would be the reaction of this country [Britain] if a third Power were to impose upon her an alien element whose presence was of a nature to disrupt her national life and her political and territorial unity. There can be no doubt as to the re-action of the British people. ... Palestine can hardly be expected to re-act in a different manner. ... The fact that Great Britain is a powerful nation and Palestine a small country in no way changes the situation. (pp 10-11)

He added a good analysis of the Mandate text. [^{>146}]

After interventions from Abdel Rahman Hakki Bey, Dr. Jamali and Fares Khoury, Bevin said he "was sorry to have to say that a solution of the problem seemed no nearer", that HMG remained on the fence regarding partition, and "that the Labour Party, to which [he] belonged, had never accepted the 1939 White Paper" (p 21) – which had however indeed been accepted by His Majesty's Government, Cabinet and Parliament [^{>410; >411}], a point made a bit later by Fares Bey (p 23). He then fell back on the argument that Palestine "was a problem of peculiar interest to all Jews" and even on the Faisal-Weizmann agreement of 1919 [^{>37}], whereupon "Jamal Bey Husseini intervened to say that it would be better for the Arabs if the British withdrew" (pp 22-23), presumably even if the U.N. then took over. Fares Bey then "expressed the opinion that U.N.O. should be asked to confirm the [1939] White Paper", after which Jamal Bey appealed to Bevin to look at immigration not exclusively politically but "as a socialist statesman", in which case he would see that in terms of economic, population-density and land conditions the Palestinians had nothing more to give away, even bringing up the question of water scarcity and water rights. (pp 24-26)

Creech Jones then reverted to the argument that the Arabs were economically better off due to Zionism; the Palestinians should

recognise that as a result of the influx of Jewish capital, the whole economic outlook of Palestine has changed, with the result that communication had been developed, marshes had been drained and the field of employment for Arabs had been extended and their standard of living raised. (pp 27-28)

The debate over development and material well-being, which for the Palestinians was a distant second in importance to political freedom, continued with the participation of

Dr Khalidi and Mr. Dimechkie (Lebanon), before returning to the political question of the intended Zionist dominance of all of Palestine and the point that, as put by Khoury, “the essence of the problem was political”. (pp 28-33)

According to John Quigley, Dimechkie then condensed the Arabs’ thinking:

- (a) Jewish historical case: Arabs have been in Palestine so long that this can hardly be taken seriously;
- (b) Distress of Jews in Europe: Arabs have not caused this and do not see why they alone should be called upon to remedy this distress;
- (c) Jewish religious interests: Jews did not have an exclusive religious interest and there was no reason why such interest should have political consequences;
- (d) Jews are capable of developing Palestine economically better than present inhabitants: This argument was precisely that used by Italians in Ethiopia.³³³⁹

(Italy had tried to justify its conquest of Ethiopia in 1936 with the last argument, and the first point recalls the King-Crane Commission’s comment that Jewish historical political claims to Palestine “can hardly be seriously considered”³³⁴⁰.)

Finally, as President of the Arab League Council, Fares Khoury repeated his offer to HMG: If they would once and for all repudiate the project of a Jewish State in Palestine and stop immigration, a deal could be reached. Bevin, however, answered in terms not of Fares’ question but of the “Jewish National Home” and shifted back to the question whether the Arabs would accept partition, prompting Fares to remark that Bevin had apparently not yet become aware of the Arabs’ being “inflexibly opposed to Partition”. (pp 33-34) *If it was true that the Palestinians’ demands at that point were only the two things named by Fares, Bevin’s rejection, or rather his evasion, of them was a watershed moment in the conflict.* Not only were Bevin and Creech Jones not listening, but HMG had learned nothing from almost three decades of information and opinion from both the Palestinians and HMG’s own investigators.

Bevin at one point said that if the Arabs and Jews couldn’t agree Palestine would be turned over to the United Nations, adding paternalistically that concerning the 25 years of the Mandate “His Majesty’s Government believed that their achievements during that period had been for the benefit of the country”. (pp 2, 9, 12th meeting) Jamal al-Husseini ended the 11th meeting by saying “that the Arabs would be willing to take Palestine over as soon as Britain decided to leave...” (p 16) John & Hadawi are correct in saying that at these last meetings the Arabs reiterated that Britain’s “proposals disregarded the fundamental principles put forward by their delegations. They urged that the independence of Palestine should be declared forthwith and the United Nations notified.”³³⁴¹

The last word belonged to Chamoun, who

³³³⁹ Quigley 2021, pp 175-76; see *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947*, vol. 5, p 1045, Chargé Gallman to U.S. State Department, 13 February.

³³⁴⁰ King & Crane 1919a, p 48.

³³⁴¹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 121.

said that the United Kingdom Delegates seemed to think that unless the Arabs sacrificed their rights in Palestine no settlement was possible. ... The British Government appeared to regard Palestine only from the point of view of a Jewish National Home... (p 40)

The 11th meeting on 12 February and the 12th on 14 February – the last ever between Britain and Palestine – brought in my opinion nothing new. The combined minutes of all five of these meetings, though, during which almost all Arab delegates spoke, are worth reading in their entirety for a feeling for why the Britain-Palestine dialogue had always failed. Trying to talk to Britain was both logically and normatively hopeless.

During these last-ever talks between the U.K. and Palestine, **the Anglo-Arab Friendship Society submitted a statement** to the Mandatory dated 30 January.³³⁴² It noted that “While the form of Partition proposed by the Royal Commission [>336] divided Palestine into two halves, under the Morrison [Morrison-Grady] Plan [>442; >445] it is proposed to divide it into four quarters.” In contrast, “The Arab programme” avoided partition and asked “only that the oriental characteristics of the country shall not be prejudiced by the enforced influx of an occidental immigration, introducing elements alien to the inherent disposition of its original inhabitants.” (For some reason there was no mention of the further fact that those immigrants, however well or poorly their “disposition” fitted in with that of the “original inhabitants”, wanted to take over the whole country.)

The submission supported the principles of the 1939 White Paper [>410] and the Arab Office’s submission to the Anglo-American Committee of March 1946 [>436], from which it extensively quoted, for example:

The Arabs recognise the need for giving special consideration to the peculiar position and needs of the Jews. No attempt would be made to interfere with their communal organisation, their personal status or their religious observances. ... The Palestinian State would be an Arab State, not in any narrow racial sense nor in the sense that non-Arabs should be placed in a position of inferiority, but because... the majority of the citizens are Arabs and... Palestine is part of the Arab World...

After more than a quarter-century of enmity, there was a need for the Zionists to earn the goodwill of the indigenous people:

There has been much talk of the Jews being in Palestine as of ‘right and not on sufferance’. [>142] The real choice is not between ‘right’ and ‘sufferance’, but between ‘goodwill’ and ‘force’. If the Jews recognise their need for the goodwill of the Arabs and accept the conditions on which alone it can be obtained, Palestine may yet have peace. ... The Conference is called upon to discuss the following three proposals:- a) The British Government puts forward a plan of Federal autonomy; b) The Arabs demand the creation of an independent Palestinian State and are ready to accept Jewish citizens as partners in the Government; c) The Zionists demand the creation of a Jewish State in a viable area of Palestine in which the Government will be exclusively Jewish.

Those were indeed the alternatives. Signatories for the Society were Earl of Norbury (Chairman), Hon. Secretary Frances Newton, Arab Liaison Yusif Bandak Effendi, Hon. Treasurer Mrs. Fox Strangways, and members Captain Alan Graham, Lady Makins, Douglas Reed, Esq., Captain Arthur Rogers, OBE, and Lt.-Col. A.D. Wintle.

³³⁴² CO 733/482/6, pp 8-14.

The official reports of the early-1947 talks in London between all parties³³⁴³ [>450] show that neither new proposals nor agreement on a solution were emerging, and accordingly on 6 February 1947 Foreign Secretary Bevin and Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones sent a “Top Secret Joint Memorandum” to the Cabinet³³⁴⁴ saying that after ten days of talks “there is no prospect of finding ... a settlement broadly acceptable to all parties”:

The essential point of principle for the Jews is the creation of a sovereign Jewish State. And the essential point of principle for the Arabs is to resist to the last the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in any part of Palestine. These, for both parties, are matters of principle on which there is no room for compromise. There is, therefore, no hope of negotiating an agreed settlement. (pp 322-23)

Like the Peel Commission ten years earlier [>336], Bevin was acknowledging in so many words the incompatibility of Britain’s ‘two obligations’. In this Zionist-centric framing the Arabs’ “essential point of principle” is described not in the positive terms always used by the Palestinians – their rights and freedoms, from which yes, consequences for the Jewish state follow – but rather in the negative terms of “resisting to the last”.

Britain had *imposed* a “settlement” for almost 30 years but now saw the settlement as dependent on agreement between the two other, subordinate parties in the Palestine triangle:

During the last 25 years,... it has not been possible to find a basis of co-operation acceptable to both Arabs and Jews. It has therefore not been possible to establish political institutions leading toward self-government. (p 327)

The “basis of co-operation” euphemism again relied on the parity principle, and now, in contrast to the British attitude in 1939 when faced with the exact same lack of harmony between “both parties”, at which time Britain took responsibility and unilaterally imposed the MacDonald White Paper [>386ff; >410], Bevin was shirking responsibility, laying it on the “Arabs and Jews”. Because “substantial acquiescence from both communities” was not forthcoming (p 328), Britain declared itself helpless.

On this topic of Britain’s responsibility, the clearest-ever verdict would come in 1949 from the pen of eyewitness Musa Alami:

The prime causes of the disaster were the British. It was they who gave the Jews the Balfour Declaration in 1917 with its ‘national home,’ and then opened the doors to them. British protection and patronage enabled the Jews to make Palestine their home, and to multiply. ... Under the wings of the British Mandate Jewish terrorism hatched and grew, and was trained by British hands until it became an organized military force. During all this the British prevented us from arming, and shut our eyes to the arming of the Jews, until the time came

³³⁴³ CO 537/2324 (8th-12th meetings, 27 January – 14 February).

³³⁴⁴ CAB 129/16/49, pp 322-31; also Zuaytir 1958, p 171.

when they were strong enough to stand on their own feet. Then the British withdrew and announced their neutrality. Thus the British were the prime causers of the disaster, and on them lies its responsibility.³³⁴⁵

Returning to the required “acquiescence from both communities”, their non-“cooperation” was in fact built into the Balfour-Declaration structure 30 years earlier and had been foreseen by scores of participants and observers. In fact, it had always been “possible” to “establish institutions” of “self-government”, i.e. turn Palestine over to its citizens; the only price would have been to admit one’s mistaken choices and suffer the wrath of international Zionism. But now Bevin was fulfilling the predictions of those Palestinians who had rejected the 1939 White Paper because it made independence (in ten years) conditional on harmony, peace and co-operation between the two “parties”³³⁴⁶. This, they argued, gave the *yishuv* a veto over independence: all it had to do was not mix with the locals and keep up a level of terrorism. And post-World War II – in fact post-White Paper – that was what the *yishuv* was doing, thereby opening the back door for HMG to escape from its independence promise.

Allow me to digress on the strength of the *yishuv* at this time, witnessed by this ability to cause major military disturbance and thus veto all-Palestine self-government. It was so well developed that it did not have to “co-operate”. As we have seen, the Palestinians argued as early as 1930 that the *yishuv* was so numerous and strong that objectively, one could declare the Jewish national home to be built, thus rendering the Balfour Declaration no longer relevant – argued for example by the 4th Palestine Arab Delegation to London³³⁴⁷ [>222], Musa Alami³³⁴⁸ [>266], Izzat Tannous³³⁴⁹ [>349], and George Antonius³³⁵⁰ [>406]. Herbert Samuel had been proud of the praise he received from various Jewish organisations in 1925, at the end of his five-year stint as High Commissioner, attesting that he had completed at least the “first stage” of “rebuilding the Jewish Homeland”³³⁵¹, the argument had been considered in 1937 by the Royal Commission³³⁵² [>336] and alluded to by Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald and Kenneth Pickthorn in the Commons in 1938³³⁵³ [>378]. In 1939 Malcolm MacDonald and the British Cabinet in effect accepted this argument.³³⁵⁴ Finally, Britain was free!

Bevin didn’t use this argument. Returning to his statement in the Commons: On the ground, the British were still supporting the Zionist project as they always had, and could not side with the Arab majority even though they knew what was at stake:

³³⁴⁵ Alami 1949, p 374.

³³⁴⁶ See MacDonald 1939, §9, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8.

³³⁴⁷ CO 733/191/15, Document 3, Annexure I, p iv.

³³⁴⁸ CO 733/257/12, Part 2, pp 2, 4-6.

³³⁴⁹ Tannous 1988, pp 236-37.

³³⁵⁰ CO 733/391/20, pp 92-93, 95-96, 99.

³³⁵¹ Samuel 1945, p 178.

³³⁵² Peel 1937, Ch. X §95.

³³⁵³ Hansard 1938, cc1988-89, 2017.

³³⁵⁴ MacDonald 1939, §6, 12, 13.

The Arabs have again put forward the plan which they presented at Lancaster House in the autumn [447] – that Palestine should be given early independence as a unitary state with a permanent Arab majority. They have, however, indicated that they would be ready to discuss modifications of their political proposals if they were first given firm assurance that – (a) we were prepared to exclude the possibility of Partition as a solution; and (b) we agreed that there should be no further Jewish immigration into Palestine. ... They are implacably opposed to the creation of a Jewish State in any part of Palestine, and they will go to any lengths to prevent it. Delegates representing the younger generation of Arabs have stated their sincere conviction that their contemporaries would take up arms to resist the imposition of Partition. Whatever doubts there may have been on this point in the past, we must now take it, as one of the facts of the situation, that Partition would be resisted by the Arabs of Palestine with the support of the Governments and peoples of all the Arab States. (p 322)

There was however a “possibility of compromise” on immigration if they got “satisfactory assurance that it will not be possible for the Jews, by continuing immigration, to secure a majority in Palestine”. (pp 322-23) “Partition has certain intrinsic weaknesses”, Bevin and Creech Jones continued, and, despite some “merits”, was the wrong solution, not least because:

If we [advocated Partition] we should have to face the resolute hostility of the Arab world.³³⁵⁵ ... Furthermore, the existing Mandate gives us no authority to move in the direction of creating an independent Jewish State, whether under Partition or otherwise. (p 324)

These novices were re-learning the lessons of the 1938 Woodhead Commission [376], and thus rejected *de jure* partition. But they embraced *de facto* partition in the form of a “local autonomy” scheme similar to the Morrison-Grady proposal [442], including 100,000 immediate Jewish European immigrants.

Given this Palestinian/Arab position and the temporary rejection of partition by the Jews as well, the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries were asking the Cabinet to approve a plan that

has as its primary object the development of self-government in Palestine, with the aim of enabling the country to achieve its independence after a short transition period under Trusteeship [under “Article 76 of the United Nations Charter”]. It provides for a substantial measure of local autonomy in Arab and Jewish areas; and enables Arabs and Jews to collaborate together at the centre. It contains special safeguards for the ‘human rights’ of the two communities. It provides for the admission of 100,000 Jewish immigrants over the next two years [“4,000 monthly”] and for continuing immigration thereafter by agreement between the two communities... [The plan] will not, of course, meet the Jewish claim to sovereignty... (pp 324-25)

While the 1939 White Paper had courageously and unambiguously said that further Jewish immigration would be subject to Arab veto,³³⁵⁶ this plan retreated to the wishy-washy “agreement between the two communities”.

³³⁵⁵ Also Khalidi 1992, pp 143-44.

³³⁵⁶ MacDonald 1939, §13, 14.3.

The plan, which became known as the Trusteeship Plan, or 'Bevin Scheme', was laid out for the Cabinet in sixteen detailed Articles in a 4-page Appendix (pp 327-30) and did offer one new thing:

British participation in Government shall not continue for longer than is necessary to effect the transition from Trusteeship to complete independence; and that a definite time limit shall be fixed for this period of transition. The period suggested is five years. (p 327)

They had evidently learned the lesson of the 1939 White Paper's rejection by the Palestinians due to its vagueness – leading to infinity – concerning the date of “complete independence”. [>394ff; >410; >412; >414]

For the “Central Government” no fixed percentages of Arab as opposed to Jewish representatives were prescribed. (pp 329-30) For the “Constituent Assembly”, likewise, to be elected “at the end of four years”, no guidelines were given as to its composition. (p 330) There was however, for a change, no use of the language of bi-nationalism or parity or of the right of the Jewish people (i.e. all Jews) to be in Palestine. Moreover, *within* the two areas with either majority Arab or majority Jewish population the respective minorities would have “adequate representation in local legislatures [and] a reasonable proportion of posts in the local Administration”. (p 328) In these respects this plan was an improvement over both the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady ones, and also closely resembled the Arab Plan of September 1946. [>438; >442; >447] But these British pioneers of democracy still offered no reasons why such a system of proportional representation should be workable in each of the mixed-population autonomous areas but not in the mixed-population area of Palestine as a whole.

Functional parity was indeed closer to British hearts than the proportional representation of a normal democracy, and it entered again at the end of the transition period:

If agreement was reached between a majority of the Jewish representatives and a majority of the Arab representatives in the Constituent Assembly, the High Commissioner would proceed forthwith to take whatever steps were necessary to establish the institutions of the independent state. (p 330)

Each side thus held a veto. However, should neither of the “two communities” show “acquiescence” with this Trusteeship plan, the whole situation should be “submitted to the Trusteeship Council [of the United Nations] which would be asked to determine future procedure”. (p 330) HMG would no longer carry responsibility.

In the summary of Nevill Barbour, who had been BBC Palestine correspondent during the war and who now ran the Arab section of the BBC from London:

The precise nature of the constitution [proposed by the Bevin declaration] to be established would, of course, still remain to be determined. It might resemble that of Syria, where the minority communities, believing the best guarantee of their future to be the goodwill with which they contribute to the common welfare, rejected any special guarantees. Alternatively, Palestine might be given a federated government on a cantonal basis, or, in view of its unique character as the Holy Land of three religions, a constitution such as that outlined in the spring of 1945 in the project published over the names of the Hon. R. Beaumont

and Colonel S.F. Newcombe [3417]. This suggested a bicameral legislature in which the Lower House would be elected on a territorial basis or by proportional representation, while the Upper House would consist in perpetuity of equal numbers of Muslims, Jews, and Christians.³³⁵⁷

Bevin's Trusteeship Plan had succeeded the Morrison-Grady Provincial Autonomy plan which had succeeded the Anglo-American bi-national plan; the Bevin scheme, which was approved by the Cabinet, inched towards but stopped well short of the Palestinian position. It was correctly and usefully summarised by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) seven months later [3468]:

On 7 February 1947, the British delegation at the Anglo-Arab Conference in London submitted a new proposal [the 'Bevin Plan'] for a five-year British Trusteeship over Palestine as a preparation for independence. The proposed Trusteeship Agreement was to provide for a wide measure of local autonomy in Arab and Jewish areas, and the High Commissioner was to seek the formation at the centre of a representative Advisory Council. After four years a Constituent Assembly was to be elected and, providing agreement could be reached between a majority of Arab and Jewish representatives respectively, an independent State would be established immediately. ... The proposal was unacceptable both to the Arab State delegations and to representatives of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee [AHC] then present at the London Conference.³³⁵⁸

A "majority of... Jewish representatives" had thus been bestowed with the power to turn over Palestine's future to the United Nations in this last-ever proposal negating the Palestinians' political ownership of Palestine. As exactly 30 years earlier, the bottom line was "Jewish Zionist aspirations" [316].

³³⁵⁷ Barbour 1946, p 231.

³³⁵⁸ UNSCOP 1947, Ch. II §115, 116.

XXVI. Last chance

Ernest Bevin announced on 25 February 1947 in the House of Commons³³⁵⁹ the Cabinet decision of 14 February that

The course of events has led His Majesty's Government to decide that the problem of Palestine must be referred to the United Nations... (c1901)

Although "referring" the problem to the UN did not literally mean relinquishing the Mandate, turning over control of the future of Palestine to the United Nations was the beginning of the end of relinquishment, although at this time Colonial Secretary Creech Jones also confusingly denied such an intention.³³⁶⁰ Only on 11 and 20 September 1947 would the Cabinet officially resign as Mandatory for Palestine.³³⁶¹ [^{>471}]

In the opinion of Izzat Tannous, Bevin was "the best of a bad lot" because he treated the Arabs honestly, admitted the incompatibility of the two prongs of the Balfour Declaration and for quite some time had stood up to Truman over the immediate immigration of 100,000 European Jews.³³⁶² This view was evidently shared by Musa Alami.³³⁶³ But, except for Malcolm MacDonald, a bad lot it had been. Anyway, although Bevin had the perspicacity to call Balfour's letter "the biggest mistake of British foreign policy in the twentieth century"³³⁶⁴, after almost three decades of arguing and shedding blood, HMG with him in charge of Palestine did not deliver independence and self-government, and in the end far more than 100,000 immigrants would be 'admitted'.³³⁶⁵

Judging by his words in his prelude to this announcement, Bevin himself seemed to have joined the ranks of the Palestinian leadership, the Lords that supported them in 1922, a few MPs along the way, High Commissioner John Chancellor during his stint, and Malcolm MacDonald, 1938-40, in placing weight on government determined by the actual population of Palestine:

In the other States of the Middle East where we also had a Mandate, it has led to self-government - in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and all the rest. I want to suggest that the cultural development of the Arabs and Jews in Palestine is of as high a standard as the cultural development and aptitude for government to be found in any other Arab State. (c1915)

Further,

There is no denying the fact that the Mandate contained contradictory promises. In the first place it promised the Jews a National Home, and in the second place it declared that the rights and position of the Arabs must be protected. Therefore, it provided for what was vir-

³³⁵⁹ Hansard 1947, all citations.

³³⁶⁰ CAB 128/9/22, p 94; also FO 371/61771.

³³⁶¹ CAB 128/3/2 & CAB 128/10/27, p 150.

³³⁶² Tannous 1988, p 396.

³³⁶³ Furlonge 1969, p 141.

³³⁶⁴ Hopwood 2018, p 170.

³³⁶⁵ See also John & Hadawi 1970b, p 119.

tually an invasion of the country by thousands of immigrants, and at the same time said that this was not to disturb the people in possession. The question therefore arose whether this could be accomplished without a conflict, and events in the last 25 years have proved that it could not. ... If I could get back to the contribution on purely humanitarian grounds of 100,000 into Palestine, and if this political fight for a Jewish State could be put on one side, and we could develop *self-government by the people resident in Palestine*, without any other political issue, I would be willing to try again. (c1901, 1919, *emphasis added*)

Sorry, Mr. Bevin, but this was too little too late, and moreover cowardly, because only now that it would be the UN's problem was it OK to state the obvious and give up the farce of the reconciliability of the 'dual obligations': the Mandate was "contradictory". But he was right that the "political issue" was distinct from the "humanitarian" one; it was democracy versus the establishment of a Jewish state in all or part of Palestine. Bevin was rejecting Churchill's and Samuel's 1922 principle³³⁶⁶ that any Jew, by virtue of being Jewish, had a "right" to enter and live in Palestine [¹⁴²]: further immigrants should be let in on "humanitarian" grounds only. Arguably, this implied agreement with Malcolm MacDonald's statement to the Cabinet eight years earlier, on 18 January 1939, that

We cannot accept the contention that all Jews as such have a right to enter Palestine. Such a principle is not a corollary of recognition of the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine, and it implies no more than that the Jews who have already entered, or might be allowed to enter, Palestine are or would be *in* that country as of right; that is to say, that they are the equals in national status of the indigenous inhabitants.³³⁶⁷ [³⁸³]

Bevin accordingly disposed with the Jewish "national home":

As far as Jewish development is concerned, everybody in this country, who has been associated with the affair, certainly up to 1931, assumed that it was a National Home for the Jews about which we were talking. I want to remind the House, however, that that is not the issue now. All that is over. The issue which the United Nations must consider and decide is, first, shall the claims of the Jews that Palestine is to be a Jewish State be admitted; second, shall the claim of the Arabs that it is to be an Arab State, with safeguards for the Jews under the decision for a National Home be admitted; or, third, shall it be a Palestinian State, in which the interests of both communities are as carefully balanced and protected as possible? (c1901)

Why did his description of the first option not add the qualifier 'with safeguards for the Arabs'?

He in any event rejected partition because there would always be "a tremendous row as to where the frontier should be";

We can make one viable State, and, so far as I can see, or as far as any student of the map could see, the only thing we could do would be to transfer the rest to one of the Arab States, but I ask what trouble is that going to cause in the whole of the Arab world? That will set going a conflict which will be worse than the conflict we have tried to settle. (c1917)

³³⁶⁶ Cmd. 1700, p 19.

³³⁶⁷ CAB 24/282/4, p 35/§14.

He had seen a lot of partition schemes, but:

The best partition scheme, and the most favourable one that I have seen up to now, has the effect that it would leave, at the present moment, 450,000 Jews and 360,000 Arabs in that Jewish State. I put that to the Arabs quite frankly, and what was their answer? The Arabs say: 'If it is wrong for the Jews to be in a minority of 33½ or 40 per cent. in the whole country, what justification is there for putting 360,000 Arabs under the Jews? What is your answer to that?' I have no answer to that. (c1917)

The only possible answer (as the Peel Commission had realised³³⁶⁸) would be to transfer the Arabs out of that "one viable state":

Either the Arabs in the partitioned State must always be an Arab minority, or else they must be driven out – the one thing or the other – and, on that basis, I am afraid that I should be led, and the Government would be led, to a worse position. (cc1917-18)

"Carving up a State that was not ours", moreover, would lead to "Syria, or some other country, [taking] us to the United Nations" for a legal challenge. (c1918) This route of officially asking the new International Court of Justice (since April 1946 the arbitration organ of the U.N.) to determine the UN's competence in disposing of Palestine would be tried in mid-November 1947 by Subcommittee 2 of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine,³³⁶⁹ but was voted down on 25 November by the General Assembly, 18 Yes/25 No/11 Abstentions. [>478] Speaking of abstentions, further proof of the cowardice behind Bevin's big words is the fact that the Labour Government would abstain on every single UN General Assembly vote in 1947!

Bevin went on to endorse the Morrison-Grady position that Palestine should be Palestinian, not Jewish, but asserted that the British, forced to work with the US-Americans, "could not enforce the White Paper of 1939 as the basis of our policy." (c1903)³³⁷⁰ Whether from war exhaustion, or dependence on US financial aid, or lack of deep conviction, HMG decided not to remain in Palestine in order to "try again", i.e. to implement this new position combining 'MacDonald' [>410] with 'Morrison-Grady' [>442]. Seeing themselves unwilling to carry out their preferred policy, he and the Attlee government gave up, leaving the major role in the hands of the U.S. which, as Ben-Gurion had seen in 1939, would be the locus of Zionism's strongest support³³⁷¹. It seems the U.S. was really now in control of the Palestinians, but no bi-lateral dialogue ever took place.

During debate on Bevin's cheap lecture in the House of Commons, Opposition spokesman Oliver Stanley, referring to the rejected Morrison-Grady Plan, implicitly accepted this renunciation of the 1939 MacDonald White Paper:

It was made abundantly clear [in August 1946] by both parties, Jews and Arabs, that it was not acceptable to them, and the rejection was based not upon this or that detail which might have been susceptible to modification, but on a fundamental divergence of view which has

³³⁶⁸ Peel 1937, XXII §36, 39-43, also IX §64.

³³⁶⁹ UN1947n, Chapter I, especially §8, 37, 40.

³³⁷⁰ Also Smith 1996, p 129.

³³⁷¹ Khalidi 1987, pp 481-88.

come up on every proposal that has been made – who is to control immigration, not for this year, not for next year, but in perpetuity, because the man who controls immigration decides whether there is to be a Jewish or an Arab majority, and whoever decides whether there is to be a Jewish or an Arab majority decides whether there is to be a Jewish or an Arab State. (c1925)

This logic was that behind the argument in 1939 that the Palestinians should accept MacDonald's White Paper since – whatever the weaknesses of that document – it gave them absolute control over immigration after five years and 75,000 more unwanted European immigrants. In any case, in sum, in the minds of both Government and Opposition, the Jewish Zionists should have a veto over policy; what was not acceptable to them would not be policy. Two months later the *Times* of London would capture the state of the debate thus: "The Arabs cannot admit that the right of the majority in Palestine to self-determination should be qualified by the needs of a non-indigenous people for whose plight the Arab world is in no way responsible."³³⁷²

³³⁷² John & Hadawi 1970b, p 154, citing the *Times*, 27 April 1947, p 5.

Getting back to basics, the newspaper *Al-Wachda* on 10 March 1947 carried a **rebuke of the Jewish claims to (part-)ownership of Palestine** which were behind British support for Zionism, such support revealed by their final refusal [452; 453] to unilaterally grant self-determination. Susan Hattis quotes from the editorial:

Mr Smilansky [and 'others like Smilansky, like Kalvarisky, Magnes, Sassoon, etc.'] has published in the Hebrew press a call to promote understanding between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine. ... The Jews who express this cry know that understanding between the Arabs and Jews is impossible and that cooperation is impossible...They put on a cloak of humanity in their call for understanding and cooperation, in order to make people believe that it is the Arabs who stand stubbornly and they are the ones who refuse to cooperate and bring about understanding. Indeed the Arabs are the owners of this land and its legal owners, and this propaganda in the name of humanity does not and cannot influence them. They have already suffered at the hands of the Zionists for 30 whole years. They know the Jews, their methods and ways, Zionism, its plans and aims, therefore they cannot help observing such a call but with suspicion and doubt, if not in contempt and negation. Let us suppose that the Jews are sincere in their call for understanding and cooperation, on what basis do they want the cooperation and understanding to be built? Do they want us to reach an understanding with them on the Jewification of Palestine? Do they want us to cooperate with them for the setting up of a Jewish state? ... Indeed the Arabs are willing to reach understanding and cooperation with the Jews, and the Arabs are sincere in this willingness, and they are not lying when they call for friendship, rapprochement and cooperation for the good of Palestine, but they want the understanding and cooperation to be based on two things and no more: a) that the Jews should give up their dream of a National Home or a Jewish State. b) that they will recognize the ownership of the land by the Arabs and that the Jews who entered it after 1918 are foreign invaders whose fate must be decided by the independent Arab Palestine State.³³⁷³

The European Jews whose immigration had been enabled by the Mandatory, that is, would not *necessarily* have citizenship or even remain; the Palestinians would decide that once they were independent. Note the similarity of this stance with that of the Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Article 6, namely that Jews present before the "beginning of the Zionist invasion" could be citizens.³³⁷⁴ [also >99; >178]

³³⁷³ Hattis 1970, pp 306-07.

³³⁷⁴ PLO 1968.

455. UNGA vs Palestine, Round 1

2 April-9 May 1947

On 2 April 1947 Britain asked UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie to call “a special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of constituting and instructing a special committee” on the question of Palestine.³³⁷⁵ Lie fulfilled Britain’s wish on 13 April, placing the item “constituting and instructing a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of Palestine at the second regular session” on the “provisional agenda” for that session, which would begin on 24 April.³³⁷⁶ This was the first step towards the creation on 9 May of UNSCOP (the UN Special Committee on Palestine). [^{>465ff}] For a precise chronology of General Assembly moves between 3 April and 2 June, see the Yearbook of the United Nations, 1946-47.³³⁷⁷ For another precise chronology of the creation and activities of UNSCOP see ‘Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Supplement 11’.³³⁷⁸

To start, here is an overview of the UN General Assembly’s structure which will help with this and the rest of the UNSCOP-related entries. The UNGA had six permanent Main Committees, as well as a General Committee, and could set up temporary ones. The thirteen committees of all types which dealt with the “problem of Palestine” were:

- The **General Committee** formed on 28 April 1947 consisting of the General Assembly President, 7 Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of its six Main Committees; it wrote the proposal that the GA accept Britain’s request that the UN “place the question of Palestine on the agenda of the General Assembly at its next regular Annual Session” and that the **First (Main) Committee** deal with it [^{>this entry}].
- The **First (Main) Committee** designed the UN Special Committee on Palestine (**UNSCOP**) in more detail – its remit, powers, and members) and put it to a vote by the GA [^{>458 >460}].
- **Sub-Committee 6** of the First Committee solved tricky questions of wording and bureaucratic procedure [^{>459}].
- **UNSCOP** itself consisted of the 11 member states Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia [^{>458; >460}].
- UNSCOP **Sub-Committee 1** decided whose testimony was to be heard [^{>this entry}].
- UNSCOP **Sub-Committee 3** visited displaced-persons camps in Europe.
- UNSCOP **Sub-Committee 4** studied the Holy Places and status of Jerusalem.
- UNSCOP sub-committee **Working Group on Constitutional Matters**, consisting of Sweden, the Netherlands, Guatemala and Canada, formulated a Plan of Partition with Economic Union which became known as the UNSCOP Majority Plan [^{>468}].
- UNSCOP sub-committee **Working Group on Boundaries** studied possible boundaries should partition be recommended.

³³⁷⁵ UNGA 1947a.

³³⁷⁶ UNGA 1947b.

³³⁷⁷ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function since there are no page or section numbers.

³³⁷⁸ UNSCOP 1947, Ch. I, Sections A & B (§1-81).

- UNSCOP sub-committee **Working Group on the Federal State Solution**, consisting of Australia, India, Iran and Yugoslavia, formulated a single-binational-state plan of federation which became known as the UNSCOP Minority Plan [^{>469}].
- The **Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine**, formed by the GA on 23 September 1947, was made up of all General Assembly members [^{>472}]. It was deemed necessary because the GA was still far from agreement on a recommendation, but why a technically separate 'Ad Hoc' committee was formed is a mystery to me.
- **Subcommittee 1** of the Ad Hoc Committee re-formulated the partition proposal and presented it to the GA on 18 November 1947 [^{>476}].
- **Subcommittee 2** of the Ad Hoc Committee re-formulated the single-state plan of federation and presented it to the GA on 11 November 1947 [^{>478}]. Its Report³³⁷⁹ must be read in its entirety by serious students of the Mandate.

Despite their similarities do not confuse the two UNSCOP 'Majority' and 'Minority' plans of 3 September with the two Ad Hoc Committee 'Subcommittee 1' and 'Subcommittee 2' plans of November.

Now that that's cleared up! note that on 28 April, at the beginning of this long process, which ended with the UNGA partition resolution #181 of 29 November 1947 [^{>481}], the Special Session began by debating the two distinct Palestine-related agenda items – 1) the establishment and constitution of the special committee which had been “suggested by the United Kingdom” and 2) the **“termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence” moved by Egypt and four other Arab member states**. UNSCOP, that is, was not the only item up for discussion, and indeed the second item, if answered in the affirmative, would have rendered the first superfluous, i.e. without any subject matter.

The Arab member states were thus carrying the ball for the Palestinians, but as of April 1947 a team of Palestinians was present in the U.S. According to the Zionist dissertation of Daniel Rickenbacher, it was made up of Rasim Khalidi and a “final team” consisting

equally of three Christians and three Muslims: Senior propagandist Emil Ghoury, Henry Kattan and Issa Naklah... as well as the Muslims Akram Zuaiter, Khalil Budairy and Rajai Husseini. ... The Arabs sought a debate in the General Assembly on the immediate independence of an Arab majority Palestinian state...³³⁸⁰

First, the 'General Committee' consisting of 14 members elected by the General Assembly (see list above) would consider whether both items, or just the first, should be on the agenda, and refer its decision to the entire General Assembly for approval or rejection. Despite some objections from the Canadian and Egyptian representatives on this 'General Committee' the inclusion on the agenda of the creation of UNSCOP was unanimously approved on 29 April.³³⁸¹

The second item – deciding Palestine's independence without the need for a Special Committee to study the issue – had on 23 April been “requested by Egypt, Iraq, Syria,

³³⁷⁹ UNGAo 1947.

³³⁸⁰ Rickenbacher 2017, p 211, citing CZA S25/4153.

³³⁸¹ UNGA 1947d.

Lebanon and Saudi Arabia”, i.e. the five Arab member states.³³⁸² Were Palestine directly granted its independence, they argued, there would be no need for further study and deliberations by any ‘special committee on Palestine’. The Arab states, supported ineffectively by for instance Haïti, Colombia, El Salvador, Cuba and Iran, were struggling to at least get the topic of a normal, independent democracy in Palestine onto the agenda, but they were outvoted. By a ‘General Committee’ vote of 1-8-5 the item did not even make it onto the agenda.

The arguments brought by the Arab states at this 29th meeting, on 29 April, for simply declaring independence rather than setting up still another investigative committee – perhaps the 20th such committee, this time not simply British or Anglo-American but under UN auspices – are worth a closer look because this was the beginning of the Palestinians’ last effort at a peaceful political solution and because the arguments captured the simple historical, political and legal essentials.³³⁸³ Quoting:

(1) The real question at issue was the recognition of the independence of Palestine, which, it was claimed, had already been expressly recognized in the Covenant of the League of Nations and in statements and declarations by the Allied powers. The Balfour Declaration and the League Mandate for Palestine had violated the principles of the Covenant and had resulted in the imposition of one people on another without the latter’s consent. Neither the Declaration nor the Mandate had ever been recognized by the Arabs. The other mandated territories which had formed part of the Ottoman Empire had already been granted independence and there was no sound reason to make a distinction between them and Palestine.

(2) The problem was not one of fact-finding but of establishing principles. The situation in Palestine had arisen because of the principles in the Palestine Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, which were based on expediency, power politics, local interests and local pressure. These were inconsistent with the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter provided that where other obligations were inconsistent with the Charter, the obligations under the Charter should prevail.

(3) All that was necessary in Palestine was to apply the principles of the Charter and declare an independent Palestine along democratic lines with equal rights for all citizens. This did not need a committee. Such a committee could only retard the settlement of a situation which, due to the activities of political Zionism, was daily getting more tense throughout the Arab world.

(4) The only appropriate way of bringing the question of Palestine before the United Nations was (a) to notify the General Assembly that the territory was qualified for independence; (b) to submit to the General Assembly a draft trusteeship agreement for the territory; or (c) to relinquish the mandate. The item proposed by the Arab States was in accordance with the Charter, since it provided that the discussion on the question should be directed towards the termination of the mandate.

³³⁸² UNGA 1947c. This contains links to A/287, Egypt’s request of 21 April, and the identical requests of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia (A/288, A/289, A/290 and A/291) of 22 and 23 April.

³³⁸³ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function. Also Quigley 2010, p 90; UN 2008, p 4.

(5) The whole question [of independence and Mandate termination] should be discussed since (a) the matter was urgent, (b) the committee should be adequately instructed, (c) it would in fact be impossible to avoid the question. Moreover, representatives had not come from all over the world just to appoint a committee.

(6) If there was no agreement on principles it would be of no use to appoint a committee, since the committee would have to work in the light of principles. If principles were accepted it might not be necessary to appoint a committee, but in any case the principles should be established first.

(7) Independence was the only just solution. It was, moreover, a question on which the two parties most directly concerned – the Jews and the Arabs – were formally in agreement.

(8) To discuss the independence of Palestine would not be prejudging the solution of the problem, since it had already been envisaged in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Not to discuss independence would be prejudging the question to a much greater extent.

(9) To discuss independence did not mean that it would have to be granted immediately or by any fixed date.

(10) To discuss the independence of Palestine need not prejudice the interests of the Jews, since their case could be heard. In any case the Jewish question was a completely separate one from the Palestine problem.

Points (3) & (7) materially supported the Palestinian cause, point (10) was political, and the rest were legal claims, with points (2) & (6) making the logical argument that agreement on principles had priority.

Emil Ghoury of the (Palestinian) Arab Higher Committee wrote on or around 6 May to the chairman of the 'First Committee' of the General Assembly, in broad support of the five Arab states' arguments, that the AHC

wish[es] to put on record before the United Nations that the Arabs have never recognized and will never recognize the mandate over Palestine or any act or body deriving from it.³³⁸⁴

(The United Nations and any trusteeship schemes could be seen as "derived from" the League of Nations' mandate system.)

The powerful nations' counter-arguments, as well, deserve a closer look, again quoting:³³⁸⁵

(i) To exclude this item from the agenda would not preclude independence as an ultimate issue for the solution of the Palestine problem. Independence was recognized as the objective of all the Class 'A' Mandates.

(ii) The question was complicated and needed careful, impartial and objective study. The matters of substance involved could best be discussed at the next session [in September] of the General Assembly after the committee's report had been received.

³³⁸⁴ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 133, citing the *Official Records of the First Special Session*, Vol II, p 126.

³³⁸⁵ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

(iii) The committee should consider all the material and all evidence from all sources. Its terms of reference should take into account every aspect of the problem. It would be pre-judging the issue to discuss only one possible solution as suggested in the Arab proposal; there were, for example, different ideas on the form of independence for Palestine.

(iv) The matter was urgent and a full debate on the substance of the question at the [present] special session would entail long discussions and delay the setting up of the special committee so that it might not be able to consider the question adequately by the time the next session of the General Assembly convened.

(v) The discussion of the Arab proposal would not create a good atmosphere in Palestine, conducive to the objective studies which the committee would have to make. If a general debate on the substance of the question was held at the [present] special session, the presentation of individual views would lead only to the confusion of the issue. ...

(vi) The United Kingdom proposal [for the establishment of a special committee] was practical – it involved the setting up of a committee and agreeing on its terms of reference. If the special session did this it would be justified. Whatever was essential in the Arab item would automatically be considered in the formulation of the committee's terms of reference. [False: the terms of reference would not include that.]

(vii) In view of the importance and the difficulty of the question, it was necessary to arrive at a solution that would obtain world support. ...

(viii) Many of the delegations to the special session which had come prepared to consider the procedural question of setting up a committee and determining its terms of reference were not briefed to discuss the substance of the question.

(ix) The question of substance should not be considered until the views of the Jews as well as of the Arabs were heard.

On this view the question was not only “complicated” but was in the competence of the entire “world” to decide; a “good atmosphere” was to be preserved in Palestine and “confusion” was to be avoided. While there is something to be said for point (viii), point (iv) is funny: “urgency” is invoked in order to take up a lot of time with investigations and committee work, and in pleading against “delay” it was begging the Arab states’ question of the desirability of a further investigative committee at any time at all.

The votes setting the agenda for the General Assembly First Special Session:³³⁸⁶

1. The General Committee voted on the Arab states’ motion to put Palestine’s independence on the agenda, and “The result of the voting on the Arab proposal was 1 in favor, 8 against and 5 abstentions”. Only Egypt’s Mahmoud Hassan Pasha, technically representing the GA’s (permanent) Third Committee, voted to include it. This vote to not even put a direct question to the General Assembly would have a parallel in the decision of the General Assembly on 25 November 1947 to refuse even to refer certain questions to the International Court of Justice.³³⁸⁷ [[>]478]

³³⁸⁶ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

³³⁸⁷ UNGA 1947n, §40; UNGA 1947p, §24.

2. On 1 May, the General Assembly plenary received this advisory decision from the 'General Committee' and held further debate during which some speakers countered the arguments of the powerful countries (just above) and during which El Salvador and Colombia made a compromise proposal "introducing a phrase to the effect that the special committee which was to prepare a report on the question of Palestine would have to study the termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence." As we just saw, counter-argument (vi) of the powerful countries had promised that "Whatever was essential in the Arab item would automatically be considered in the formulation of the committee's terms of reference." The compromise proposal, however, was ruled out-of-order: "The President ruled that the suggestion could not be voted on since there was no formal proposal in writing." The GA plenary then voted against putting the proposition "The termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence" on the agenda by a vote of 15-24-10. This was a decisive defeat for Palestine.

On 15 May Palestine's defeat would be sealed in that the question would be *excluded even from the terms of reference of UNSCOP*³³⁸⁸ [^{>460}], a decision which was ultimately one of the AHC's reasons for refusing to "collaborate" with UNSCOP (the other being the conflation of the European Jewish problem with Palestine).³³⁸⁹ [^{>462}] The decision was duly derisively criticised by Fares al-Khoury of Syria³³⁹⁰. [^{>459}]

Clarification of the "Position of the United Kingdom", by the way, was evidently sought by some members, but one has sympathy with whoever wrote the four paragraphs pertinent to this question for the 'Yearbook of the United Nations, 1946-47' in failing to unearth any clarity.³³⁹¹

During the next few days it was decided that the Jewish Agency for Palestine, which had "special status", should be heard by the General Assembly. Various delegations, including the Egyptian, pointed out that "the Arab States did not represent the Palestinian Arab population", and after the receipt of a cable from the Arab Higher Committee requesting "due recognition" of its right to be heard – signed by Emil Ghoury, Jamal al-Husseini, Henry Cattán, Wasef Kamal, Issa Nakhleh and Rasem Khalidi – the GA voted "by 44 votes in favor, 7 against and 3 abstentions" to hear both the Jewish Agency and "other representatives of the population of Palestine."³³⁹²

However, since the former would be allowed to speak before the GA while the latter would be allowed to speak only before the GA's 'First Committee', the AHC declared its unwillingness to testify. This privileged treatment of the Jewish Agency was remedied by a later GA Resolution, and on 9 May Henry Cattán did appear before the First Committee [^{>457}], and although rejecting that the future of Palestine was any of the United Nations'

³³⁸⁸ UNGA 1947h, §2.

³³⁸⁹ UNSCOP 1947a, Annex 5 (also Annexes 7 and 8).

³³⁹⁰ UNGA 1947f.

³³⁹¹ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

³³⁹² Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

business, he said there would be no Palestinian boycott of the UN proceedings.³³⁹³ In mid-June, however, the AHC would indeed decide once and for all to boycott UNSCOP. [462]

Shira Robinson's summary is correct that

Delegates from the Arab states and representatives of Palestine's Arab Higher Committee rejected the need for an investigation, demanding the immediate declaration of an independent, democratic Palestinian state on the basis of the UN's founding principles. Their proposal was quickly voted down, and in June the members of the UN Special Committee on Palestine [UNSCOP] established their headquarters in Jerusalem.³³⁹⁴

around 15 May 1947 *'[O]n the actual opening day of the Assembly debate, F.B.I. agents occupied the [Arab] Office and impounded its files, and investigations and interrogations continued during the whole of the Assembly session. ... The... investigators... at the end of six weeks... reported their inability to find any corroboration whatsoever of the [Zionist] accusations [of being Communist propagandists]'*³³⁹⁵

³³⁹³ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 134, 138.

³³⁹⁴ Robinson 2013, p 21; also John & Hadawi 1970b, p 131.

³³⁹⁵ Furlonge 1969, p 145.

On 23 April 1947 the House of Lords found itself once again discussing the Palestine situation in its entirety, triggered by concern over illegal Jewish immigration, Jewish terrorism and the concurrent deliberations at the UN.³³⁹⁶ The powerful members of the United Nations would in fact maintain throughout the UN deliberations over Palestine – from April 1947 til May 1948 – a positive attitude towards Zionism despite the Jewish-Zionist violence, towards both Arabs and British, which had begun in earnest in June 1939 after the approval of the MacDonald White Paper; based solely on documents in the War, Foreign and Colonial Office files, Issa Nakhleh recorded 1,591 such crimes and acts of terrorism – 79 for the period 1939–1945, 161 for 1946, 377 for 1947, and 974 for the first half of 1948.³³⁹⁷ As so often, **the discussion** revealed the intellectual arguments of the anti-Zionists in British politics who vicariously defended many of the points the Palestinians had always made.

One-fourth of the discussion consisted of the thoughts and opinions of Lord (“Viscount”) Herbert Samuel. (cc70–85) He began by stating his basic premise of Jewish superiority:

The Jewish people have always taken pride in the good deeds performed and the distinctions won by their members; in the number of scientists, writers, musicians, philosophers and statesmen, who have come from the Jewish ranks, far out of proportion to their numbers. They remember that in the distant past it was the Jewish people who laid the foundations for the three greatest religions of the world. (c70)

The missing minor premise in this enthymeme had always been that such intellectual and cultural achievements should be convertible into unusual, even unique, political rights. We encountered the derivation of Jewish political entitlement in Palestine from Jewish cultural superiority not only in Samuel’s 1915 tract ‘The Future of Palestine’ [>8; also >105; >429] but in the utterings of other powerful British politicians.

(As an aside, a statement of this philosophical principle of converting racial superiority into political power was expressed exceptionally bluntly exactly ten years after this House of Lords debate by prominent US-American political commentator William F. Buckley, Jr. – in favour of white supremacy. Commenting on a US Supreme Court decision, he wrote:

The central question that emerges... is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes – the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race. It is not easy, and it is unpleasant, to adduce statistics evidencing the median cultural superiority of White over Negro; but it is a fact that obtrudes, one that cannot be hidden by ever-so-busy egalitarians and anthropologists. The question, as far as the White community is concerned, is whether

³³⁹⁶ Hansard 1947a, cc57–121, all quotations.

³³⁹⁷ Nakhleh 1991, pp 65–230; Suárez 2016; Suárez 2023.

the claims of civilization supersede those of universal suffrage. The British believe they do, and acted accordingly, in Kenya, where the choice was dramatically one between civilization and barbarism, and elsewhere; the South, where the conflict is by no means dramatic, as in Kenya, nevertheless perceives important qualitative differences between its culture and the Negroes', and intends to assert its own.³³⁹⁸

One of the "elsewheres" suffering British application of the principle was Palestine. Indeed, I give this quotation because of its parallels with British Zionist policy, then and now.³³⁹⁹)

Samuel's main thrust (cc71-78) was the conflation which turned out to be decisive in forming world elite opinion on Zionism during 1947-48 – the plight of the European displaced Jews which in Zionists' eyes justified as much immigration to Palestine as possible, oblivious to the fact that their plight, *ipso facto*, would justify mass Jewish immigration into the U.K. and U.S. Again assuming its relevance to the Palestine question, he recounted the horrors suffered by the European Jews under the Nazis. (cc76-77)³⁴⁰⁰ He even made a long argument maintaining that present Jewish immigration, illegal under the still-valid 1939 White Paper, was legal; it was those provisions of the White Paper limiting Jewish immigration that were illegal. (cc71-74, 76, 77)

He also argued circularly:

An Arab State in Palestine, in my view, is also impracticable *in view of the Balfour Declaration*. As the noble Lord, Lord Altrincham, has quite frankly pointed out, what this country has said it must stand to. Therefore there must be a Jewish National Home in Palestine and an Arab State would very gravely shake the stability of anything that could really be called a Jewish National Home. The good faith of this country must be maintained. On the strength of the *Balfour Decimation* 500,000 people have gone there, and they have started to build up a marvellous community. Putting it on a merely monetary basis, hundreds of millions of pounds have been invested and spent there. (cc80-81, *emphasis added, with "Decimation" in the original*)

That is, his argument depended on the premise which the argument for an "Arab State" was rejecting, namely what was contained in Balfour's letter.

In an implied rebuttal of the Arab/Palestinian call for a secular democratic state he argued against Britain's own kind of democracy in the case of Palestine:

We are so accustomed, in this country and in the United States, to look upon democracy as government by a representative body which is elected by geographical constituencies that we always think there must be some areas which will elect members by a majority, and that the minority will acquiesce in the decisions of the majority. A democracy of this kind cannot

³³⁹⁸ *National Review*, Why the South must prevail, 1957; google 'why the south must prevail' or <http://forum.woodenboat.com/showthread.php?268601-quot-Why-the-South-Must-Prevail-quot>

³³⁹⁹ It was Yale alumnus Buckley, by the way, who would later quip that there was no reason for Israel to become the 51st State, for then it would have only two Senators, whereas now it had one hundred.

³⁴⁰⁰ Also Magnes et al. 1947/1983, p 94.

be maintained in countries where you have – as there are in Palestine – two communities, each imbued with a passionate feeling of the justice of their several causes. You must provide not on a basis of geography but on a basis of communities,... (c82)

Since a normal democratic system would mean the end of the Zionist project, another system had to be found, one which of course must be built on at least parity between the two “communities”. Any political scientist would reply that most nations have multiple “communities”, yet that did not prevent geographical, majoritarian democracy.

Samuel’s vision of a future Jewish state in the Near East [^{>10}] had almost come true, and the evil of partition, from his point of view, should be avoided by implementing one of the federal schemes, preferably the Anglo-American scheme (c82) [^{>438}]. Finally, he appealed to the Arab League:

It would be an act of magnanimity and of good grace to consent to a mixed Constitution of this kind, and it would be greatly to the advantage of the Arab population of Palestine, who have flourished under the Mandate. They have not been oppressed, they have not been driven out, their population has increased by as many as the Jewish population has increased, and they have reached a state of economic prosperity greater than they have ever known. (c84)

His argumentation could not depart from the assumptions that HMG should define what “oppression” was and that the Palestinians, their explicit wishes notwithstanding, should be happy with a purported material prosperity which trumped political freedom. The man was uneducable.

Countering Samuel was Lord Lloyd, son of the Lord Lloyd who had been Colonial Secretary for nine months in 1940–41 in the Government of Samuel’s friend Churchill. He first welcomed “the funeral of the present Mandate” because it had always been contradictory and “never clearly defined”. (c96) He went on to criticise the Government for being quite lenient towards the present Jewish terrorists whereas it had gone all-out to crush the Arab rebels of 1936–39. (c98) Directly to Samuel he said,

In my view we must get an absolutely clear decision on this question of the Jewish State. To say, as the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, has said, that even if you had a large Jewish majority it would not be a Jewish State, seems to me quite honestly, from the Arab point of view, to make no sense at all. At any rate I know a good many Arabs, and that is not their view. They regard themselves as the rightful inhabitants of the country and they consider that any system which will force upon them immigrants, until those immigrants in their turn become a majority, is the very negation of all international morality. (c98)

He then called Samuel out on his failure to tie immigration to the establishment of a Jewish state:

The question of immigration is obviously bound up completely with the Jewish State. If you do not intend to have a Jewish State you cannot continue to have unlimited immigration. But I believe that if this whole question of the Jewish displaced persons in Europe could be tackled on separate lines, and we could show the Arabs that other nations were doing some-

thing to deal with this problem, then the Arabs themselves would play a not inconspicuous part in doing their share. A solution based on these principles seems to me to be the only solution that we in this country can carry out with a clear conscience. (c99)

Finally, speaking about the United Nations deliberations in New York “taking place at this moment” ^[>455]:

To appoint yet another Commission at this stage seems to me, in the present situation, to be the most incredible folly. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that history will write of us that our sins in Palestine were not so much errors of omission as of Commission after Commission. (c97)

Samuel was also challenged by Viscount Hall, who had been Colonial Secretary for 14 months in 1945-46, over his bemoaning of the 1939 White Paper's ^[>410] intended cessation of European-Jewish immigration (cc108-11) and his equivocation about the Biltmore Declaration's ^[>420] intention to bring millions of Jews to Palestine and establish a Jewish state:

I cannot balance on a tightrope in describing what is to be a Jewish State. The noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, referred to the fact that if there were a majority of Jews in Palestine at any time, that would not make Palestine a Jewish State; nor, indeed, if there were a majority of Arabs – as there are at the present time – would that make it an Arab State. It is a question as to the power to be given into the hands of the persons who will elect the administrative body or organization. We hope – whether Palestine becomes an Arab State or a Jewish State – that whatever system of administration is adopted in Palestine it will be a democratic State. (c108)

The “tightrope” referred to was Samuel's convoluted mathematical-semantic discourse on why one could not correctly speak of a “Jewish State” under any circumstances: “Even if the Jews were twice as many as the Arabs in the future, it would still not be a Jewish State.” (cc80, 79)

28 April 1947 *The UN General Assembly convenes its 1st Special Session to consider the Question of Palestine (until 15 May).*

May 1947 *Under the control of Jamal Al-Husseini the paramilitary organization Futuwwa is formed.*³⁴⁰¹

13 [sic: 15] May 1947 *The UNGA adopts Resolution 106 (S-I) establishing a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), composed of Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia, to prepare a report on the Question of Palestine with proposals for a solution of the problem. UNSCOP is the 11th commission of inquiry appointed since 1919.*

³⁴⁰¹ Both Al-Futuwwa and Al-Najada were probably formed already in 1945: <http://www.mideastweb.org/Middle-East-Encyclopedia/al-futuwa.htm>

After a skirmish over whether the Arab Higher Committee would be allowed to testify at the UN on equal terms with the Jewish Agency, on 9 May lawyer Henry Cattan, representing the AHC, **appeared before the First Committee** (captured on video³⁴⁰²) of the General Assembly.³⁴⁰³ According to the UN paraphrase of his testimony, ‘Kattan’ told the Committee:

The Arab people are deeply anxious to find a just and lasting solution to the problem before you, because it is their own problem. ... No one is as concerned with it as much as they are, since it involves their very existence as a people. ... [T]hat which is dearest to any people’s hearts [is] the national right of self-determination which stands at the basis of your Charter. ... Before the First World War... small communities of Jews, Armenians and Kurds lived in Palestine, as in other Arab countries, in peace and security. ... [The Jews] had their own schools, synagogues and communal institutions, but they had no national or political aims hostile to the Arabs... (emphasis in original)

He re-iterated the McMahon and other pledges of British and League of Nations intent to grant Palestine (actually all of Syria) and Iraq independence as Arab states, but:

I do not wish to comment on the denial or breaking of pledges, nor on the ethics or legality of making contradictory promises. I wish to emphasise, however, that the claim of the Arabs for the termination of the Mandate and recognition of their independence does not rest on promises or pledges. The Arabs of Palestine are not claiming their country on pledges made to them, for it belongs to them. [also >10; >400] ... They are entitled to their independence as being their natural and inalienable right. The administration of the country in a manner contrary to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants was a glaring injustice. ... The Balfour Declaration and the policy it enunciated was the root cause of all the troubles in Palestine and the Middle East. It was made without the consent or the knowledge of the people most directly affected, it was contrary to the principles of national self-determination and democracy and the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, and was inconsistent with the pledges given to the Arabs both before and after it was issued. The special committee should enquire into its legality, validity and ethics.

“Legality” and “ethics” were indeed two different things, and recall that the British had always excluded from the remits of its Commissions of Enquiry any enquiry into the legality, validity and ethics of the Mandate-cum-Balfour Declaration, factors always declared taboo as well by the Permanent Mandates Commission. Cattan was denying the *legitimacy* of Mandatory rule or the rule over Palestine by anyone other than the Palestinian citizens, to whom it “belonged”.³⁴⁰⁴

³⁴⁰² For an edited, 11-minute video of Cattan’s testimony see <https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/as-set/2018/2018700/> Text in italics are verbatim quotations.

³⁴⁰³ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47 (= paraphrase), all quotations, use Search function for Kattan [sic.].

³⁴⁰⁴ See also Alcott 2018.

Yet Cattan was addressing the Committee primarily as a lawyer rather than as a historian, ethicist or political scientist:

*The principles propounded by President Wilson, that is, the rejection of all ideas of conquest and the recognition of the right of self-determination were incorporated in Article 22 of Covenant of the League of Nations. ... The Mandate derived its authority from the Covenant and if inconsistent with the Covenant was *ultra vires and void*. ... There was no provision in the Covenant enabling the embodiment in the Mandate of provisions prejudicial to the interests of the people of the country. ... There was no reason for differentiating between the Arabs of Palestine and of the other Arab countries... It was not a convincing argument to say that the Mandate should be continued since its cessation would lead to bloodshed between Jews and Arabs, because the whole history of the Mandate had been one of bloodshed and troubles. Moreover the power of the Mandatory could not legally outlive the League of Nations [† 18 April 1946], which had delegated that power to it. The Charter, while not interfering with existing rights, did not confer validity on an agency or Mandate which had ceased to be valid.*³⁴⁰⁵

Moreover, a UN Resolution of 15 December 1946

disapproved of the resettlement of displaced persons where this resettlement would be likely to disturb friendly relations with neighbouring countries. The Resolution further states that due weight should be given, among other factors, to any evidence of genuine apprehension and concern felt, inter alia, by the indigenous population of non-self-governing countries.

Cattan was referring to the General Assembly's creation, on 15 December 1946 at its 67th plenary meeting, of the International Refugee Organization by A/RES/62(I) – i.e. Assembly Resolution 62.³⁴⁰⁶ [also >459; >478]

Cattan tried to correct a common misrepresentation:

The problem was not an Arab-Jewish problem. Arab opposition to Jewish immigration would be equally strong against any group attempting to force immigrants into the country against the will of the Arabs. It was not economic. To argue that the Jews could colonize the country better than the Arabs would justify any aggression by more advanced against less advanced nations.

The wisdom of both parts of this comment cannot be overemphasised.

As for seeking the solution for a European problem in Palestine,

opposition to Jewish immigration was not connected with the refugee problem, which was a humanitarian problem in the solution of which all countries should share. In the view of the Arab population all immigration of Jews into Palestine was illegal, and a recommendation should be made to the Mandatory to stop all Jewish immigration.

Furthermore,

³⁴⁰⁵ See also Quigley 1990, 2010, 2021 & 2022.

³⁴⁰⁶ UNGA 1946.

the problem was not one of historical connection. History could not be put back twenty centuries to give away a country on the ground of a transitory historic association, or the map of the whole world would have to be redrawn. In conclusion Mr. Cattan stated his hope that the special committee and the General Assembly *will be convinced that this apparently complex problem cannot be solved except on the basis of principles already agreed upon by all the civilised world and sanctioned by the Charter. It is high time that Palestine's right to independence be recognised and that this tormented country enjoy the blessings of a democratic government. ... We are not asking something which is out of line with what humanity has striven for throughout the ages – nothing more than what each of you would wish for his own country.*

Cattan was right to refer to the problem as only “apparently” complex.

Following Cattan, Emil Ghoury urged the Committee without success not to include in UNSCOP's terms of reference the plight of the displaced Jews in Europe: the issues of Palestine's independence and the persecution of Jews in Europe were separate phenomena.³⁴⁰⁷ Cattan and Ghoury were not the only Palestinians directly pleading with the UN around this time. On 28 April the Palestine Native Church Council decided to send a telegram to New York which in part read:

The PNCC meeting in Nazareth beseeches the U.N.O. in the name of Christianity and from the city of Christ to do justice in giving the Arabs of Palestine their National rights, to terminate the British mandate, to declare Palestine an independent country and to form a democratic Government immediately.³⁴⁰⁸

Cattan himself later wrote of these 1947 debates:

[O]n the termination of the British mandate on 15 May 1948 the Mandatory's powers of administration over Palestine came to an end so that legally the right to 'exercise' sovereignty over the State of Palestine was vested in the original inhabitants of the country. It is noteworthy that in a communication to the US Government in 1948 the British Foreign Office expressed the view that 'with the end of the mandate sovereignty will probably lie in the people of Palestine but it will be latent'. In exercise of their sovereignty, the people of Palestine became entitled to rule themselves and to determine their future in accordance with normal democratic principles and procedures. ... Accordingly, Palestinian sovereignty was not extinguished by the emergence of the State of Israel and its usurpation of most of the territory of Palestine. Israel did not acquire sovereignty over the territory reserved by the 1947 partition resolution for the Jewish State because the UN possessed no sovereignty itself over Palestine and hence had no power to dispose of any part of its territory to Jewish immigrants who came in during the mandate or to impair the sovereignty of the people of Palestine.³⁴⁰⁹

Note that Subcommittee 2 of the UN Ad Hoc Committee (= General Assembly, actually) in November 1947 would unsuccessfully move that exactly such questions be referred to

³⁴⁰⁷ See also Tannous 1988, pp 403-04.

³⁴⁰⁸ Quoted by Robson 2011, p 156.

³⁴⁰⁹ Cattan 1988, p 325; also Quigley 2010, Parts One and Two; Quigley 2021.

the International Court of Justice. [⁴⁷⁸] If Cattán is right, Israel is still a usurping occupier – of all of Palestine. He also once again, these forty years after 1948, pointed out the continuous violation of the Covenant’s Article 22, whether by the League of Nations, Britain, the U.S. or the UN, and went back to the basic point – deeper than any argument based on the faux-legal Covenant – that this was all simply “contrary to the wishes of the majority of the population.”³⁴¹⁰

³⁴¹⁰ Cattán 1988, pp 334-35.

First Committee members **asked questions** to both the Jewish Agency and the (Palestinian) Arab Higher Committee during the few days before UNSCOP was officially set up.³⁴¹¹ In one case, India's representative Sir Abdur Rahman asked both parties:

Did the representatives of the two organizations recognize that there was a clear distinction between a Jewish National Home and a Jewish State? Did the representative of the Jewish Agency recognize that the statement made by a representative of the British Labour Party referred to a Jewish National Home and not a Jewish State and did the representative of the Arab Higher Committee realize that a national Jewish home was not inconsistent with an independent and sovereign Arab Palestine State?

Rahman's implied premise was that a "national Jewish home" was consistent with a free Palestine.

The Jewish Agency replied:

The distinction recognized by the Jewish Agency between a Jewish State and a Jewish National Home was that the establishment of the Jewish National Home was a process the consummation of which was the setting up of a Jewish State. The remarks of Hugh Dalton showed that this point had been understood by those responsible for the 1944 statement on Palestine of the British Labour Party Executive [>425]. Unlike other mandates in Category 'A,' the Palestine Mandate contained no clause declaring that the object of the Mandate was to prepare the country for independence. Its primary purpose was the establishment of the Jewish National Home. [>146] The ultimate goal must be independence, but if its purpose was to be fulfilled and Jewish interests not sacrificed, then a Jewish State must come into being. A Jewish National Home could not fulfil its primary purpose of being open to Jews in need of it if it remained under non-Jewish sovereignty. An Arab minority in a Jewish State would be secure, if for no other reason than that it would be surrounded by Arab States, but a Jewish minority in an Arab State would have no security. To provide for the independence of Palestine without safeguarding the independence of the Jews as a people would be to take the problem out of its context and 'load the dice heavily against the Jews.'

The events of the next few years would show the falsity of the assumption that "surround[ing]... Arab States" would guarantee protection of an Arab minority.

Yes, if we shuffle around the legalistic language, the Mandate did not mention the word "independence", but in Article 2 it required of the Mandatory the "development of self-governing institutions" – arguably the same thing; and anyway, as the Palestinians consistently argued, it didn't ethically matter what the Mandate said because, as a set of statutes by which to illegitimately rule a colony, its precise terms didn't have to be discussed at all. As Cattani had said, it was simply *ultra vires*. [>457] Ironically, any need for special protection for a Jewish minority had arisen precisely because of the "context" re-

³⁴¹¹ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, all citations, use Search function.

ferred to, namely the forced growth of the “Jewish National Home”. For millennia there had been no need for special “security” for Jews because the “context” had not included the “Jewish Zionist aspirations” of the Balfour Declaration.

The Arab Higher Committee’s reply to Rahman:

The Arab Higher Committee was not prepared to consider any solution based on the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs had expressed their opposition to this Declaration by all means at their disposal – e.g. their protests, strikes and uprisings in Palestine during the last 29 years. A Jewish National Home was not inconsistent with a sovereign Arab Palestinian State. United Kingdom statements of policy of 1922 and 1938 [sic.: 1939] and the interpretations of two Jewish writers Mr. Sokoloff, the president of the Zionist Organization, in his history of Zionism, written in 1918, and Professor Norman Bentwich in ‘The Mandate System,’ published in 1924 repudiated the idea that the Jewish National Home implied a Jewish State.

The home/state play of words – arguably a scam – was still on the main stage thirty years after it had begun. [^{>16}; *passim*]

Asked about the “relations... between the Arabs and Jews”, the AHC replied:

The constitutional organization of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine would be based on democratic lines in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and would be similar to constitutional organizations in democratic countries.

A bog-standard democracy that respected human rights.

At meetings of the UNGA's First Committee and its Sub-Committee 6 [see >455] on 10-12 May 1947, **Syria, Lebanon and Iraq urged** inclusion in the terms of reference for the foreseen UNSCOP the "maximum Arab concessions, as put forward at conferences between the United Kingdom Government and the States of the Arab League from September 9 to October 2, 1946, and from January 23 to February 14, 1947" [>447; >459]; these demands (described here as "concessions") included:³⁴¹²

Creation of a provisional executive council to be composed of Arabs and Jews, and presided over by the British representative; Summoning by free election in which all citizens of Palestine, without discrimination as to nationality, creed, or faith, would participate, of a constituent assembly to promulgate an organic, democratic constitution guaranteeing:

- the unity of the State with the elected legislature;
- the sanctity of the Holy Places with freedom of access and worship;
- religious courts for matters of personal status;
- rights of citizenship;
- the right to employ the Hebrew language as a second official language in areas where speakers of that language form an absolute majority;
- communal parliamentary representation in proportion to the number of citizens;
- further immigration to be prohibited until the independent Government of Palestine provides otherwise;
- supervision by the United Nations over the status of the Holy places and shrines;

After the election and convocation of parliament, the elected head of the State [is] to assume power under the constitution, thereupon terminating the Mandate, and declaring Palestine a completely independent State. It had been contemplated, the Syrian representative said, that these steps would take a maximum of two years. The representatives of Iraq and Lebanon associated themselves with the statement of the Syrian representative, and with his criticisms of the [restrictive] terms of reference of the special committee.

These proposals were the decades-long demands of the Palestinians plus some practical steps toward their realisation, plus specific concessions of temporary British rule and international oversight over the Holy Places.

The delegates of the Arab Higher Committee present in Flushing Meadows, New York, for whom the representatives of Arab UN-member states were fighting, were Rajai (Jamal? al-) Husseini, Henry Cattan, Emil Ghoury, Isa Nachly (Nachleh) and Wasaf Kamal.³⁴¹³ They and all Palestinians had for several decades argued that Palestine should not pay for the European crime of persecution against Jews, a point also argued during these meetings in early May by Hassan Pasha of Egypt and Fadhil Jamali of Iraq, the latter claiming that the immigration was Zionist and

not a question of humanitarianism, nor a question of displaced persons. It is a question of determination to come in and dominate. ... Palestine should not suffer for the crimes of

³⁴¹² Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, Section 6, use Search function.

³⁴¹³ Tannous 1988, p 403.

Hitler. ... There are some who propose that Palestine bear a part of the burden. To these gentlemen I would say that Palestine has already taken much more than its due. ... Please let the committee of inquiry... put themselves in our place. I hope that they will open their own doors to those displaced persons much more than they have been doing so far.³⁴¹⁴

Syrian UN Delegate Fares al-Khoury added the legal point that a separate, unanimously adopted UN Resolution (UNGA Resolution 62 of 15 December 1946) stipulated “that the resettlement of displaced persons should not be undertaken in any Non-Self-Governing Territory without the consent of the population of that territory...”³⁴¹⁵ [see also >457]

On 14 May this same official Syrian UN Delegate, who had been a member of *Al-Fatat*, the Ottoman Parliament and the Syrian Government under Emir Faisal in 1920 [>4; >5; >69], and who had been and would sometimes be Syrian Prime Minister, reiterated numerous points that had been made for the last 30 years.³⁴¹⁶

Palestine used to be a Syrian province. Geographical, historical, racial and religious links exist there. There is no distinction whatever between the Palestinians and the Syrians and, had it not been for the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the mandate, Palestine would now be a Syrian province, as it used to be. Syria is intimately connected with Palestine, and is concerned with Palestinian questions more than any other State in the world. For this reason, you will excuse the Syrian delegation if, from time to time, it tries to explain its great concern and tells you of the danger facing Palestine and to what extent the Syrian delegation can resist that danger.

Back in April Syria, said al-Khoury, had written a letter to the UN Secretariat identifying three ways in which Britain could have handled the situation after throwing in the Mandatory towel [>453]:

The first way would be to recognize the independence of the mandated territory, since it is mature and entitled to that independence, and to notify the General Assembly to take note of that fact; the second way would be to come to a trusteeship agreement with the States directly concerned, as provided for in Article 79 of the [UN] Charter, and to present the trusteeship agreement to the General Assembly for its approval; the third way would be for the mandatory to come to the General Assembly and say, “The mandate which I have from the League of Nations has failed; it is unworkable. I give it up and return this trust to the General Assembly to manage it in whatever way it likes.” Unfortunately the case was not presented to the General Assembly on any of these bases. The General Assembly was simply asked to make recommendations as to the future government of Palestine. This was a confession, an acknowledgment on the part of the mandatory Power that its task was beyond its power, that it could not carry on any more, that it had failed to work the mandate in its present form.

It was of course nonsense that an independent Palestine was or ever had been “beyond the power” of Great Britain.

³⁴¹⁴ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 138-39, citing the *Official Records of the First Special Session*, Vol III, pp 185-88.

³⁴¹⁵ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 138-39, citing the *Official Records of the First Special Session*, Vol III, p 184.

³⁴¹⁶ UNGA 1947f, all citations, use Search function.

As to the causes of this failure, so al-Khoury further:

The mandatory Power now confesses and acknowledges that the mandate is unworkable and that it cannot continue in its present form. In that case, we have to find out the reason why it is unworkable. The mandatory has not explained this yet, but it is expected to do so in the report which it has promised to give on the administration of the mandate during the last twenty-seven years. ... We say there is a disease; we have to deal with a patient, a patient who is in a very bad state. How are we going to treat this patient? ... Let us search for the cause of the disease and the cure will be very easy. If there is a dagger in the side of the patient, take it out. If there is a cord around his throat which does not allow him to breathe, remove it and he will be all right.

The dagger, the cord; the Balfour Declaration, the Churchill White Paper. [>16; >142]

The innocent and the guilty should be clearly identified:

It is considered a complicated problem. Why? ... Are the Arabs responsible for that problem? Have they acted in any way or helped in any way to create such a problem? Certainly the answer to that question is no. The Arabs were living peacefully and quietly in their country and awaiting the result of the First World War in order to get their independence, according to the promises that had been made to them, just like any other nation of the world. What was intended was altogether different. A certain scheme, a certain conspiracy was hatched in London or somewhere else. ... The land and property of others was promised to a new foreign element who were to come to Palestine and establish themselves there and become a majority, dominating the country and removing the inhabitants from their homes. We do not understand with what sort of mentality, with what logic, or what morals such a thing could be admitted or accepted by any civilized nation or any civilized person inspired by justice and reason. Palestine is not an empty country.

Syria was civilized.

Fares al-Khoury then detailed the history of Palestine and the Palestinians going back "forty centuries", saying *inter alia*:

I have heard many references to the historical rights of the Jews in Palestine. [However, they] remained for a very short time in Palestine. They occupied the eastern portion of it. The western portion of Palestine – and the best part of it – was still occupied and held by the Philistines, the remote fathers of the present people of Palestine.

After recounting the history up until the late 19th century,

Now we come to the point at which Zionism was established at the end of the last century. The founder of Zionism was a certain Dr. Herzl. You know the Zionist programme is quite clear, and we are thankful to the representatives of the Jewish Agency for having come to the First Committee and having declared their case openly, frankly and boldly. They have said, 'Our programme is this: we will have continuous, unlimited immigration into Palestine until we become a majority and dominate the country. We promise that the Arabs there will have fair play.' We thank them for that – that they will treat us fairly there...

He related Herzl's rejection by Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid, adding,

How absurd it would be for an outsider who had nothing to do with Palestine, who had neither subjects nor people there, to go and give definite promises to people all over the world that he would provide a national home for them in Palestine. Lord Balfour did it, I am sorry to say, and thereby he went beyond accepted limits.

Returning to the present debate:

We cannot admit that Palestine should not be granted its independence. We have voted against the terms of reference of the special committee because no mention was made in the terms of reference to the word "independence". I am sorry some of the speakers in the [First] Committee avoided the word "independence" as if it were something injurious or as if it were out of order, claiming that it would prejudice the action of the special committee [UNSCOP, *see* >455]. We said that it would not prejudice action. This is the essential and the sole object of the mandate, that it be ended by independence, and by the termination of an unworkable mandate. It is the general principle of all mandates and trusteeships, that the end in view be independence. It is in the [UN] Charter and the Covenant of the League of Nations. ... Are we demanding anything exorbitant or anything which is irregular or out of order if we ask that the provisions of the Charter be applied and that they serve for the solution of the problem of Palestine? ... The only thing which ought to be suppressed and done away with is the Zionist programme, which is continuous, unlimited immigration in order to have a Jewish majority in Palestine. Only then, would independence be granted. ... At least for the sake of peace, if [the Powers] do not care for justice and for the principles of self-determination as laid down in the Charter, let them consider peace at least sufficiently to make them careful in what they are going to do.

He also broached a subject of relevance given that Europe was then at the height of its anti-fascist, democratic stage:

We say: 'Let us try to have the Jews and Arabs of Palestine co-operate and establish good understanding among themselves'. Well, if we suppose this is possible, I think it is more possible for the Jews to co-operate and create good understanding with the people of their own homes from which they have been displaced. Why do they not go back to the country which they have left, which is their country, and where they have their homes. It is easier to assimilate with people who speak the same language, and in whose country they are not intruders. For instance, if the Jews who left Poland would go back to Poland they would not be considered intruders, newcomers, outsiders, or invaders—they would be considered citizens of Poland. In Russia and in any other place it would be the same thing.

We understand that a great percentage of the Jews were massacred in eastern Europe. Well, the survivors, who are a small percentage under the ruling democracies of eastern Europe, could go back and take into their possession the properties of all the Jews who were there before, and each of them would be seven or eight times as rich as he used to be before. Further, he has for his protection, as has been claimed by various representatives, a full guarantee that democracy is prevailing. The representatives of those provinces even say that in their countries everything prevails, equality, democracy, full rights, liberty and fraternity. But, if it is so, why do the Jews hate to go back to those countries?

At this time the Zionists were encouraging Eastern European Jews to go to Palestine, and Britain and most other countries were accepting few such displaced persons.

“Palestine is a tiny country”, so al-Khoury, but Europe was much less densely populated, so there

we can find spacious areas where the Jews, if they really wish it, will be able to live peacefully, but not Palestine. ... Had the Jews gone to other parts of the Arab world, other than Palestine – because Palestine cannot hold any more – with the intention of finding a refuge there, they would have been treated with tolerance and indulgence. But this is not the case.

He added that the Arab countries after World War I had taken in “two or three hundred thousand Armenian refugees... We received them... Why? Because they [did] not come with political views” of domination and extermination.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammed Ali Jinnah from not-yet-partitioned India also at this time supported Palestinian independence: “We sympathize with Jews persecuted by Nazis in Europe, but Palestine is an Arab country and should remain so.”³⁴¹⁷ Support came as well from Norway’s delegation, led by Finn Moe, arguing against “linking together” the two problems, but on 9 May Norway reversed its stand, saying that “the problem of the Jewish homeless in Europe is an integral part of the problem of Palestine.”³⁴¹⁸

³⁴¹⁷ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 131, citing the *New York Times*, 27 April 1947, p 3.

³⁴¹⁸ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 135, 138, citing the *Official Records of the First Special Session*, Vol III, p 182.

Against the will of the directly-affected indigenous Palestinians and their Arab neighbours, the UN General Assembly on 15 May determined the **establishment and terms of reference of, and membership in**, a UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP [³⁴¹⁹ >465ff]) For an overview of the activities of UNSCOP, including historical Mandate documents, correspondence, itineraries and individual commentary of members, see both its main ‘Report to the General Assembly’³⁴²⁰ and ‘Addendum 1’ to the Report³⁴²¹, both dated 3 September 1947. Support for this renewed investigation into Palestine was overwhelming: “The resolution as a whole was... adopted by 45 votes in favor and 7 against.” Voting No were Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey.³⁴²² UNSCOP’s members were to be Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia – no Security Council members allowed. [³⁴²³ Appendix 1] Its basic remit: “The Special Committee shall have the widest powers to ascertain and record facts, and to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine”.³⁴²³

Termination of the Mandate and the independence of Palestine, in the end, were not only not on the GA agenda as a separate item, but were thus even omitted from UNSCOP’s terms of reference. Recall that in arguing not to place the independence question explicitly on the General Assembly agenda on 1 May 1947, the powerful countries had had the cheek to promise that the question “would automatically be considered in the formulation of the committee’s terms of reference”.³⁴²⁴ [³⁴²⁵ >455] But, as Iraq’s representative Fadhil Jamali complained.³⁴²⁵

The members will remember that my country, together with the other Arab States, had proposed the termination of the mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence. In the discussion in this Assembly which followed that proposal, it was the prevailing sentiment and opinion of the Members that, although this proposal should not be accepted directly during this special session, it should not be excluded from the terms of reference. The First Committee, however, after three days of discussion and after drafting six alternative texts containing the term ‘independence’, has, by a magic move, deleted the word ‘independence’ from the terms of reference. ... The only instruction is that there shall be no instruction. The terms of reference have actually avoided ideas and concepts like freedom, independence, self-determination, democracy, the Charter, unity, harmony, peace and justice. The situation is strange not because these words are not included – and they are

³⁴¹⁹ UNGA 1947h, A/RES/106 (S-1).

³⁴²⁰ UNSCOP 1947, Ch. I, Sections A & B (§1-81).

³⁴²¹ UNSCOP 1947a, 3 September, Add.1.

³⁴²² Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, last sentence of Section 6, use Search function. For a list of the individuals representing the state members of UNSCOP ^{>Appendix 11.}

³⁴²³ UNGA 1947h, §2.

³⁴²⁴ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

³⁴²⁵ UNGA, 1947e, use Search function.

conspicuous by their absence – but because of the firmness of the opposition from certain quarters to the inclusion of such words for fear of prejudicing the issue. As if the demand to investigate any people's right to freedom and independence were an indication of partiality!

He added:

Many Members of this Assembly described the question of Palestine as a very serious and a very complex one. It certainly is serious, but not at all complex. It is very simple to comprehend. It consists of one people's intention to enter a country inhabited by others, with the aim of occupying it and forming a State therein. It is an aggressive invasion, pure and simple. The only way to solve the problem is to revert to the fundamental principles of the Charter and to protect the political rights of the inhabitants and stop the invasion immediately. I wish, in this connexion, to record my Government's thesis that nothing but one independent democratic State of Palestine can guarantee peace based on justice throughout the Arab world. Oneness, democracy and independence are the minimum words which should have been included in the terms of reference.

Jamali's assertion remains true today that the Palestine issue "is very simple to comprehend." In arguing that no UNSCOP was necessary, all five Arab states had said at the First Committee meeting of 29 April, "The problem was not one of fact-finding but of establishing principles. ... If there was no agreement on principles it would be of no use to appoint a committee, since the committee would have to work in the light of principles."³⁴²⁶ [^{>455}] The principles were simple.

What was "the problem of Palestine" referred to in the terms of reference? Was UNSCOP's research question to be simply 'the future constitution and government' of Palestine? (This formulation, taken literally, implied no partition.) Wasn't it really 'the problem of Zionism', or perhaps 'the problem of Britain'? Why was it a *problem* to establish "one independent democratic State", as Jamali said? And should the terms of reference include the plight of the persons displaced in Europe or did this constitute a separate problem?

Built on these themes, which had emerged in April and May in various debates [^{>455}; ^{>457-459}], the other Arab states recorded their reservations:³⁴²⁷

The representative of Lebanon [dissented, because] not only has any mention of independence for Palestine been severely suppressed from the terms of reference but also the basis on which this extraordinary session of the General Assembly was convened in the first place has insensibly shifted, during the last two weeks, from preparing for advising the United Kingdom Government on the future government of Palestine to preparing for the consideration of the so-called problem of Palestine in general, a phrase which by its very generality may mean anything and, therefore, is really unacceptable.

³⁴²⁶ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

³⁴²⁷ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

The representative of Syria [likewise dissented because] a definite proposal for the independence of Palestine was deleted by a great majority of the committee and... another proposal that a solution should be based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Covenant of the League of Nations had been overlooked.

According to UN records of the long debate on 14 May before the vote to set up UNSCOP the following day,³⁴²⁸ Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia joined this dissent, and India's representative Asaf Ali the next day said,

Palestine has become the acid test of human conscience. ... [T]he United Nations [has] no other purpose but to assure the implementation of the original principle laid down in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League, which contemplated nothing else but independence for Palestine.³⁴²⁹

After holding its first meeting on 26 May at the Long Island town of Lake Success, UNSCOP visited Palestine in June and July.

³⁴²⁸ UNGA 1947e, UNGA 1947f and UNGA 1947g.

³⁴²⁹ UNGA 1947g, use Search function.

A Top Secret ‘Memorandum Prepared in the [U.S.] Department of State’ dated 4 June 1947 bore the title ‘Plan for the Future Government of Palestine’:

Palestine should become neither an Arab State nor a Jewish State [^{>438; >442; >469; >481; >487}] but a single independent Palestine State in which all its people, of whatever religion or blood, may dwell together [and share] a common Palestinian citizenship. ... The Government of Palestine should represent all Palestinian citizens and should protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms. [The UN Trusteeship Council should] prepare Palestine for its ultimate establishment as a single, independent state.³⁴³⁰

The plan, which closely resembled that put forth by the Palestinians and other Arabs for decades, by the MacDonal White Paper [^{>410}], by the Palestinians and Arab states in London in September 1946 and before the UN in May 1947 [^{>447; 455}], by UN Ad Hoc Subcommittee 2 on 11 November 1947 [^{>478}], and by the U.S. State Department in January and March 1948 [^{>483; >487}] envisioned further that

The General Assembly at its second regular session [in September 1947] should approve a trusteeship agreement [Charter, Articles 75–85] for Palestine to enter into force on January 1, 1948 [and] Provide immediately for the maximum degree of urban and rural self-government [and] [n]ot later than three years after the trusteeship agreement comes into force, the administering authority should convoke a Constituent Assembly of Palestine, elected on the basis of proportional representation, for the purpose of formulating a constitution. ... The form of government of the proposed independent State of Palestine must be based upon broad democratic principles and must preclude any discrimination on grounds of religion or blood. The Constitution of Palestine, which should include a bill of rights, and a new legal system—equally applicable to Jew, Christian, and Moslem alike—should be in harmony with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the practices of advanced democratic countries. ... The Palestine State should have a federal form of Government. An appropriate number of federal divisions should be created upon the basis of economic and social considerations rather than upon considerations of religion or blood.

As far back as 17 March 1944 the U.S. State Department under Edward Stettinus had opposed partition in favour of a Palestine that was an “International Territory under a charter” of the incipient “United Nations Organization” with Great Britain holding the “Trusteeship”, a position British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden argued for within the Cabinet.³⁴³¹

The content of this democratic solution was not only in broad strokes that of the Palestinians since even before the Mandate, but was almost identical to that put forth by

³⁴³⁰ U.S. State Department 1947; Quigley 2021, p 36, citing ‘Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) to the Secretary of State, Washington, July 7, 1947, FRUS 1947, vol. 5, at 1120.

³⁴³¹ Cohen 1987b, pp 160, 170–73.

the Palestinians to the U.K. Government in September 1946 [>447] and again in January and February 1947 [>450] and, through the Arab states, to the First Committee of the UN on 10 & 12 May [>459], but I have found no State Department acknowledgment of any intellectual debt. It was an improvement on the 1939 White Paper [>410] in that the state would become independent more or less “immediately”, not in ten years or whenever “peace” and “co-operation” reigned between the two opposing political groups, and differed from the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady proposals [>438; >442] in prescribing “proportional representation” rather than parity (bi-nationalism).

This document is a draft of a Working Paper that originated in mid-May 1947 with Loy Henderson, director of the State Department’s Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, who repeatedly pointed out the contradictions between the racially-based Partition Resolution draft and both the UN Charter and US Constitution³⁴³². The copy sent to U.S. UN Ambassador Warren Austin noted that “Loy Henderson is anxious, for apparent reasons, that there be no further distribution or discussion of this plan at this time within the Mission.” The Working Paper was supported by Ralph Bunche, a U.S. member of the UN-SCOP secretariat and later assistant to and successor of Folke Bernadotte; it was revived in March 1948 [>487], but this potential U.S. position was ultimately rejected by President Harry Truman under the influence of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis and the desire for the US Jewish vote in the November 1948 Presidential election.³⁴³³ The Zionists would defeat democracy.

³⁴³² Weir 2014, p 45 quoting Neff, Donald, 2002, *Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy towards Palestine and Israel since 1945*, 2002 reprint by the Institute for Palestine Studies.

³⁴³³ Eban 1948; Millis 1951; see also Rickenbacher 2017, pp 149-227.

According to Izzat Tannous,

The A.H.C. [Palestinian Arab Higher Committee] did not see why the U.N. Special Committee should come to Palestine at all. They did not see why the Arabs who were the indigenous and the overwhelming majority in Palestine and who owned most of the land of the country should not be allowed to exercise their right of self-determination as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. They did not see why Palestine should take the refugees of Central Europe for whose plight the Arabs of Palestine were in no way responsible.³⁴³⁴

As the UN summed up this situation in 2008,

While Jewish organizations cooperated with UNSCOP in its deliberations, the Palestinian leadership in the Arab Higher Committee decided not to participate, on the grounds that the United Nations had refused to address the question of independence and had failed to separate the issue of European Jewish refugees from the question of Palestine. The natural rights of the Palestinian Arabs were self-evident and should be recognized, it said, and should not continue to be subject to investigation.³⁴³⁵

Indeed, the AHC refused to co-operate with UNSCOP, as Jamal al-Husseini explained to U.N. Secretary-General Trygve Lie in **a cable** dated 13 June 1947 and confirmed on 10 July:

Arab Higher Committee Palestine desire convey to United Nations that after thoroughly studying the deliberations and circumstances under which the Palestine fact-finding committee was formed and the discussions leading to terms of reference they resolved that Palestine Arabs should abstain from collaboration and desist from appearing before said committee for following main reasons – firstly United Nations refusal adopt natural course of inserting termination mandate and declaration independence in agenda special United Nations session and in terms of reference [³⁴³⁶>455; >459; >460] secondly failure detach Jewish world refugees from Palestine problem thirdly replacing interests Palestine inhabitants by insertion world religious interests although these are not subject of contention – furthermore Palestine Arabs natural rights are self evident and cannot continue to be subject to investigation but deserve to be recognized on the basis of principles of United Nations charter.³⁴³⁶

Co-operation was here identified as “collaboration”. To my knowledge only one Palestinian testified before UNSCOP while it was in Palestine between 15 June and 20 July 1947, and it was thus left to UNSCOP to summarise the “Arab plan”, which was identical to the one presented in London in September 1946 [³⁴³⁷>447] and entered into the First Committee minutes by Syria on 10–12 May 1947 [³⁴³⁷>459]. [³⁴³⁷see also >465]. Arabs, Indians, Iranians, Yugoslav-

³⁴³⁴ Tannous 1988, pp 406–07.

³⁴³⁵ UN 2008, p 4.

³⁴³⁶ UNSCOP 1947a, Annex 5 (also Annexes 7 and 8); see also UNSCOP 1947, Ch.IA §32–34; John & Hadawi 1970b, p 155; UNSUPR 1978b, > ‘The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine’.

³⁴³⁷ UNSCOP 1947, Ch.IV §11–12.

vians, Chinese and Latin Americans might wonder what on earth gave the UN the right to call the shots in Palestine, but the old Powers holding the power at the United Nations, by establishing UNSCOP with its limited remit, would push through their anti-democratic solution.

22 June 1947 *'A joint memorandum from the Arab governments... condemned all further investigation of a question that had already been over-investigated [and] said the only solution of the problem lay in the setting up in Palestine of an independent government in which Arabs and Jews enjoyed equal constitutional rights and duties.'*³⁴³⁸

³⁴³⁸ Zuaytir 1958, p 174.

The 'bi-national' idea of equal political power for the Jewish and non-Jewish communities (parity) was very much under discussion in 1947, its main influential proponent being Judah Magnes, who had emigrated from California to Palestine in 1922. This bi-national type of solution had some support amongst Jewish-Zionist intellectuals, but practically none amongst Palestinians.³⁴³⁹ And as we have seen, it had often been seriously considered within the British bureaucracy: at various times within the Colonial Office, by the Anglo-American and Morrison-Grady Committees [>438 ; >442], and by high politicians such as Herbert Samuel [in 1937, >340]. Musa Alami, who called Judah Magnes a "friend", relates that around 1933/34 the two had once bargained over the ratio of Jewish to Arab power, with Magnes moving from a 1/3:2/3 to a 40%/60% ratio, then to a vague "political equality".³⁴⁴⁰ It is worth a look at his ideas on parity, namely the principle that the two groups should hold equal political power regardless of numerical strength or historical possession or any present "feeling for the soil".³⁴⁴¹ [*see* >32]

In October 1929 Magnes had made a proposal for a constitution:³⁴⁴²

Palestine is a land where both Arabs and Jews live of right and not of sufferance. [>142] ... The government of Palestine is to be democratic and representative. ... A suitable representation of minorities is to be guaranteed in the electoral law... [F]ree immigration to Palestine of Jews and Arabs is to be granted dependent upon the economic capacity of the country. ... The Arabic and Hebrew languages are the official languages... Arabic and Jewish Palestinians are to be employed in all grades of Government Service in proportion to their numbers in the population. ... Similar to the Lebanon Palestine has no State religion.

Only in the civil service, that is, would numerical proportionality reign.

Furthermore, a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority would be needed to approve of both a treaty with the U.K. and a constitution, and the Cabinet would include a Minister for Jewish Affairs co-operating with the Jewish Agency. The country would not be independent but rather a British "Dominion":

The British High Commissioner occupies the position of head of the State in a manner similar to the Governors General of Dominions. ... All laws require the signature of the High Commissioner before they become effective.

Parity across the board was not explicit, but would perhaps be secured by the built-in British veto and the super-majority required for the constitution itself.

In the spring of 1946 he had presented a similar scheme before the Anglo-American Committee, drawing wry criticism from Albert Hourani. [>437 ; >438] Now, before UNSCOP

³⁴³⁹ Hattis 1970.

³⁴⁴⁰ Furlonge 1969, p 103.

³⁴⁴¹ FO 371/4170, pp 173-74.

³⁴⁴² Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 63-64; *see also* Boyle 2001, pp 172-77.

on 14 July 1947, **Magnes**, who for some reason was invited to speak, **argued for a bi-national solution** based on the idea that world Jewry and indigenous Palestinians enjoyed political parity.³⁴⁴³ Given in Jerusalem at the 13th meeting of UNSCOP, his testimony is worth quoting extensively as it included trying to answer tough questions from India's Abdur Rahman and Canada's Mr. Rand. [Appendix 12] Magnes was here in fact expressing in plainer language and with more honesty the basic ideas underlying the British message to the Palestinians throughout three decades. The testimony also clarified the difference between the usual Palestinian position for a representative democracy and Magnes' 'soft' Zionist position.

Magnes first agreed with the Anglo-American Committee's *Recommendation 3*³⁴⁴⁴ that Palestine is neither purely Arab nor purely Jewish, presumably meaning in its present demographic composition rather than in its essence as a Land; he then distinguished between the "natural" rights of the Arabs and the "historical" rights of the Jews – implying that the Palestinians' rights are not "historical" and the Jews' are not "natural" – and then concluded:

We propose that Palestine become a bi-national country composed of two equal nationalities, the Jews and the Arabs, a country where each nationality is to have equal political powers, regardless of who is the majority or the minority. We call this 'Political Parity'. (pp 32-33)

Just as in the Anglo-American *Recommendation 3*, for Magnes "numerical majorities" are "mere". (p 32) "The Jews" would be a "constituent nation". (p 34) Citing the Belgian constitution [which actually referred to 'communities' rather than 'nationalities'], Magnes said what the British had been circumlocuting:

The Arabs... would have to yield their ambition to set up in Palestine a uni-national, independent sovereign state. ... We ask for the immediate appointment... of an equal number of Jews and Arabs to the Executive Council of the Government, to the Secretariat, as heads of the non-controversial central Government Departments, as Presidents of Courts, as District Commissioners [amounting to] a federation of two peoples. ... Jewish immigration [ought to] be permitted up to parity with the Arabs. We call this 'Numerical Parity'. (pp 34-35)

Oblivious to what he had conceded to be the "natural rights [and] ambitions" of the "Arabs" in Palestine, and to the geographical fact that Europe ends well northwest of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, he emoted over the 100,000 Jewish refugees stranded in Europe in terms coinciding with those of President Harry Truman [438; 448] and some UK politicians [445; 449; 452; 456]:

We have wanted these 100,000 of our brothers and sisters so intensely that it seems to us that it ought to be granted, if for no other reason than because the Jewish people have suffered this unspeakable tragedy. Forty per cent of the Jewish people have been annihilated. It

³⁴⁴³ Magnes et al. 1947/1983, pp 31-64 and UNSCOP 1947c for the verbatim record which is consistent with the rendering in Magnes et al. and which includes a list of UNSCOP members present. See also UNSCOP 1947b for testimony by Ben-Gurion.

³⁴⁴⁴ Hutcheson 1946, Ch. I, Recommendation 3, >438.

is a matter of historic mercy. It is a psychological problem, and not so much a political or an economic problem. The Jewish people must be given something... One hundred thousand souls! (p 38; also 46)

The “intensity” of his and other Jews’ feelings, and the “unspeakability” of Jews’ suffering are determinant, even if “giving them something” means taking away from others: The “something” they should be “given” – immigration and political parity – must be given by the Palestinians. His own “psychology”, i.e. the feelings of Jews and others in the world, trumped the Palestinians’ “psychology” as well as their self-determined political and economic interests.

Magnes then articulated a view which had been implicit in the Zionist Mandate from the start:

Palestine is a land *sui generis*, and no one can have in Palestine everything that he wants.
(p 32)

The Palestinians did not view Palestine as unique in a political sense; like other countries, it had been generated by generations of Palestinians. However that may be, the ‘special case’ of Palestine, and later Israel, was born. While it does not strictly follow that everybody can have in Palestine something he wants, this is the unstated premise in Magnes’s enthymeme. He seems to have been struggling with the injustice of giving only parity to “the Arabs” despite their “mere” numerical majority and their more recent and unbroken habitation.

Indicating that “Palestine” was *sui generis* in a deep or historical sense, and not simply because it had in the 20th century, uniquely, been colonised by a Power on behalf of a third party, he told the Committee: “We look upon the Jewish Agency as the representative of all the Jews in the world in relation to Palestine.” (p 54) The concept of a given ethnic group’s legal or rightful “relation” to a territory, often the very meaning of the concept of a ‘nation’, deserves more analysis as applied to Palestine, partly because the Palestinian self-concept, while basically territorial, was often religious, but ethnic only in the broad sense of ‘Arab’.³⁴⁴⁵ At any rate, the concept is fundamental to both British and Jewish Zionism and contradictory to concepts of territorial, non-sectarian citizenship.³⁴⁴⁶

Sir Abdur Rahman raised the issue of safeguards for the Jewish community within a non-Jewish-majority Palestine which had plagued the 1939 St. James talks between the Arabs and Malcolm MacDonald’s Colonial Office [^{>386ff}];³⁴⁴⁷

Dr. Magnes, can you suggest any other solution for parity than what you have suggested? Can it not be secured, for instance, by constitutional safeguarding of the rights of the various parties without affecting the numerical parity between the two sections of the community living there? ... [I]s it not possible to achieve the same objective by safeguarding the civil, political and religious rights and liberties by constitution, and by providing that no

³⁴⁴⁵ See Khalidi 1997; Robson 2011; Haiduc-Dale 2013.

³⁴⁴⁶ Also Quigley 1990, pp 10-11; 2011, p 251; Kattan 2009, pp 118, 125, 250.

³⁴⁴⁷ UNSCOP 1947c, use Search function.

change in the constitution should be effected unless something like seven-eighths or four-fifths of the majority vote for the change? ... Can we, without resorting to numerical parity, safeguard... the minority who are numerically less?

This was the standard Palestinian and Arab-states position.

In reply Magnes, whose bottom line was that immigration from Europe should continue, said:

I don't think so. ... We contend that there is one just, equitable, practicable way of meeting a minority-majority problem, and that is by wiping it out and making both the majority and the minority equal constituent partners... [a]lthough numerically they may not be so. A numerical majority, we contend, is all right for this place and for that place, but it has not been decreed from Heaven for other places.

At this point Canadian delegate Rand demolished Magnes' stance:

You say that you can secure parity by constitutional provision but you cannot secure minority right by the same kind of provision?

Note in passing that a consequence of the logic of bi-nationalism is multinationalism: If a society had, say, four 'minorities', parity would mean equal institutionalised power for each of them, and the majority, of 20%; if nine 'minorities', 10%, etc. Yacoub al-Farraj had thrown this logic into a discussion he had with High Commissioner Wauchope on 26 July 1935, saying that on the (Zionist) parity logic one would have to give Moslems, Christians and Jews each one-third of the political power in Palestine.³⁴⁴⁸ [>282] But other groups in Palestine – defined somehow ethnically, religiously or linguistically – have never been on the bi-nationalists' radar.

During cross-examination by Emil Sandstrom of Sweden, Arturo Garcia Salazar of Peru and again Abdur Rahman of India, Magnes had to "admit" several things the Palestinians had been saying for thirty years: 1) that his solution denied Palestinian "self-government"; 2) that the immigration had been an "invasion"; 3) that the claim that the collective Jewish case is "at least as strong" as that of the Arabs is "artificial"; 4) that he contradicted himself in saying both that his lofty principles do away with the political relevance of the relative numbers of each group while also saying that it is desirable that they should reach "numerical parity"; and 5) that it is difficult to claim that Jewish "nationality" and the Jewish religion are one and the same.³⁴⁴⁹ Taken together, Magnes had refuted his own ideas.

Finally, Magnes played the card of Jewish economic and scientific superiority: The Arab might not know it, but we will do him good. (p 57) The 1947 book in which these testimonies and proposed constitutions of the bi-nationalists were collected was co-authored by Herbert Samuel.³⁴⁵⁰ [*also >456*]

³⁴⁴⁸ CO 733/275/1, p 78.

³⁴⁴⁹ UNSCOP 1947c, use Search function for these people, the words in quotation marks, and 'any more questions'.

³⁴⁵⁰ Magnes et al. 1947/1983.

15 August 1947 British India is partitioned into India and Pakistan, both of which gain independence.

15 August 1947 [The Haganah blows up the farmhouse of the orange-growing Abu Laban family, killing 'twelve occupants, including a mother and six children.']³⁴⁵¹

³⁴⁵¹ Khalidi 1984, pp 252-53.

The Arab Office, manned mainly by Musa Alami, Albert Hourani and Izzat Tannous, **published a booklet** which they presented to UNSCOP. Its title, *The Future of Palestine*, had been used by many non-Palestinians with the power to determine Palestine's future – Samuel in 1915 [>8], Curzon in 1917 [>15], Cavendish in 1923 [>167], Amery in 1929 [>214] and the Arab-British group meeting in London September 1946-January 1947 [see >451] – and would become a common term in the United Nations to this day.³⁴⁵² As quoted by Susan Hattis,³⁴⁵³ the booklet refuted the bi-nationalism then currently under discussion, propounded mainly by Judah Magnes [>463], by the 1946 U.K./U.S. Committees [>438; >442], and by the UNSCOP Minority Plan [>469] which was intended as an alternative to the Majority Plan's two-state scheme:

There are three suggestions which are often made by those who think in this way (compromise). They are: a) Federation. For certain purposes Palestine should be provided with a Federal Government in which Arabs and Jews would both participate, but for other purposes it should be divided into Arab and Jewish states each of which should be responsible for matters including immigration. b) Parity. The Arab and Jewish communities should be given a position of parity in political status regardless of numbers but with unrestricted possibilities for Jewish immigration. Thus a bi-national state would be formed in which the present Jewish inferiority in numbers would be counter-balanced by equality of power, by the certainty of future immigration, and of an eventual Jewish majority. c) A solution similar to that proposed by the Anglo-American Committee [>438]: that a substantial measure of immigration should be granted immediately with further immigration to follow, but Palestine should remain under Mandate or Trusteeship indefinitely until the antagonism between Arabs and Jews dies down. ...

The fundamental objections. Whenever any of these plans has been put forward it has always met with uncompromising opposition from all responsible Arab organizations both inside and outside Palestine, and there is no doubt that it always will meet with such opposition. The reason for this is clear. All these plans contravene the right of the majority to live under a government of their own choosing, and to make their own decisions in such matters as immigration, which are of direct importance to the whole population. There is another reason scarcely less important for Arab opposition to such proposals. They fall into the same error as have so many suggestions and statements of policy in the last thirty years – the error of *ignoring the reason* for the Zionist demands for further immigration. The Zionists want immigration because they want a Jewish state, and they will not be deterred from working for a Jewish state by a mere formal assurance, whether given by Great Britain or the United Nations. ... (*emphasis added*)

³⁴⁵² See Lesch 1973, p 42.

³⁴⁵³ Hattis 1970, pp 313-15, quoting 'The Future of Palestine', Arab Office London, August 1947, pp 60, 67, 82, all quotations.

Recall James de Rothschild's pithy statement in the Commons on 17 November 1930 that "we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews."³⁴⁵⁴

The booklet continued:

Such plans are impracticable. ... The fundamental Arab objection to the bi-national state is, however, one of principle: that to give a minority a political status equal to that of the majority is essentially undemocratic the more so as it is certain that the minority will use its [equal] power to override the will of the majority or at least to obstruct it on matters of vital concern to that majority. Furthermore, the condition put forward by the advocates of the bi-national state, that immigration should continue at least until the Jews reach numerical equality with the Arabs and possibly become a majority eventually, is again a denial of democracy, and if adopted would in fact turn the Arabs into a minority immediately. It is thus clear that the proposals for a bi-national state put forward by Dr. Magnes and his group are nothing but another way of reaching the objective of Zionism, that is, the creation of a Jewish state. For this reason the Arabs regard the views of Dr. Magnes as no less extreme and perhaps more dangerous than those of the official Zionists, because they are cloaked in an aspect of moderation and reasonableness. ...

As always the issue of 'safeguards' for the minority was important:

[We say] Palestine would be an 'Arab State'. This does not mean that those citizens who are not Arabs would be in any sense persecuted or discriminated against, or made to feel that they are outside the full community of the State; but it means that the Government and the citizens should accept the implications of the fact that the majority of the inhabitants are Arabs and that Palestine geographically and historically is part of the Arab world.

The self-definition as 'Arab' was both descriptively accurate and important psychologically, that is, but had no legal consequences.

Commenting on this booklet, Hattis remarks that

The bi-nationalists made much less of an impact on UNSCOP than they had made on the Anglo-American Committee. ... Only the minority report [469], signed by the Indian, Iranian and Yugoslav members of the Commission, proposed a bi-national federal state, but with the express provision that the Jews should never become a majority of the population.³⁴⁵⁵

According to Lesch it was a "final effort to persuade the United Nations to uphold the Arab case" and was "largely drafted by Albert Hourani... under the direction of Musa al-Alami."³⁴⁵⁶

I have not had access to this booklet, but J.M.N. Jeffries, then working with the Arab Office in London, had in his 1938 book described the standard Arab position which excluded bi-nationalism by simply positively stating democratic theory otherwise undilutedly accepted by the Western Powers:

³⁴⁵⁴ Hansard 1930a, c179.

³⁴⁵⁵ Hattis 1970, p 315.

³⁴⁵⁶ Lesch 1973, p 42 note 58; see Hourani et al.'s *The Future of Palestine*, Beirut: Hermon Books, 1970.

Palestine is the Arabs' land. It is for them to decide its future. ... The Irak Minister's new plan [Nuri as-Said, in October 1938 (p.373)] is the Arab Higher Committee's old plan, and the plan of every Arab delegation which has visited Britain for twenty years. That plan is that 1. Great Britain shall recognize the natural rights of the Arabs of Palestine and carry out her own treaty obligations by establishing in Palestine a national Government by universal suffrage. 2. The National Government of Palestine will make a Treaty with Great Britain upon the same lines as that made by Irak with Great Britain. Under this treaty Palestine will guarantee to safeguard all the legitimate interests of Great Britain in her territorial area, as Egypt has done. 3. All the inhabitants of Palestine shall have equal political rights. 4. The Palestine Government will guarantee the rights of minorities.³⁴⁵⁷

Given the frustration caused by the evident impossibility of convincing Britain or the UN to apply normal democracy to Palestine, a basic question of colonialism itself re-emerges: Why was this 'dialogue' between Palestinians and Western Powers taking place at all? Why were the British, or the UN, fretting over the future of a place which was not theirs?

³⁴⁵⁷ Jeffries 1939, p 710.

465. UNSCOP on the Palestinian position

3 September 1947

To recapitulate: The remit of UNSCOP approved by the General Assembly on 15 May 1947 [460] had included authorisation that it investigate not only in Palestine but “wherever it may deem useful”, thus opening the door to its visiting displaced persons in Europe; embodying the conflation of the humanitarian issue with the “question of Palestine”, it made these visits.³⁴⁵⁸ On the other hand it omitted all language describing the possibility of immediate independence, as demanded by the Arab states, the USSR and India – the latter two also having unsuccessfully directly or indirectly introduced, on 9 and 10 May, a motion to include “a proposal on the question of establishing without delay the independent democratic State of Palestine.”³⁴⁵⁹ Due to the conflation (“connection between the two problems”) and this omission, as well as the general vagueness of the Resolution setting up UNSCOP (“The Special Committee shall have the widest powers to ascertain and record facts, and to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine.”) the representatives of Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia either abstained or voted against setting up UNSCOP – both at the 55th First Committee meeting on 12 May and the General Assembly plenum on 15 May which adopted the Resolution creating UNSCOP by a vote of 45 to 7.³⁴⁶⁰

As we saw, the Arab Higher Committee was invited on 2 June by UNSCOP to appear before it or submit written statements to it, but on 13 June replied with a telegram declining to participate due to 1) its illegitimacy and 2) its biased terms of reference. [462] Later in the summer, however, the AHC – comprised as of January 1947 of Hajj Amin al-Husseini, Jamal al-Husseini, Hussein al-Khalidi, Emil Al-Ghoury, Ahmed Hilmi Abd al-Baqi, Hasan Abu Saud, Ishaq Darwish al-Husseini, Izzat Darwaza, Rafiq al-Tamimi and Muin al-Madi – did indeed testify or at least present their case in writing, in the form of the booklet of the Arab Office, *The Future of Palestine* [see >464].

According to UNSCOP’s **depiction of the Arab position**³⁴⁶¹ which, as put forward by “the Arab States at Beirut” was “much the same constitutional proposals for the future government of Palestine as those advanced by the Arab States’ delegations to the Palestine Conference at London in September 1946 [447]” (IV §11):

The Arab case seeks the immediate creation of an independent Palestine west of the Jordan as an Arab State. The Arabs emphasize the fact of an actual Arab numerical majority, in the ratio of two to one in the present population of Palestine. (II §156) They postulate the ‘natural’ right of the Arab majority to remain in undisputed possession of the country, since they are and have been for many centuries in possession of the land. (II §157) The Arabs further stress the natural desire of the Arab community to safeguard its national existence from for-

³⁴⁵⁸ UNSCOP 1947, Ch. I (B), §65-69.

³⁴⁵⁹ Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

³⁴⁶⁰ UNGA 1947h and Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, use Search function.

³⁴⁶¹ UNSCOP 1947, all quotations, mainly Ch. II §156-180.

eign intruders, in order that it may 'pursue without interference its own political, economic and cultural development.' (II §158) The principle and right of national self-determination were violated. (II §160b)³⁴⁶²

In its 'Appraisal of the Arab case' (II §162-180) the Committee said:

The Arabs consider that all of the territory of Palestine is by right Arab patrimony. Although in an Arab State they would recognize the right of Jews to continue in possession of land legally acquired by them during the Mandate, they would regard as a violation of their 'natural' right any effort, such as partition, to reduce [through partition] the territory of Palestine. (II §165) With regard to the principle of self-determination, although international recognition was extended to this principle at the end of the First World War and it was adhered to with regard to the other Arab territories, at the time of the creation of the 'A' Mandates, it was not applied to Palestine, obviously because of the intention to make possible the creation of the Jewish National Home there. Actually, it may well be said that the Jewish National Home and the *sui generis* Mandate for Palestine run counter to that principle. (II §176)³⁴⁶³

"Reduction of territory" is an improvement on the somewhat anodyne "partition".

The Committee did put in a sort of caveat, writing that "The Arabs of Palestine consider themselves as having a 'natural' right to that country, although they have not been in possession of it as a sovereign nation." (II §163) Not only did they put the word 'natural' in inverted commas, but they regarded some sort of previous "sovereignty" as relevant. That said, however, this "appraisal" by the Committee might have been expressing full agreement with the Palestinians, not least in using the phrase "it may well be said", and in light of the fact that UNSCOP was legally bound by Article 1 §2 of the UN Charter upholding "the principle... of self-determination". There was probably tension within the Committee on this point. At any rate, since one of the two states would be a non-Arab state in Palestine, any two-state solution ('partition'), for instance that proposed by the Committee majority on 3 September [468] or that recommended by the General Assembly majority on 29 November [481], would stand in contradiction to this part of the Committee's appraisal.

³⁴⁶² UNSCOP 1947, Ch. II §156-60.

³⁴⁶³ Also Quigley 1990, p 33; Quigley 2011 (in Akram et al), p 220.

UNSCOP's 'Report to the General Assembly' of 3 September 1947 comprised six long chapters, the first three covering the story of UNSCOP itself, Palestine's history, geography and economy, the Mandate period, "the conflicting claims" to Palestine, the Holy Places, and the like.³⁴⁶⁴ It was thereby doing what other investigative teams had done quite well – the 1946 Anglo-American Committee [->438], the 1937 Peel Commission [->336], the 1930 Shaw Commission [->220], and the 1921 Haycraft Commission [->122] and to some extent the 1920 Palin Court [->88] and the 1919 King-Crane Commission [->59]. Today, these reports are essential reading for the history of the Mandate, and taken together meant that it was not part of the problem facing the UN General Assembly in 1947 that one did not know enough; the problem was values, or *principles*, and political power.

Then Chapter IV began by stating drily:

Proposals for the solution of the Palestine question propounded at various times by official and unofficial sources during the past decade may be broadly classified as of three main categories:

- (i) The partition of Palestine into two independent States, one Arab and one Jewish, which might either be completely separate or linked to the extent necessary for preserving, as far as possible, economic unity;
- (ii) The establishment of a unitary State (with an Arab majority, unless a Jewish majority is created by large-scale Jewish immigration);
- (iii) The establishment of a single State with a federal, cantonal or bi-national structure, in which the minority would, by such political structure, be protected from the fear of domination. (Ch. IV §1)

The UNSCOP proceedings where the Report was discussed were however anything but dry, a heated meeting on 27 August 1947 having seen three members walk out.³⁴⁶⁵

A majority of UNSCOP at that 27 August meeting did agree on many things. First and even foremost it was against **option (ii)**, which proposed a one-person-one-vote democracy. It was declared an unacceptable "extreme position, namely, a single independent state of Palestine, under either Arab or Jewish domination". (Ch. V §2-3) This was ironic as at that time at least eight of UNSCOP's eleven members practiced democracy on this same model at home, with Iran and Czechoslovakia arguably practicing something close to it. Perhaps majority rule in Palestine, as opposed to their own countries, was conflated with "domination". In any case, only **options (i) and (iii)** remained – partition or else something described as "cantonal" or "bi-national", however hard to define and however unproven the case that it would protect "the minority" better than standard-issue constitutional democracies.

³⁴⁶⁴ UNSCOP 1947, all citations.

³⁴⁶⁵ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 175, citing the *New York Times*, 27 August 1947, p 1.

The majority felt motivated to add:

In taking this action the Committee was fully aware that both Arabs and Jews advance strong claims to rights and interests in Palestine, the Arabs by virtue of being for centuries the indigenous and preponderant people there, and the Jews by virtue of historical association with the country and international pledges made to them respecting their rights in it. (V §3)

Concerning the “strong claim” of the “Jews”, the majority had already straightforwardly observed that “The Jewish case seeks the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine,... [and makes] contentions based on biblical and historical sources as to... the right to ‘return’ to Palestine”. (II §127, 128) The Report at least had the acumen to place the word “return” in inverted commas. In its “appraisal of the Jewish case” it did not, however, appraise or even examine these underlying “contentions”, instead treating the Balfour Declaration as the beginning of the story. (II §135-155) What it did concede was that “the King-Crane Report [59], among others, had warned that the Zionist program could not be carried out except by force of arms.” (II §148)

Concerning the “strong claim” of the “Arabs”, their “claims and contentions” are mainly of a

‘natural’ right of an actual Arab majority to remain in undisputed possession of the country, since they are and have been for many centuries in possession of the land. This claim of a ‘natural’ right is based on the contention that the Arab connection with Palestine has continued uninterruptedly from early historical times, since the term ‘Arab’ is to be interpreted as connoting not only the invaders from the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, but also the indigenous population which intermarried with the invaders and acquired their speech, customs and modes of thought in becoming permanently Arabized. (II §157) ... The Arabs also claim ‘acquired’ rights, based on the general promises and pledges officially made to the Arab people in the course of the First World War,... (II §159)

Although couched as mere “contentions”, at least the “uninterruptedness” of residence and the Palestinians’ appeal to residence *preceding* the ‘Arab’ period were here evoked; by contrast, as we have seen, many defenders of the Palestinian claim went back no further than 1300 years. The “acquired” rights would logically, or technically, parallel the pledges to the Jewish Zionists contained in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

The majority’s “appraisal of the Arab case” (II §162-180) saw as a weakness the fact that “Palestinian nationalism, as distinct from Arab nationalism, is itself a relatively new phenomenon” (II §166); the pledges of Palestinian independence were moreover not “unequivocal” (II §167-72); and Emir Faisal and other “Arab statesmen” had more or less agreed to Zionism (II §173-75) [37]. As for the “self-determination” granted the other ‘A’ mandated countries [465], the language of Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant was flexible enough so that this denial of self-determination didn’t violate it (II §177-79), and anyway, “as explained by Lord Balfour”, the Mandates were not justified by any act of the League of Nations, but rather “a self-imposed limitation by the conquerors on the sovereignty which they obtained over conquered territories” (II §180). Although of course implicit in every action of the Mandatory, such an explicit avowal of ‘might makes right’ was almost never made during the Mandate. In addition, UNSCOP was here doing two

other things: making the very ambiguities coming out of HMG into an argument against the Palestinians, and historically incorrectly blowing up Emir Faisal's qualified statements in favour of Zionism [37].

The Report then listed and briefly described five "Main proposals of commissions and British Government plans prior to the creation of the Committee": the 1937 Royal (Peel) Commission [336]; the 1938 Partition (Woodhead) Commission [376]; the 1946 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry [438]; the 1946 (Morrison-Grady) Plan for Provincial Autonomy [442]; and the 1947 Cantonization (Bevin) Plan [452]. (IV §1-7) Curiously, no, suspiciously, the Report omitted all mention of the 6th "plan", namely that of the 1939 (MacDonald) White Paper [410], although it was stronger than all of the other five commission reports due to its status as a Statement of Policy ("White Paper") approved by Parliament (on 23 May 1939) [410; 411] and had never legally been superceded. This type of chicanery is known in magic as a 'vanish'. Hardly incidentally, the overlooked MacDonald "plan" was almost identical to **option (ii)** above which UNSCOP rejected as "extreme". (IV §1, V §2-3)

Then came a description of eleven "recommendations approved unanimously". (V. Section A) These covered the termination of the Mandate, the Capitulations, UN responsibility, economic union, protection of minorities, the Holy Places, an appeal for peace and order, etc. Recommendation VI – "Jewish Displaced Persons" – uncontroversially said that something had to be done about them, while Recommendation XII controversially said that some of them should come to Palestine, causing two members to reject it and one to abstain. Note that the concrete number of 150,000 European Jews to be forced into Palestine would appear not here as a consensus point but only in the UNSCOP Majority Plan. (VI Part I) [468]

The unanimously approved **Recommendation VII**, by the way, in reality adopted what the Palestinians and Arab states had been proposing all along, in their "extreme positions", indicating a somewhat embarrassing oversight on the part of UNSCOP:

In view of the fact that independence is to be granted in Palestine on the recommendation and under the auspices of the United Nations, it is a proper and an important concern of the United Nations that the constitution or other fundamental law as well as the political structure of the new State or States shall be basically democratic, i.e., representative, in character, and that this shall be a prior condition to the grant of independence.

The mention of "States" in the plural meant that if **option (i)** won out over **option (iii)**, each of the two states after partition was required to be democratic in the sense of **option (ii)** above. That is, Recommendation VII was mandating for option (i) exactly what it was eschewing in option (ii) as "extreme". The same goes, actually, for the "cantons" or "nations" in bi-national option (iii). Unless the foreseen polities were cleansed into ethnic purity, the two-state and "federal" models of options (i) & (iii) both faced the problem of minority protection which was said to render a unitary democracy undesirable or impossible. That is, if Recommendation VII were followed neither the partition nor the bi-national option would solve anything in terms of constitutional structure and protec-

tion of minorities, as also elaborated upon in Entry 468 below. The only conclusion is that UNSCOP rejected option (ii) not because it was “extreme” but because it would preclude a Jewish state.

As we shall see, all three two-state proposals to come in autumn 1947 were plans for *two democratic states*: 1) the proposal of the UNSCOP majority on 3 September [^{>468}]; 2) the proposal of the Ad Hoc Committee’s Subcommittee 1 presented on 19 November [^{>476}; ^{>478}]; and 3) the actual partition plan approved by the General Assembly majority in the form of its Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 [^{>481}]. Just as in Recommendation VII, unanimously agreed by UNSCOP on 27 August, neither State would be allowed to evince the slightest prejudice for or against anyone based on ethnicity or creed. Their constitutions would be exactly like the one proposed and argued for by the Palestinians all during the previous almost 30 years for *all of Palestine* as well as **option (ii)** above. What, then, was the point of partition?

The contradiction became perfectly visible once **Recommendation VII** presented a standard list of “guarantees” of:

- A. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of worship and conscience, speech, press and assemblage, the rights of organized labor, freedom of movement, freedom from arbitrary searches and seizures, and rights of personal property; and
- B. Full protection for the rights and interests of minorities, including the protection of the linguistic, religious and ethnic rights of the peoples and respect for their cultures, and full equality of all citizens with regard to political, civil and religious matters.

UNSCOP’s “Comment” on its Recommendation VII conceded that even in the two-state solution “The wide diffusion of both Arabs and Jews throughout Palestine makes it almost inevitable that, in any solution, there will be an ethnic minority element in the population.” So again: If this Recommendation requiring two standard democracies was enough for each of the two States alone, why wasn’t it sufficient for the single state of **option (ii)** above? If it was stiff enough for the to-be-proposed Jewish-majority State, why wasn’t it stiff enough for a State of Palestine with an Arab majority? Did Jews and Arabs perhaps inherently differ regarding their intention and ability to treat minorities fairly? [*also >343*]

467. Anbara Khalidi to Ralph Bunche

summer 1947

After wading for even this short while in the documents produced by UNSCOP, **the words of Jerusalemite Anbara Salam Khalidi**, who for over 20 years had been part of the Palestinian resistance, provide a welcome break:

I recall a visit to our house by Dr Ralph Bunche (1903-1971), then deputy chairman of the UN Special Committee on Palestine. He had arrived as member of a commission and I said to him, 'Would you permit me to explain the problem simply and directly? I do not wish to enter into the political intricacies nor to review the history and consequences of the problem. All I want to say is this: I own this house and cannot understand why I should renounce or surrender it; nor can I be convinced that any law in the world or any international resolution can make me consent to hand it over to foreigners, even if they have no house. I do not understand my responsibility in this regard. This is my house, I am here, and I do not wish anyone to share it with me.' With a pained expression Bunche answered, 'Believe me, dear lady, this simple statement of yours is more convincing to me than the great pile of documents stacked on my desk.'³⁴⁶⁶

Bunche succeeded Folke Bernadotte as UN Mediator for Palestine when the latter was assassinated by Zionists on 17 September 1948. But neither he nor anyone else returned the house to its rightful owners.

³⁴⁶⁶ Khalidi 1978, pp 144-45.

Finalised on 31 August and **published by the United Nations on 3 September 1947** the ‘partition with economic union’ plan³⁴⁶⁷ was written by the UNSCOP ‘Working Group on Constitutional Matters’ made up of Sandstrom, Blom, Granados and Rand. It was supported by UNSCOP at the 47th of its 51 meetings by a vote of 7 in favour (Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay) versus 3 against (India, Iran and Yugoslavia), with Australia abstaining. The Palestinians and other Arab states rejected it, but with non-essential modification it would be approved on 25 November by the so-called ‘Ad Hoc Committee’ (made up of all members of the General Assembly, *see* >455) by a vote of 25 Yes to 13 No to 17 abstentions³⁴⁶⁸ and on 29 November by the General Assembly as Resolution 181 by a vote of 33 Yes to 13 No with 10 abstentions and 1 absence. (Seven abstaining members had within 4 days, between 25 and 29 November, somehow decided to vote Yes.) [>481]

The majority’s main argument for partition:

Jewish immigration is the central issue in Palestine today and is the one factor, above all others, that rules out the necessary co-operation between the Arab and Jewish communities in a single state. The creation of a Jewish state under a partition scheme is the only hope of removing this issue from the arena of conflict.³⁴⁶⁹

Another “hope” would of course be ending European immigration, but the bottom line for the ‘world community’ was further immigration, all other arguments be damned.

But at least in recommending independence for the two states, the international powers were all of a sudden saying that now that there was to be a Jewish state, the inhabitants of Palestine needed no more ‘tutelage’: “the peoples of Palestine are sufficiently advanced to govern themselves independently.” (unanimous Recommendation II on “Independence”, Comment (a)) The ability to “stand alone” appeared miraculously, i.e. with no change either in the peoples’ experience or their education level, and the Covenant’s Article 22 could now be respected! [>46]

The plan foresaw no compulsory population transfer but rather the immigration into the Jewish State of 150,000 European Jews within about 2 years and 60,000 per year thereafter, and “no Arab shall be permitted to establish residence in the area of the proposed Jewish State”. (Recommendations B.1.c.1 & B.3) There was no such prohibition of Jews’ coming to reside in the Arab state. These two racist stipulations, even assuming a high Arab birthrate, would assure the Jewish inhabitants’ increase from a minority to a majority in the territory allotted to the Jewish State in the near future.

At present, however, the numbers were about 50/50. According to the UNSCOP majority’s *own* population figures and according to the border *it itself* had drawn between the

³⁴⁶⁷ UNSCOP 1947, *all citations*, most from Ch. VI, *use* Search function.

³⁴⁶⁸ UNGA 1947p, §29.

³⁴⁶⁹ Khan 1947, p 683 (§72), *citing* the majority report.

two foreseen states, the Jewish majority in the Jewish state was razor thin; an even slight Arab majority would of course have been embarrassingly unthinkable. UNSCOP's numbers were, very conveniently, 498,000 Jews and 497,000 non-Jews (407,000 "Arabs" and "about 90,000" Bedouins), a majority of 50.05%. (Part II just after §5)

However, it is highly likely that the embarrassingly unthinkable case was the truth: according to the census numbers of Subcommittee 2 of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine³⁴⁷⁰ [478], in the proposed Jewish state there were actually 105,000 Bedouins rather than the 90,000 officially counted by UNSCOP. This meant there were actually 512,000 non-Jews, yielding a Jewish minority of 49.3%. Should that tally prove correct, two problems would arise: (1) if the state were "Jewish", as the Majority Plan declared it to be, the Plan would be recommending rule by minority, however slight a minority; and, even 'worse', (2) the prescribed constitution of the state, being based on proportional representation and majority vote (*see just below*), would result in a legislature which would not set up a "Jewish" state but rather either an Arab or a secular democracy blind to ethnicities. Lacking a Jewish majority, the only sense in which that state could be 'Jewish' would be if it *privileged* the Jewish minority, but this would violate the conditions contained in the Majority Plan itself (*again, see just below*). Therefore the (likely) legerdemain of counting as few Bedouins as plausible was necessary to justify the Zionist state.

In fact the Majority Plan laudably applied normal human rights-based constitutional-democratic principles when requiring that whatever state or states emerged be secular democracies treating all citizens equally and functioning through organs elected by proportional representation. In that case, however, there would be no sense in calling the states Arab or Jewish. This requirement was stated in two places in the Majority Plan:

1) "[T]he constitution or other fundamental law as well as the political structure of the new State or States shall be basically democratic, i.e., representative, in character, and... this shall be a prior condition to the grant of independence. [It must include] specific guarantees respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of worship and conscience, speech, press and assemblage... [and] full protection for the rights and interests of minorities... with regard to political, civil and religious matters." (Ch. V, Section A. Recommendations approved unanimously, Recommendations³⁴⁷¹ VII., 'Democratic Principles and Protection of Minorities')

2) "The constituent assemblies shall draw up the constitutions of the States,... [e]stablishing in each State a legislative body elected... on the basis of proportional representation [and] [g]uaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religious worship, language, speech and publication, education, assembly and association." (Ch. VI Recommendations (II) Part I. Partition with economic union, B.4.a & d)

Given these stipulations, of course, counting Jews and non-Jews, computing ethno-religious majorities and minorities, was literally irrelevant – so far as the prescribed constitutions were concerned, they were just human beings.

³⁴⁷⁰ UNGA 1947n, §62-64.

³⁴⁷¹ For some reason "Recommendations" is in the plural.

Thus, as also argued above in Entry 466, this two-state solution would in reality create two constitutionally identical democratic states, raising the question of why partition in the first place. As Ivor Thomas MP would say in the House of Commons on 10 March 1948:

The United Nations... made a grievous mistake. Because it was impossible, so they said, to have a bi-national State in Palestine, they tried to create two bi-national States. Could absurdity go further?³⁴⁷²

At any rate, according to this Majority Plan, since all citizens in both states were to have absolutely equal rights, there would be no meaningfully “Jewish” state after all, defeating the purpose of partition. [see also >464] This inference is so clear that the Zionists could not have not realised it – but knew they wouldn’t have to play by the rules.

Aside from that, a double standard was in play: As we saw in a previous entry [>466], this proposal, for all of Palestine, was rejected by a majority of UNSCOP as “extreme”, even with such safeguarding “provisions” such as those just quoted. (Ch.V §2-3) Yet suddenly exactly such a constitution was put forward for “the new State or States”. Such constitutions were preconditions of independence for both States, independence which would be withheld by the international community until the proper fully-democratic constitutions were signed and sealed. So the UNSCOP majority was now itself advocating “extreme” constitutions. However that may be, it was saying that under partition the Jews in the Jewish State could be trusted to safeguard the rights of non-Jews, the Arabs in the Arab State could be trusted to safeguard the rights of Jews, but that in an unpartitioned state the majority of Arabs could not be trusted to safeguard the rights of Jews. These were representatives of countries which had always claimed to be equipped to give the Palestinians “tutelage” in political matters.

Before getting to the foreseen boundaries of the two states, in its ‘A Commentary on Partition’ the majority compared its proposal to that of the UNSCOP minority by writing that

the difference in substance between the two plans would lie in the failure of the federal scheme [Minority Plan] to satisfy the aspirations of both groups for independence. ... The Arab State will organize the substantial majority of Arabs in Palestine into a political body containing an insignificant minority of Jews; but in the Jewish State there will be a considerable minority of Arabs. That is the demerit of the scheme. But such a minority is inevitable in any feasible plan which does not place the whole of Palestine under the present majority of the Arabs. One cannot disregard the specific purpose of the Mandate and its implications nor the existing conditions, and the safeguarding of political, civil and cultural rights provided by the scheme are as ample as can be devised.

It was disingenuous to characterise the Arab population in the foreseen Jewish territory as “a considerable minority” when it amounted by the UNSCOP majority’s own numbers to a 49.95% minority and by Subcommittee 2’s numbers to a 50.7% majority of the population. Any margin of error in census-taking would mean that in the so-called Jewish State there was no “minority”. But most importantly, the bottom line was that “one cannot disregard the specific purpose of the Mandate” – massive immigration in order to

³⁴⁷² Hansard 1948, c1337.

construct a “home”. But why could one not disregard that, now that the League of Nations and its mandates system as of 18 April 1946 no longer existed, and Britain had given up the Mandate *de facto* by referring its problem to the United Nations [^{>453}; ^{>455}] and would *de jure* relinquish it a few weeks later [^{>471}]? The Mandate text, at this point literally irrelevant, was all the UNSCOP majority had to latch onto.

Turning their eyes away from the 50/50 demography in the so-called Jewish State, the four American and three European teams behind the plan – all thoroughly unqualified to investigate Palestine in the first place – asserted that

The scheme satisfies the deepest aspiration of both: independence. There is a considerable body of opinion in both groups which seeks the course of cooperation. Despite, then, the drawback of the Arab minority [sic.], the setting is one from which, with good will and a spirit of cooperation, may arise a rebirth, in historical surroundings, of the genius of each people. (also in ‘A Commentary on Partition’)

All of a sudden, the two communities *could* conceivably get along.

There is further logical roughness in the fact that the “Arab minority” could only be a “drawback” for the proposed Jewish State if that State intended to deviate from the democratic constitution which the UNSCOP majority stated to be “a prior condition to the grant of independence” for that State. Under the required “proportional representation” and “guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms”, nobody’s religion or ethnicity could logically constitute a “drawback”. It was a “drawback” only if you wanted the (purportedly slight) Jewish majority to in some crucial ways to ride roughshod over the (purportedly slight) Arab minority – and presumably, the smaller that minority the easier it would be to get away with it.

The term “drawback” is even more confusing because these seven countries also claimed to know that, regarding both the Jews and non-Jews:

here are the sole remaining representatives of the Semitic race. They are in the land in which that race was cradled. There are no fundamental incompatibilities between them. ... The Jews bring to the land the social dynamism and scientific method of the West; the Arabs confront them with individualism and intuitive understanding of life. Here then, in this close association, through the natural emulation of each other, can be evolved a synthesis of the two civilizations, preserving, at the same time, their fundamental characteristics. In each State, the native genius will have a scope and opportunity to evolve into its highest cultural forms and to attain its greatest reaches of mind and spirit. In the case of the Jews, that is really the condition of survival. Palestine will remain one land in which Semitic ideals may pass into realization. (‘A commentary on partition’ at the very end of Part I)

Whether or not, as this maudlin piece of fiction claimed, the European Jews were “Semitic”, and whether or not the Arabs were “individualistic”, unscientific and “intuitive”, and whether or not, now that World War II was over, “the Jews” (all? some? those in Palestine?) would not “survive” without their own state in the Near East, logic raises the question why, if this unasked-for description of the feelings of the inhabitants was true, this paradise could not also apply to a unitary Palestine with safeguards for whichever

group was the minority. It is beside the point that the UNSCOP majority, made up of noble democracies, were not listening to what either the Arabs (69% of the population) or the Jews were saying. The point for now is only the internal contradiction which would also plague the partition scheme passed by the UNGA on 29 November: As in the Recommendations unanimously agreed by UNSCOP [466], the UNSCOP majority was formally accepting a human rights-based democracy within each state while simultaneously denying it for the country as a whole. This can only be because of their arguably racist view that only a Jewish majority could be trusted to treat a minority fairly. Without this premise, the contradiction remained.

As boundaries, the Palestinians would be given “Western Galilee, the hill country of *Samaria and Judea* with the exclusion of the City of Jerusalem, and the coastal plain from Isdud to the Egyptian frontier”. (Ch. VI. Recommendations II, Part II, ‘Boundaries’, *emphasis added*) Further,

The inclusion of the whole Beersheba sub-district in the Jewish State gives to it a large area, parts of which are very sparsely populated and capable of development, if they can be provided with water for irrigation. ... Jaffa, which has an Arab population of about 70,000, is entirely Arab except for two Jewish quarters. It is contiguous with Tel Aviv and would either have to be treated as an enclave or else be included in the Jewish State. On balance, and having in mind the difficulties which an enclave involves, not least from the economic point at view, it was thought better to suggest that Jaffa be included in the Jewish State, on the assumption that it would have a large measure of local autonomy and that the port would be under the administration of the Economic Union. (Chapter VI Recommendations (II) Part II. Boundaries)

Why could not Tel Aviv and its mostly northern environs “have a large measure of autonomy” within either an Arab state (if Palestine was partitioned) or an ethnically-neutral Palestinian state covering all of Palestine? Why couldn’t the “Beersheba sub-district” be irrigated and opened to Arabs as well as Jews? How was it that the nomadic non-Jews in the Beersheba sub-district did not deserve a mention? Whatever the answers to these questions, on an emotional, even spiritual level, for the Palestinians there would be no more Yaffa, no more Haifa, and no more Jerusalem. This degree of pain was being regarded as acceptable.

The omniscient UNSCOP Majority also said its Plan was very valuable to the Palestinians:

It is recognized that partition has been strongly opposed by Arabs, but it is felt that that opposition would be lessened by a solution which definitively fixes the extent of territory to be allotted to the Jews with its implicit limitation on immigration. The fact that the solution carries the sanction of the United Nations involves a finality which should allay Arab fears of further expansion of the Jewish State. (Part I §9)

This much, and no more, will be robbed. We have encountered this great advantage before: knowing the exact scope of their dispossession should relieve their worries.

Further, the UNSCOP majority failed to heed Henry Cattán’s warning of 9 May [457] not to conflate the situation of the Jews in Europe with political solutions for Palestine:

It is not without significance that only since the rise of Nazism to power in Germany, with the resultant mass movement of Jews to Palestine, has the Palestine question become sufficiently acute to require the devising of solutions outside the framework of the normal evolution of an 'A' Mandate. Thus, all of the significant solutions devised for Palestine are of comparatively recent origin. (IV §15)³⁴⁷³

This paragraph is ignorant: Well before the advent of the German Nazi Government the British had dozens of times enacted, and many times admitted to enacting, a “solution outside the framework of the normal evolution of an ‘A’ Mandate”, namely the Balfour Declaration’s and Mandate’s privileging of a Jewish national home as opposed to a democratic “solution”. Solutions violating self-determination had been discussed and applied for almost 30 years. Moreover, the “significant solution” of a normal democracy in the likeness of those practiced at home by the UNSCOP-majority countries was not “recent”, its having been tirelessly advocated by the Palestinians for three decades. But maybe it just wasn’t a “significant” solution. The paragraph also interestingly implies that before the rise of Nazism, there should have been a solution within “the framework of the normal evolution of an ‘A’ Mandate” – an opinion condemning both Britain and the Permanent Mandates Commission.

The “Political Committee of the Arab League Council”, meeting in Sofar, Lebanon, on 16-19 and on 26 September 1947, adopted four resolutions accusing the U.N. majority of “a flagrant violation of the natural rights of the Arabs of Palestine to independence” and warning of “unavoidable disturbance and unrest” in reaction to Zionist and U.N. “aggression”.³⁴⁷⁴ Musa Alami, as well, as Director of the Arab Office, specifically rejected UNSCOP’s majority plan.³⁴⁷⁵ Jamal al-Husseini, speaking before the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine, rejected both it and the Minority Plan.³⁴⁷⁶ [³⁴⁷⁶472]

³⁴⁷³ Also Quigley 2010, pp 90-91.

³⁴⁷⁴ Zuaytir 1958, pp 178-80.

³⁴⁷⁵ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 190.

³⁴⁷⁶ Tannous 1988, pp 415-16.

469. UNSCOP Minority Plan

3 September 1947

As we saw in the last entry, seven of the eleven UNSCOP members preferred the Majority Plan, devised by the ‘Working Group on Constitutional Matters’ and known officially as Partition with Economic Union, while three preferred that devised by the ‘Working Group on the Federal State Solution’ and known as **the ‘Minority’** or **‘Federal State Plan’**.³⁴⁷⁷ The 11th member, Australia, voted for neither. This minority working group consisted of Indian delegate Sir Abdur Rahman, Iranian delegate Nasrollah Entezam, Yugoslavian delegate Novak Simić, and Australian delegate Samuel Atyeo and their solution was actually a hybrid two-state/one-state solution in the style of the Anglo-American [>438] and Morrison-Grady [>442] plans – all abandoning representative human rights-based democracy in the search for a solution giving the ethno-religious Jewish community collective political status.

It is easy to become confused amongst the many proposals half-baked in the UN kitchen. This UNSCOP Minority Plan is not to be confused with the more comprehensive and principled, last-ditch plan of the UN ‘Ad Hoc’ Committee’s Subcommittee 2, published on 11 November, which moved closer to a normal constitutional democracy without doing away entirely with collectivist concepts.³⁴⁷⁸ [>478]

The UNSCOP minority proposed that the “independent Federal State of Palestine shall comprise an Arab state and a Jewish state”. ([Ch. VII.] Section I §3) The ambiguity of the word “state”, even in lower-case, would on 26 April 1948, when the General Assembly was struggling over whether to ditch partition,³⁴⁷⁹ cause Guatemala’s delegate, García Granados, to make the in my opinion accurate point that the plan was hardly distinguishable from partition: like the majority, the minority maintained that “the two peoples of Palestine were very separate entities” and “the plan for a federal State also provided for a territorial partition”. In response to Granados, the delegate from Iran, Entezam, who had co-written and signed the Minority report, would clarify that this meant two “states” in the way that the U.S. had 48 “states”, which were not “independent States”.

At any rate, even in such an incarnation somewhere between a province and an independent state, part of Palestine and its people were being separated from the indigenous polity. It did recommend that the “peoples of Palestine are entitled to recognition of their right to independence, and an independent federal State of Palestine shall be created following a transitional period not exceeding three years” ([Ch. VII] Recommendations, I §1), but “peoples” in the plural, due to its implication of collective parity, was not acceptable to the Palestinians and they rejected this plan as well as the Majority Plan. Their simple demand, as the Palestinians had said to Churchill already on 24 October 1921 and said ever since:

³⁴⁷⁷ UNSCOP 1947, all citations, most from Ch. VII, use Search function.

³⁴⁷⁸ UNGA 1947n, A/AC.14/32.

³⁴⁷⁹ UNGA 1948b, pp 87, 99.

The Balfour Declaration was made without our being consulted... [It] should be superceded by an Agreement which would safeguard the rights, interests and liberties of the people of Palestine, and at the same time make provision for reasonable Jewish *religious* aspirations, but precluding any exclusive political advantages to them which must necessarily interfere with Arab rights.³⁴⁸⁰ [^{>123}]

“People” – Jewish people or Arab people – should have rights, but not all Jews as a “people”.

It differed from the Majority Plan in recommending that “a constituent assembly shall be elected by the population of Palestine and shall formulate the constitution of the independent Federal State of Palestine”. ([Section] I §5) But the constituent assembly would be constrained in several areas by parity or near-parity for the Jews, who made up roughly only 31% of the population:

- While “election to one chamber of the federal legislative body shall be on the basis of proportional representation of the population as a whole”, “election of members to the other chamber of the federal legislative body shall be on the basis of equal representation [numerical parity] of the Arab and Jewish citizens of Palestine.” (II §4 & 5)
- Jews were guaranteed 40% of the seats on an “arbitral body” to solve disagreements between the two legislative chambers. (II §8) The selection or election of this body was left unspecified.
- “The federal court shall have a minimum membership of four Arabs and three Jews.” (II §14) But the absolute size of the court is not specified, and since its members were to be elected by “both chambers” of the legislature, in case of dispute the 40%-Jewish “arbitral body” would again decide.
- “Arabic and Hebrew shall be official languages in both the federal and state governments.” (II §23)
- Amendments to the constitution would require “the assent of a majority of both the Arab and Jewish members of the federal legislative body.” (II §31) Like the MacDonald White Paper plan of 1939 somewhat more ambiguously foresaw [^{>395ff; >402; >405; >410; >412}], the minority would thus hold veto power over fundamental decisions.

On immigration, the Minority Plan began by recommending that the “settlement of the difficult conditions in Palestine” should be aided by other countries in the world admitting large numbers of “Jews in the displaced persons camps and the distressed European Jews outside them”, but that Palestine should take in “its share”: first, because “large numbers of Jews... insistently demand the right to settle in Palestine”, and second, because “many of the Jews in Palestine have relatives among the displaced Jews of Europe”. ([Ch. VII] Section VII §2 & 3) Such immigrants would be allowed only “into the borders of the Jewish state in the proposed independent federal state of Palestine”, and although no numbers were named the criterion of “absorptive capacity” was stipulated; nevertheless, in general,

no claim to a right of unlimited immigration of Jews into Palestine, irrespective of time, can be entertained. It follows, therefore, that no basis could exist for any anticipation that the

³⁴⁸⁰ CO 733/16, pp 508-12.

Jews now in Palestine might increase their numbers by means of free mass immigration to such extent that they would become the majority population in Palestine. ([Section] VII §5 & 6a)

No words were lost on the large Arab community – whether a bare minority or a bare majority – in the Jewish “state”. During the 3-year transitional period Jewish immigration would be decided by a 9-member committee made up of 3 Jews, 3 UN representatives and 3 indigenous Arabs (meaning *less than* parity for the Palestinians). (VII §6b)

The plan furthermore did not trust the new Palestinian country to deal responsibly with the holy places, placing their control under an “international body... composed of three representatives designated by the United Nations and one representative of each of the recognized faiths”. ([Ch. VII] Section V.A §6)

The plan was bi-national or federal, rather than two-state, in the sense that the following functions were centralised: “national defence, foreign relations, immigration, currency, taxation for federal purposes, foreign and inter-state waterways, transport and communications, copyrights and patents.” (II §18) Also, “There would be a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship.” (II §25) It was a two-state solution in the sense that the following functions were devolved: “education, taxation for local purposes, right of residence, commercial licenses, land permits, grazing rights, inter-state immigration, settlement, police, punishment of crime, social institutions and services, public housing, public health, local roads, agriculture and local industries.” (II §27) [*compare* >438, >442, >461, >478, >481 & >487]

The Plan was not as good for the indigenous majority as that of the MacDonald White Paper [>410], and it was far more complicated, with many unknowns and risks, than the Palestinians’ own plan for a representative democracy [>457; >459]. Nevertheless, according to its authors, who represented India, Iran and Yugoslavia,

the well-being of the country and its peoples as a whole is accepted as out-weighting the aspirations of the Jews [and the] federal State is also in every respect the most democratic solution, both as regards the measures required for its implementation and in its operation, since it requires no undemocratic economic controls, avoids the creation of national minority groups, and affords an opportunity for full and effective participation in representative government to every citizen of the State. This solution would be most in harmony with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations. (Chapter VII, Justification for the federal-State solution (8))

Again, the very large non-Jewish minority in the foreseen Jewish “state” was regarded not as a “minority group” but as a group of individuals – just as the Jews there were not regarded as the ‘majority group’. Much of the effort of both the minority and majority Working Groups went into devising anything but a much simpler representative democracy.

The Palestinian side of the ‘dialogue’ between the Palestinians and the world was taken up by India’s delegate Sir Abdur Rahman in a 26-page “special note” appended to the Mi-

nority Plan.³⁴⁸¹ It began with the statement that “Independence is the natural birthright of every people of the world”, unfortunately leaving it unclear whether “people” meant the long-term inhabitants of a territory or some ethno-religious group. While it contained nothing not already noted by the Palestinians during the previous thirty years, it is a comprehensive and detailed historical, military and legal work damning British involvement in Palestine – or non-involvement, as when “no attention was paid to the King-Crane Commission’s report” [>59]. It also praised the 1939 White Paper [>410] for saying that the task of facilitating the Jewish national home had been completed.

Abdur Rahman noted in particular that

The Administration of the mandatory Power does not seem to have done much during the last twenty-seven years in the way of uplifting the indigenous people of the country, a task which, as an agent of the mandatory Power, it was obliged to do. ... [What’s more, for example,] it might be mentioned that the only bank which was advancing money to agriculturists (the Ottoman Agriculturist Bank) was liquidated in 1922.

The Palestinians had faced difficulties of economic as well as political survival.

However, so Abdur Rahman, even if most Jewish immigrants had come against the will of the native population, “Private rights have been created. People have been allowed to come and settle down. They cannot be asked to go.” In placing blame, he wrote:

Speaking for myself, I consider the British Government, rather than any other Power, to be primarily responsible for the situation in which the United Nations find themselves now placed. It had not only agreed to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine after its promises of independence to the Arabs, which were reiterated in 1918 [>21; >22; >25; >28] and later, but in its intense desire to keep control of the Middle East and to keep France out, it secured the Mandate assignment from the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers at San Remo in 1920 [>78] and got the assignment approved by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1922 [>146]. In anticipation of this approval, the British Government had Palestine under its control in 1920 [sic.: 1918], and started its endeavours to facilitate the establishment of the National Home in all earnest almost immediately, so much so that no less than 5,514 Jews were allowed to immigrate between September and December 1920, despite various Arab protests and riots which had started almost immediately.

In short, “the Balfour Declaration should not have been made.”

11 September 1947 *Leading Palestinian trade unionist Sami Taha is assassinated in Haifa.*

³⁴⁸¹ UNSCOP 1947a, Appendix III, all citations, use Search function.

470. Mufti to Britain

19-22 September 1947

While debates over a UN recommendation were in high gear, Palestine Government police officers A.F. Giles and J.A. Briance on 19 September 1947 met in Cairo with Hajj Amin al-Husseini “unofficially” and only with the assistance of “a highly placed British resident of Cairo”. They asked him if he 1) was “irrevocably opposed to any form of partition”, 2) would accept a “modified partition scheme which would leave Jaffa and the Negeb in the Arab state”, and 3) wished “a rapprochement [with Britain] and if so on what basis”.³⁴⁸² **As reported in the document**, which bears the title ‘Officer Administering the Government of Palestine to the Secretary of State for the Colonies’, dated 23 September and stamped TOP SECRET, the Mufti’s answers were “emphatically yes” to question 1, “an emphatic rejection” to question 2, and a yes to question 3 “only if Britain withdrew its support from Political Zionism.”

In the rendering of Giles and Briance,

His Eminence was in excellent mood, charming, joking. He listened to my questions with great care, wrote them down, translated into Arabic, and will in due course provide written replies. ... Of course, it is possible that what His Eminence wants and what Jamal Husseini may be forced to agree to are different. The test will come if Jamal attempts to persuade Haj Amin to a compromise.

As to the substance of the issues:

As regards partition, in any form, under any conditions, with or without the Negeb and Jaffa, disguised as federalisation – the answer would be a simply uncompromising NO. In the first place, he was not bargaining with the Zionists about a possession in dispute. Palestine, including Jaffa and the Negeb, was Arab, and he did not recognise the right of anyone to ‘offer’ him what was theirs as a condition of Arab consent to partition. It was like a robber trying to make conditions on which he would return stolen property.³⁴⁸³

“In the second place”, paraphrased the two officers,

the Arabs were absolutely convinced that no form of partition or federalisation would finally satisfy the Zionists. Whatever they got would merely be a springboard from which to leap on more. ... Take Weizmann. In 1922, ‘We have no thought of a Jewish state’; by 1936-37, ‘We would accept partition’; by 1942 [Biltmore, >420] ‘Palestine to be a Jewish state’; today, ‘Palestine to be a Jewish state and Trans-Jordan is part of Palestine’. ... Remember yourselves in 1940. Did you ever think of offering the Germans part of Britain on condition they let you alone in the rest? Of course not, and you never would. In the second you know that they would never have kept their word to remain in the one part. All right. That was how the Arabs were; and, once again, the answer to ‘Partition’, ‘Federalisation’, in fact any system that gave the Zionists political authority in Palestine, was NO, categorically NO.

³⁴⁸² FO 371/61835, pp 50-52, sent “top secret” to the Colonial Office.

³⁴⁸³ Also Bethell 1979, pp 348-49.

In independent Palestine

the Jews, like anybody else, would have as many and no more rights as the other citizens of Palestine. Jews in England did not vote, etc., until they were naturalised. Jews – and Arabs for that matter – in Palestine would not have full rights until they became Palestinian citizens. There would be no discrimination against the Jews nor against any other people in Palestine. But the Arabs would NEVER agree to any bestowal on the Zionists of political power or privilege that put them above or independent of the Palestinian state government.

The Arabs basically loved the British, and would reconcile if the British would repudiate

the policy which has founded and nourished the Zionists' national home... [Were Britain as] 'one of the Big Five in the United Nations [to] make it evident there that she did not intend to support Zionist political claims and aims in Palestine...' she would have gained Arab friendship in a moment. It was little to ask. Britain has done a great deal for the Jews. Let her merely refrain from doing any more – Palestine. 'We do not ask justice. We ask less than justice,' because we do not ask Britain to undo the past.

As political officer Deedes had put it back in 1921, "They like the doctor, but not his prescription."³⁴⁸⁴ Soon, the British would ignore several opportunities in the Security Council to atone. [>483; >484; >487]

Hajj Amin added that were the British to withdraw militarily, the Arabs would defeat the Zionists should it come to that. Interviewers Giles and Briance closed by noting: "Most of the conversation was in Turkish. Important words and phrases were repeated in Arabic. Haj Amin occasionally lapsed into broken French and even, once or twice, into a word or two of English." The Mufti's words in this interview – of course as related by the two police officers – are hardly different from those of Musa Kazem al-Husseini and the entire Palestinian elite beginning almost thirty years earlier [>99].

Meanwhile, the Arab League Political Committee was to meet 16-19 September in Sofar, Lebanon, with Iraqi Prime Minister Saleh Jabr proposing to devote the meeting solely to the Palestine issue; the resolution he presented in the name of the Iraqi parliament called on the West to honour the 1939 White Paper and "declare the independence of Palestine as an Arab state at the UN..."³⁴⁸⁵

³⁴⁸⁴ CO 733/17B, 'Situation' 15 April 1921, p 282.

³⁴⁸⁵ Khalidi 1986, p 117.

471. Cabinet relinquishes Mandate

20 September 1947

The Cabinet had on 11 September 1945 taken the next-to-last formal, internal step to turn Palestine policy over to the “World Organisation” (United Nations).³⁴⁸⁶ [>430] On 20 September 1947 it took the last formal step, agreeing with Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin’s proposal to relinquish the Mandate – except in the extremely unlikely event that the Arabs and Jews could come to a peaceful agreement; as Prime Minister Atlee put it,

He did not think it reasonable to ask the British administration in Palestine to continue in present conditions, and he hoped that salutary results would be produced by a clear announcement that His Majesty’s Government intended to relinquish the Mandate and, failing a peaceful settlement, to withdraw the British administration and British forces.³⁴⁸⁷

The Cabinet decided that HMG would state to the UN

with all solemnity that, if it proves impossible as a result of the deliberations of the General Assembly to reach a settlement, HMG will be forced to base their policy on the assumption that they will have to surrender the mandate under which they have sought for twenty-five years to discharge their obligations to facilitate the growth of the Jewish National Home and to protect the interests of the Arab population. This task has now become impossible, and in the absence of a settlement HMG must plan for an early withdrawal of British forces and of the British Administration from Palestine.³⁴⁸⁸

As usual there was no awareness, even at a secret Cabinet meeting, that the “present conditions” had been caused by HMG themselves, nor that the only reason the Arabs needed “protection” was the Zionist-Mandate “obligation” itself; moreover for once it was not the ‘establishment’ of the JNH that HMG had “sought”, but its “growth” – a plain contradiction to the actual words of the Balfour Declaration/Mandate text.

In a long memo to the Cabinet two days earlier, on 18 September, Bevin had weighed the pros and cons of staying or leaving under the three scenarios being debated at the United Nations: the UNSCOP Majority Plan, its Minority Plan or the status quo.³⁴⁸⁹ [>468; >469] Britain would “accept” whatever plan the General Assembly decided in the sense of not opposing it, but would not “accept” it in the sense of “actively carrying it out by means of a British administration and British forces”. (pp 51/§7, 56/§7) Specifically, enforcement of the Majority Plan’s partition would require large military reinforcements and cost British lives (p 53/§21) and its moral self-respect:

The majority proposal is so manifestly unjust to the Arabs that it is difficult to see how... ‘we could reconcile it with our conscience’. (p 51/§8) ... The Jewish Government... would try to

³⁴⁸⁶ CAB 128/3/2.

³⁴⁸⁷ CAB 128/10/27, p 150.

³⁴⁸⁸ CAB 129/21/9, p 56/§10.

³⁴⁸⁹ CAB 129/21/9, pp 48-56.

expand its frontiers [and its] desire for expansion [would mean that] any Power attempting to give effect to [partition] would be faced simultaneously with an Arab rising and large-scale Jewish terrorism. (pp 51/§10, 52/§13)

Britain's abstention on all UN votes on "manifestly unjust" partition plans between now and mid-May 1948 was on the other hand apparently reconcilable with its "conscience". Bevin was correctly predicting the Jewish Government's expansion of frontiers.

Furthermore, Britain should warn the General Assembly against conflating the "solution for Palestine" with "a solution of the [European] Jewish problem in general". (pp 48/§3, 55/§3) Bevin was evidently 'growing in the job'. Finally, even if the General Assembly decided on the minority "federal State" plan, since this was anyway "incapable of being enforced" because the "willing co-operation of the two peoples" was nowhere in sight – and because the tendencies to partition would remain – HMG would likewise have to "withdraw from Palestine, in the last resort unconditionally". (pp 52/§14 & 15, 53/§18) The House of Lords would discuss withdrawal once again at length on 10 March 1948 [→486] and on 7 April 1948³⁴⁹⁰, and the 'Palestine Bill' authorising withdrawal would be passed on 29 April 1948.

³⁴⁹⁰ Hansard 1948a.

472.* **Palestinians to Ad Hoc Committee** 23 & 29 September 1947

On 23 September 1947 the General Assembly, having had time to digest the UNSCOP Majority and Minority reports, quaintly declared itself in its entirety an 'Ad Hoc' Committee whose sole remit was to consider the two schemes. This Ad Hoc Committee met continuously until a few days before the General Assembly vote on Resolution 181 on 29 November [>481], and these meetings and their agenda items are listed chronologically in a special UN document.³⁴⁹¹ This entry covers **some presentations by Palestinians** or their allies at these hearings.

In the debate of 23 September, according to Tannous, the standard argument put forward by the Palestine Arab delegation was that

the Arab people of Palestine have now reached a state of development which entitled them to complete independence; and since they were the overwhelming majority of the population, the U.N. was not competent to impose a solution which was contrary to the wishes of the majority of the population. To solve the Palestine Question,... the following principles must be recognized: 1. An Arabic democratic state is to be established in the whole of Palestine, based on the principles of fundamental freedom and the equality of all persons under the law. 2. The legitimate rights and interests of all minorities must be protected. 3. The freedom of worship and access to the Holy Places must be guaranteed. The Palestinian Arab delegate [Jamal al-Husseini] ended his statement by saying that he did not comment on the Special Committee's reports because both the majority report on partition and the minority report on two Federal States were inconsistent with the United Nations Charter and with the Covenant of the League of Nations. Consequently, the Arab people of Palestine were determined to oppose the dismemberment of their country with all the means at their power.³⁴⁹²

This statement "was very similar to the statement made by Henry Cattan who had represented the A.H.C. [Arab Higher Committee] in the Special Session (S-1)" on 9 May 1947.³⁴⁹³ [>457] Notable is the rejection of *both* Plans.

Jamal al-Husseini spoke before the Ad Hoc Committee also on 29 September on behalf of the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee.³⁴⁹⁴ Before re-iterating the irreducible standard demands of the colonised, in his by now familiar recapitulation of Mandate history he pointed out that

the rights and patrimony of the Arabs in Palestine had been the subject of no less than eighteen investigations within twenty-five years... Such commissions of inquiry had made recommendations that had either reduced the national and legal rights of the Palestine Arabs

³⁴⁹¹ UNGA 1947j.

³⁴⁹² Tannous 1988, pp 415-16.

³⁴⁹³ Tannous 1988, p 415.

³⁴⁹⁴ UNGA 1947l, *all quotations, use Search function*; Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 152-53.

or glossed them over. The few recommendations favorable to the Arabs had been ignored by the Mandatory Power. It was hardly strange, therefore, that [the Arabs] should have been unwilling to take part in a nineteenth investigation [that by UNSCOP in the summer of 1947, >462].

The usual legalistic argument of the incompatibility of partition-cum-Jewish state with the League of Nations Covenant and the UN Charter was brought forth,³⁴⁹⁵ and Jamal also pointed to the fact that

the struggle of the Arabs in Palestine had nothing in common with anti-Semitism. The Arab world had been one of the rare havens of refuge for the Jews until the atmosphere of neighborliness had been poisoned by the Balfour Declaration and the aggressive spirit the latter had engendered in the Jewish community.

Much evidence supported this view of Jamal. Throughout the years 1918-1948 British officials attested the friendliness of Arabs towards Jews as Jews rather than Zionists; for instance, twenty-nine years earlier Jaffa Military Governor Hubbard had reported that "What the Arabs fear is not the Jews in Palestine but the Jews who are coming to Palestine."³⁴⁹⁶

As to who possessed rights of self-determination in the territory of Palestine Jamal continued:

[T]he [Jewish] claim to Palestine based on historical association was a movement on the part of the Ashkenazim, whose forefathers had no connection with Palestine.³⁴⁹⁷

I do not know when this awareness, here evinced by Jamal, had arisen that the European Jews were not Semites; but it was merely added to the deeper argument brought by the Palestinians for the previous thirty years, namely that *even if* all Jews were Semitic descendants of the Old Testament Jews, their claim to Palestine stood no chance against that of the actually-present people whose ancestry extended back millennia. Ronald Storrs, who had been Governor of Jerusalem 1917-1926, in his 1937 memoirs had also said that

This distinction [between the actual residing Palestinians and 'the Jewish people as a whole'] is one of paramount importance. It means that while the rights of the Arabs are based on their residence in the country, the rights of the Jews are independent of this qualification...³⁴⁹⁸

At least in terms of the offered justifications for their claims to collective rights in or over Palestine, there was no 'parity' between the two groups.

Returning to Jamal's statement:

³⁴⁹⁵ Also Tannous 1988, p 416.

³⁴⁹⁶ FO 371/3386, p 262, John E. Hubbard to O.E.T.A. Jerusalem; Ingrams 1972, p 45.

³⁴⁹⁷ See also UNGA 1947f, > Al-Khoury; Baihum 1957; Zuaytir 1958, pp 38-39; John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 184-85, 224-25; Koestler 1977; Nakhleh 1991, pp 966-67, citing *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, pp 1-6 & H.Graetz, *The History of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p 3; Sand 2009.

³⁴⁹⁸ Storrs 1937, p 358 note; Huneidi 2001, p 19.

[Furthermore] the Zionists claimed the establishment of a Jewish National Home by virtue of the Balfour Declaration. But the British Government had had no right to dispose of Palestine [and the] Balfour Declaration was in contradiction with the Covenant of the League of Nations and was an immoral, unjust and illegal promise. ... The Zionists were conducting an aggressive campaign with the object of securing by force a country which was not theirs by birthright. ... The Arabs of Palestine could not understand why their right to live in freedom and peace, and to develop their country in accordance with their traditions, should be questioned and constantly submitted to investigation.

Jamal was also asserting their right to socio-economic development in their own way, not necessarily the way of efficiency- and growth-oriented Europeans.

Rather,

the solution lay in the Charter of the United Nations, in accordance with which the Arabs of Palestine, who constituted the majority, were entitled to a free and independent State. ... Regarding the manner and form of independence of Palestine, it was the view of the Arab Higher Committee that that was a matter for the rightful owners of Palestine to decide.

Again, premises as to the *political* “ownership” of Palestine determined anybody’s further positions on the Palestine question.

After sketching the “future constitutional organization of Palestine” based on democracy and “human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality of all persons before the law”, Jamal concluded:

The Arabs of Palestine were solidly determined to oppose with all the means at their command any scheme which provided for the dissection, segregation or partition of their country or which gave to a minority special and preferential rights or status. Although they fully realized that big Powers could crush such opposition by brute force, the Arabs nevertheless would not be deterred, but would lawfully defend with their life-blood every inch of soil of their beloved country. ... [T]here was self-defense on one side and, on the other, aggression. The *raison d’etre* of the United Nations is to assist self-defense against aggression.

He was making a distinction that is decisive in morally judging the participants in the Palestine triangle: Britain threw the first stone, while in “self-defense” the indigenous threw stones back. These words were the Palestinian swan song of a battle for self-determination triggered exactly fifty years earlier by Theodor Herzl’s *The Jewish State* and the first World Zionist Congress in Basel – a battle as of 1917 directed against Great Britain.

The Cabinet's having formally decided on 20 September 1947 to relinquish the Mandate³⁴⁹⁹ [>471], Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones on 26 September told the UN Ad Hoc Committee that the U.K. agreed with the twelve UNSCOP consensual resolutions [>466],

but that if the Assembly should recommend a policy which is not acceptable to both Jews and Arabs, the United Kingdom Government would not feel able to implement it. ... [The Government] are not themselves prepared to undertake the task of imposing a policy in Palestine by force of arms [and] in the absence of a settlement... they must plan for an early withdrawal of British forces and of the British Administration...³⁵⁰⁰

This was in fact a reversal of the *de facto* previous policy, in effect since 1918, of "imposing by force of arms" a policy "not acceptable to both Jews and Arabs". This communicated to the Palestinians and Arab states, as well, that HMG would not militarily defend the rights and position of the indigenous inhabitants. Only a year later, after Bernadotte's assassination by Jewish terrorists on 17 September 1948, did Bevin for the first time express some willingness on the part of HMG to support solutions which were *not* supported by both sides.³⁵⁰¹ At any rate, in these months before the General Assembly vote on the UNSCOP majority plan for partition [>468; >478; >481] Bevin and HMG pretended not to know what the Palestinians had been telling them all along – that there *never had been* any solution "acceptable to both" Jewish and Palestinian nationalists.

³⁴⁹⁹ CAB 128/10/27, p 150.

³⁵⁰⁰ UNGA 1947k.

³⁵⁰¹ Pappé 1988, p 46.

The United States of America took a public stand in favour of partition, as quoted by Mahdi Abdul Hadi:³⁵⁰²

The policy of the United States toward Palestine over the span of the years since the First World War shows a consistent interest in the establishment of a Jewish National Home. The United States has frequently stated its support of large-scale Jewish immigration into Palestine and has indicated that it might look with favor upon some arrangement for a partition of Palestine, provided that such an arrangement gave promise of being workable.

It also, unrealistically, wished “the maintenance of good will toward the United States on the part of the Moslem world...” The U.S. Government statement concluded this run-of-the-mill disregard for the Palestinians with a wish based on political parity of natives and Jews: “It is essential that any plan for Palestine adopted by the General Assembly be able to command the maximum cooperation of all elements in Palestine.” Innocent of all imperialism,

The plan for Palestine ultimately recommended by the General Assembly should be a *United Nations* solution and not a *United States* solution. ... [T]he final recommendation of the General Assembly cannot be labelled ‘the American plan’.

This disclaimer indicates that many people knew it was “the American plan”. That aside, the US could not have been unaware of the difficulties of any partition plan, as laid out by the Palestinian-Arab political parties, the Peel Commission, the Woodhead Commission, the MacDonald White Paper, the Anglo-American Committee, the Morrison-Grady Group and a dozen member states of the United Nations, including Great Britain, yet it would follow the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency in supporting UN General Assembly Resolution 181 [481] in favour of a Jewish state in Western Asia.

³⁵⁰² Abdul Hadi 1997, p 153, citing a US Department of State Memorandum.

475. Nashashibi letter in *The Times*

autumn 1947

Lawyer Anwar Nashashibi of Jerusalem, who had studied at the Sorbonne and practiced at Gray's Inn, London, wrote to *The Times* sometime in the autumn of 1947 protesting against the paper's position on partition:

'Sir, you advocate the partition of Palestine as the only solution of the problem. ... No one can but understand and sympathise with your endeavour to find a way out of the impasse. To help in this direction, the Arab League would, therefore, be ready to recognise the Jewish National Home in Palestine to the extent in which it has developed, which, be it noted, was developed from its initiation against the will of the Arabs. As to the Holy Places, their safeguard and the free access to them can be internationally guaranteed. But if it is meant to solve the world Jewish problem, Palestine, being no larger than Wales, is politically and physically unfit...³⁵⁰³

³⁵⁰³ Nashashibi 1990, p 19.

476. Arabs to Ad Hoc Committee

5-17 October 1947

According to John Quigley, on 14 October 1947

Syria submitted a resolution [in the *Ad Hoc Committee*] ‘that a sovereign State for the whole of Palestine be established on a democratic basis,’ to be constituted by a constituent assembly for which ‘all genuine and law-abiding nationals of Palestine’ would be entitled to vote.

Proposals for related questions for advisory opinions were submitted by Iraq and by Egypt. Iraq wanted to ask whether partition would conflict with the right of the majority population of Palestine to choose their own government, whether it would violate promises of independence made by Britain during World War I, and whether it would violate the League Covenant and Article 80 of the UN Charter.

Egypt wanted to ask whether the General Assembly was competent to recommend either of the two plans devised by the Special Committee on Palestine [³⁵⁰⁴>468; >469], and whether it would be lawful for any UN member state to implement any proposed solution for Palestine without the consent of its population.³⁵⁰⁴

These proposals stood on the democratic principle, captured in the League of Nations Covenant and the UN Charter, that provided no basic human rights were violated, the majority of the inhabitants of a territory had the right to determine their own government.

Not satisfied with the plenary vote on 27 August 1947 for the UNSCOP Majority Plan (partition with economic union), on 21 October at its 20th meeting the ‘Ad Hoc Committee’ [³⁵⁰⁵>472] **set up two subcommittees** to make “detailed recommendations” on the “future government of Palestine” in accordance with the Majority and Minority Plans, thus repeating the work during the summer of the 2 Working Groups of UNSCOP [³⁵⁰⁵>468; >469].³⁵⁰⁵ Ad Hoc Committee Chairman H.V. Evatt named the members of each Subcommittee.³⁵⁰⁶ Subcommittee 2 would deliver its report³⁵⁰⁷ on a solution combining representative democracy and some elements of bi-nationalism in an un-partitioned state on 11 & 19 November [³⁵⁰⁸>478], while Subcommittee 1 would deliver its report³⁵⁰⁸ advocating partition on 19 November.³⁵⁰⁹

Between 5 and 17 October spokespersons for the Palestinian position in the Ad Hoc Committee were Camille Chamoun of Lebanon, General Nuri es-Said and Fadhel Jamali of Iraq, Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan of Pakistan, Mahmoud Fawzi Bey of Egypt, Amir (Shakib?) Arslan, Farid Zeineddin and Fares al-Khoury of Syria, Mrs. Vijaya Pandit of In-

³⁵⁰⁴ Quigley 2021, pp 73-74, citing UN Documents A/AC.14/21, A/AC.14/22 & A/AC.14/24; also Fieldhouse 2006, p 214.

³⁵⁰⁵ UNGA 1947j.

³⁵⁰⁶ UNGA 1947m.

³⁵⁰⁷ UNGA 1947n (A/AC.14/32).

³⁵⁰⁸ UNGA 1947o, (A/AC.14/34).

³⁵⁰⁹ UNGA 1947p, §14-16.

dia, Emir Faisal Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, and Mr. Baghdadi of Yemen.³⁵¹⁰ Khan, the main author of Subcommittee 2's plan, noted that the Palestinians wanted no more than what the 1939 White Paper [>410] had offered them and pointed out that while the Charter of the United Nations, of which the Ad Hoc Committee was an organ, vowed non-aggression by one country against others, "during the previous thirty years... the United Kingdom had held Palestine by armed force..."³⁵¹¹ For Khan the history of aggression before the coming into being of the United Nations Charter was relevant in judging the present Palestine situation.

As we have seen [>472], Jamal al-Husseini had been allowed to speak for non-member Palestine as the representative of the Arab Higher Committee, making statements at the Ad Hoc Committee's 3rd meeting on 29 September, as well as at its 18th and 31st meetings, saying once again that the solution to the Palestine problem was simple: a normal democracy as foreseen in the Charter of the UN.³⁵¹² (§4, 6, 23) Concerning the Jewish violence happening as the Ad Hoc Committee convened, he noted:

All the committees of inquiry had recognized that Arab violence had been directed against Jewish immigration and the loss of independence. But Jewish violence was aimed at forcing the British to agree to the continuation of immigration, in other words, of aggression; the Jews were attacking the very troops whose arms had shielded the growth of the Jewish national home.³⁵¹³

On legal grounds Nasrollah Entezam of Iran recalled the relevance of an Egyptian resolution concerning

whether it lies within the competence of the General Assembly to recommend either of the two solutions...; or whether it lies within the rights of any member state or group of member states to implement any of the proposed solutions without the consent of the people of Palestine.³⁵¹⁴

It was thus evidently within the repertoire of some of those debating the future of the Palestinians to imagine something like a referendum – as in fact demanded by Camille Chamoun in the General Assembly floor debate³⁵¹⁵.

While the General Assembly had explicitly excluded members of the Security Council from membership in UNSCOP, it did not do so for the 2 new Subcommittees. 'Subcommittee 1' consisted of UNSCOP members Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala and Uruguay plus Poland, South Africa, the USA, the USSR, and Venezuela, while 'Subcommittee 2', prompted by the motions submitted by Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, consisted

³⁵¹⁰ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 200-24.

³⁵¹¹ John & Hadawi 1970b, pp 205-06.

³⁵¹² UNGAq, §4, 6, 23.

³⁵¹³ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 226.

³⁵¹⁴ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 228.

³⁵¹⁵ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 241, citing the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestine Question, pp 194, 196.

of Afghanistan, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen; representatives of the U.K. sat in on the meetings of both Subcommittees and a representative of the AHC sat in on those of Subcommittee 2.³⁵¹⁶

According to Akram Zuaytir, notes were

sent by the Arab governments to the governments of Britain and the United States. In these notes it was stated that... the Arabs of Palestine and all the peoples of the Arab countries condemned and rejected the [partition] proposals and would point out that there was no authority in existence vested with the legal power to usurp a part of Arab Palestine and to give it to the Zionists to establish a Jewish State therein. They would also declare that no authority in existence had the right to authorize the invasion of Palestine by hordes of Jews who were neither connected with the country nor legally entitled to be admitted into it.³⁵¹⁷

It was during the meetings in Lebanon of the Arab heads of state that Amin al-Husseini proposed “the establishment of a Palestinian government under the aegis of the Arab Higher Committee”, something he would re-propose in February 1948, again to no avail.³⁵¹⁸

October 1947 *“The second [Ikhwan] conference convened in Haifa in October 1947, when the conferees declared “the determination of the Ikhwan to defend their country with all means and their readiness to cooperate with all the national associations to serve this purpose.”*³⁵¹⁹

7-15 October 1947 *[The Arab League Council discusses the political and military situation in Palestine at meetings in Beirut and Aley.]*³⁵²⁰

³⁵¹⁶ UNGA 1947j.

³⁵¹⁷ Zuaytir 1958, p 180.

³⁵¹⁸ Khalidi 1986, pp 119, 126.

³⁵¹⁹ Hamas Political Bureau 2000, quoted in Tamimi 2011, p 271.

³⁵²⁰ Zuaytir 1958, p 181; Khalidi 1986, pp 117-18.

What if the Palestinians, once the inflexibility of the West became unbreachable, had unilaterally declared their independence? According to Mattar,

The Mufti had, in fact, previously made numerous appeals to the Arab League to establish an Arab state in Palestine. The Mufti had pleaded with the Arab League at Aley in October 1947 and again in Cairo in December 1947 for the setting up of a shadow government under the control of the Arab Higher Committee, but the Arab League had ignored his request. In February 1948 the league again rejected his demands for a government-in-exile, the appointment of Palestinian military governors, and a loan for administrative expenses. During the ten weeks before the departure date of the British on May 14, the Mufti tried to pressure the Arab League to allow him to establish a government that would fill the political and military vacuum resulting from Britain's departure.³⁵²¹

The AHC on 5 January 1948 in Cairo did make a move in this direction. [>482]

After all, according to Quigley,

In 1931 the Institute of International Law, a leading academic group, said that a mandate community was a subject of international law, meaning that it had the capacity to bear rights and responsibilities. ... [In addition,] the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Commission, which oversaw mandate administration, said that mandatory powers had no right of sovereignty but that the people under the mandate held ultimate sovereignty.³⁵²²

One of the rights might have been that of forming a government and declaring its sovereignty over Palestine, based on such status as a "mandate community" – similarly to Israel's Declaration of Establishment on 14 May 1948 based on UNGA Resolution 181 [>481]. It is highly probable that Amin's cousin Jamal supported this autonomous move, while Hussein al-Khalidi and Ahmad Hilmi Pasha opposed it,³⁵²³ but Musa Alami's position is unknown to me. Of course open independence movements before 25 February 1947, when the U.K. announced its relinquishment of the Mandate, would have been severely repressed, but why this line of resistance – or planning for the future – was not more intensely pursued, and why the AHC might have regarded itself dependent on the Arab League for any such move, are intriguing questions with perhaps very sad answers. The All-Palestine Government finally planned by the Arab League in July 1948, set up in Gaza on or just after 20 September against the wishes of ex-Mandatory and Jordan protector Great Britain, and relocated to Cairo in December – including Amin al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi, Michel Abcarius, Ahmed Hilmi Abd al-Baqi, Rajai al-Husseini, Anwar Nusseibeh, Husayn al-Khalidi and Jamal al-Husseini – was too little, too late.³⁵²⁴

³⁵²¹ Mattar 1988, pp 129-30.

³⁵²² Quigley 1990, pp 14-15; Quigley 2010, pp 69-70, 76.

³⁵²³ Pappe 1988, p 78.

³⁵²⁴ See Pappe 1988, pp 81-90, 94.

10 November 1947 *The US and the Soviet Union agree to support the UNSCOP partition plan and end the British Mandate by 1 May 1948.*

XXVII. 'A just cause never perishes.'

This 7-page entry covers the UN Ad Hoc Committee's Subcommittee 2's thorough attempt to flesh out previous Palestinian outlines of a constitution for a democratic state of a unified Palestine. Subcommittee 2 also rejected the legitimacy of the UN's deciding the future of Palestine as well as the conflation of the European 'Jewish problem' with the Western-Asian country of Palestine.

Written mostly by the Chairman of the UN Ad Hoc Committee's **Subcommittee 2**, Sir Mohammed Zafarullah Khan of Pakistan, with the advice of Musa Alami and Henry Cat-tan, the report of that subcommittee³⁵²⁵, completed on 11 November 1947 and officially submitted on 19 November, is the definitive statement of incompatible Palestinian/Arab, British and Jewish-Zionist positions over the decades. It is essential reading. Subcommittees 1 and 2 had been created by the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine on 23 September [^{>472}], its terms of reference being to "draw up a detailed plan for the future government of Palestine in accordance with the basic principles expressed in the proposals" of UNSCOP's Minority Plan [^{>469}] and of UN members Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria on 3 April 1947, which kept Palestine unified.³⁵²⁶ The Ad Hoc Committee decided that Subcommittee 2 should consist of Afghanistan, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. Observers at its meetings would be representatives of the (Palestinian) Arab Higher Committee and the UK Government. In parallel, **Subcommittee 1** was tweaking UNSCOP's Majority Plan [^{>468}], but I will not deal explicitly with it as its results differed only slightly from that of the UNSCOP Majority Plan and UNGA Resolution 181 [^{>481}].

Subcommittee 2 at the outset objected that both Subcommittees

were so constituted as to include in each of them representatives of only one school of thought, and that there was insufficient representation of neutral countries. (§3)

Ad Hoc Committee Chairman H.V. Evatt, who was pro-partition,³⁵²⁷ denied their request to internally balance the two memberships. (§3)

The Subcommittee divided itself into three working groups to study the three aspects (i) the "legal questions connected with or arising from the Palestine problem", (ii) the "Jewish refugees and displaced persons", and (iii) "constitutional proposals for the establishment of a unitary and independent state". (§4) Correspondingly it presented three "draft resolutions" to the entire Ad Hoc Committee (§87) and divided its report into Chapters I, II and III (§92) which I will deal with separately.³⁵²⁸

³⁵²⁵ UNGA 1947n, A/AC.14/32, all citations. Also Khan 1947; Abdul Hadi 1997, pp 155-72 (excerpts). Citations in this entry refer to the UN document, not to Khan 1947, which inexplicably omits the 'Introduction' consisting of §1-5; therefore, §1 in Khan 1947 = §6 in UNGA 1947n, and so on.

³⁵²⁶ UNGA 1947a, referring to UN documents A/317, A328 and A/AC.14/22 respectively.

³⁵²⁷ See Mandel 1999 and 2003.

³⁵²⁸ See also Khalidi 1986, p 121.

CHAPTER I – Legal Issues (§6-40)

Subcommittee 2's Chapter I was the basis for its 'Draft Resolution Referring Certain Legal Questions to the International Court of Justice'.³⁵²⁹ At the edge of its remit, it first tackled the superordinate question of what the United Nations was doing:

The problem of Palestine necessitates a proper interpretation of the claims of Arabs and Jews to Palestine. The solution of the problem also raises various legal points as to the legality of any proposal for the future of Palestine, as well as the competence of the General Assembly to make and enforce recommendations in this regard. (§6)

Literally, it was being suggested that a group of foreign nations had no jurisdiction over Palestine.

Next came the ethical, political, or historical *claims* to the territory asserted by anybody but the indigenous residents. "The claim of the Arabs to Palestine rests upon their centuries old possession and occupation of the country, and their natural right to determine their own future." (§9) The Jewish-Zionist claim was on the other hand based on the "ancient historic connection" of the Jews to the territory of Palestine, a claim affirmed by the White Paper and Mandate in 1922 [^{>142}; ^{>146}], often by members of the House of Commons such as by David Lloyd George in 1930 [^{>242}], by the Royal 'Peel' Commission in 1937 [^{>336}] and, in contradiction to the rest of its message, the White Paper of 1939 [^{>410}]. The claim had been either ridiculed or dryly rejected by for instance Palestinians in 1918 and 1921 [^{>33}; ^{>99}], the King-Crane Commission in 1919 [^{>59}], George Antonius in 1938 [^{>354}] and the Arab states meeting with Ernest Bevin in January/February 1947 [^{>450}]. (see Theme Index) The UNSCOP Majority Report, wrote Subcommittee 2, had not even gone into this question, and correspondingly went on the false assumption that "the claims... both possess validity"; but "This pronouncement is not supported by any cogent reasons and is demonstrably against the weight of all available evidence". (§7) To resolve, among other questions, the question of the primary claims "the opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) should be obtained..." (§8)

The usual Palestinian/Arab material arguments were then discussed: the McMahon pledges, the British Balfour Declaration decision made without the "consent or knowledge" of the people, what the 'Jewish National Home' really meant and intended, the violation of the League of Nations Covenant, the officially unreplaced 1939 White Paper, and finally "the extent to which the [JNH] undertaking... may be said to have been carried out" – with Arthur Creech Jones, Colonial Secretary and U.K. Delegate to the UN, having confirmed to the Ad Hoc Committee on 16 October that the JNH now indeed "had been established". (§9-12) The ICJ should also evaluate formal questions such as the McMahon pledges (§34) [^{>10}; ^{>400}], the validity of the Balfour Declaration (§35) [^{>16}], whether the Mandate's inclusion of "the creation of a Jewish National Home" violated the Covenant (§36.i) [^{>46}], whether partition violated the UN Charter (§36.ii & iii) [^{>441}] and "the constitutional method for the termination of the Mandate" (§13-14). UNSCOP and the "Mandatory Power itself" after all agreed that "the independence of Palestine be recognized", and

³⁵²⁹ Khan 1947, pp 690-92.

therefore “the appropriate manner of its formal termination would be by way of transfer of power from the Mandatory Power to a Government representing the people of Palestine”. (§15)

The Subcommittee also held that until the Mandatory Power had negotiated a Trusteeship Agreement on Palestine, according to the UN Charter’s Chapters XII & XIII, especially Articles 79 & 80, the General Assembly could not alter anything pertaining to the “rights... of any peoples or the terms of existing international instruments...” (§16)

[T]he General Assembly is not competent to recommend, still less to enforce, any solution other than the recognition of the independence of Palestine, and... the settlement of the future government of Palestine is a matter solely for the people of Palestine. (§18; also §20)

Thomas Reid MP would make this point a bit later in the House of Commons – that unless Palestine was under UN Trusteeship, legally the UN had nothing to do with it.³⁵³⁰ In case the Ad Hoc Committee or the General Assembly disagreed with the Subcommittee on this point, the question should be referred to the ICJ for an “advisory opinion”. (§21)

Moreover,

partition involves the alienation of territory and the destruction of the integrity of the State of Palestine. The United Nations cannot make a disposition or alienation of territory. Nor can it deprive the majority of the people of Palestine of their territory and transfer it to the exclusive use of a minority in the country. (§24) The United Nations Organisation has no power to create a new State. Such a decision can only be taken by the free will of the people of the territories in question. (§25)

(The Subcommittee’s argument was actually that no territory could be “transferred” to anybody.) The “State of Palestine” referred to was of course simply Mandatory Palestine with its at least 1.4 million citizens under the Citizenship Order in Council of 1 August 1925. [→186] Trusteeship for Jerusalem was likewise invalid (§26), as was the placing of any conditions on the nature of the constitutions of any State or States succeeding the Mandate, as they were free to determine that themselves (§28). Partition would moreover violate Article 1.2 of the UN Charter (“the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples”) and lead to endless violence. (§29-33)

The ICJ should advise as to

whether it lies within the power of any member or group of members of the United Nations to implement any of the proposed solutions without the consent of the people of Palestine. (§37) ... A refusal to submit this question for the opinion of the International Court of Justice would amount to a confession that the United Nations are determined to make recommendations in a certain direction, not because those recommendations are in accord with the principles of international justice and fairness, but because the majority of the delegates desire to settle the problem in a certain way, irrespective of what the merits of the questions, or the legal obligations of the parties, might be. (§40)

³⁵³⁰ Hansard 1948, c1305.

By a vote of 18-25-11 the General Assembly (technically the Ad Hoc Committee) would on 25 November reject Subcommittee 2's Resolution, i.e. refuse to submit any questions to the UN ICJ.³⁵³¹ A similar tactic of debate-refusal had succeeded on 1 May 1947 in keeping the very question of Palestine's independence off the General Assembly agenda.³⁵³² [>455]

CHAPTER II – Relief of Jewish Refugees and Displaced Persons (§41-53)

Although the plight of Jews in Europe was “not strictly relevant to the Palestine problem,... its alleged connection with the Palestine question... has unnecessarily complicated the Palestine issue”; “in view of the misconceptions which are entertained in certain quarters about this matter” and because the UNSCOP majority called for the “admission... of 150,000 Jewish refugees”, the Subcommittee saw fit to muster some facts and statistics about the Jewish displaced persons in Europe and reviewed them in light of UNGA Resolution 62 (I) – “Refugees and Displaced Persons” – of 15 December 1946. (§41-43) [*see also* >459]

The Subcommittee believed that Resolution 62 and other UN actions concerning refugees supported their contention that

There can be no justification for recommending any immigration into any country against the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants. (§47)

UNSCOP, in its unanimous “appraisal of the Jewish case”, had actually stated its agreement with this principle, namely that if “Jewish immigration should continue with a view to establishing a Jewish majority in the whole of Palestine, [this] would mean ignoring the wishes of the Arab population and their views as to their own well-being” and also apparently violate the Covenant’s Article 22. (§48b)³⁵³³ [*also* >466] A majority of UNSCOP had nevertheless then contradictorily recommended forcing 150,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine³⁵³⁴, leading Subcommittee 2 to observe that UNSCOP in making this recommendation

did not pause to consider that the creation of a Jewish majority in a part of Palestine would also disregard the wishes and well-being of more than half a million Arabs. (§48b, 49)

The “more than half a million Arabs” referred to were those living in what was proposed as the Jewish State. As related just below and in entry >468, Subcommittee 2 calculated the number to be 512,000 when Bedouins were included – compared with 498,000 Jews (thus not a majority-Jewish state after all).

Based on its analysis of the problem of all refugees in Europe (§50-53), Subcommittee 2’s “draft resolution” presented to the Ad Hoc Committee on this issue³⁵³⁵ also included the opinion that

³⁵³¹ UNGA 1947p, §24. Nakhleh (1991, p 1031) gives the vote tally as 21-20 against referral to the IIC.

³⁵³² Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, *search for* ‘result of the voting’.

³⁵³³ Subcommittee 2 was quoting UNSCOP 1947, Ch. II §150.

³⁵³⁴ UNSCOP 1947, Ch. VI. Part I, Recommendations B (1.c.1).

³⁵³⁵ UNGA 1947p, §25; Khan 1947, pp 692-93.

Palestine... has absorbed a disproportionately large number of Jewish immigrants and cannot take any more without serious injury to the economy of the country and the rights and position of the indigenous population.

The draft resolution also made three more specific recommendations. (1) That the “countries of origin” of the refugees be requested to take them back, approved on 25 November by a vote of 17-14-23; (2) That those “who cannot be repatriated” should immigrate to “the territories of Members of the United Nations in proportion to their area” and other factors, also approved, by a vote of 18-16-21. (3) That a special UNGA committee be set up to work out “a scheme of quotas” saying which Members should take how many. Although this was simply the application in reality of the first two recommendations, it was rejected by a vote of 15-18-22.

CHAPTER III – The Constitution and Future Government (§54-86)

The Subcommittee broke down its ‘constitutional’ task into three aspects: “the termination of the Mandate, the recognition of the independence of Palestine, and the preservation of Palestine as one state”, the last of which is “in accord with the wishes and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the people of Palestine”; again, as Britain would be withdrawing, “the only action now outstanding was the manner of the transfer of power to the government of the people of Palestine.” (§55) For support, the Subcommittee referred to the reasoning of the 1939 White Paper. (§57) [^{>410}]

One of several arguments listed against the Majority Plan of partition with economic union [^{>468}] was that the proposed Jewish state would be majority-non-Jewish, since 105,000 of Palestine’s 127,000 Bedouins would live there who, when added to the other 407,000 Arabs, yielded a non-Jewish population in the proposed Jewish State of 512,000, meaning the 498,000 Jews residing there were actually outnumbered. (§62-64, 73) UNSCOP had (under-)counted only 90,000 Bedouins, not 127,000, a difference of 37,000, most of whom lived in the proposed Jewish territory; by undercounting, the Majority Plan could claim a Jewish majority of 50.05% in the Jewish state.³⁵³⁶ Nakhleh credits “the Representative of the United Kingdom” for submitting the total figure of “127,300” Bedouins to Subcommittee 1 of the Ad Hoc Committee³⁵³⁷, but what that Subcommittee did with this information is not known to me. Subcommittee 2 added that it was obviously “unwarranted” not to count all the Bedouins – yielding a 50.7% non-Jewish majority in the proposed Jewish State.

As related above in the entry on the Majority Plan [^{>468}], since the Plan prescribed a majority-democracy with proportional representation, its resulting Legislature would be slightly majority non-Jewish, or 50-50%, meaning it was inaccurate, in respect of demographics, for the Plan to characterise as “Jewish” its proposed “Jewish State”.

Subcommittee 2 argued further that since there were large Arab majorities in the defined southern and northern “sections” of the proposed Jewish state (Beersheba and eastern Galilee)

³⁵³⁶ UNSCOP 1947, Ch. VI, Part II, *just after* §5.

³⁵³⁷ Nakhleh 1991, p 311.

It is surprising that an international committee, such as UNSCOP, should have recommended the transfer of completely Arab territory and population to the control of [a Jewish minority]. (§65)

(They evidently opted for the polite word “surprising”.) Finally, allowing mass Jewish immigration into these Arab-majority sections of the Jewish state, in order to correct the constitutional problem by reducing the Arabs eventually to a minority, would be “unfair to the Arabs”, “utterly undemocratic” and would do “violence to the principles of the [UN] Charter”. (§70) For support, the Subcommittee also referred to the Report of the Woodhead Commission of 1938. (§74) [³⁷⁶]

After describing well-known administrative and economic difficulties with partition, the conclusion, stated far more bluntly than in the Woodhead Report, was that

the partition proposal is legally objectionable, politically unjust, and economically disastrous; in short, it is utterly unworkable. (§83)

Therefore, in harmony with the proposal of the Arab States in London in the fall of 1946, which was in accord with that of the Palestinians, who were boycotting those talks [^{444ff}],

the future constitution and government of Palestine must be based on the free consent of the people of that country and must be shaped along democratic lines. In other words, the constitution of Palestine should be framed by a representative body, namely, an elected Constituent Assembly. (§84)

Although the Constituent Assembly would have final say concerning the constitution, Subcommittee 2 “indicate[d] in general terms the main principles” in 12 points, including “a democratic constitution, with an elected Legislature and an Executive responsible to the legislature”, “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”, a fair naturalisation process, “adequate representation in the Legislature [and Executive] for all important sections of the citizenry in proportion to their numerical strength”, and

The guarantees contained in the constitution concerning the rights and safeguards of the minorities shall not be subject to change without the consent of the minority concerned expressed through a majority of its representatives in the Legislature. (§85)

Recall that the St. James talks in February and March 1939 had at great length chewed over this question of constitutionally “safeguarding” the Jewish minority by means of a sort of bill of rights not subject to overturn by the majority. [^{387-397; >412}] The Subcommittee’s suggestion was explicitly granting the minority a veto over any changes made to its status or position once such a rights-based constitution had been put into effect.

First of all a Provisional Government, also formed according to proportional representation, “shall be set up without further delay”, and it was the body which would then set up the electoral register and the Constituent Assembly; as soon as the Provisional Government was in place the Mandatory would begin its orderly withdrawal. (§86-88) This was what the Arab states had presented to Bevin on 19 September 1946.³⁵³⁸ [⁴⁴⁷] (The Constituent Assembly of India, by the way, after about three years’ work at drafting,

³⁵³⁸ CO 537/1778, pp 10-14.

would adopt a very similar constitution on 26 November 1949; both it and this proposed constitution, proposed by Pakistani Zafarullah Khan, were blind to religion and ethnicity.) Nowhere in Subcommittee 2's proposal is the Zionist Jewish 'national' (ethnic) claim affirmed, nowhere is numerical parity in legislative, executive or administrative bodies foreseen, and nowhere is the already-common term 'bi-nationalism' used; instead of partition, it thus did not envision 'bi-nationalism', as the title in 'Khan 1947' misleadingly indicates,³⁵³⁹ but rather a thoroughly *non-national* state.

Should the constitution proposed by Subcommittee 2 gain a majority of votes, according to Khan in the General Assembly debate of late November, "it was certain that the majority of the inhabitants would accept that state. ... But if the partition plan ... were adopted and if the Arab inhabitants were unwilling to co-operate with the United Nations commission, the resulting situation would be extremely difficult."³⁵⁴⁰ Khan wrote an essay in 1948, 'Thanksgiving Day at Lake Success', a report on both the substance of Subcommittee 2's proposals and the drama at the General Assembly during the week ending Saturday, 29 November with the passage of Resolution 181 [^{>481}].³⁵⁴¹

The votes of the full Ad Hoc Committee (actually the same as all General Assembly members) were on 25 November.³⁵⁴² The first vote, on referring the entire undertaking to the International Court of Justice for a decision, *inter alia*, on whether the United Nations was even competent to dispose of Palestine, was voted down by a vote of 18-25-11 – an ironic detail being that Muhammad Zafarullah Khan would be a Judge of the ICJ 1954-1961 and 1964-1973, serving for those last three years as its President. The second vote had to do with "Jewish refugees and displaced persons" and consisted of 3 paragraphs, or specific recommendations, the first two of which were adopted but the third of which was rejected. (see just above) The third vote, on the substance of the future government of Palestine, recommending a representative democracy, was defeated 12-29-14. A normal democracy such as functioned in most of the countries voting was evidently fundamentally objectionable. On the same day Subcommittee 1's proposal, almost identical to the Majority Plan of UNSCOP [^{>468}], was accepted by vote of 25-13-17, meaning that

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution on the future government of Palestine embodying a Plan of Partition with Economic Union.³⁵⁴³

The matter was thus ready for the General Assembly debates and votes of 26-29 November on Resolution 181. [^{>481}]

Subcommittee 2's plan's defeat on 25 November was another of the several narrow escapes for Zionism, alongside the House of Lords vote twenty-five years earlier [^{>144}], the anti-Zionist wave under High Commissioner Chancellor and Lord Passfield [^{>218->234}], the MacDonald White Paper [^{>410}], and the somewhat more ambiguous Bevin Plan [^{>452}]. The

³⁵³⁹ Khan 1947, pp 645-701.

³⁵⁴⁰ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 240, citing Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestine Question, pp 188, 191-93.

³⁵⁴¹ Khan 1948.

³⁵⁴² UNGA 1947p, §24-26.

³⁵⁴³ UNGA 1947p, §29-31.

proposed 55-page plan actually had a chance: Although Britain was abstaining on all votes, the British Foreign Office and its US equivalent, the State Department (even after the vote on Res 181) [461; 487], as well as about half the members of the UNGA, remained anti-partition and pre-disposed to favor the alternative presented by Subcommittee 2. The death of the Palestinians aspirations was at this time by no means a foregone conclusion.

As for Britain's anti-climactic role during November 1947, according to Sykes, partition was opposed by the Labour Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones,³⁵⁴⁴ but Ilan Pappe brings evidence that in the spring of 1948 he did support partition between a Jewish state and Transjordan sovereignty in the West Bank.³⁵⁴⁵ [see 450] In the event, Foreign Secretary Bevin and Prime Minister Attlee preferred to not intervene, and Britain abstained at the votes on both 25 and 29 November. *Ipsa facto* Britain one last time abandoned the indigenous majority before the eyes of the world.

³⁵⁴⁴ Sykes 1965, p 385.

³⁵⁴⁵ Pappe 1988, p 12.

479. George Antonius

no date

George Antonius, Secretary to the Arab Delegation at the 1939 talks which saw the UK abandon Zionism, passed away on 21 May 1942. **In his 1938 book *The Arab Awakening*** [*also* >354] he had written something **very similar to the “Resolution” of Subcommittee 2** [>478], and similar, for that matter, to all Palestinian statements during the Mandate:

To those who look ahead, beyond the smoke-screen of legend and propaganda, the way to a solution is clear: it lies along the path of ordinary common sense and justice. There is no room for a second nation for a country which is already inhabited, and inhabited by a people whose national consciousness is fully awakened and whose affection for their homes and countryside is obviously unconquerable. The lesson to be drawn from the efforts hitherto made to lay the foundations of a Jewish state in Palestine is that they have turned the country into a shambles... because it is not possible to establish a Jewish state in Palestine without the forcible dislodgement of a peasantry who seem readier to face death than give up their land. ... There seems to be no valid reason why Palestine should not be constituted into an independent Arab state in which as many Jews as the country can hold without prejudice to its political and economic freedom would live in peace, security and dignity, and enjoy full rights of citizenship. Such an Arab state would... contain provisions... for ensuring the safety and the inviolability of the Holy Places of all faiths [and] for the protection of all minorities and minority rights.³⁵⁴⁶

Even the top echelon of the U.S. State Department was convinced of such a path’s “common sense and justice” [>461; >487], but Harry Truman’s pro-Zionism would trump all of these last Palestinian cards [>483; >487].

³⁵⁴⁶ Antonius 1938, pp 409-10. On “forcible dislodgement” see Sayegh 1952, Khalidi 1959, 1988, Nahkleh 1991, pp 251-345; Masalha 1992; Pappé 2006.

Musa Alami was convinced that only if Britain kept the Mandate could the pro-Zionist forces in the United States and at the United Nations be thwarted. At a meeting in early November 1947 with Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, set up by the Regent of Iraq, he argued that a

walk-out by Britain... would be not only a calamity for Palestine, but a moral wrong. [Britain] had created the situation in the country, and to abandon it now would be utterly unfair to its people, for whose welfare she bore the responsibility. It would moreover harm the British image in the Middle East, for it would vindicate those who argued that the British had always intended to make Palestine into a Jewish State and would enable them to assert that, having laid the foundations for this they were now quitting.

Here responsibility was placed where it belonged. While Alami and all Palestinians had good reason to want to see the backs of the British, rather than plead with them not to walk out, it was simply a correct perception that Britain's retaining the reins and applying some policy mixture of the MacDonal White Paper and the Bevin Scheme [^{>410; >452}] was at that moment their best shot for independence. Bevin, for his part, mistakenly told Musa that Britain "would be begged to remain" with a free hand to solve the problem and that he would continue the bluff of actually leaving Palestine.³⁵⁴⁷

This is a good place for a coda concerning Musa Alami. Many years later his biographer (in Arabic), Nassir Eddin Nashashibi, related the following:

What, I asked Musa [at their last interview on 17 July 1976 in London], was his bequest to the Palestinian people? He replied: 'I ask them to stand firm, to remain on their land and in their country for the alternative would be wandering in the wilderness, getting lost. However harsh the conditions, it is our duty to remain in our homeland. Before we can demand that our country be returned to us we must remain on our soil. Our continued existence on our land is half the battle won. Leaving it is a prelude to failure. In politics there is no such thing as eternal continuance. The victory of this state [Israel] today does not mean victory forever. Countries that win today may lose tomorrow. ... No Arab should contemplate submission. No Arab has the right to abandon the struggle and say to himself or to his relations that all is lost. No, nothing is lost. Everything will be returned if we are patient, use our intelligence, our knowledge, see things as they really are without fooling ourselves or others. A just cause never perishes.'³⁵⁴⁸

"A just cause never perishes."

This statement is perhaps even strictly speaking relevant to this chronology, because its spirit, expressed 29 years after the *Nakba* when Musa was 80 years old, was something that had been communicated to the British uninterruptedly for the 30 years of the Man-

³⁵⁴⁷ Furlonge 1969, pp 148-49.

³⁵⁴⁸ Nashashibi 1991, p 187; but see also Alami 1949.

date. But there was never enough respect in London, except perhaps during 1938 and 1939, but certainly not during 1946 and 1947, to do what was still in its power, namely to first impose normal democracy on Palestine and then leave the country.

29 November 1947 *The UNGA votes for the UNSCOP partition plan [Resolution 181] by 33 to 13 votes with 10 abstentions [including Britain]; Arab representatives denounce the decision and walk out.*

The member states of the General Assembly voted on 29 November 1947 – the vote was 33 Yes, 13 No, 10 Abstentions – to “recommend” the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state and a *corpus separatum* in and around Jerusalem.³⁵⁴⁹ [[>]Appendix 13] Of interest regarding Resolution 181, which was a ‘Plan of Partition with Economic Union’,³⁵⁵⁰ is its formal place: As a General Assembly Resolution it is not binding on anybody. It first

Takes note of the declaration by the mandatory Power that it plans to complete its evacuation of Palestine by 1 August 1948; [and] *Recommends* to the United Kingdom, as the mandatory Power for Palestine, and to all other Members of the United Nations the adoption and implementation, with regard to the future government of Palestine, of the Plan of Partition with Economic Union set out below;... (Introduction [‘A’])

Aside from the fact that the Resolution was merely a recommendation, the point made by the Palestinians about such two-state solutions, ever since the “surgical operation” recommended by the failed Royal Commission in 1937 [[>]336], was that it was unjust no matter what the boundaries or the demography of the two states. Much has been made of the injustice of Resolution 181’s concrete partition boundaries, as it was obviously unfair to give 55% of the land to 31% of the people – but not even a small autonomous Jewish Republic of Tel Aviv was ever consistent with the political rights of the citizens of Palestine. As they repeatedly said, the country belonged to them on the same criteria that all other countries were recognised as belonging to their residents/citizens. The new coloniser was not another country but 33 of the 56 countries voting in the UN General Assembly, and 181’s preamble “calls upon the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put this plan into effect”.

PART I of the Plan, after declaring the Mandate terminated (I.A.1), **prescribed** in five Sections the “future constitution and government of Palestine”, confusingly implying that “Palestine” would still be a unit; the two “independent States”, to be established by 1 October 1948, would be “Arab” and “Jewish” – terms which remained undefined. (I.A.3) A “Commission” of five member-states – in the event, Czechoslovakia, Bolivia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines – was given fifteen specific tasks to “prepare” the two States for independence (I.B.1-15), and the “Mandatory power” was instructed to co-operate with it to assure that “the administration of Palestine shall... be progressively turned over to the Commission” (I.B.2). Mandatory power Britain, however, not only withdrew politically from Palestine, e.g. by abstaining on all General Assembly votes, but also told this newly-created Commission that HMG would not give up the Mandate “piecemeal” and would not allow Commission members to enter Palestine before “approximately a fort-

³⁵⁴⁹ See Khan 1948; Romulo 1961; Roosevelt 1948.

³⁵⁵⁰ UNGA 1947q, all citations, use Search function.

night before the termination of the Mandate” (which they’d moved up to 15 May 1948) because the Commission’s arrival would cause violent outbreaks; it did claim, though, to be assisting the Commission in New York.³⁵⁵¹ [^{>487}]

The Commission would create two “Provisional Councils of Government” which would “hold elections to the Constituent Assembly [of each state] which shall be conducted on democratic lines” and which in turn would “draft a democratic constitution for its State”. (I.B.9 & 10) What “democratic” meant was spelled out: the constitutions would prescribe Legislatures elected “on the basis of proportional representation” and guarantee standard human rights (I.B.10.a & d), and furthermore “each proposed State before independence” would have to “declare” that within its territory “No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants on the ground of race, religion, language or sex” (I.C.2). Just like the corresponding clauses in the UNSCOP Majority Plan of early September 1947, Resolution 181 was running into the logical trouble that if both states treated their citizens absolute equally, there would be neither a Jewish nor an Arab state. [^{>468}; ^{>478}]. It is fun to imagine the non-Jewish as well as Jewish residents of the foreseen “Jewish State”, divided numerically more or less 50/50, sitting down to draft a constitution for a “Jewish” state.

It was not explained, that is, how a state could be both “Jewish” or “Arab” without “discriminating” against non-Jews or non-Arabs. As Ivor Thomas MP would later quip in the House of Commons debate of 10 March 1948, “Because it was impossible, so they said, to have a bi-national State in Palestine, they tried to create two bi-national States. Could absurdity go further?”³⁵⁵² The Resolution’s stringent and unequivocal requirements for democracy and equality in each state meant in fact that neither the UNSCOP majority [^{>468}] nor the General Assembly could provide a logical or coherent solution to the problem it had set for itself [^{>455ff}].³⁵⁵³

However that may be, according to Walid Khalidi the Palestinians

failed to see why it was not fair for the Jews to be a minority in a unitary Palestinian state, while it was fair for almost half of the Palestinian population – the indigenous majority on its own ancestral soil – to be converted overnight into a minority under alien rule in the envisaged Jewish state according to partition.³⁵⁵⁴

A double standard. To date, of course, the Palestinians had been a *majority* “under alien [British] rule”.

The “freedom of transit and visit for all residents and citizens of the other State in Palestine and the City of Jerusalem”, which would have gone without saying in Subcommittee 2’s unitary state [^{>478}], was only “subject to considerations of national security”. (I.B.10 & I.D.2.18) In matters of economics and transit each state would be bound by decisions of a “Joint Economic Board” made up of three people from each state and three “for-

³⁵⁵¹ UNSC 1948, p 270; UNGA 1948, 8.a.iii & 8.c; Mandel 1999, p 150; Mandel 2003, pp 83-84.

³⁵⁵² Hansard 1948, c1337.

³⁵⁵³ Mallison & Mallison 1984, p 50; Tilley 2015, pp 316-18.

³⁵⁵⁴ Khalidi 1984, p 306.

eign members... appointed by the Economic and Social Council of the UN". Given this description of the prescribed "democratic constitution", the General Assembly was assuming that the two states would be Arab and Jewish respectively, on definitions that did not contradict these democratic principles, if such could be found; that this constitution-alised equality for all citizens would in principle defeat the purpose of creating a Jewish state in the first place was nowhere conceptualised.

PART II verbally described the boundaries of the states, where possible using Hebrew place-names, as well as the exact boundaries of "the Arab enclave of Jaffa" – certainly a painful phrase for Palestinians reading the resolution's text. One neighbourhood was however problematic:

The question of Karton [sic.: Katamon?] quarter will be decided by the Boundary Commission, bearing in mind among other considerations the desirability of including the smallest possible number of its Arab inhabitants and the largest possible number of its Jewish inhabitants in the Jewish State. (II.A)

According to Walid Khalidi, "Within the proposed Jewish state, Jewish land ownership did not exceed 1.67 million dunums out of a total area of 15 million dunums".³⁵⁵⁵

PART III dealt *inter alia* with the "special regime" of the City of Jerusalem, to be a "*corpus separatum*" ruled by the UN Trusteeship Council, and with "autonomy" which would be strictly "local", i.e. at the level of "villages, townships and municipalities". (III.C.3) Taking a page out of the Mandatory's various constitutional proposals over the years, Jerusalem's Legislative Council would have limited powers, subject to the Statute of the City written by the Trusteeship Council, although it would be normal-democratically elected. (III.C.5) The citizens would enjoy rights and freedoms (III.C.12), that is, but not self-determination, although allowed to "express by means of a referendum their wishes as to possible modifications of the regime of the City" (III.D). And echoing the slow pace of the 1939 White Paper's move towards independence [^{>410}], UN rule would be "in the first instance for ten years", after which "the whole scheme shall be subject to re-examination by the Trusteeship Council". (III.D)

The main message sent to Palestine by the requisite 2/3 majority of the UN's members who voted either Yes or No (33 out of 46; the other 10 abstained) was that about half of Palestine should belong, against the will of the indigenous people, to a particular, largely immigrant, ethno-religious group. Just as Palestinians up until 1946 had declared the Mandate immoral and illegal, the PLO Charter or Covenant of 1968 would declare:

The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the State of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time, because they were contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and to their natural right in their homeland, and inconsistent with the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the right to self-determination.³⁵⁵⁶

³⁵⁵⁵ Khalidi 1986, p 121.

³⁵⁵⁶ PLO 1968, Article 19; also Roosevelt 1948; Quigley 1990, pp 24, 52.

The difference between ethical and international-law arguments arises once again. The ethical case for self-determination of the people rightfully in a certain territory is simply that slavery, whether of an individual or a group, is wrong, and since other-determination at the state or political level is collective slavery, colonisation under whatever name is also wrong. The international-law case, on the other hand, called on above by the PLO Charter, is typically ambiguous, as for example when the UN Charter's Articles 1 (2) and Article 55 uphold "the self-determination of peoples": What is a 'people'? *Where* does it have a right to self-determination? To answer these questions one must go back to ethical principles, namely "their natural right in their homeland".

Zafarullah Khan, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee's Subcommittee 2 [^{>478}] and Pakistani Delegate to the UN (and later President of the General Assembly as well as of the International Court of Justice), stated during the debate over Resolution 181 with regard to the to-be-unmandated, "recommended" independent States:

How is Palestine to be independent? What sort of independence? What is the solution that we are invited to endorse and to attempt to carry through? In effect, the proposal before the United Nations General Assembly says that we shall decide – not the people of Palestine, with no provision for self-determination, no provision for the consent of the governed – what type of independence Palestine shall have. We shall call Palestine independent and sovereign, but Palestine shall belong to us... What authority has the United Nations to do this?³⁵⁵⁷

In the British Parliament the affair was not quite done and dusted, with debates raging over Palestine's future as if Resolution 181 were revocable. On 11 December 1947 in the House of Commons Thomas Reid MP, for instance, some ten years after his stint as the leading anti-partition member of the Woodhead Commission [^{>376}; ^{>443}; ^{>486}], spoke the minds of most Palestinians³⁵⁵⁸ – who unlike the Zionists had none of their own MPs – when he defended Foreign Secretary Bevin for resisting the "unjust and unwise" partition scheme which had won the day in New York and condemned his own Labour Party for its "absurd and impossible" stance on Zionism-plus-population transfer [^{>425}]:

The Balfour Declaration was an iniquitous thing passed without the consent or the knowledge of the Arabs. ... That was a promise made by the British Government in regard to territory over which they had no control, which they did not own and did not even possess. ... Following that, they got the Balfour Declaration entwined in the Mandate. ... Now the Mandate is to be cast aside and, in defiance of it, we are to have Palestine carved up with a Jewish State set up contrary to the Mandate, contrary to all our and Allied promises and contrary to justice. We are to give a Jewish State in Palestine, to a minority of immigrants in a land in which the Arabs have lived for 1,300 years, because the Jews had a state there 2,000 years ago. Can anyone justify that on any principles of legality or morality? Nobody can. The Jewish leaders themselves admit that it is unjust, but they say that it is a smaller injustice than to have the Jews marooned in Europe in displaced persons camps. (cc1300, 1301)

³⁵⁵⁷ UNSUPR 1978b, > "The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine".

³⁵⁵⁸ Hansard 1947b, cc1299-1307.

Reid was pointing to the Zionist 'lifeboat-ethics' argument which concedes the basic injustice to the Palestinians.³⁵⁵⁹

After the Woodhead Commission report of 9 November 1938, continued Reid,

The Conservative Party decided that on every ground partition was impracticable. What has happened since then to make it practicable? What has happened since then to make it just? ... Now America says 'This Palestine problem is troublesome. We are going to carve it up in a most unjust fashion whether Palestinians like it or not,' and give the best part of the country to a minority composed mostly of immigrants. ... [W]e [the U.K.] should quit because we cannot use our boys to implement this iniquitous policy,... [Two years ago] I said that the policy of partition would send the Middle East up in flames, and I say the same now. ... U.N.O. really has no authority over [Palestine]. When America destroyed the chance of making peace in Palestine at the dictation of political Zionists, we felt bound to refer the matter for advice to U.N.O. [>448-453] (c1305)

The U.K. had been opposed to partition ever since 1938, and

There is no reason why this Government should carry out a policy of which they thoroughly disapprove. ... The wise people who framed that advice should carry it out themselves, and I wish them joy in the task. ... [I do] not approve of our sending troops to kill the Arabs who are fighting for their independence. ... One final word. When I was in Palestine on this [Woodhead] Commission, we met Jews and a few Arabs. I stated then that the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine could live together in amity. I say the same today. The mischief makers are from outside. ... If the Jews would drop this wretched Jewish State, which is going to be disastrous for them, then they and the Arabs could get together and agree on a Constitution giving equal rights to all, and Palestine could flourish. That is the solution I think which my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary [Bevin] has been working on for all these years. (cc1302, 1306-07)

There was then a skirmish over why, then, Bevin and the Labour Government had not been able to prevent Resolution 181; Reid said it was the fault of pressure from the U.S. Government which was under pressure from the Zionist lobby.

The General Assembly thought an Arab State was a good idea, but, in the words of John & Hadawi,

The Palestine Arabs took the view that being two-thirds majority of the total population and owning the majority of the land of Palestine, they could not approve of partition, did not recognize the rights of the United Nations to carry it out, and therefore, would make no move to prepare for establishing the Arab state implicit in the Resolution of 29 November 1947.³⁵⁶⁰

Neither, however, did they make a move to establish an Arab state not implicit in any UN resolution but based solely on their constantly-invoked natural right to the whole unpartitioned territory. They did not, that is, simply declare sovereignty over all of Palestine and set up a government.

³⁵⁵⁹ Alcott 2015.

³⁵⁶⁰ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 280.

By going against the overwhelming majority of the people, at any rate, the Resolution was arguably contrary to the UN Charter's Articles 1(2), 55, 73(b) and 76(b). Also relevant to our theme of dialogue in the form of non-verbal messages was the sale by the Government of Palestine to the Jewish National Fund of about 1,620 hectares of good land near Tel Aviv well after Britain had named the date on which it would give up the Mandate and declared itself responsible only for security.³⁵⁶¹

30 November 1947 A day after the UN vote in favor of the partition plan, Palestinians proclaim a general strike.

5 December 1947 'Peaceful protests of several thousand Palestinians against Partition take place in Gaza, Khan Yunis and Kefar Saba.'³⁵⁶²

12 December 1947 The Arab Higher Committee issues a communiqué urging Arabs not to flee their homes.

20 December 1947 'Since our home had a strategic location, we had an extremely good view of the entire area [just west of the Jerusalem Old City]. So we [Wasif Jawhariyyeh and his family] were able to see in the quiet night how the British army and a unit of the mandate's Jewish police, under the leadership of officer Mr. Linker, brought young Jews and helped them to open the shops of Arab merchants in the commercial center, such as the shops of Rashad Barakat, Michel Manneh, and others, allowing them to loot silk and wool fabrics, before burning down whichever shops they wanted to burn down.'³⁵⁶³

21 December 1947 Fearing Jewish attacks, Arab residents of Khirbet Azzun on the Coastal Plain flee their homes; four days later, residents of Al-Masudiyya north of Tel Aviv follow.

late December 1947 The Arab Higher Committee begins to organize local committees for the defense of Palestinian towns and villages. By January 1948, 275 such committees are established.

25 December 1947 The first of a series of secret meetings is held aimed at organizing Jihad l-Muqaddas group and its revolutionary council. Abdel Qader Hussein becomes Commander-in-Chief, Kamel Abdul Fahman Erekat his deputy, Daoud Hussein General Inspector, Qassem Ar-Rimawi Secretary and Ibrahim Abu Dahayeh Military Commander. Malik Hussein is in charge of Finances, Saleh Rimawi of Supplies, and Musa Abu Shiban, Fuad Erekat, Attallah Haj Ali and Fawzi Qutub become Group Commanders. A political committee, as well as one for media and communications, are appointed as well.

December 1947-May 1948 [The conquest by force of the half of Palestine recommended by 33 of the UN's 56 members (59%) to come under the control of the Jewish Agency, with the accompanying ethnic cleansing³⁵⁶⁴ of around 350,000 non-Jewish Palestinians by death or expulsion, proceeds ever faster up until the date that 37 Jewish residents of Mandate Pales-

³⁵⁶¹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 291, citing the New York Times, 26 December 1947, p 4.

³⁵⁶² Suárez 2016, p 241.

³⁵⁶³ Tamari & Nassar 2014, p 245.

³⁵⁶⁴ Sayegh 1952; Morris 1988; Khalidi 1949 [2005], 1988; Nakhleh 1991, pp 251-345; Masalha 1992; Abu Sitta 2001; Pappé 2006.

tine declare the “establishment” of the Jewish state on 15 May. Two examples: only about 5,000 of Jaffa’s 75,000 Arab citizens remained, either fleeing in fear or being expelled, and only 2 of 34 villages surrounding Jerusalem ‘remained intact.’³⁵⁶⁵

1947-1948 [In all, in 1948 up to 800,000 Moslem and Christian Palestinians were forced to leave Palestine, according to the detailed listing of Nakhleh and the sources in the previous ‘event.’]³⁵⁶⁶

³⁵⁶⁵ Robinson 2013, pp 127, 130; Khalidi 1959, 1988; Nakhleh 1991, pp 251-345; Masalha 1992; Pappé 2006.

³⁵⁶⁶ Nakhleh 1991, pp 251-345.

Both the Mufti [*see >477*] and the Arab Higher Committee were contemplating forming a government, or government-in-exile. According to Tannous,

The Arab Higher Committee, in its *meeting of January 5, 1948, held in Cairo, resolved to find means of establishing a Palestine Government* to take the place of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine and thus assume the responsibility of the 'government of Palestine.' Why this resolution was not immediately implemented was the very slow motion which dominated all operations of the Arab Higher Committee. Consequently, it was not until September, nine months later, that they decided to put their resolution into effect and call for a Palestine Congress to be held in Gaza.³⁵⁶⁷

Why did "slow motion" dominate? There were no ideological differences on the basics. Was it fear of British repression, or lack of co-ordination with the Arab States, or internal lack of agreement on personnel? It is a mystery to me why forming their own Government of Palestine, perhaps clandestinely or on the model of the first Irish Dáil Éireann, was during the Mandate never a serious project.

³⁵⁶⁷ Tannous 1988, p 655.

On 20 January 1948 George Kennan of the US State Department's Policy Planning Staff, together with Loy Henderson, wrote to his Secretary of State the secret 'Position of the United States with respect to Palestine'.³⁵⁶⁸ The authors gave evidence that U.S. and U.S.S.R. lobbying was responsible for the decisive pro-partition votes on 29 November 1947 (§7 & Annex A), then attested "strong nationalistic and religious feelings" against partition in the Arab world:

[M]anifestations of popular feeling have not so far represented organized Arab resistance to partition, although a 'jihad' (holy war) against the Jews of Palestine has been proclaimed by Moslem leaders in most of the Arab states and has been joined by Christian leaders in Syria.

Therefore, they went on, the U.S. had to decide whether to join in the armed battle. (§7) Although the tract overwhelmingly argued from U.S. self-interest ("security interests", "prestige", and business opportunities), a bit of morality crept in when it was admitted that "U.S. support of the principles of self-determination was a basic factor in the creation of the Arab states [and *ipso facto* Palestine] out of the Ottoman Empire after World War I." (§12) In conclusion, the U.S. should not spend any money or send any troops in order to enforce the partition resolution (§22, 27, 28) but rather

we should... take the position that we have been obliged to conclude that it is impracticable and undesirable for the international community to attempt for enforce any form of partition in the absence of agreement between the parties, and that the matter should go back to the U.N. General Assembly. ... Thereafter, [we would] investigate the possibilities of any other suggested solution such as a federal state or trusteeship, which would not require outside armed force for implementation. (§31, 32)

Still, though, the U.S. should oppose referring any questions to the "International Court" (§33) although arguably its decisions would carry at least as much authority as those of the General Assembly, thus resolving some of Kennan's and Henderson's concerns.

In the following weeks U.S. Government functionaries exchanged pro and con views on the Policy Planning Staff's arguments, asking whether forcing Resolution 181 through might be "prohibitively costly", whether the International Court of Justice might find that "an important part of the Assembly resolution is illegal under the Charter", and whether the U.K. had actually sought to prevent partition; they accepted, though, that "the United States will not be able to avoid responsibility for a Palestine solution" partly because "on November 30 it agreed to the proposal of Foreign Secretary Bevin to support the British timetable of withdrawal whereby the [UN Palestine] Commission would not arrive in Palestine before May 1"; while the U.S. and the Security Council had been made aware by the five-member UN Palestine Commission of the "almost insurmountable difficulties to carry out partition without the use of force", Henderson claimed that U.S. foreign policy makers in fact no longer supported the previous

³⁵⁶⁸ U.S. State Department 1948; Cohen 1987c, pp 12-35.

policy of the United States vis-à-vis the Jewish aspirations in Palestine [and] in Palestine the United Nations is seeking to invoke partition against the wishes of the great majority of the inhabitants, contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter as set forth in Article 1 (2) providing for the self-determination of peoples.³⁵⁶⁹

This was strong tobacco.

Speaking of British neutrality, non-cooperation and avoiding responsibility, recall that had the U.K. instead of abstaining *opposed* Resolution 181, in line with HMG's true convictions, and convinced only two of the four Commonwealth ('Dominion') countries who voted Yes to also vote No, partition would have failed. As well, Britain might have convinced two or three abstaining countries to vote No. [see Appendix 13]

John Quigley sums up this U.S. State Department episode by writing that hardly two months after partition had been recommended by the General Assembly,

When the predicted chaos engulfed Palestine, the United States experienced buyer's remorse over partition. The Policy Planning Staff of the State Department circulated a memorandum explaining that partition would not work and that US interests called for opposing a Jewish state in Palestine. The United States had lost prestige, the staff wrote, by overriding the self-determination of the Arab population. The Soviet Union might use a Jewish state to make inroads in the region. 'We should take no further initiative in implementing or aiding partition,' the staff concluded.³⁵⁷⁰

This position prevailed temporarily, leading to the U.S. proposal for a Palestine Trusteeship on 8 March. [>487; also >461]

³⁵⁶⁹ Cohen 1987c, pp 38-44, 78-86.

³⁵⁷⁰ Quigley 2021, p 39, citing Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1948, vol. 5, pp 545-54.

484. AHC & UK to Security Council

Feb & March 1948

The (Palestinian) Arab Higher Committee made only one communication to the United Nations, namely to the UN Palestine Commission which had been set up to implement UNGA Resolution 181 and consisted of representatives of Czechoslovakia, Bolivia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines and .³⁵⁷¹ It was quoted in that Commission's 1st Report to the Security Council, dated 29 January 1948³⁵⁷² – namely **the AHC's telegram** rejecting an invitation to send delegates to assist the Commission:

Arab Higher Committee is determined persist in rejection partition and in refusal to recognize UNO resolution this respect and anything deriving therefrom. For these reasons it is unable to accept invitation. (3.d)

In contrast, at the UN in New York **British officials made various statements** revelatory of their end-of-Mandate attitudes. At some of the Palestine Commission's previous 26 meetings, for instance, many comments had been made by U.K. UN Delegate Alexander Cadogan as the "representative designated by the Mandatory power". He had "stated that the Arabs had made it clear that 'they proposed to resist with all the forces at their disposal the implementation of the partition plan'" (7.b) Another time he told the Commission that

in the present circumstances the Jewish story that the Arabs are the attackers and the Jews the attacked is not tenable. The Arabs are determined to show that they will not submit tamely to the United Nations Plan of Partition; while the Jews are trying to consolidate the advantages gained at the General Assembly by a succession of drastic operations designed to intimidate and cure the Arabs of any desire for further conflict. (7.c)

Further, "Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom delegation elaborated on the above by further informing the commission that":

The view held by the Government of Palestine is that the arrival of the Commission will be the signal for widespread attacks by the Arabs both on the Jews and on the members of Commission itself. In addition, some 62 per cent of the present Government staff in Palestine are Arabs, and there is reason to believe that none of these will be willing or able to serve the commission. The Arabs have made it quite clear and have told the Palestine government that they do not propose to co-operate or to assist the Commission, and that, far from it, they propose to attack and impede its work in every possible way. (7.d)

Cadogan said that the relinquishment of the Mandate would happen on 15 May 1948, "as a whole. They cannot relinquish it piecemeal." And thus the Commission could not come to Palestine until about 1 May. (8.a.iii) Concerning immigration, Cadogan said that Britain would continue to let in 1500 Jews per month but would refuse permission for ships to land carrying "unauthorized Jewish immigrants". (10.a.i & iii) It would moreover *not* evacuate a seaport and some of its hinterland for the exclusive use of the Jewish Agency, as

³⁵⁷¹ UNGA 1947q, I.B.1-15.

³⁵⁷² UNGA 1948, *all citations*.

required by Resolution 181 at I.A.2, because this would enable “unlimited numbers of Jewish immigrants and possibly unregulated importation of arms”. (10.a.ii) So when it wanted, Britain disobeyed the General Assembly.

At the Security Council on 24 February Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones explained why the U.K. would not help “implement” the partition plan; present were the members of the Palestine Commission, Syria’s representative on the Security Council Fares al-Khoury and, by invitation, the representatives of Iraq and Egypt.

In the past, my Government has tried hard to secure the co-operation of the Jewish and Arab communities in finding a solution to the Palestine problem. ... For more than a quarter of a century, the United Kingdom has never ceased to contribute men, expenses and resources to the end that Jew and Arab alike may prosper in Palestine and the Jewish National Home be established there. Public opinion in the United Kingdom will permit no more expenditure of life and treasure. It will acquiesce no longer in the use of United Kingdom forces and the squandering of British lives to impose a policy in Palestine which one or the other of the parties is determined to resist. We have already used force enough in Palestine in the interests of our international obligations.³⁵⁷³

The “problem”, the two “parties” and their violent conflict, was thus presented as if it had no history, at least none involving the dutiful U.K. as a causal agent. Furthermore, “life and treasure” had been paid – in the end for zero benefit to Great Britain.

A few weeks later, at the UNGA First Committee meeting of 26 April 1948, Guatemalan delegate García Granados (from a pro-Zionist viewpoint) would give a critical overview of Britain’s recent behaviour.³⁵⁷⁴ The “attitude of the Mandatory power” was that

Instead of co-operating in a peaceful solution of the problem which he himself had brought before the United Nations, and thereby enabling an orderly transfer of power and administrative authority to be carried out, the representative of the United Kingdom announced his refusal to co-operate actively in implementing the plan under discussion. ... [I]t thwarted the efforts of the United Nations to implement partition. ... The Mandatory Power had taken upon itself the illegitimate parenthood of a partition which had become a reality and which could not be revoked.

In my reading, Granados was saying that the offspring of Britain’s rape of Palestine was the ethnic state on half of Palestine’s territory while there were no signs that an Arab State on the other half would be born; but Britain was avoiding responsibility for this outcome of its 30-year reign. In fact Britain could have taken responsibility in the opposite direction, its being within its power during March and April to support the Trusteeship Plan put forth by the U.S. State Department and to balk when Harry Truman pulled the rug out from under that plan [>487].

³⁵⁷³ UNSC 1948, pp 272, 273.

³⁵⁷⁴ UNGA 1948b, pp 88-89.

On 3 March 1948 all the Christian denominations **sent a 'STATEMENT'** in the name of the "Committee of the Christian Union of Palestine, addressed to All World Religious and Political Bodies":

The painful and regrettable situation now prevailing in Palestine has prompted representatives of all [eleven] Christian Communities of the various denominations to hold a joint meeting for the purpose of discussing the abnormal position which the country has reached, realizing, as they did, their responsibilities towards members of their respective communities, spiritually, morally and materially. The meeting was attended by representatives of:

The Orthodox Patriarchate, The Latin Patriarchate, The Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate, The Custodian de Terra Sancta, The Coptic Patriarchate, The Vicar of the Melkite Patriarchate, Metropolitan of the Syriac Orthodox Community, The Vicar of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate, The Arab Evangelical Episcopal Community, The Vicar of the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate, The Arab Lutheran Community in Palestine. Having given careful consideration to the situation now prevailing in Palestine, they decided to address this statement to all world religious and political bodies, in which they seek to give expression to their deep sorrow and strong indignation at the lamentable situation in which the Holy Land, the cradle of peace, has been placed as a direct result of the erroneous policy which has been imposed on the country and which has culminated in the partition plan.

It is our firm conviction that peace will not be restored nor would any endeavours made for the promotion of the 'peace of Jerusalem' be crowned with success unless those bodies who undertake the determination of the future of Palestine would remove the causes which had made a battlefield of the Holy Land, reestablish the principles of justice and maintain the right of self-determination as envisaged in the charter of the United Nations Organization. The Christian Union wishes to declare, in unequivocal terms, that they denounce the partition plan, being of the strong conviction that this plan involves a violation of the sacredness of the Holy Land which, by its nature and history, is indivisible and represents an encroachment on the natural rights of the Arabs, the people of the country. In view of our close contact with the various classes of our communities, we deem it our duty to draw the attention of all responsible authorities to the fact that the Christian Community in Palestine of all denominations is in complete agreement, in principle and deed, with their Moslem Brothers in their endeavour to resist and ward-off any violation of their rights or any encroachment on their country.³⁵⁷⁵

The "bodies who undertake the determination of the future of Palestine" were not the "self" deemed by the United Nations Organization, on paper, to possess the right to determine the country's future. But Great Britain, whose majority was overwhelmingly at least nominally Christian and which regarded itself as a "Christian" country, was at the

³⁵⁷⁵ Quoted by Tannous 1988, pp 487-88.

end of the Mandate unmoved by such appeals as this one from Palestinian Christians.³⁵⁷⁶ That said, I have yet to see any evidence that the “world religious... bodies” to which this appeal was addressed undertook anything to help this Christian Union in fighting for a single Palestine and “the people of the country”.

³⁵⁷⁶ See also Robson 2011, p 161, *passim*; Haiduc-Dale 2013, pp 182-86 & *passim*.

As in some earlier debates [e.g. >242; >290; >411], in the House of Commons on 10 March 1948 several MPs brought up many of the recurring themes of the Mandate's history.³⁵⁷⁷ They were debating a bill ordaining that on 15 May 1948 "the jurisdiction of His Majesty in Palestine shall cease and His Majesty's Government will no longer be responsible for the government of Palestine." (c1246) Colonial Secretary **Creech Jones**, who seems to have taken over the Palestine 'problem' from Foreign Secretary Bevin, first took stock:

The question of our attitude to the Mandate, which proved in practice both self-contradictory and unworkable, and of the reference of the Palestine question to the United Nations, has been debated in the House. [>453] ... We made it plain that the success of any plan in Palestine depended on Arab and Jewish co-operation, that implementation must be an essential part of any plan, and that if an attempt were made to impose a policy which one or other community vigorously opposed, the means of enforcement was an important aspect of implementation.³⁵⁷⁸ ... I do not believe, after our bitter and tragic experience, that the British public would tolerate any new commitments in Palestine. (cc1251, 1252, 1255)

The self-pity aside, Britain's experience was indeed "tragic" in the literary sense that the seeds of devastation were present at the beginning – a sort of character flaw which made Britain dedicate itself to a "self-contradictory and unworkable" experiment. Yet for Creech Jones, the failure of any and all plans rested not with Britain but rather on the absence of "Arab and Jewish co-operation". And again, the U.K. were granting the minority *yishuv* veto power.

Actually, Britain was taking sides, the side it had always taken:

We deeply deplore the fact that certain Arab bands have crossed the frontiers and dispersed themselves among the Arab villages. It is too often forgotten, however, how difficult it is, in the existing circumstances in Palestine, to control all the frontiers; how much patrolling has been done and how many Arab arms have been confiscated; how many bands of Arabs have been repulsed and how we have defended Jewish settlements. His Majesty's representatives in the Arab States which appear to be concerned have left the Arab Governments in no doubt of the serious view which His Majesty's Government take of these incursions from their territories into Palestine. (cc1256-57)

The Security Council, for its part, was sitting on the fence:

Turning again to the Security Council – which, I may say, has failed to endorse the Resolution of the Assembly [UNGA Res 181, >481] and did not find a sufficient number of members willing to accept the recommendations of the Assembly on 29th November in respect to the partition plan³⁵⁷⁹ – unofficial and informal talks between the permanent members of the Security Council are now going on. (c1259)

³⁵⁷⁷ Hansard 1948, all quotations.

³⁵⁷⁸ See also Pappe 1988, p 46.

³⁵⁷⁹ See e.g. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-180474/>

He reported on Great Britain's attitude within the Security Council:

The immediate prospects in Palestine are not bright. Our concern is deep for the well-being of the people of both communities, the violence committed day after day and the unaccommodating spirit that is abroad. We have done all possible to preserve authority and respect for law, to reduce violence, to see the work achieved by Britain maintained and conditions created for an orderly and effective transfer of authority. We fervently endorse the appeal made by the United Nations that the peoples concerned should cease their acts of destruction and that no States should add fuel to the fire already burning. Many harsh and wicked things have been said about the men and women who have laboured in the discharge of our international obligations. We remember the sacrifices they have made, and we thank those who have served and those who are still serving. (c1260)

Not only were these "sacrifices" still not bringing any benefits, but in this picture "The work achieved by Britain", by "men and women who have laboured in the discharge of our [self-imposed] international obligations", had had no role in the causation of the non-bright prospects for Palestine, of "the violence". Britain was not an actor in the Palestine triangle. The locals simply had no "respect for law". In reality, it was HMG which for 30 years had maintained the level of "violence committed day after day" necessary for the "destruction" of Palestine.

But HMG was not "disappointed" in itself:

We withdraw now with profound disappointment, conscious, however, that, whatever lapses we may have been guilty of – and mistakes are made by everybody – we have given, as a nation, much to Palestine and to the two communities there. We hope our friendship will not be dissolved by the experiences of recent years. The British people have given much in fulfilment of their international responsibilities. They should not be asked to endure more. It is now for others to find and implement the solution which has eluded us. We pray that they will. (c1261)

With all due respect to contextualisation of such speeches, to me it reads like satire. At any rate HMG, in contrast to the indigenous Palestinians, could safely "withdraw".

Continuing in this vein of self-praise was staunch Labour-Party Zionist Richard **Crossman**:

It is fashionable to look back after the event and to say that we should never have embarked upon the Balfour Declaration or upon this great *experiment*. I am not one of those who decry the vision of the great men of all parties of those days who saw, in the coming of the Jews to the Middle East, a possible solution of the relationship between Europeans and Arabs in that area, who saw that these people, if they came, if they developed the soil, if they brought their technical achievements with them, might get a better relationship with the Arabs than the oil magnates and the soldiers that the rest of the nations were exclusively sending to the Middle East. But not only the vision was sound. The achievement was miraculous, the achievement of the British, the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine. Never let us forget that it stands out in the Middle East as the only area where Arabs go to school and learn to use tractors. (c1342, *emphasis added*)

What problematic “relationship between Europeans and Arabs in that area”, which needed a “solution”, was this man talking about? The Palestinians, for sure, had a ‘Britain problem’, but I don’t think this is what Crossman was on about. He was claiming that it was for thirty years reasonable to believe that an influx of hundreds of thousands of Zionist Europeans, articulately undesired by the “Arabs”, would morph into a good “relationship with the Arabs”. Materialist Crossman was moreover typically evidence-resistant when it came to the fact that the “Arabs” were interested in freedom, not learning to use tractors.

Rab **Butler** was a bit more critical of his country:

[W]e... remember the intense difficulty and the manner in which this problem seems to follow the same round, namely, an inquiry followed by a decision, followed by the decision to adopt the report of the inquiry, followed by the decision not to adopt the report, followed by the decision to start off a new investigation and another decision, and so forth. That has been the story of Palestine. (c1262)

He followed this up with the perhaps ironic remark that

From the human point of view, it is always wise, in dealing with Palestine, to say that the last word has not been spoken. (c1263)

Back on the ground, so Butler,

With regard to troops and police, we on this side of the House would like to pay our tribute. Many countries in the world, when they look back upon the history of this matter, will regret the passing of British troops and police, who have a particular characteristic of kindness combined with firmness which has won them many a meed of praise and laurels. We express our detestation of the outrages, from whichever quarter they have come, and we appeal to people of influence inside and outside Palestine to bring their influence to bear upon this terrible canker of terrorism. (c1273)

Some other entries have documented the “firm kindness” of British “troops and police”. [>268; >296; >304; >325; >351; >369; >379; >381] And in this same spring, namely on 21 April 1948, according to Ghassan Kanafani and scores of historians, the British would *for example* actually help the Zionists clear Arabs out of Haifa.³⁵⁸⁰ For Butler, though, although “outrages” also came from the British “quarter”, state terrorism was not a concept.

In the opinion of Rhys **Hopkin Morris**, the British had been good colonialists:

We entered Palestine nearly 30 years ago as the mandatory Power with high hopes. We found it had a population of 750,000 and was a backward Ottoman province. There were no highways, and it was riddled with disease, but, despite all the difficulties, and the great obstacles, in the last 30 years the population has increased from 750,000 to something like two million. Today Palestine has the necessary equipment for a modern civilised State. That is a great achievement, a magnificent achievement by this country, made in the space of 30 years, and one of which we might well be proud. (c1287)

³⁵⁸⁰ See e.g. Attar 2010, p 160.

Only within the materialism endemic to British politicians of all parties did mention of “highways” or tractors make any sense. But they were forgetting the most important things: land, rights, justice. Even more worrying was that in this MP’s concept of “civilisation” was an unquestioned place for colonial military power (killing resisting natives). Most worrying was that the wishes of the indigenous residents did not matter. They were the human guinea pigs in Balfour’s³⁵⁸¹ and Crossman’s “great experiment” (c1342).

MP for Cambridge University Kenneth **Pickthorn**, who was at that university when both George Antonius and Musa Alami studied there, turned the spotlight towards the people of Palestine:

When this Bill receives the Royal Assent, if it does, what is then the status at international law of Palestinians, of those who till recently, for almost all foreign intents and purposes, were British subjects? Is it not a horrible thing that His Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State should have brought this Bill before us and made a Second Reading speech about, I will not say the abandonment, but the relinquishment of two millions of His Majesty’s subjects without a word to try to explain to us the subsequent international rights and status of what had been His Majesty’s subjects? (c1280)

This was one of the few instances in three decades of debates where the question of the *citizenship*, and thus the citizenship rights, of Palestinians was broached. In (not) answering Pickthorn and a similar intervention from Ian **Mikardo**, Attorney General **Shawcross** then said that citizens of Palestine were not citizens of Britain, yet

nor will they be dispossessed of any nationality which they at present enjoy when we lay down the burden which we have hitherto borne of giving them the protection, but not the nationality, of the British Crown. (cc1321-22)

What this “nationality” was which they presently had was not revealed. Shawcross did remark that the country “Palestine”, if it ended up as neither mandated nor somehow under the control of the “United Nations [Palestine] Commission”

would no longer have any *de jure* government or be entitled to recognition in international law. ... [Nevertheless,] It is a well-established rule of international law and it is one which we can say with confidence is fairly well established, that the laws of a country which has been ceded, or abandoned, continue, in the presumption of international law, to be those which existed at the time of the cession or abandonment. (cc1320, 1322-23)

Without the West, that is, Palestine could not exist, but the British-deposited laws “continued”, including those identifying the citizens of an entity called Palestine.

Shawcross also claimed that HMG’s policy of voluntary abandonment of Palestine [^{>453;} ^{>471}] was “the policy to which the Government have been forced.” (c1318) The U.K. in fact even at that late date had the option of supporting the attempt by the U.S. in the Security Council to substitute for the partition recommendation (UNGA Resolution 181) a UN

³⁵⁸¹ Hansard 1922b, c1018, >144.

Trusteeship for an un-partitioned, normal-democratic Palestine, but did not do so; nor had it in 1947 simply chosen to apply its own 1939 White Paper for a unified Palestine. [>483; >487; >410]

Pickthorn also spoke against conflating the issues of the fate of Palestine and the fate of European Jews:

If the United Nations were united about anything, could they not have been united in offering asylum? And so that argument could be taken away, [and] these two questions, which should never have been tied up together, could thus be clean separated. The first question, which is the Zionist question, is whether it is or is not right for Britain, or the United Nations, to exercise military force to compel a long-settled society to permit immigration without having any control of its quantity and quality. The other question is what ought to be done as a matter of human pity for such Jews as are miserable and homeless in and around Europe. Let us get and keep these two questions apart. Which nations have promised that they will take x thousands for the next y years? (c1284)

His speech confirmed the centrality of the Palestinians' demand for control over immigration, and pointed to the hypocrisy of the nations united in the United Nations.

Harry **Legge-Bourke** also championed the Palestinian cause by saying pithily that in a previous House debate

I said that we should not have come out straight away, and that this partition plan would lead to chaos. I said that last time, and for that reason I came out most forcibly in saying that I felt we should make clear to the United Nations that this decision was a rotten one, and should ask them to think again. ... I believe that Zionism is a menace to world peace; and I believe that we shall never have the right – and this Bill admits it officially on behalf of the British people, for the first time – and no country will ever have the right, to say to another people: 'You have got to take in a certain number of people from somewhere else, whether you like it or not.' Palestine is an Arab country. We, under the duress of the first world war, were bamboozled – there is no other word for it – into allowing the Jews, the Zionists, to go into Palestine. (c1328)

“Bamboozled” implies awareness of the scam-like nature of Zionism’s hoary “national home” discourse.

He also believed the U.K. still had agency and should quit its policy of abstaining:

What I do not agree with is that His Majesty’s Government should remain silent. If they really believe that this partition will not work – and the hon. Member for Nelson and Colne drew that out of the Secretary of State for the Colonies [Creech Jones] this evening – ... surely they have a voice [*inter alia* in the Security Council] with which to say to the United Nations what they think ought to be done. ... I cannot possibly support this Amendment, because I am against partition as an answer. ... What I say to the Government is that they should tell the United Nations that, if they want to make partition work, they will probably have to treble the number of troops in that country. They will have to do it by force; there is no other way, nor is there ever likely to be. (c1329)

Thomas **Reid**, having championed Palestinian rights for over a decade, brought an anti-partition argument based on the UN Charter:

Section 4 says that members of the organisation shall refrain from using the threat of force or from the use of force against the integrity or the independence of any State. And yet this Assembly of the same organisation is proposing to interfere with the integrity of and to dis-integrate a State. I certainly say that is immoral, probably illegal and certainly unjust. ... If this decision of the Assembly is accepted by the Security Council, and the United Nations try to enforce it, I predict – and my predictions on this subject since I came to this House have all proved to be realised up to date – that we shall then have war which will last 10, 20 or 50 years. The Arabs will not submit so long as their sovereignty is to be taken away from them. (c1331, 1332)

Reid then recalled his own involvement [*see* >376; >443; >481]:

I was a member of the Partition Commission [Woodhead, >376]. We sat for six months on this job, and we decided then that partition was utterly impracticable on every ground, strategic, economic, fiscal and other grounds, and, I would add, on moral grounds. It is quite unworkable. The reason I am opposing the Assembly's Palestine policy is because an unlawful, immoral and disastrous decision was made by the Assembly. The matter must be remedied by the United Nations organisation. The Security Council must refuse to accept that recommendation [i.e. Resolution 181] and U.N.O., through the Security Council or otherwise, must find a new solution to the problem. (c1332)

Finally, so Reid, the 1917 War Cabinet's wish for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" [>16] had in fact now been fulfilled:

What I suggest should be done now – and what I have said on this subject since 1938 has been vindicated – is to give independence to a Palestinian State. We promised the Jews a national home, and that has been set up; we promised the Arabs independence in Palestine and the Mandate envisaged independence after a period of trusteeship. That is the solution which I recommend to the United Nations organisation, and until that solution is accepted and adopted by U.N.O. there is no chance of a settlement of any kind in Palestine. (c1333)

To "give independence to a Palestinian State" had always been possible, and had even been supported by the House of Commons on 23 May 1939 [>411].

Ivor **Thomas** perceived the core contradiction in the UN's partition recommendation:

The United Nations... made a grievous mistake. Because it was impossible, so they said, to have a bi-national State in Palestine, they tried to create two bi-national States. Could absurdity go further? I submit that their best course in the interests of the United Nations is to retrace their steps, and I am bound to say that the Security Council appear to be doing that as rapidly as their legs will carry them. (c1337, *also* >468; >481)

Indeed, as we have seen and will see, Security Council permanent member China, as well as the U.S. UN delegation and non-permanent member Egypt, were then supporting UN trusteeship for a unified Palestine, but their legs did not carry them rapidly enough. [>483; >487]

The House did not want anything more to do with Palestine, voting 240-30 to get out on 15 May. In one of the late-night speeches Reginald **Manningham-Buller**, as well, divested Britain of moral responsibility:

We leave that country now with Jew and Arab in bitter animosity. How different were our hopes. Did we not hope that when the time came to give up our responsibility we should leave with Arab and Jew living in peace, friendship and prosperity? How different is the reality. ... But no solution, whether it be cantonisation, partition or in any other form, becomes possible except with force, unless we can secure agreement between Jew and Arab. (cc1346-47, 1353-54)

Britain had always pursued its Zionist “solution” “with force”, but instead of conceding the folly, the problem was, as usual in the second half of the Mandate, conceived as one “between Jew and Arab”.

1948 *[T]he British... continued to occupy and administer the Arab areas as well as to interfere with Arab arming and supplies and to prevent the entry into Palestine of Arab armed forces. ... The British forces in Palestine sold surplus war material to the Jewish Agency.*³⁵⁸²

Spring 1948 *“The evacuation and homelessness of the Arabs was planned and intended by the Jews. When Menahem Begin, the leader of the Irgun Zvei Leumi, was visiting New York following the assassination of Count Bernadotte, he made the following statement: “In the month preceding the end of the Mandate, the Jewish Agency decided to undertake a difficult mission as a prelude to taking over the Arab cities before the evacuation of British forces and the dispersal of their Arab population.”*^{m3583}

³⁵⁸² Zuaytir 1958, p 192.

³⁵⁸³ Alami 1949, p 381. On Bernadotte's murder see also Suárez 2023, pp 289-96.

Based on a State Department analysis of 20 January 1948 [^{>483}], in March and April 1948 parts of the U.S. Administration made a last-minute attempt to apply the emergency brake on Resolution 181 [^{>481}] by abandoning partition in favour of a single democratic state. As the United States' 'Office of the Historian' somewhat more equivocally wrote in late April 2017:

Although the United States backed Resolution 181, the U.S. Department of State recommended the creation of a United Nations trusteeship with limits on Jewish immigration and a division of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab provinces but not states. ... Later, as the date for British departure from Palestine drew near, the Department of State grew concerned about the possibility of an all-out war in Palestine as Arab states threatened to attack almost as soon as the UN passed the partition resolution.³⁵⁸⁴

HMG also feared "all-out war" and thus prevented the 5-member Palestine Commission set up by Resolution 181 (section I.B.1) to enter Palestine backed up by UN troops [^{>484}], and the Commission got no military back-up from the Security Council.³⁵⁸⁵

By 8 March a **U.S. plan had been detailed** to supercede Resolution 181 through a temporary UN Trusteeship³⁵⁸⁶, enabling U.S. Ambassador to the UN Warren Austin to submit a formal proposal at the Security Council meeting of 19 March 1948³⁵⁸⁷, a day after Briton Weizmann had personally convinced Truman to support the establishment of a Jewish state via the partition route³⁵⁸⁸. At the meeting Austin said that since "the partition plan cannot be implemented by peaceful means under present conditions", Resolution 181's "recommendation" for two states should no longer be adhered to:

We believe that further steps must be taken immediately not only to maintain the peace but also to afford a further opportunity to reach an agreement between the interested parties regarding the future government of Palestine. To this end we believe that a temporary trusteeship for Palestine should be established under the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. ... Pending the meeting of the proposed special session of the General Assembly, we believe that the Security Council should instruct the Palestine Commission to suspend its efforts to implement the proposed partition plan.³⁵⁸⁹

In words almost identical to those in the Security Council minutes, Austin on 19 March also issued a public 'Statement' in which he added:

³⁵⁸⁴ Office of the Historian, U.S. Government <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/creation-israel>; also Boling 2003.

³⁵⁸⁵ UNGA 1948, 7.d, 8.a.III & 8.c; see also UNSC 1948, pp 258-60, 263-64, 270; Quigley 2010, p 96.

³⁵⁸⁶ Boling 2003, p 75; Cohen 1987c, pp 204-06, 226-29; Quigley 2021, p 39, citing FRUS 1948, vol. 5, p 697.

³⁵⁸⁷ UNSC 1948a, use Search function.

³⁵⁸⁸ Khalidi 1984, p 310.

³⁵⁸⁹ Also <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v05p2/d105>

The announced determination of the mandatory power to terminate the mandate on 15 May 1948, if carried out by the United Kingdom, would result, in the light of information now available, in chaos, heavy fighting and much loss of life in Palestine. The United Nations cannot permit such a result. The loss of life in the Holy Land must be brought to an immediate end. The maintenance of international peace is at stake.³⁵⁹⁰

On 12 April the U.K. Cabinet told its U.N. Delegation not to “modify its policy of neutrality” concerning the moves to replace the partition plan with a Trusteeship for unified Palestine but also speculated that the Arab states would support the Trusteeship in hopes of

persuading the Assembly to adopt a limited number of amendments, the most important of which might be:- (a) A provision ensuring that the establishment of democratic institutions in Palestine was not made dependent upon the consent of both communities. In this way, the Arabs could be sure that there would be no Jewish veto on the establishment of a majority Government. ... (c) A precise time limit for the trusteeship agreement, so that its termination would not depend upon agreement between the Arab and Jewish communities.³⁵⁹¹

These two issues were deep ones. They had been the two main unfulfilled demands of the Palestinians at the 1939 St. James talks [394-397; 412], and here they were again stated crystal-clearly.

The Trusteeship Proposal itself as presented by Austin to the General Assembly's First Committee on 20 April 1948 was a full-blown constitution with 47 Articles.³⁵⁹² It was identical to all positive Palestinian proposals ever since the ‘Report on the State of Palestine’ of 28 March 1921 [e.g. 99; 472; 478] – including “fundamental human rights and freedoms” (a bill of rights) and provisions on citizenship, democratic government with a bi-cameral legislature, and “the territorial integrity of Palestine” – and was on the UNGA table almost a month ahead of the date announced by Britain for its military pull-out. It was a slightly modified version of the secret proposal of the State Department of 4 June 1947. [461] This remaining month would however pass without action.

According to Gail Boling, who observes that adoption of the trusteeship proposal by the Security Council would have prevented not only partition and a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine, but also the Palestine refugee problem:

‘[P]artition’ could only be imposed forcibly against the will of the majority of inhabitants. The Yishuv [Jewish-Zionist community] opted to use force to try to impose partition. ... [T]he State Department's Policy Planning Staff reported to the U.S. Secretary of State as early as 19 January 1948 that imposition of the partition plan by force would appear to violate the Palestinians' right to self-determination under international law. ... The Trusteeship entity would follow a democratic system of government [and] include a cabinet and a democratically elected legislature, preferably bi-cameral.³⁵⁹³

³⁵⁹⁰ Austin 1948, use Search function.

³⁵⁹¹ Cohen 1987c, pp 225, 224.

³⁵⁹² UNGA 1948a, especially Articles 5, 8, 9, 10.

³⁵⁹³ Boling 2003, pp 74, 75, 77, & 84 note 30.

This reads today like a dream.

Diplomacy escalated as the date of British withdrawal, 15 May, approached:

On 16 April 1948, the UN General Assembly convened in special session to discuss the U.S. proposal for a provisional trusteeship for Palestine. ... On 20 April 1948, at its 118th meeting, the General Assembly's First Committee officially embarked upon debate of the U.S.-proposed Trusteeship Agreement. ... The First Committee [^{>455;} ^{>460}] was to meet a total of twenty-five times during the special session of the General Assembly convened to discuss the question of the future government of Palestine. ... However, by 14 May 1948, the clock had finally run out. While discussion of the U.S.-proposed Trusteeship Agreement had wound its complex way through numerous General Assembly committee and subcommittee debates, no final agreement had been reached.³⁵⁹⁴

Henry Cattán, who was then present at the UN, summarised U.S. behaviour during March and April:

In view of the turmoil and the impossibility of implementing partition by peaceful means, the US Government asked the Security Council on 19 March 1948 to suspend action on the partition plan and to call a special session of the General Assembly at once to work out a new solution. Warren R. Austin, the US representative at the UN, advocated a temporary trusteeship for Palestine under the UN Trusteeship Council until the establishment of a government approved by Arabs and Jews. On 30 March, he presented to the Security Council a resolution asking that the General Assembly be convened 'to consider further the question of the future government of Palestine'. On 16 April 1948 a second special session of the General Assembly was convened for this purpose. Discussions both at the Security Council and at the General Assembly revealed that some governments questioned the wisdom of the partition plan. The UK, as the retiring Mandatory Power, declared that it was not prepared to participate in the enforcement of a settlement which was not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews, and further asserted that lack of co-operation on its part sprang from the fact that the partition had not been impartially conceived.³⁵⁹⁵

I would like to see research on this "further assertion", namely on whether and why the U.K. regarded Resolution 181 as not "impartial".

Of the other permanent Security Council members (with the right of veto), China supported the U.S. abandonment of the partition plan, Russia was apparently opposed, and Britain had removed itself even from most of the Security Council discussions. (I do not know France's position.) The Jewish Agency – which was present at the 19 March Security Council meeting – was opposed, but the Egyptian representative, Mahmoud Fawzi Bey, took the opportunity to argue one last time against Resolution 181 in general and to assert that in fact

it is the Zionists who are the aggressors. ... In the proposed Jewish State, outside of the Tel-Aviv area, the Arabs constitute the majority of the population and are by far the greater owners of the land. What is the answer to their unequivocal intent that neither their persons

³⁵⁹⁴ Boling 2003, p 76.

³⁵⁹⁵ Cattán 1988, pp 42-43.

nor their land should belong to a Jewish State? What would then be left of that proposed State, except a harbour without a country? Can that harbour without a country constitute the territorial element of a State? If, as we believe, it cannot, may one earnestly and safely suppose that the Arabs should then supply the necessary territorial element and, on top of it, literally submit to a rule which they have every reason to consider foreign? Will they be required to sit supinely and look on while this is being imposed by force?³⁵⁹⁶ [also >458; >459]

At a meeting of the Security Council earlier in March only five votes could be mustered for continuing to try to implement partition, and on 18 April in further discussion at the Security Council there was hope, unfulfilled, of British co-operation in the last-minute setting-up of the UN Trusteeship.³⁵⁹⁷ However, not enough members of the General Assembly, even with the backing of the U.S. State Department and its UN Delegation, had during March and April 1948 seen the urgency of the Trusteeship which would stave off much bloodshed, give the non-partitioned state one more chance and, as Boling intimates (*just above*), prevent roughly 300,000,000 future Palestinian refugee-years.³⁵⁹⁸

The decisive fact, though, was that the U.S. itself ended up opposing its own State Department's proposed constitution and its move for the UN Trusteeship! Although on 25 March President Truman had instructed UN Delegate Warren Austin to support the Trusteeship proposal³⁵⁹⁹, towards the end of April he overruled Austin, George Kennan, Loy Henderson, George Marshall, Dean Rusk and other high State Department officials in favour of the Jewish state³⁶⁰⁰. Because Truman, in his 'Statement' of 25 March, had written that "Unfortunately, it has become clear [since 29 November 1947] that the partition plan cannot be carried out at this time by peaceful means...", it is accurate to say that he soon consciously chose bloody war in Palestine. The 'end' of a Jewish state apparently justified the 'means'. The U.K., which at that time had a monopoly on military force in Palestine and had a veto on the Security Council, likewise declined to support the State Department proposal, although it was basically its own 1939 White Paper [*>410*]. This was a further narrow escape for Zionism, and the Palestinians' last chance died.

8 April 1948 *'Military and political leader Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, Musa Kazem's son, is killed fighting at al-Qastal just west of Jerusalem.'*³⁶⁰¹

9 April 1948 [*Zionist military forces murder about 250 Palestinians in the village of Deir Yassin west of Jerusalem, sending a message of the risks of resisting Zionist expansion.*]³⁶⁰²

³⁵⁹⁶ UNSC 1948a, use Search function; also Kattan 2005, p 69.

³⁵⁹⁷ Quigley 2010, pp 96-97.

³⁵⁹⁸ I am assuming an *average* of approximately 4,000,000 Palestinian refugees per year for the last 75 years. See also Nakhleh 1991, pp 1031-32.

³⁵⁹⁹ Document in my possession, 'United States Proposal for Temporary United Nations Trusteeship for Palestine: Statement by President Truman, March 25, 1948'; also Boling 2003, pp 75-76.

³⁶⁰⁰ See https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/israel/large/index.php?action=bg; also UNGA 1948b, pp 89-92.

³⁶⁰¹ Wikipedia > 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni'.

³⁶⁰² Also Khalidi 1984, pp 334-35

23 April 1948 [Former top official in the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office Richard Meinertzhagen himself shoots dead several Arabs during the cleansing of Haifa.]³⁶⁰³

³⁶⁰³ Paraphrasing Meinertzhagen 1959, pp 222-23.

Speaking before the First Committee of the General Assembly for the Arab Higher Committee, Jamal al-Husseini departed from the currently hot issue of the irrelevance of Jewish suffering in Europe to Palestine's political future,³⁶⁰⁴ instead recounting the ethics of the colonial situation and the main stages of Mandate history.³⁶⁰⁵ According to the 'summary record' in the UN minutes, he

stressed the injustice and inequality of what he termed the Anglo-Zionist Mandate. Its former sponsors in the United Kingdom now rejoiced at seeing the end of this disastrous policy as much as did the Arabs who were its victims. ... In the course of its second regular session, the General Assembly had heard the people of Palestine proclaim their intention to defend their national patrimony to the last man [^{>472; >476}]; yet two-thirds of its Members, ill-advised, misled or acting under compulsion, had accepted an illegal scheme which could not be carried out and which was contrary to the rights and interests of the Arabs. The latter had done what any other Member State would have done: they had defended themselves. (p 93)

For "at least thirteen centuries" the Arabs had lived in Palestine, and under the Ottomans they had had freedom and held official posts, but then came the "Anglo-Zionist conspiracy", with Britain breaking its pledges and even refusing to take part in the "plebiscite commission" (King-Crane, 1919 [^{>59}]) which, taking self-determination seriously, came to Palestine to find out "the views of the people of Palestine on their future government". Their views were stated unequivocally, yet after the Covenant [^{>46}], the Mandate [^{>146}] and the "risings" (of the 1930s [^{>268; >296ff}]) came the 1939 White Paper with its plan for limited immigration and eventual independence [^{>410}]; yet instead of recognising that the Palestinians were no longer minors and carrying out the Covenant's Article 22, Britain, "yielding to the Jewish Agency,... had not enforced its own White Paper" and "the United Nations had carried out an investigation - the nineteenth of its kind [^{>460ff}] - in Palestine". (pp 94-95)

The Arab Palestinians were not responsible for the present situation:

Bayonets had opened up the country to the Jews, whose number had increased from 50,000 to 700,000 in a quarter of a century. The average area of land in Arab hands had fallen to below half the basic minimum, and this despite the fact that three-quarters of the Palestinian Arabs were farmers. This had led to the formation of a proletariat of landless peasants who had settled around the towns. Moreover, the Jewish Agency had excluded non-Jewish labour from Jewish lands and undertakings. (p 95) [*see e.g. >233*]

Speaking for people who had been rooted in or near Palestine for centuries, Jamal even pointed out that the borders of Palestine were invalid (recalling the unity of Greater Syria prior to the Sykes-Picot Agreement [^{>12}]):

³⁶⁰⁴ See Quigley 1990, p 32.

³⁶⁰⁵ UNGA 1948b, pp 93-97, all quotations; Quigley 2010, p 97.

The Jewish Agency had spoken of Arab invaders. How was it possible to speak of an invasion when no Arab, whether from Palestine or elsewhere, had ever recognized the frontiers of Palestine which had been established against his wishes? (p 96)

You can't invade your own country, or invade from within your country (Syria).

Deconstructing 'the Palestine problem' or 'the question of Palestine', Jamal said:

It had also been alleged that the lot of the Arabs under the Mandate would have been an equitable one had there been no difficulties inherent in the problem. It was decided therefore to carve the living body of the country with the sharp knife of partition. But it was the United Kingdom Government and the League of Nations which had created the Palestinian problem, for if the right of peoples to self-determination had been applied in Palestine from the very beginning, such a problem would never have arisen. (pp 93-94)

Only in the problem set up by outsiders were "difficulties inherent". The long and the short of it was that

with Article 28 of the Mandate which dealt with the obligations of the 'Government of Palestine' to be established after the termination of the Mandate ... [w]hat the United Kingdom Government had to hand over was the whole of Palestine as one unit, and this could be done only to one Palestinian government representing all the lawful citizens of Palestine. (p 95)³⁶⁰⁶

Returning to the present (spring 1948), the AHC would even go along with the US-proposed Trusteeship [p.487] if it were temporary:

If the proposals of the United States (document A/C.1/277) aimed at the establishment of an interim government, destined to remain in being during a short and previously determined period, pending the final settlement of the question, those proposals could be examined, provided it was clearly understood that they were meant to lead to the independence of Palestine as a single democratic State in which the legitimate rights of the different sections of the citizens would be safeguarded. (p 97)³⁶⁰⁷

The Security Council met three weeks later, on 15 May 1948, to deal with the entrance of Arab military forces into Palestine. There, for the Arab Higher Committee, spoke Issa Nakhleh, a British-trained barrister and member of the Palestine bar who was present throughout the UN's handling of 'the Palestine problem' during 1947 and who now referred to the League Covenant as determining what should occur upon Britain's withdrawal:

By the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the people of Palestine were recognized provisionally as an independent nation. Now that the Mandate has ended, the people of Palestine consider themselves to be an independent nation. The majority of the population of Palestine, the 1,300,000 Arabs, considers that the Jewish minority – whether the 300,000 Palestinian citizens or the 400,000 foreigners – is a rebellious minority which has revolted against the sovereignty of the majority of the population of the

³⁶⁰⁶ Also Quigley 2010, pp 97, 103, 69-70.

³⁶⁰⁷ Also Qumsiyeh 2004; Tilley 2005; Abunimah 2006; Karmi 2007.

country. We, the Arab Higher Committee, representing the majority of the people of Palestine, consider that any attempt to create any foreign government in Palestine is nothing but an act of rebellion which will be put down by force.³⁶⁰⁸

Most Palestinians had come to believe that what had been established by force could be replaced, by their own government, only by forceful resistance.

³⁶⁰⁸ UNSC 1948b, pp 6, 8-9; Quigley 2010, p 103.

Britain was finally gone or going, and thus the Palestinians' futile dialogue with it was also over and gone, and this chronology is finished as well. But instead of ending it abruptly, I feel the need in these last two entries to get away from the constitutional questions and touch upon an aspect of the battle of 1948 mentioned by chronicler Izzat Tannous, namely the broad and dedicated, actually universal, support for armed resistance. According to Tannous, writing of the necessity of fighting Zionism militarily.³⁶⁰⁹

The partial exclusion of the Palestinians from the [Arab] Liberation Army [*Jaysh al-Inqadh*, under Fawzi al-Qawuqji] instigated the A.H.C. to establish their own. Abdul-Kadir Al-Husseini, son of Musa Kazem Al-Husseini, the Arab leader, was appointed Commander in Chief. He made Bir-Zeit village, twenty-five kilometers north of Jerusalem, his headquarters.

Neither of these armies prevented the Zionist military success of 1948. Rivalry between Mufti Amin al-Husseini, and Qawuqji, as of 6 December 1947 leader of the Arab Liberation Army whose headquarters were in Damascus, did not help.³⁶¹⁰ Abdul Kadir's troops were poorly supplied and financed, and he himself was killed by Jewish forces on 8 April 1948. Facing difficulties from the Mufti, the British, diseases amongst the troops, and also from Emir Abdullah in Jordan, Qawuqji entered Palestine only on 6 March 1948, just east of Tubas, and his army fought until about mid-November when it had retreated to just north of the Lebanon border.³⁶¹¹

Tannous chooses to mention the example of the activities of Palestinian women's committees [also >210; >257; >269; >320; >356]:

Al-Jihaad Al-Muqaddas [this Palestinian army] also included women who were as enthusiastic as the men. The Palestinian Arab Women Society, established long before, had branches all over Palestine. With its headquarters in Jerusalem, the society had connections with all Arab Women Societies in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. In 1947, when Palestine became in grave danger all Arab Women Societies in Arab countries united their efforts to meet that danger. Huda Sharawi, head of the Egyptian Women Society, became the spokeswoman for all the Arab Women Societies and played a big role in that field. [374; also >269; >320; >356] In Jerusalem, Zleecha Shihaabi at headquarters had a devoted team to work with her.³⁶¹² Of special mention were Shahinda Duzdaar, Hind Al-Husseini, Matil Mogannam, Kateengo Hananiya Deeb, Wadia Khartabil, Sultany Halabi, Mrs. Musa Alami, Mrs. Jamal Al-Husseini, Mrs. Awni Abd-Hadi, Mrs. George Antonius. There were many others. In fact every Arab woman in Palestine was part of *Al-Jihaad Al-Muqaddas*.

³⁶⁰⁹ Tannous 1988, pp 460-62.

³⁶¹⁰ Parsons 2016, pp 112-17, 157-58, 192, 195, 199-205; Zuaytir 1958, pp 189-90, 196-204; Khalidi 1984, pp 308-09; Khalidi 1986, p 122.

³⁶¹¹ Parsons 2016, pp 217-47; also Khalidi 1984, pp 316-20.

³⁶¹² Before her death, that is, on 2 December 1947.

Armed resistance continued until well into the autumn of 1948, then lulled, and would not resume on a broad scale until the mid-1960s. One eyewitness, Akram Zuaytir, gives a good chronological account of the events from the partition resolution through the armistices between Israel and its neighbours.³⁶¹³

³⁶¹³ Zuaytir 1958, pp 183-227.

A second aspect of the armed resistance at the tail end of the Mandate, witnessed by Izzat Tannous, was that Britain worked against it. A big Zionist attack on Qatamon was launched on April 27 and Tannous, who was then living and working in Jerusalem, writes that Ibrahim Abu-Dayeh and reinforcements from *Jeish al-Inqaath* and *Al-Jihaad al-Muqaddas* (men sent by Khaled al-Husseini) had to give up trying to retain the important, mostly Arab Qatamon quarter of Jerusalem:

On May 1, Abu-Dayeh was forced to withdraw with the few Munaadilin who remained alive. He rushed to Beit Jala where he was stationed before he came to Qatamon, mobilized three hundred men and proceeded to Jerusalem to reoccupy Qatamon. But as they approached the quarter, they were intercepted by the British army and were ordered to stop and retreat; and if they did not they would be stripped of their weapons or shot. Unable to force his way to Qatamon, Ibrahim came straight to my office on the Mamilla road sobbing. He began to beg me if I could do anything with the English. 'Can you do anything; can you intervene?' 'No, my dear Ibrahim,' I said, quoting an Arab proverb, 'When the judge is your enemy, it is useless to appeal.'³⁶¹⁴

There was harmony between Britain's withdrawal and yishuv military moves in Tiberias and Haifa as well.³⁶¹⁵ 'Great' Britain had set itself up as judge over normal Palestinians in the country of their grandmothers and grandfathers, living their lives like you and me. HMG had always claimed to be neutral over against 'the two sides' in carrying out its 'dual obligation'. In fact, even the Balfour Declaration at the very beginning of Britain's colonial rule was biased, and led logically to actions such as that just described in the last days of the Zionist Mandate: the more powerful "English", self-styled arbiters, threatened 300 Palestinians with death should they, in self-defence, also use non-verbal weapons.

1948 [*Murders, maimings, confiscations, expulsions and physical destruction known as the Nakba.*]³⁶¹⁶

13 May 1948 'Count Folke Bernadotte... appointed by the United Nations as a mediator to seek a settlement of the Palestine conflict.'³⁶¹⁷

15 May 1948 Britain pulls out, state of Israel founded, neighbouring armies enter almost exclusively into areas given to the Arab state under UNGA Res 181.

15 May 1948 [The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States cables to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, 'on the occasion of the intervention of Arab States in Palestine to restore law and order...', a ten-point treatise covering the history of Palestine's battle with Britain for independence, stating that 'the Jewish National Home... had been estab-

³⁶¹⁴ Tannous 1988, 526-27.

³⁶¹⁵ Khalidi 1986, p 129.

³⁶¹⁶ Sayegh 1952; Al-Aref 1956-60; Khalidi et al. 1992; Hourani 2004; Pappé 2006 – five sources among hundreds.

³⁶¹⁷ Khalidi 1984, p 343.

lished', that 'Palestine had become an independent country since its separation from the Ottoman Empire', that Palestine's 'inhabitants [had] the right to set up a Government', that 'with the termination of the Mandate [its] independence and sovereignty... become established in fact', and that 'mainly, the only fair and just solution to the problem of Palestine is the creation of United State of Palestine based upon the democratic principles which will enable all its inhabitants to enjoy equality before the law, and which would guarantee to all minorities the safeguards provided for in all democratic constitution States...']³⁶¹⁸

³⁶¹⁸ <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/A717E30BD2F6E5EC8525761E0072E9B3>

Annex

What the book is not

1) balanced

The book is not **balanced**. It condemns the colonialist, racist, British side. Because of the difference between aggressors and the aggrieved against, treating the two sides as ethically or politically equal would be both inaccurate and a betrayal of Palestine's rightful owners. Why should we treat the well-educated Sirs and Lords and MPs who threw the first stones, and should have known better, with respect?

2) a treatise on ethics

Colonial rule was collective slavery. As with individual slavery, introspection and the Golden Rule are enough to judge that it is wrong. In standing on their natural rights the Palestinians likewise saw the ethics of the violent colonial situation as **self-evident or axiomatic**. On paper, even the Lloyd Georges and Woodrow Wilsons regarded the rightness of self-determination as a given. Those who want to dive deeper can mull over twentieth-century books such as those by Frantz Fanon (1961) and Edward Said (e.g. 1978) – or Orlando Patterson (1982), whose notions of 'social death' and 'natal alienation' apply both to individuals and to whole identifiable societies.³⁶¹⁹

3) concise

The story of Palestine's robbery, its usurpation, is as **simple** as it gets. A concise history would be enough to show the factual and ethical clarity of the tale and the absence of any moral dilemmas in judging the Mandate. From this perspective most of the book is superfluous. But in the real-world debate over Palestine historical detail is often useful to bolster one's positive case and undermine the complex British-Zionist narrative. In the debate, many documents covered here get routinely mentioned anyway, and knowledge of them can prohibit their being misused. The wealth of detail, moreover, increases the visibility of the usually-erased Palestinians – many of them relatively unknown. Finally, many Palestinian statements, and those who made them, are an inspiration.

4) a study of British motives

I largely avoid writing about **why** the British both colonised Palestine and supported Zionism. Naming and measuring the real or perceived costs and benefits of having a colony in which one is to build a national home for a group of Europeans is of interest in the study of Britain and the general study of colonialism. But I wanted to focus on the Palestinians who were mainly dealing with the violent *fact* of that colonialism-cum-Zionism.³⁶²⁰ The exact mixture of Zionist lobbying power, British cultural pro-Zionism and perceived British military and foreign policy interests is arguably, from the point of view of the disenfranchised natives, fundamentally uninteresting. Once a liberation movement starts, some political and anthropological research into the colonial enemy is certainly

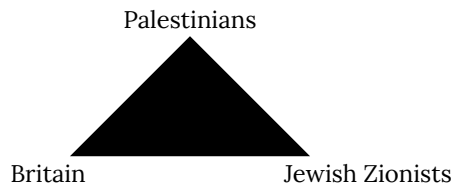
³⁶¹⁹ Patterson 1982, pp 1, 4, 6, 12-13, 66, 77, 97, 182, 303, 331, 337, 340.

³⁶²⁰ See Abu-Lughod 1981, pp 407-08.

useful, but I don't see how any given explanation of British behaviour would have altered the Palestinians' conceptual or behavioural resistance to their mandated situation. That said, I do here and there criticise the view that the Mandate was in Britain's self-interest.

5) all-encompassing

The book is also not a general history of the Mandate, one interweaving interactions between the British, the indigenous Palestinians, international Zionists and the world in general. Rather, it covers only the left side of **the Mandate triangle**:



While the interaction between the native Palestinians and the actor which enabled the Zionists to play a role in the first place, namely Britain, remains relatively under-researched, the base of this triangle has been studied to the moon and back:

Between 1922 and 1947 the great issue witnessed by the world in Palestine was not, as a Palestinian would like to imagine, the struggle between natives and new colonists, but a struggle presented as being between Britain and the Zionists.³⁶²¹

The “new colonists” were the European-Jewish settlers, and the Palestinians’ struggle with them is the right side of the triangle, to which I’ve devoted only some fourteen entries.³⁶²² Some of those entries involve Chaim Weizmann, who was both a Jewish-Zionist and (quasi-official) British actor. *See also* Ben-Gurion (1968), Chapters 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, & 19, relating discussions with Musa Alami, Awni Abdul Hadi, Hussein Khalidi, George Antonius, Izzat Tannous and some non-Palestinian Arabs. The Palestinian-Zionist ‘dialogue’ in a nutshell is Nuh Ibrahim’s conversational poem of ca. 1937, ‘Debate between an Arab and a Zionist’ [[>]363].³⁶²³

To be sure, the vertices of the triangle are not clean-cut. (1) Many of the powerful actors were at once Jewish Zionists and British. (2) Some Zionists were neither British nor Jewish. (3) Syrians and other Arabs often acted with or on behalf of the Palestinians. (4) Other Western countries, mainly the U.S., acted with or on behalf of either Britain or the international, mostly Jewish, Zionists. (5) Indigenous *Jewish* Palestinians belonged to the ‘self’ that was fighting to determine its political future, and many were not Zionists.

The most relevant overlap is the first-mentioned just above. Such actors include Herbert Samuel, Chaim Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, Albert Montefiore Hyamson, Leo Amery,

³⁶²¹ Said 1979, p 23; also Abu Lughod 1981; Fieldhouse 2006, Ch. 4.

³⁶²² >1, >24, >37, >62, >64, >173, >190, >273, >274, >278, >333, >362, >363, >462.

³⁶²³ Indigenous-Zionist interaction is also covered in Herzl 1896; Hattis 1970; Porath 1974 & 1977; Abu Lughod 1981; Caplan 1983 & 1986; Shabeeb 2006; Gribetz 2018.

Max Nurock, Norman Bentwich, Montague David Eder, James de Rothschild, Henry Mond, Frederick Kisch, and Edwin Samuel. For these actors themselves, and for their commitment to Zionism, their Jewishness was important.

Some books which devote accurate and sympathetic attention to the Palestinian resistance end up focussed on the Britain-Jewish Zionist base of the triangle. Nicholas Bethell's *The Palestine Triangle*, for instance, looks mainly at Britain's service to Zionism and the Zionists' post-1939 rebellion against Britain.³⁶²⁴ It also covers particularly well the Palestinian interaction with the Malcolm MacDonald Colonial Office during 1938-39, but in the end the book gives normative credence to Jewish historical claims to Palestine and its Acknowledgements, including 73 people, include only three Palestinians, namely Musa Alami, Katie Antonius and Anwar Nusseibeh. A recent book by Penny Sinanoglou, *Partitioning Palestine*, deals almost exclusively with Britain and Britons, with at most 24 of the 360 items in its bibliography being written by Palestinians and, as far as I can tell, no Palestinian appears in the Acknowledgments; indigenous views of partition, moreover, receive only cursory attention.³⁶²⁵

6) based on Arabic-language sources

I don't read **Arabic** and did not feel I had the time, around the age of 70, to both learn it and do the research for the book. Of course many statements of Palestinians I've covered are translated from Arabic, but that's not the same thing. Neither, however, have I run across literature documenting politically-motivated British-Government mistranslations.

I hope researchers in Arabic will add to and/or correct what I've written. When in this way either a correction or a new document appears, it will be added to the online book by means of lower-case letters, e.g. entry >34a, in order to keep its strict chronological structure. Among possible additions are excerpts from Arabic newspaper articles and editorials, reports of political meetings, and additional records in Arabic kept by for instance Awni Abdul Hadi, Abdul Wahhab Kayyali, Kamil Mahmud Khillih, Bayan al-Hout, Akram Zu'ayter or Aref Abdul Razzak. Rashid Khalidi lists "a total of nine autobiographical memoirs and diaries... published in Arabic by the Institute for Palestine Studies alone since 2005"; I've only read the ones in English by Wasif Jawhariyyeh and Reja-I Busailah.³⁶²⁶

Some of my English-language sources are perhaps biased, written as they were by the powerful colonialists, the British elite, who made policy and kept their records through their own eyes and language. This is not necessarily a drawback, though, because it was this class that was the enemy of Palestine, and it was these words the Palestinians had to confront.

Even though many Palestinians knew English or French, there are perhaps ways of thinking or conceptual frameworks which rendered English unsatisfactory for expressing their actual thoughts. For instance, was the entire idea of the constitutional democracy

³⁶²⁴ Bethell 1979; also Khalidi 2009, p 31.

³⁶²⁵ Sinanoglou 2019, pp 228-43, viii-ix, *passim*.

³⁶²⁶ Khalidi 2020, pp 264-65, note 34; Tamari & Nassar 2014; Busailah 2017.

the Palestinian elite consistently called for, couched as it was in terms of the European Enlightenment, a misrepresentation of what they actually wanted? Or perhaps the term ‘immigration’, used ubiquitously during the Mandate, is a misrepresentation, in Palestinian eyes, of Europeans’ entry into Palestine *against their will* – a euphemism for colonization or invasion.³⁶²⁷ In Penny Sinanoglou’s recent book, for instance, “immigration” into Palestine is typologised in terms of the immigrants’ being non-Arab, non-British or “non-imperial”, but not in terms from the Palestinian perspective, namely that they were being *forced upon* them and that they were *political* immigrants aiming to take over Palestine.³⁶²⁸ It would be epistemologically just as wrong to categorise ethnic cleansing as a type of *emigration*.

Reflecting on these language and framing issues, though, Zeina Ghandour weighs, then rejects, the opinion that

the most we can hope to achieve through our reading of the historical archive and of colonial texts is the revelation of the West’s misrepresentation of the subaltern, so that no matter how radical, projects of historical recuperation of subaltern consciousness are doomed to failure.³⁶²⁹

For Ghandour, that is, a relatively objective rendering of Palestinians’ views and feelings is indeed ultimately possible. It was, I believe, most likely achieved by their more judicious British masters such as Louis Bols, Philip Palin, Lord Islington, Walter Shaw, John Chancellor, John Hope Simpson, Arnold Toynbee, E.T. Richmond, Thomas Reid, Malcolm MacDonald, Grattan Bushe, Anthony Crossley or even Lord Peel and Ernest Bevin. While J.M.N. Jeffries’ takes on Palestinian thought and sentiment are in a category by themselves, I have yet to read of any Palestinian’s dissociation from them (*see also* caveat 12) below).

7) an on-the-ground history

Almost all interactions I’ve included were **verbal and non-violent**. The violent ones have been relatively well-studied, and I give non-violent resistance some attention, but the verbal, usually written, ones have seldom been the exclusive subject of academic studies. The *events* strewn into the chronology, reporting the ‘news’, are intended to complement the documentary story.

8) time-limitless

Except for the first fifteen entries giving some context, **the time period covered** is strictly limited to 2 November 1917 – 15 May 1948, the dates, respectively of the Balfour Declaration and Britain’s exit from Palestine.

9) a legal history

The book records legal arguments from both adversaries, but tries to do justice to the fact that the **international law** often invoked was basically beside the point. First, in the

³⁶²⁷ Cronin 2017, p 24.

³⁶²⁸ Sinanoglou 2019, p 19.

³⁶²⁹ Ghandour 2010, pp 83-84, *paraphrasing* G.C. Spivak.

banal sense that Britain not only wrote much of this 'law' but also did what it wanted regardless. Second, many Palestinians themselves emphasised the ethical, pre-legal nature of their argument.

Focussing on law does not pay enough attention to the fact that it was written and adjudicated by the same powerful countries who robbed the Palestinians in the first place. All law is a mixture of ethics and political power, so the status of being embodied in international law says nothing at all, in and of itself, about its ethical, political or historical truth or justness. The Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate, for instance, while declared null and void by the Palestinians, were arguably 'internationally legal', even though they themselves violated other norms of international law and were anyway only statements by the powerful of what they wanted to do with their power. Was the Covenant, is General Assembly Resolution 181, international law? It gets very confusing. That said, studies of the Mandate focussing on legal aspects are worth reading, and further the Palestinian case, because so much of world opinion does listen to 'law'. The works of John Quigley, for instance, are unsurpassed in their completeness, acuity and embeddedness in a sense of justice for Palestinians; they are both legal and historical works, asking the most important questions and answering them in terms of international law.³⁶³⁰ On the subject of the Mandate's lack of any basis in international law, Quigley's 2022 book *Britain and its Mandate over Palestine* is indispensable. While as a non-lawyer I don't really have much choice, I wish to highlight the history and ethics of Palestine's British-enabled obliteration.

10) intra-Palestinian history

As for the politics within each of the three groups, I pay no attention to the intra-Zionist scene, a bit to that of the Palestinians, and quite a bit to the intra-British debate which directly affected the Palestinians and sometimes gave them hope. The main reason I largely ignore **intra-Palestinian political tensions** is that on the main issues – independence, cessation of immigration, and an end to land sales to Zionists – there was unity. On some political or tactical issues the elites had differences among themselves as well as a different perspective than the workers and peasantry, or than the 'subalterns'; and they were the ones who could communicate and try to come to some understanding with the British.³⁶³¹ But I've come across not a single Palestinian (or Arab) who did not utterly wish self-determination and reject Zionism. That said, more non-elite Palestinian voices would certainly enrich the book.

Rashid Khalidi's Chapter 'A Failure of Leadership'³⁶³² is a good overview of the rivalries within the elite, but he, too, believes that too often these have been over-emphasised and that, for example, "In fact,... until the mid-1930s [Nashashibi's] position vis-à-vis the British... was no more and no less conciliatory than that of the mufti" [of the Husseini

³⁶³⁰ Quigley 1990, 1997, 2010, 2011, 2021, 2022; also Mallison & Mallison 1984; Cattani 1988; Qafisheh 2008; Kattan 2009; Banko 2012; Khalil 2014.

³⁶³¹ See Fanon 1961, Ch. 2.

³⁶³² Khalidi 2006, pp 65-104, also further quotations.

‘clan’]. (pp 67, 78) He nevertheless does identify opposition between “timid diplomatic” forces and more “radical” or “militant” forces. (pp 32, 41) But again, it is important to distinguish between disagreements over goals (there were none) and over tactics. [see e.g. >175]

Abdelaziz Ayyad similarly writes:

The members of the Palestinian national movement agreed to oppose the Zionist immigration and settlements in Palestine as well as the Zionist desire to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. They differed, however, on the issue of whether confrontation or collaboration would be the right way to deal with the British. ... Despite the weakness of the Palestinian national movement, this movement could still show strong stands on vital concerns.³⁶³³

The editor of *Filistin*, for instance,

was *pro* the policy of negotiation with the British colonizers. However, he emphasized that this policy should bring about independence for Palestine and self-determination for the Palestinians. ... Both the traditional groups and leadership and the newly emerging revolutionary forces were... all acting for the achievement of a national goal, i.e., the independence of Palestine and the termination of the Zionist Idea of “a Jewish home in Palestine.” At the same time, they differed in their stand on the issue of British colonialism...³⁶³⁴

Ghassan Kanafani’s *The 1936-1939 Revolt in Palestine*³⁶³⁵ records and analyses the Palestine-Britain-Zionism triangle through the lens of the class and wealth differences within Palestinian society: here the “traditional,... semi-feudal and semi-religious leadership”, there the workers; he maintains that both Michel Mitri, in 1935, and Sami Taha, in 1947, were assassinated by “the Mufti’s group” (p 16) and that the peasants’ exploitation by the “effendi class” was “far more ruinous than Zionist colonisation.” (p 24) Seeing as the latter managed to rob them of their whole country, this view is certainly false. Kanafani however does wisely use the plural, “leaderships”, saying that the “upper structure of the Palestinian national movement... had ultimately, despite its reactionary nature, provided positive leadership during a critical phase of the Palestinian nationalist struggle.” (p 10)

Kanafani also writes that he did “not know of a single Palestinian writer or intellectual in that period who did not participate in the call for resistance against the colonial enemy” (p 27) Whoever within the “feudal-clerical relationships [of] Palestinian Arab society” was struggling intra-societally, “it was impossible to forget the primarily nationalist character of that struggle” – “the Palestinian rural masses were primarily conscious of the national challenge”. (pp 33, 21) Kanafani describes nevertheless several instances where the traditional leadership went along with efforts of the British and some neighbouring Arab states to call off the more confrontational tactics of the anti-colonial struggle such as general strikes, refusal to pay taxes, and violent attacks on the British oppressors. (pp 11, 30, 33-34, 45-46, 49-54)

My book also ignores the religious differences amongst Palestinians because Moslems and Christians were equally against Britain’s pro-Zionist policies. What’s more, in the

³⁶³³ Ayyad 1999, pp 68, 110, also 89, 94, 100-01, 106-08.

³⁶³⁴ Ayyad 1999, pp 115, 118, 126-27.

³⁶³⁵ Kanafani 1972, all further quotations.

cases where Christian Churches had European higher-ups – particularly the Greek Orthodox and the Anglicans – there was some conflict between the rank-and-file worshippers and leaderships which at times supported the Zionist Mandate.³⁶³⁶ According to Laura Robson, Archbishop of Canterbury Cosmo Lang for instance, who on paper held rank over Palestinian Anglicans, supported Zionism and the immigration it entailed in a speech in the House of Lords in 1937, arguing both from European anti-Semitism and “a theological interpretation of the Jewish return to the Holy Land”.³⁶³⁷

11) **balanced between elite and common opinions**

Partly because I cannot research Arabic-language sources and partly because I regard the elites’ opinions on Palestinian national goals as identical with those of the rest, most documents here were written by elites. One example of the type of expression which could be part of a different, non-elite record, is street-level rebel propaganda during the ‘Arab Revolt’ of 1936-39:

[T]he Palestinian subaltern rebel equally spoke during the rebellion, and spoke loudly and threateningly enough to exasperate the British administration with his rebel propaganda for instance. The decrees which were posted on buildings and mosques made the Mandatory exquisitely uneasy. Even though the Palestinian subaltern rebel was not granted an audience to speak, and even though those instances when he did constituted an outrage in the culture of the dependency with its clearly defined avenues of expression and amounted to an ideological trespass, nonetheless the Mandatory was forced to listen.³⁶³⁸

Emil Ghoury, as Secretary to the Palestine Arab Delegation testifying before the ‘First Committee’ of the United Nations General Assembly on 12 May 1947 on the utter unacceptability of Zionism, stated that, as paraphrased by John & Hadawi, “The protests, strikes and uprisings of the Arabs in Palestine during the last 29 years, manifested their opposition to the Balfour Declaration.”³⁶³⁹ Although in the war/rebellion situation verbal interactions were necessarily mainly between the British and the elite, non-verbal communication was going on *uninterruptedly*.

12) complete

Of course not, but here I want to mention **other titles and websites** which record Mandate history in chronological and/or encyclopedic style or as eyewitness accounts. Abdul Wahhab Kayyali’s 1968 collection in Arabic was titled *Documents of the Palestinian Arab Resistance against British Occupation and Zionism*, and much of that research comprises his 1978 work in English. Likewise indispensable is Abdelaziz Ayyad’s 1999 *Arab Nationalism and the Palestinians 1850-1930*. Emanuel Beška has done much scholarly work on the pre-Mandate years including analyses of the Palestinian press, in particular a chronology of articles in *Filastin* dealing with Zionism.³⁶⁴⁰ Rashid Khalidi’s analysis of

³⁶³⁶ Robson 2011, pp 80-86, 127-38, 141-57, *passim*; Haiduc-Dale 2013; also CO 733/346/7, pp 1-5, >322.

³⁶³⁷ Robson 2011, p 152.

³⁶³⁸ Ghandour 2010, p 85.

³⁶³⁹ John & Hadawi 1970b, p 144, citing UN Official Records, First Special Session, Vol. III, pp 251-58.

³⁶⁴⁰ Beška 2016, pp 139-52; also Mandel 1976, pp 173-81; Robson 2011, pp 86-91, 104-06, 134.

the ten newspapers *Al-Karmil*, *Filastin*, *Al-Mufid*, *Al-Muqtabas*, *Al-Muqattam*, *Al-Ahram*, *Lisan al-Hal*, *Al-Ittihad al-Uthmani*, *Al-Haqiqa* and *Al-Iqbal* for their anti-Zionist and/or pro-independence content also gives valuable background.³⁶⁴¹

Authors such as Izzat Tannous, Musa Alami, Jamal al-Husseini, Awni Abdul Hadi, Anbara Khalidi, Akram Zuaytir, Matiel Mogannam, Wasif Jawhariyyeh, George Antonius, George Mansour, Isa Nakhleh, Izzat Darwaza, J.M.N. Jeffries, and Fred Michel Abcarius (incomplete list!) in effect wrote eyewitness accounts which are primary sources. Many other works by Arabic speakers, which I've drawn on and which are listed in the bibliography, count better as secondary sources, their authors including Henry Cattan, Samih K. Farsoun, Zeina Ghandour, Sami Hadawi, Sahar Huneidi, Doreen Ingrams, Walid Khalidi, Neville Mandel, Nur Masalha, Philip Mattar, Mohammad Muslih, Nasser Eddin Nashashibi, Rashid Khalidi, Jacob Norris, Ilan Pappé, Wasif Abboushi, Yehoshua Porath, Victor Kattan, Edward Said, Fayez A. Sayegh, May Seikaly, Abdul Latif Tibawi, and Mazin Qumsiyeh (another incomplete list).

Walid Khalidi's 1987 collection of 80 writings covering the period up to 15 May 1948 warrants special mention, not least for his profound Introduction and the anthology's nine Appendices and 22 maps, but principally because the authors he gives space to are, with one exception, non-Arabs, and several are Jewish or gentile Zionists. Its title, *From Haven to Conquest*, puts the Mandate story in a nutshell: as expressed by Anthony Crossley MP during the 1939 House of Commons debate over the MacDonald White Paper [>410; >411], "You do not ever right one wrong – the wrong that has been inflicted on the Jews in other countries – by inflicting another, the wrong inflicted on the Arabs."³⁶⁴² The need for a haven, even well before Nazi atrocities, was perverted into a crime of conquest committed by Britain.

A chronology from a Zionist point of view, dealing with all sides of the Palestine triangle, is a 39-volume 1987 series, divided into three Sections edited respectively by Isaiah Friedman, Aaron S. Klieman and Michael J. Cohen, working under General Editor Howard M. Sachar, called *The Rise of Israel*.³⁶⁴³ A chronology compiled by M. Cherif Bassiouni and Shlomo Ben Ami lists and discusses sixty-six documents pertinent to the Mandate, most included here; some of theirs not included here are either Zionist or League of Nations documents.³⁶⁴⁴

One work which, like this chronology, focuses mainly on the Palestinian (and Syrian)-British side of the triangle is Abdul Latif Tibawi's meticulous, monumental study of Anglo-Arab relations limited to the years 1914-1921. If for this time period you can read only one book, this is it. Concerning the most influential of all British Zionists, Herbert

³⁶⁴¹ Khalidi 1997, pp 122-44, also 54-59, 165-66, *passim*; Robson 2011, *passim*.

³⁶⁴² Hansard 1939, c1975.

³⁶⁴³ Sachar 1987.

³⁶⁴⁴ Bassiouni & Ben Ami 2009, pp 73-91.

Samuel, Tibawi's last chapter, 'The Sacrificial Victim', is an unsurpassed indictment of that man's foisting of an unwanted, deceptive colonial regime upon the owners of the country.³⁶⁴⁵

Indispensable is also Mahdi Abdul Hadi's 1997 chronological presentation of many documents, which however goes beyond the end of the Mandate and covers more than just interchanges between the Palestinians and the British.³⁶⁴⁶ Many original documents are also found at 'hardcorepropaganda', and the Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question should be browsed for its contributions to Mandate history.³⁶⁴⁷ I hope eventually to access through translators the works of Izzat Darwaza³⁶⁴⁸ and Bayan al-Hout³⁶⁴⁹. Philip Mattar's 2000 *Encyclopedia of Palestine* includes not only entries on almost all of the Palestinians who appear in my study, but also a useful chronology; another encyclopaedia I made only limited use of is Isa Nakleh's of 1991.³⁶⁵⁰ I hope that by referring to these two works, by Mattar and Nakleh, I can mitigate the drawback that I do not include an Index with a comprehensive listing of the host of Palestinians who were active politically, militarily, artistically or scholarly.

J.M.N. Jeffries' 1939 work *Palestine: The Reality* is essential reading made even more valuable by the fact that it was written by an eyewitness. As the 2017 re-issue of the book reveals,³⁶⁵¹ upon its publication Jamal al-Husseini, President of the Arab Delegation in London, advertised for it by writing,

We request everyone in England who can to read this book. It tells the true facts about our country and makes clear where we stand and why we stand where we do.

Palestinian Labour leader George Mansour on 26 April 1939 praised it as well, "on behalf of the Arab Centre, 554 Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square":

Mr. Jeffries' book, which is a detailed history of the 'Palestine Question' from the period of the Great War till now, fulfils a notable want. ... [H]ow false is a position in which [the British public] must form its opinion and must support or reject governmental policy without ever learning the contentions of a primarily interested party, the Arabs.

Required reading is also George Antonius' 1938 *The Arab Awakening*.

The United Nations Special Unit on Palestinian Rights (UNSPR) has posted two excellent short chronological histories, starting in 1917.³⁶⁵² The 'British Mandate Jerusalem Photo Library' is a gold mine with thousands of photos and much information from the Mandate period.³⁶⁵³ The work of Salman Abu Sitta of the Palestine Land Society³⁶⁵⁴,

³⁶⁴⁵ Tibawi 1977, pp 433-90; of course see also Huneidi 2001.

³⁶⁴⁶ Abdul Hadi 1997.

³⁶⁴⁷ <https://hardcorepropaganda.wordpress.com/page/1/> & <https://www.palquest.org/>

³⁶⁴⁸ Darwaza 1959.

³⁶⁴⁹ al-Hout 1981.

³⁶⁵⁰ Mattar 2000, pp 475-80; Nakleh 1991.

³⁶⁵¹ Jeffries 1939, introductory facsimiles.

³⁶⁵² UNSPR 1978a and 1978b.

³⁶⁵³ https://www.facebook.com/BMJerusalemPhotoLib/?ref=page_internal

³⁶⁵⁴ <https://www.plands.org/en/home>

of Antoine Raffoul of '1948 Lest We Forget'³⁶⁵⁵, and of those behind the sites Palestine Remembered³⁶⁵⁶, the Palestine Photo Project³⁶⁵⁷ and Palestinian Journeys³⁶⁵⁸, while focussing mainly on the Nakba and thus on the tail end of the Mandate, enrich anyone's understanding of what the British 'accomplished' in Palestine.

13) 'professional'

I am a cabinetmaker and belated ecological economist, not a professional historian. But remember the etymology of the word 'amateur'. It comes from the word 'love'.

³⁶⁵⁵ <http://www.1948.org.uk/>

³⁶⁵⁶ <https://www.palestineremembered.com/>

³⁶⁵⁷ <https://www.palestinephotoproject.org/>

³⁶⁵⁸ <https://www.palquest.org/en/about-journeys>

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15 Appendices

APPENDIX 1. Palestine Arab Congress (PAC) Meetings, some other Congresses, and Palestine Arab Delegations to London

1st PAC Jerusalem 27 Jan – 10 Feb 1919 [>39]

2nd PAC *in secret* ~31 May 1920 [>82]

3rd PAC Haifa 4-12 (?) December 1920 [>95]

4th PAC Jerusalem 29 May – 25 June 1921 [>109]

1st Delegation to England August 1921 – August 1922 [>117; >123; >127; >132; >135; >137; >143]

5th PAC Nablus 22 – 25 August 1922 [>151]

2nd Delegation to England December 1922 – January 1923 [>157]

6th PAC Jaffa 16 – 20 (?) June 1923 [>164]

3rd Delegation to England 22 July – 13 September 1923 [>169-71]

7th PAC Jerusalem 20 – ? June 1928 [>197]

General Assembly of the Arab Congress 27 October 1929 [>211]

4th Delegation to England March – May 1930 [>222; >225; >226]

General Islamic Congress Jerusalem 7 – 17 December 1931 [>254]

5th Delegation to England *aborted* ~March 1936

6th Delegation to England June 1936 *with Arab Centre* [>303]

7th Delegation (to Geneva) August – September 1937 [>345]

8th Delegation to England January – March 1939 [>384ff]

London Arab Office as of May 1945 [>428]

9th Delegation to England August – September 1946 *accompanying Arab states* [>444ff]

10th Delegation to England January – February 1947 [>450]

APPENDIX 2. Members of the 1st Palestine Arab Congress (Jerusalem, 27 Jan-10 Feb 1919) given by Captain J.N Camp, FO 371/4153, pp 320, 324; *also* Friedman 1987, pp 1, 5. [>39; >40]

from Jerusalem: Arif Pasha al Daudi, Abdul Hamid Abu Gosh, Jacob Faraj, Shukri Karmi

from Nablus: Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, Ramez Agha al Nimr

from Jaffa: Sheikh Ragheb Abu al Said, Yusuf al Issa, Muhammad Baidas

from Gaza: Haj Said al Shawa, Ahmad al Surani

from Haifa: Rashid Ibrahim, Iskendar Munassah

from Safad: Salaheddin Haj Yusuf, Muhyi ed din al Issa
from Tiberias: Mahmud al Tabari, Elias Kewar, Mahmud al Jibain
from Nazareth: Hassan al Zubi, Jubran Kazma
from Jenin: Haj Hedar Abdul Hadi, Nafi Ebushy
from Zummardin: Kamilleddin Arafat, Izzat Darwazi
from Tulkeram: Sheikh Said al Karmi, Sheikh Tewfik al Tiby
from Ludd & Ramleh: Ahmad Saifeddin

APPENDIX 3. The 1936-37 Arab Higher Committee (AHC)

In 1936, the members of the Committee were:

- Amin al-Husayni, President – Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and president of the Supreme Muslim Council until his dismissal; dodged deportation October 1937
- Raghīb al-Nashashibi – founder and member of the National Defence Party
- Jamal al-Husayni – related to Amin al-Husayni and chairman of the Palestine Arab Party, member of the Supreme Muslim Council; dodged deportation October 1937
- Yaqub al-Ghusayn – member and representative of the Youth Congress Party, member of the Supreme Muslim Council; deported
- Abd al-Latif Salah – founder of the National Bloc; avoided deportation
- Husayin al-Khalidi – founder and representative of the Reform Party; deported
- Awni Abd al-Hadi – leader of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party, appointed AHC General Secretary
- Ahmed Hilmi Pasha – treasurer; deported

نص رسالة تصريح بلفور :

وزارة الخارجية

في 2 نوفمبر/ تشرين الثاني سنة 1917

عزيزي اللورد روتشيلد،

يسرني جدا أن أبلغكم بالنيابة عن حكومة جلالته، التصريح

التالي الذي ينطوي على العطف على أماني اليهود

والصهيونية، وقد عرض على الوزارة وأقرته:

"إن حكومة صاحب الجلالة تنظر بعين العطف إلى تأسيس

وطن قومي للشعب اليهودي في فلسطين، وستبذل غاية

جهدتها لتسهيل تحقيق هذه الغاية، على أن يفهم جليا أنه

لن يؤتى بعمل من شأنه أن ينتقص من الحقوق المدنية

والدينية التي تتمتع بها الطوائف غير اليهودية المقيمة الآن

في فلسطين ولا الحقوق أو الوضع السياسي الذي يتمتع به

اليهود في البلدان الأخرى".

وسأكون ممتنا إذا ما أحطتم الاتحاد الصهيوني علما بهذا

التصريح.

المخلص

آرثر بلفور

APPENDIX 5. Britons in charge in Palestine

5.1) Chief Administrators (under straightforward military rule), June 1918 – July 1920

Arthur Wigram **Money** June 1918 – June 1919

Harry D. **Watson** June 1919 – December 1919

Louis **Bols** December 1919 – June 1920

5.2) High Commissioners (under 'Civil Administration'), July 1920 – May 1948

Sir Herbert Louis **Samuel**, 1 July 1920 – 30 June 1925 = 5 years

Field Marshal Lord Herbert **Plumer**, 25 August 1925 – 31 July 1928 = 3 years

Sir Harry Charles Luke (Acting)

Sir John **Chancellor**, 6 December 1928 – 1 November 1931 = 3 years

Sir Mark Aitchison Young (Acting)

Sir Arthur Grenfell **Wauchope**, 20 November 1931 – 1 March 1938 = 6½ years

William Denis Battershill (Acting)

Sir Harold **MacMichael**, 3 March 1938 – 30 August 1944 = 6½ years

John Valentine Wistar Shaw (Acting)

Field Marshal John Vereker, The 6th Viscount **Gort**, 1 November 1944 – 5 November 1945
= 1 year

Sir Alan **Cunningham**, 21 November 1945 – 14 May 1948 = 2½ years

5.3) Colonial Secretaries (& Foreign Secretaries, when in charge)

DATES	COLONIAL SECRETARY	PRIME MINISTER
Arthur Balfour was <i>Foreign Secretary</i> in charge 10 Dec 1916 – 23 Oct 1919.		
George Curzon was <i>Foreign Secretary</i> at times in charge 23 Oct 1919 – 22 Jan 1924.		
10 Jan 1919 – 13 Feb 1921	Alfred Milner	David Lloyd George
13 Feb 1921 – 19 Oct 1922	Winston Churchill	Lloyd George
24 Oct 1922 – 22 Jan 1924	Victor Cavendish	Bonar Law/Stanley Baldwin
22 Jan 1924 – 3 Nov 1924	J.H. Thomas	Ramsay MacDonald
6 Nov 1924 – 4 June 1929	Leo Amery	Stanley Baldwin
7 June 1929 – 24 Aug 1931	Sidney Webb (Passfield)	Ramsay MacDonald
25 Aug 1931 – 5 Nov 1931	J.H. Thomas	Ramsay MacDonald
5 Nov 1931 – 7 June 1935	Philip Cunliffe-Lister	Ramsay MacDonald
7 June 1935 – 22 Nov 1935	Malcolm MacDonald	Stanley Baldwin
22 Nov 1935 – 22 May 1936	J.H. Thomas	Stanley Baldwin
28 May 1936 – 16 May 1938	William Ormsby-Gore	Neville Chamberlain
16 May 1938 – 12 May 1940	Malcolm MacDonald	Neville Chamberlain
12 May 1940 – 4 Feb 1941	George Lloyd	Winston Churchill
8 Feb 1941 – 22 Feb 1942	Lord Moyne	Winston Churchill
22 Feb 1942 – 22 Nov 1942	Viscount Cranborne	Winston Churchill
22 Nov 1942 – 26 July 1945	Oliver Stanley	Winston Churchill
3 Aug 1945 – 4 Oct 1946	George Henry Hall	Clement Attlee
4 Oct 1946 – (28 Feb 1950)	Arthur Creech Jones	Clement Attlee
Ernest Bevin was <i>Foreign Secretary</i> in charge 27 July 1945 – 9 March 1951.		

5.4) Foreign Secretaries

DATES	FOREIGN SECRETARY	PRIME MINISTER
10 Dec 1905 – 10 Dec 1916	Edward Grey	Herbert Asquith (from 1908)
10 Dec 1916 – 23 Oct 1919	Arthur Balfour	David Lloyd George
23 Oct 1919 – 22 Jan 1924	George Curzon	Bonar Law/Stanley Baldwin I
22 Jan 1924 – 3 Nov 1924	Ramsay MacDonald	Ramsay MacDonald I
6 Nov 1924 – 4 June 1929	Austen Chamberlain	Stanley Baldwin II
7 June 1929 – 24 Aug 1931	Arthur Henderson	Ramsay MacDonald II
25 Aug 1931 – 5 Nov 1931	Rufus Isaacs (Reading)	Ramsay MacDonald Nat I
5 Nov 1931 – 7 June 1935	John Simon	Ramsay MacDonald Nat II
7 June 1935 – 18 Dec 1935	Samuel Hoare	Stanley Baldwin Nat III
22 Dec 1935 – 20 Feb 1936	Anthony Eden	Stanley Baldwin Nat III & IV
21 Feb 1936 – 22 Dec 1940	Edward Wood (Halifax)	Baldwin/Chamberlain/Churchill
22 Dec 1940 – 26 July 1945	Anthony Eden	Winston Churchill
12 May 1940 – 4 Feb 1941	Ernest Bevin	Clement Attlee (until 1951)

5.5) Prime Ministers

Arthur Balfour	12 July 1902	4 December 1905
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	5 December 1905	5 April 1908
Herbert H. Asquith	6 April 1908	5 December 1916
David Lloyd George	6 December 1916	19 October 1922
Bonar Law	23 October 1922	20 May 1923
Stanley Baldwin	22 May 1923	22 January 1924
Ramsay MacDonald	22 January 1924	4 November 1924
Stanley Baldwin	4 November 1924	4 June 1929
Ramsay MacDonald	5 June 1929	7 June 1935
Stanley Baldwin	7 June 1935	28 May 1937
Neville Chamberlain	28 May 1937	10 May 1940
Winston Churchill	10 May 1940	26 July 1945
Clement Attlee	26 July 1945	26 October 1951

APPENDIX 6. Jewish immigration per year

For 1929-41, Porath (1977, p 39) gives:

1929	5,249
1930	4,944
1931	4,075
1932	12,553
1933	37,337
1934	45,267
1935	66,472
1936	29,595
1937	10,629
1938	14,675
1939	31,195
1940	10,643
1941	4,592

According to Tannous (1988, p 115), before this period, for instance from July 1920 to July 1921 16,500 European Jews were legally permitted to immigrate, although the Mandate was not internationally-legally in effect. There were also some thousands of uncounted illegal immigrants. Using Appendices 7 & 8, *compare* the increase in the non-Jewish population for these years.

APPENDIX 7. Population, population increase, and population percentages by year and religion (John & Hadawi 1970b, p 45)

year	total	Moslems	Jews	Christians	others
1922	752,048	(78%) 589,177	(11%) 83,790	(10%) 71,464	(1%) 7,617
		+20,154	+5,870	+626	+291
1923	778,989	(78%) 609,331	(12%) 89,660	(9%) 72,090	(1%) 7,908
		+18,329	+5,285	+2,004	+355
1924	804,962	(78%) 627,660	(12%) 94,945	(9%) 74,094	(1%) 8,263
		+13,834	+26,780	+1,418	+244
1925	847,238	(76%) 641,494	(14%) 121,725	(9%) 75,512	(1%) 8,507
		+22,119	+27,775	+955	+275
1926	898,902	(74%) 663,613	(17%) 149,500	(9%) 76,467	(1%) 8,782
		+17,112	+289	+1,413	+139
1927	917,315	(74%) 680,725	(16%) 149,789	(8%) 77,880	(1%) 8,921
		+14,555	+1,867	+1,932	+282
1928	935,951	(74%) 695,280	(16%) 151,656	(9%) 79,812	(1%) 9,203
		+17,063	+4,825	+1,964	+240
1929	960,043	(74%) 712,343	(16%) 156,481	(9%) 81,776	(1%) 9,443
		+20,806	+8,315	+3,210	+185
1930	992,559	(74%) 733,149	(17%) 164,796	(9%) 84,986	(1%) 9,628
[census]:		+26,551	+9,810	+3,921	+473
1931	1,033,314	(74%) 759,700	(17%) 174,606	(9%) 88,907	(1%) 10,101
		+19,103	+17,531	+3,613	+275
1932	1,073,827	(73%) 778,803	(18%) 192,137	(9%) 92,520	(1%) 10,367
		+19,703	+42,830	+4,271	+310
1933	1,140,941	(70%) 798,506	(21%) 234,967	(8%) 96,791	(1%) 10,677
		+15,873	+48,008	+5,616	+116
1934	1,210,554	(67%) 814,379	(23%) 282,975	(8%) 102,407	(1%) 10,793
		+22,309	+72,182	+2,829	+238
1935	1,308,112	(64%) 836,688	(27%) 355,157	(8%) 105,236	(1%) 11,031
		+26,042	+28,921	+3,270	+347
1936	1,366,692	(63%) 862,730	(28%) 384,078	(8%) 108,506	(1%) 11,378
		+20,716	+11,758	+2,363	+265

year	total	Moslems	Jews	Christians	others
1937	1,401,794	(63%) 883,446	(28%) 395,836	(8%) 110,869	(1%) 11,643
		+16,804	+15,386	+1,105	+196
1938	1,435,285	(63%) 900,250	(29%) 411,222	(8%) 111,974	(1%) 11,839
		+26,883	+34,235	+4,984	+311
1939	1,501,698	(62%) 927,133	(30%) 445,457	(8%) 116,958	(1%) 12,150
		+20,691	+18,078	+3,629	+412
1940	1,544,530	(61%) 947,846	(30%) 463,535	(8%) 120,587	(1%) 12,562
		+25,258	+10,567	+4,826	+319
1941	1,585,500	(61%) 973,104	(30%) 474,102	(8%) 125,413	(1%) 12,881
		+22,188	+10,306	+1,771	+240
1942	1,620,005	(61%) 995,292	(30%) 484,408	(8%) 127,184	(1%) 13,121
		+33,423	+18,504	+4,097	+542
1943	1,676,571	(61%) 1,028,715	(30%) 502,912	(8%) 131,281	(1%) 13,663
		+32,562	+25,790	+4,266	+435
1944	1,739,624	(61%) 1,061,277	(30%) *528,702	(8%) 135,547	(1%) 14,098

*revised *de facto* estimate: 553,500

These numbers, as well as those of McCarthy in the table in APPENDIX 8, corroborate Storrs's numbers of for instance 31,000 legal Jewish immigrants during 1933, 42,000 during 1934 and 61,849 during 1935 – “to say nothing of the ten thousand clandestine but undeniable additions.” (1937, p 373) Said (1979, p 254, cites for these numbers *The Anglo-Palestine Yearbook, 1947-48* (1948) p 33.

Compare APPENDIX 8, McCarthy's numbers.

APPENDIX 8. Population of Palestine by year and religion (McCarthy 1990, pp 35-36)

year	total	Moslems	Jews	Christians	others
1922 census	816,123	638,407	93,360	75,875	8,481
1922 31 Dec	820,259	640,798	94,752	76,194	8,515
1923	852,031	663,296	102,134	77,905	8,696
1924	878,138	676,544	113,059	79,653	8,882
1925	918,052	690,055	137,484	81,441	9,071
1926	945,438	703,838	149,066	83,270	9,265
1927	966,325	717,896	153,828	85,139	9,462
1928	987,070	732,234	158,122	87,050	9,664
1929	1,010,224	746,858	164,492	89,004	9,870
1930	1,033,641	761,775	170,783	91,002	10,081
1931 census	1,054,189	775,181	175,936	92,802	10,270
1931 31 Dec	1,057,214	777,403	176,468	93,029	10,314
1932	1,095,602	795,184	193,467	96,415	10,536
1933	1,163,616	815,787	235,297	100,686	10,846
1934	1,234,129	832,560	284,305	106,302	10,962
1935	1,332,587	855,769	356,487	109,131	11,200
1936	1,388,852	879,496	385,408	112,401	11,547
1937	1,427,441	903,699	397,166	114,764	11,812
1938	1,462,249	921,820	412,552	115,869	12,008
1939	1,540,727	949,612	457,943	120,853	12,319
1940	1,593,204	976,119	479,872	124,482	12,731
1941	1,639,757	1,004,989	492,458	129,260	13,050
1942	1,683,178	1,035,249	503,608	131,031	13,290
1943	1,739,695	1,068,623	522,112	135,128	13,832
1944	1,800,995	1,099,432	547,902	139,394	14,267
1945	1,868,597	1,136,851	573,587	143,132	15,027
1946	1,942,349	1,175,196	602,586	148,910	15,657

McCarthy notes that the 'Moslems' column includes 55,000 Bedouin in each year, but he himself says a more accurate estimate is 65,000-90,000 (average = 77,500). According to Nakhleh (1991, p 26; also p 4), of the 716,500 Jews in Palestine in 1948, 500,000 were citizens, the rest being either ineligible for naturalization (usually illegally in Palestine) or unwilling to take Palestine citizenship.

Compare APPENDIX 7, John & Hadawi's numbers.

APPENDIX 9. Participants, St James talks February-March 1939 [→386]

Palestine: Jamal Eff. Husaini, Amin Bey Tamimi, Mr. George Antonius, Awni Bey Abdul-Hadi, Musa Bey al-Alami, Alfred Eff. Rock, Yaqub Eff. Ghusain, Fuad Eff. Saba. **Egypt:** Mohamed Abdul-Moneim, Hassan Nashat Pasha, Ali Maher Pasha, Abdul-Rahman Bey Az-zam; **Iraq:** Nuri as-Said, Rauf Bey Chadirji, Saiyid Eff. Abdullah Bekir, Mr. Lloyd; **Saudi Arabia:** Amir Faisal, Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, Fuad Bey Hamza, Ibrahim Eff. al-Suliman; **Trans-Jordan:** Taufiq Pasha Abul-Huda, Najib Bey Alamuddin; **Yemen:** Saif ul-Islam al-Husain, Al Qadhi Muhammad Abdullah al-Shami, Sayed Ali ibn Akiel, Mahmoud Abu el Soud, Ibrahim el Mogi

Britain: Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary Viscount Halifax, Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, FO Undersecretary R.A. Butler, CO Undersecretary Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, Cosmo Parkinson, Lancelor Oliphant, John E. Shuckburgh, Grattan Bushe, S.E.V. Luke, H.L. Baggallay, V.F.W. Cavendish Bentink, J.R. Colville, R.G.A. Etherington Smith, H.M. Eyres

Jewish Zionists: Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Selig Brodetsky, Nahum Goldman, Mrs. Rose Jacobs, M.L. Perlzweig, M. Shertok, Schalom Asch, Viscount Bearsted, I. Ben-Zwi, M. Berlin, M. Blau, Israel Feldman, J.K. Goldbloom, H.A. Goodman, J.H. Hertz, B. Katznelson, B. Locker, Arthur Lourie, J.M. Machover, B. Mossinsohn, Marquess of Reading, K.C., J. Rosenheim, Harry Sacher, L.J. Stein, Robert Szold, B. Weill-Halle, Stephen S. Wise

APPENDIX 10. Anglo-American Committee, spring 1946 [→436]

Joseph C. Hutcheson, US Chairman

John E. Singleton, British Chairman

Frank Aydelotte (US)

Frank W. Buxton (US)

Bartley C. Crum (US)

James G. McDonald (US)

William Philips (US)

W. F. Crick (UK)

R. H. S. Crossman (UK)

Frederick Leggett (UK)

R. E. Manningham-Buller (UK)

Lord (John) Morrison (UK)

They were "supported by a staff of twenty-two research assistants and secretaries" and "Crum, McDonald, Buxton, Crossman, and Morrison" had strong "Zionist sympathies." (Khalidi 2005, p 74)

APPENDIX 11. Members of UNSCOP [>460]

Australia: Mr. J. D. L. HOOD, representative; Mr. S. L. ATYEO, alternate

Canada: Justice I. C. RAND, representative; Mr. Leon MAYRAND, alternate

Czechoslovakia: Mr. Karl LISICKY, representative; Dr. Richard PEACH, alternate

Guatemala: Dr. Jorge Garcia GRANDEES, representative; Mr. E. ZEA GONZALES, alternate

India: Sir Abdur RAHMAN, representative; Mr. Venkata VISWANATHAN, alternate; Mr. H.DAYAL, second alternate

Iran: Mr. Nasrollah ENTEZAM, representative; Dr. Ali AKDALAN, alternate

Netherlands: Dr. N.S. BLOM, representative; Mr. A. I. SPITS, alternate

Peru: Dr. Alberto ULLOA, representative; Dr. Arturo Garcia SALAZAR, alternate

Sweden: Justice Emil SANDSTROM, representative; Dr. Paul MOHN, alternate

Uruguay: Professor Enrique Rodriguez FABREGAT, representative; Mr. Secco ELLAURI, alternate

Yugoslavia: Mr. Vladimir SIMIC, representative; Dr. Jose BRILEJ, alternate

APPENDIX 12. UNSCOP members present at Magnes' testimony in Jerusalem, 14 July 1947
[>463]

1. SANDSTROM Sweden, CHAIRMAN
MR. HOOD, Australia
MR. RAND, Canada
MR. LISICKY, Czechoslovakia
MR. GARCIA GRANADOS, Guatemala
SIR ABDUR RAHMAN, India
MR. ENTEZAM, Iran
MR. BLOM, Netherlands
MR. GARCIA SALAZAR, Peru
MR. FABREGAT, Uruguay
MR. BRILEJ, Yugoslavia
Secretariat:
Mr. HOO, Assistant Secretary-General
MR. GARCIA ROBLES, Secretary

APPENDIX 13. THE VOTE ON UNGA RESOLUTION 181 [>481]

33 Yes: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byelorussian S.S.R., Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, Ukrainian S.S.R., Union of South Africa, U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Uruguay, Venezuela.

13 No: Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen.

that was their choice. The British claimed to support the independence of former Ottoman colonies? That, too, was their choice. But instead of lying and equivocating they should have gone home. The world has more important and more pleasant things to do than to work on correcting the consequences of Balfour's letter to Rothschild.

Theme Index

1. **self-determination** The Palestinians wanted independence from both the Ottomans and the West. Both when they were and weren't being 'consulted', they said this. However, Britain's answer was that the U.K. should govern Palestine, for instance in Churchill's opinion, 'against the wishes of the people'. [^{>327}] This theme crops up or underlies almost all of the entries, not only those enumerated here.

>8, 16, 20, 25, 26, 30, 37, 39, 41, 45, 46, 50, 55, 59, 67, 80, 82, 85, 91, 92, 99, 104, 106, 117, 123, 125, 126, 135, 144, 146, 147, 149, 156, 158, 165, 169, 176, 181, 184, 191, 193, 200, 213, 248, 263, 287, 313, 320, 322, 327, 336, 343, 364, 367, 378, 387, 400, 410, 411, 443, 455, 456, 457, 469, 472, 478, 488.

2. **"a pot of lentils"** Whether or not Zionist immigration and industrial projects raised or lowered the material standard of living of the indigenous Palestinians, the primary issue for the latter was the political freedom to decide their pace and style of economic development for themselves. Political issues trumped economic ones; the Palestinians were not for sale.

>8, 21, 27, 37, 51, 52, 64, 73, 74, 81, 85, 88, 89, 98, 100, 106, 111, 117, 126, 143, 144, 145, 147, 159, 166, 218, 220, 226, 234, 242, 243, 246, 247, 263, 269, 273, 274, 290, 316, 321, 326, 327, 331, 333, 336, 342, 344, 364, 373, 378, 387, 388, 390, 391, 393, 410, 411, 428, 429, 435, 438, 439, 450, 456, 457, 463.

3. **Greater Syria** Palestine and 'Transjordan' were Southern Syria, and most Palestinians wanted the independent political entity to be un-partitioned Syria.

>12, 25, 27, 28, 37, 39, 40, 46, 49, 52, 59, 66, 69, 75, 120, 146, 154, 159, 178, 254, 270, 288, 296, 322, 370, 459.

4. **anti-Arab racism** For many powerful Britons Arabs, as a racial group, were essentially deficient and in any case beneath both Jews and Britons. Jewishness was a superior ethnicity. Churchill referred to Arabs as the 'dogs in the manger' of Palestine [^{>327}]. By a step of illogic this undergirded the British policy of entitling Jews to both presence and political privileges in Palestine. *See especially* entry #44.

>4, 8, 17, 24, 44, 55, 61, 74, 105, 106, 112, 115, 116, 117, 122, 124, 125, 128, 142, 147, 148, 153, 173, 192, 204, 237, 242, 276, 289, 290, 323, 324, 327, 328, 334, 342, 350, 376, 378, 383, 389, 391, 411, 422, 429, 449, 456.

5. **'The Future of Palestine'** This was the title of six British tracts as they worked to other-determine the country's citizenry and course – and, perhaps with tongue in cheek, of one tract written by Palestinians in the very last year of British rule.

>8 (Herbert Samuel, 1914/15), 15 (George Curzon, 1917), 30 (Leo Amery, 1918), 167 (Victor Cavendish, 1923), 214 (Leo Amery again, 1929), 442 (Herbert Morrison, Cmd. 7044, 1946), 464 (the Arab Office, 1947). *See also* >465; >485

6. **paternalism** Father knows best.

>8, 46, 52, 55, 89, 98, 100, 110, 111, 135, 220, 234, 242, 263, 289, 290, 327, 391, 395, 445, 450, 456, 463.

7. **dual obligation** His Majesty's Government had chosen, or as they often presented it, been saddled with, two allegedly equally-heavy 'obligations' – one to the indigenous people and one to world Jewry or, rather, to Zionists. In Antonius' words, Britain thought it was merely the umpire between two teams having 'equal rights to the possession of Palestine'. [>373] The two 'obligations' were often rightly regarded as purely self-contradictory or 'irreconcilable'.

>16, 55, 59, 88, 98, 117, 122, 125, 126, 146, 159, 161, 167, 171, 183, 191, 218, 220, 223, 227, 230, 231, 234, 237, 242, 243, 270, 276, 323, 335, 336, 353, 358, 361, 364, 366, 373, 378, 383, 406, 411, 413, 429, 438, 442, 445, 453, 452, 486, 490.

8. **political parity** As the basis for both partition and bi-nationalism, the Jews in Palestine, although without numerical parity, were seen to deserve political parity.

>4, 11, 34, 35, 50, 85, 94, 100, 117, 122, 136, 137, 138, 150, 168, 171, 172, 177, 178, 214, 234, 242, 247, 258, 261, 266, 273, 277, 279, 280, 282, 283, 287, 289, 290, 314, 326, 333, 336, 337, 347, 352, 383, 385, 390, 394, 395, 406, 407, 410, 413, 417, 426, 436, 437, 438, 445, 450, 452, 456, 461, 463, 464, 469, 472, 474, 478. *See also* McMahon 2010.

9. **'national home' or state?** Instead of honestly stating that the policy goal was an ethno-religious *state*, British and other Zionists created the obfuscating neologism 'Jewish national home', causing decades of lost time, printer's ink, paper and mental effort. The success of this verbal subterfuge was a necessary condition for the success of Zionism, for a foreign-imposed **state** would have been too bad a look.

>15, 16, 17, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35, 36, 38, 50, 59, 72, 74, 77, 80, 88, 94, 95, 97, 100, 101, 105, 111, 114, 116, 117, 122, 128, 134, 142, 146, 157, 159, 161, 164, 213, 214, 235, 237, 242, 243, 255, 273, 274, 289, 290, 320, 326, 327, 334, 336, 340, 347, 353, 363, 364, 373, 383, 395, 400, 410, 411, 420, 422, 425, 429, 435, 437, 450, 452, 454, 458, 459, 463, 464, 470, 478.

10. **ambiguous language** British documents very often used equivocal words, leaving room for wiggle and spin. What for one Government spokesman was poor "draughtsmanship" [>242] was for Jeffries intentional "terminological inexactitude" [>400].

>10, 11, 15, 16, 21, 26, 34, 41, 46, 71, 88, 97, 116, 128, 142, 146, 149, 159, 161, 162, 167, 218, 220, 237, 239, 242, 243, 246, 326, 362, 366, 383, 387, 392, 395, 400, 401, 402, 408, 410, 411, 412, 456, 469, 481.

11. **historical connection** In Balfour's words, "Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land." [55] But as the King-Crane Commissions wrote, the "claim, often submitted by Zionist representatives, that they have a 'right' to Palestine, based on an occupation of 2,000 years ago, can hardly be seriously considered." [59]

>2, 8, 11, 17, 24, 32, 33, 39, 41, 43, 45, 55, 59, 63, 70, 72, 73, 85, 88, 94, 99, 100, 101, 106, 116, 117, 122, 142, 143, 146, 150, 161, 182, 189, 190, 222, 242, 263, 322, 323, 336, 340, 354, 370, 383, 385, 393, 410, 411, 429, 436, 437, 438, 453, 457, 459, 466, 472, 476, 478.

12. **'as of right and not on sufferance'** "The Jews", said British policy, could come to and have political power in Palestine "as of right and not on sufferance" [142].

>15, 142, 143, 147, 162, 214, 218, 222, 242, 274, 289, 300, 327, 336, 376, 383, 385, 410, 411, 437, 451, 463.

13. **ownership analogies** If 'the Jews' owned Palestine by reason of historical presence, then Spain could be claimed by the Arabs, England by the Italians or the Welsh, etc.

>27, 30, 33, 39, 47, 72, 73, 99, 126, 242, 320, 370, 393, 470.

14. **empty, derelict Palestine** Since Palestine was relatively empty of people and economically poorly 'developed', there was plenty of room for immigrants, especially as they brought development capital with them.

>15, 61, 73, 74, 88, 100, 119, 140, 147, 153, 220, 233, 242, 289, 290, 318, 323, 327, 340, 342, 360, 376, 378, 397, 411, 429, 459.

15. **immigration** Immigration was the *sine qua non* of Zionism, but the indigenous people wanted to determine immigration policy themselves, were against the immigration of all European Zionists, demanded that if there had to be some such immigration, it should be on political and social grounds, not on grounds of 'economic absorptive capacity', and that the 'natural increase' in their own population required land and jobs otherwise taken by the immigrants. Many entries mention immigration of European Jews, but the following highlight it more than others.

>23, 67, 74, 88, 89, 101, 105, 108, 117, 128, 143, 147, 150, 218, 220, 231, 233, 245, 246, 274, 326, 327, 336, 342, 359, 373, 383, 391, 392, 393, 395, 410, 411, 431, 432, 434, 436, 437, 438, 456, 464.

16. **democracy must wait** On paper, the British wished to respect the principles of self-determination and representative democracy, but only 'in due course', i.e. when Jews had become a majority. Self-government before then would kill the Jewish-national-home project at once and therefore, in Churchill's words, the Arabs must "concede" and the Jews "forbear" [117]. That man also accurately stated, "I cannot conceive that you will be able to reconcile... the development of the policy of the Balfour Declaration with an Arab majority on the Legislative Council." [290]

>5, 8, 16, 24, 27, 34, 35, 36, 55, 88, 90, 94, 99, 100, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 112, 114, 117, 119, 122, 126, 128, 136, 142, 143, 144, 149, 150, 178, 190, 192, 196, 200, 214, 217, 218, 220, 228, 230, 234, 237, 243, 262, 263, 278, 290, 300, 327, 336, 342, 353, 373, 383, 385, 390, 393, 394, 407, 411, 419, 425, 429, 434, 436, 437, 438, 439, 443, 450, 456, 459, 465, 466.

17. **neighbouring countries** Because Britain et al. wanted Zionism, Palestine was admittedly treated differently than Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt.

>16, 19, 28, 35, 46, 78, 85, 92, 95, 98, 99, 103, 112, 114, 117, 134, 136, 137, 143, 144, 146, 162, 167, 186, 197, 200, 218, 220, 223, 257, 262, 263, 291, 320, 321, 322, 328, 336, 338, 342, 360, 361, 373, 374, 383, 388, 393, 394, 396, 397, 410, 413, 422, 427, 436, 437, 438, 453, 455, 465, 457, 458.

18. **the Europe-Asia conflation** Because there was a European problem (the persecution of Jews on the basis of their ethno-religiosity), the area of Western Asia called Palestine had to pay for its attempted solution – two wrongs apparently making a right – although the Western Asians were in no way responsible for the problem.

>50, 116, 144, 290, 320, 323, 327, 336, 340, 342, 355, 364, 378, 383, 392, 393, 409, 411, 425, 426, 429, 431, 432, 434, 437, 438, 439, 440, 442, 446, 448, 450, 453, 455, 456, 457, 459, 462, 465, 471, 478, 481.

19. **British prestige and honour** Britain's bottom line at key moments was that, however attractive turning costly Palestine over to its inhabitants might have been, in order to save face internationally, to maintain its 'prestige', it must honour its 'pledge', or 'promise', or 'commitment', to the Zionists.

>63, 88, 100, 106, 111, 119, 136, 139, 142, 147, 159, 161, 162, 165, 166, 167, 191, 220, 242, 246, 258, 289, 290, 328, 336, 342, 351, 361, 362, 364, 366, 370, 373, 376, 378, 402, 411, 422, 432, 456.

20. **the U.K. shirked responsibility** Faced with violence, injustice, confusion and failure in Palestine, HMG made a two-pronged plea: 1) Instead of honestly admitting that they *wanted* Zionism, HMG over and over again pleaded that they were mere agents of the League of Nations, with the international *obligation* to establish Zionism; and 2) The Arabs and Jews – the two allegedly mutually antagonistic 'races' – were responsible, not Britain: if only they would 'co-operate' to solve the problem Britain had created!

>88, 89, 90, 149, 171, 196, 220, 222, 228, 234, 242, 246, 261, 289, 301, 318, 320, 323, 327, 328, 335, 361, 368, 369, 383, 390, 395, 396, 397, 399, 402, 405, 410, 412, 432, 442, 444, 445, 450, 452, 471, 473, 480, 484, 486.

21. **AEC and AHC represented the people's views** The Palestinian political elite repeatedly asserted, and the U.K. often denied, that it did not manipulate, but rather represented, the anti-Zionist views of the entire population.

>27, 29, 30, 40, 42, 49, 52, 57, 59, 88, 85, 95, 96, 99, 100, 103, 110, 115, 117, 122, 136, 137, 160, 164, 176, 183, 189, 220, 264, 266, 268, 266, 296, 344, 352, 373, 376, 436, 437.

22. **feelings of friendship towards Britain** Especially in the beginning, the Palestinians actually respected and liked the British, but this changed.
- >10, 25, 27, 28, 30, 40, 45, 59, 75, 78, 87, 99, 101, 105, 112, 174, 217, 247, 266, 269, 270, 302, 317, 321, 346, 361, 366, 370, 374, 379, 389, 422, 436, 449, 451, 470.
23. **anti-Zionist, not anti-Jew** In Palestine Jews, Moslems, Christians and others had lived peacefully for centuries. Zionism was the problem, not 'anti-semitism' on the part of the largely semitic Arabs. More precisely, the problem was conquest by any other group, of whatever ethnicity. Racial tension followed from political tension.
- >1, 5, 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 37, 47, 48, 62, 82, 88, 99, 103, 106, 122, 143, 197, 217, 218, 220, 222, 227, 230, 243, 246, 266, 268, 270, 274, 320, 322, 333, 342, 364, 370, 374, 382, 389, 393, 395, 396, 411, 434, 436, 437, 446, 450, 457, 459, 470, 472, 479, 481.
24. **document suppression** Britain suppressed for decades many documents detrimental to its pro-Zionist policy.
- >10, 12, 16 (in Palestine), 21, 25, 59, 88, 167, 218, 358, 458.
25. **high cost in blood and money** Britain was consciously willing to incur great costs in order to set up the necessary conditions for the Jewish national home and the Jewish state. The costs were not only financial but also political, in terms of loss of prestige, violation of democratic principles and the jailing and exiling of many subjects. The costs were also military: equipment, troops and Palestinian and British blood, death and maiming. The cost-benefit analysis spoke against Britain's taking on or keeping the Zionist Mandate; no imperial interests were served.
- >40, 45, 57, 59, 72, 74, 77, 79, 84, 89, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 104, 106, 112, 116, 117, 119, 124, 125, 126, 144, 146, 159, 161, 165, 167, 178, 217, 218, 223, 227, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 243, 246, 252, 259, 271, 273, 274, 303, 306, 323, 325, 327, 328, 330, 334, 342, 357, 362, 370, 373, 376, 378, 383, 413, 437, 438, 439, 443, 450, 453, 456, 457, 466, 471, 473, 481, 484, 486.
26. **women's statements** At various times and places women and women's organisations lobbied for Palestinian rights.
- >6, 28, 59, 86, 162, 210, 257, 264, 269, 288, 303, 320, 356, 374, 489.
27. **the Zionist Commission** The creation, function and quasi-official nature of a group which would start establishing the Jewish state on the spot and would evolve into a 'state within a state' and be transformed into the Jewish Agency.
- >5, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 52, 59, 70, 74, 77, 84, 85, 88, 99, 101, 103, 112, 115, 116, 117, 122, 124, 126, 142, 143, 155, 192, 218, 220, 300, 336, 450.
28. **legislative and advisory councils** The ins and outs of the various proposals to superficially allow Palestinian subjects some voice in their governance.

>35, 89, 94, 104, 107, 110, 117, 119, 133, 135, 136, 137, 142, 149, 150, 158, 160, 163, 164, 165, 167, 170, 171, 176, 178, 184, 193, 196, 200, 208, 220, 222, 224, 228, 231, 236, 237, 250, 251, 258, 261, 266, 273, 277, 282, 283, 287, 289, 340, 349, 383, 399, 429, 452.

29. **one democratic state** The Palestinians wanted one democratic state – i.e. majority legislative rule within the framework of respect for the equal rights of all citizens and, usually, rejection of *collective* rights.

>2, 21, 27, 31, 37, 39, 47, 52, 53, 59, 64, 94, 95, 99, 111, 112, 117, 123, 126, 135, 137, 143, 152, 169, 176, 178, 182, 193, 197, 200, 209, 213, 217, 220, 222, 226, 243, 257, 266, 283, 284, 295, 296, 300, 320, 334, 336, 338, 346, 348, 349, 354, 359, 360, 364, 373, 374, 383, 384, 387, 389, 390, 393, 394, 395, 396, 402, 412, 417, 428, 436, 437, 438, 446, 447, 450, 451, 454, 455, 456, 458, 459, 460, 461, 466, 469, 472, 476, 478, 479, 487, 488.

30. **dying for Palestine/Syria** The homeland was, and would be, defended to the death.

>9, 10 (event), 12 (event), 27, 30, 39, 40, 44, 47, 49, 69, 75, 99, 101, 187, 211, 219, 220, 222, 226, 228, 229, 263 (event), 264, 269, 272, 278, 284, 330, 351, 360, 364, 370, 374, 396, 413, 422, 452, 472, 479, 484.

31. **unified Palestine, no partition** Unanimous Palestinian opposition to partition was a corollary to their demand for self-determination, for ‘partition’ was a euphemism for the forcible removal of part of their homeland. It often implied the transfer of Arabs, and Arab lands, finding themselves within a given proposed Jewish state. It was partition *as such* that was anathema, not this, that or the other partition scheme. As Iz-zat Tannous said to Malcolm MacDonald: “they could not *discuss* partition, for they were wholly opposed to it.” [^{>364}] Many themes here indexed are obvious principles which go without saying, but this one is so obvious that I won’t bother to index it. Readers can themselves Search for the words ‘unity’ or ‘partition’.

32. **boycott the Mandatory** Should the Palestinians avoid ‘granting legitimacy’ to the Mandate by boycotting its ‘investigative’ commissions and other talks with the colonialist power?

>89, 99, 133, 150, 151, 153, 158, 160, 168, 163, 170, 192 (event), 196, 210, 218, 231, 237, 247, 262, 264, 268, 283, 319, 321, 322, 336, 351, 360, 364, 376, 377, 412, 430, 436, 437, 444, 455, 484.

33. **mere Palestinian fears** Palestinian objections and demands were often re-framed by the colonialists as merely their subjective ‘fears’, not as their ethical and political response to objective injustice and empirical facts. Typically, it was said that what they expressed were fears of something that might happen, not *opposition* to things that were happening. These ‘fears’ were then declared groundless.

>28, 29, 31, 34, 73, 88, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 106, 111, 115, 122, 136, 137, 171, 184, 200, 210, 214, 220, 233, 237, 242, 243, 247, 268, 309, 328, 334, 376, 390, 391, 403, 410, 411, 412, 422, 450, 488.

34. **done and dusted** While the *de facto* establishment of a ‘state’ is usually indisputable, the establishment of an undefined ‘national home’ is subject to quarrel, and the

Palestinians and some British politicians at several points in time pestered HMG with the claim that the 'home' was now actually 'established' (built, completed, crystallized), thereby fulfilling Britain's self-imposed 'obligation' towards the League of Nations and the Zionists. Were the Balfour project thus done and dusted, the road to independence for the entire populace would be faux-legalistically free.

>146, 221, 222, 232, 234, 242, 243, 246, 266, 271, 287, 326, 327, 336, 349, 364, 365, 373, 374, 376, 392, 395, 405, 406, 411, 412, 413, 437, 445, 450, 452, 475, 478, 480, 486.

35. **population transfer** Indigenous people literally standing in the way of the European immigrants filling up the Jewish national home could, and perhaps should, be forcibly transferred out of Palestine – or such plans were explicitly rejected.

>30, 44, 54, 116, 124, 220, 230, 232, 242, 246, 250, 273, 271, 328, 334, 336, 339, 340, 341, 342, 353, 359 (event), 376, 425, 437, 453, 479, 481. See Masalha 1992

36. **Holy Places** Britons and other Westerners, against centuries of evidence, did not trust the Palestinians, particularly the Moslem Palestinians, to safeguard the Holy Places of all religions and sects in the Holy Land – thus thinking it necessary to place them under 'international' sovereignty.

>16, 21, 65, 105, 158, 162, 167, 336, 395, 396, 399, 436, 438, 447, 455, 459, 469, 472, 475, 479.

37. **relatively pro-Palestinian Britons** Readers should use the Search function for the relatively pro-Palestinian stances of: Herbert Asquith, Edwin Montagu, Arthur Money, H.D. Watson, Louis Bols, W.N. Congreve, Gilbert Clayton, E.T. Richmond, Wyndham Deedes, E.L. Popham, Vivian Gabriel, Arnold Toynbee, J.M.N. Jeffries, John Dickson-Poynder (Lord Islington), George Clarke (Lord Sydenham), Stanley (Lord) Buckmaster, Charles Cochrane-Baillie (Lord Lamington), William Maxwell Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook), Frank Sanderson, Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe), C.D. Brunton, Philip Palin, Thomas Haycraft, William Joynson-Hicks, N.L. Mayle, Walter Shaw, John Hope Simpson, Charles Howard-Bury, Seymour Cocks, Thomas Reid, Colonel Waters-Taylor, Mrs. Waters-Taylor, Frances Newton, Arnold Wilson, Mrs. Steuart Erskine, Harry St. John Philby, Stewart Newcombe, Margaret Milne Farquharson, J.E. Campbell, Michael McDonnell, Earl Winterton, William Gallacher, Anthony Eden, Malcolm MacDonald, Grattan Bushe, Cosmo Parkinson, Frederick Downie at times, H. Hindle James, Harry Legge-Bourke, Kenneth Pickthorn, Douglas Clifton Brown, E.L. Spears, Lord Dufferin, Ralph Beaumont, John Martin, Freddie Blenkinsop, R.A. Butler, Andrew McLaren, Tufton Beamish, Thomas Inskip, Harold Lever, Ivor Thomas, Anthony Crossley and Walter Guinness (Lord Moyne). On the other hand Edward (Lord) Grey, George Curzon, Mark Sykes, John Chancellor, and Ernest Bevin at times, but not in deciding moments, evinced a pro-Palestinian stance, as did, to a lesser degree, Edmund Allenby, Ronald Storrs and even John Shuckburgh. The person who did the least compared with what he had the power to do was Curzon – followed by Bevin.

38. **rules of occupation** For those interested in international law as well as ethics, the rule that an occupying country should not change the constitution or laws of the country, province or territory it was occupying meant that Britain's acts at least up until the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne (with Turkey) on 24 July 1923 were illegal.
- >19, 60, 77, 85, 88, 99, 115, 117, 137, 147, 155, 178.
39. **Jewish-Zionist veto** On whether the 1939 White Paper indeed gave the Jewish Zionists de facto veto power over independence for a non-partitioned Palestine.
- >373, 395, 396, 397, 399, 402, 405, 406, 410, 412, 437, 445, 447.
40. **Palestinian articulations** The Palestinians dozens of times made their ethical, political, historical, or legalistic claims clearly and eloquently directly to Great Britain; they claimed *ownership* of Palestine.
- >27, 29, 30, 39, 44, 47, 48, 52, 67, 75, 83, 99, 135, 137, 149, 176, 177, 178, 182, 183, 197, 200, 210, 211, 222, 227, 243, 247, 262, 263, 264, 284, 285, 286, 287, 296, 301, 302, 303, 306, 308, 312, 313, 315, 316, 320, 321, 322, 325, 345, 346, 348, 349, 354, 356, 357, 359, 360, 361, 364, 367, 370, 374, 382, 387, 394, 395, 396, 397, 400, 403, 405, 406, 407, 412, 422, 428, 436, 437, 447, 450, 457, 462, 464, 472, 476, 478, 479, 480, 488.
41. **immigrants' citizenship status** The Palestinians always called for a democratic state. What would be the place of the recent Jewish immigrants in the *demos*?
- >99, 349, 359, 360, 374, 383, 389, 428, 436, 437.
42. **the three demands** The Palestinians' 3 demands were 1) self-government, 2) no more European-Jewish immigration, and 3) no more land sales to Zionists.
- >44, 47, 52, 59, 101, 103, 117, 123, 200, 210, 217, 218, 220, 222, 243, 254, 266, 269, 281, 284, 287, 290, 295, 296, 300, 313, 336, 371, 387, 438, 439, 464.

Acknowledgments

Thank you very much to the people who have helped and encouraged me write this – utterly without prejudice to their views on how it turned out. Some of them: Özlem Yazlık Alcott, Yousef M. Aljamal, Omar Asi, Ahmad Azem, Emanuel Beška, Sabine Blum, Damien Dessane, Hassan Eltaher, Ghada Karmi, Alex Jack, Radi Jarai, Geoff and Nancy Lee, Harald Molgaard R.I.P., John Quigley, Kevin Ramzi Nasir, Jeremy Salt, Andy Simons and Eddie Thompson R.I.P. In addition, I always received helpful replies when I wrote to some of the authors listed in the Bibliography.

Where would we be without libraries, for their resources and as places to work? Thanks to the institutions and staff of: Boğaziçi University Library (Istanbul); the British National Archives (London); Feyza Hepçilingirler Kütüphanesi (Ayvalık); Kadıköy Belediyesi Tarih Edebiyat Sanat Kütüphanesi (Istanbul); Sevim ve Necdet Kent Kitaplığı (Cunda) – especially Evren Kafadar and Yasemin Site; University Library Cambridge; Zentralbibliothek Zürich; and Zübeyde Hanım Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi (Ayvalık) – especially Alev Türkmenilli and Ali Satın.

Conclusions

Please excuse the telegraphic, even apodictic, tone of my conclusions. I want to keep them short, and don't here argue for them. They are, I believe, consistent with the documents covered in this chronology.

Britain **threw the first stone**, and it was thrown at the Palestinians. The 600,000+ peaceful, indigenous Southern Syrians, increasingly called and self-called Palestinians, merely wanted to rule themselves.

The Palestinians claimed the right to **self-determination**, but Britain, itself self-determined, consciously denied them that. While ignoring the wishes of the governed is what colonialists do, wherever they are, in Palestine Britain knew it couldn't get the consent of the governed for their special project of fulfilling Jewish Zionist aspirations for a state: the 95% anti-Zionist majority would vote it down.

So the Palestinians formulated **two gripes**: 1) being ruled by *any* foreign power, for whatever reasons, and 2) having the entire European *Zionist project* forced upon them, with the immigration, land transfers and loss of sovereignty it entailed.

'Mandate' is a euphemism for a **colony**. League of Nations control was non-existent. It is a fiction that Great Britain 'accepted' or 'received' the Mandate from the League of Nations. It **gave itself** the Mandate and its terms.

Not only the Mandate text with its colonialist content, but also the entire Covenant with its colonialist Article 22, was **a hoax**. The Covenant and its League of Nations were the faux-legal drapings that gave an appearance of legitimacy to illegitimate rule by sheer force. State-formation was solely the right of the people of Palestine.

If on the Palestinian side the positive battle was for liberation and self-determination, the concept best explaining the negative British-Zionist side is **settler-colonialism** – as long as one doesn't forget that the Palestinians were against *any* colonialism, whether 'settler-' or not.

It moreover didn't matter whether the settlers – who were indeed colonialists in the sense that they wanted to take over the country – were British, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Moslem, Turkish, French or Martian. In Edward Said's words, "So far as the natives were concerned, it could not have mattered initially whether the Europeans they faced in the colony were Englishmen or European Jews." (Said 1979, p 94) Their aspirations and arguments were independent of *who* was colonising and/or settling. **The argument for self-determination was made, and still can be made, without even mentioning Zionism or Jews.**

Because Britain both misused Palestine for its own ends and denied its personhood ethically and in law, Palestine was Britain's **collective slave**.

It is a fiction that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate pledged **equal treatment** of indigenous Palestinians and immigrant European Jews. The language of each document is heavily weighted towards Zionism. Thus, talk of Britain's '**dual obligation**' was pure deception.

Although Britain did once turn its back on Zionism, in 1938-40 – and although it routinely talked out of two sides of its mouth – during the three decades of the Mandate it did not, as some maintain (e.g. Toynbee 1970, p xiv), waver undecidedly. Rather, it pursued the Samuel-Churchill strategy of **fulfilling Zionist aspirations slowly** – of denying Palestinian rights until Jews made up the majority; Britain pulled out when the native Palestinians still made up 68% of the population, but the Jewish minority was able to seize power militarily.

As self-prescribed in the Balfour Declaration, Mandate text and 1922 'Churchill' White Paper, Britain's **administrative and military actions** during the Mandate were one-sided in favour of Zionism. His Majesty's Government helped with immigration, land acquisition, para-military build-up, and job patronage; it incorporated Hebrew language and symbols, used tax revenue for Jewish-national-home infrastructure and security for Zionism, and permitted autonomous self-governing institutions. The "institutional infrastructure established under the Mandate would later constitute the foundations of the Jewish state." (Sa'di & Abu Lughod 2007, p 295) The flip-side was neglect of and disrespect for the indigenous Palestinians, even in respect to education, not to mention brutal political repression.

Dividing-and-conquering by means of **the Sykes-Picot Agreement was a necessary condition** for Zionism's success because a Zionist beachhead in Greater Syria – rather than in much smaller Palestine – would have faced far greater demographic, political and military disadvantages. The same goes for separating Transjordan from Palestine.

Because a Jewish state in part or all of Palestine was the goal – it was the "Jewish Zionist aspiration" spelled out in the Balfour Declaration, Herzl's *Judenstaat* – talk of a '**Jewish national home**' was one of the main hoaxes of the century.

The Palestinians resisted all attempts to **buy them off** with economic progress. Whether they were on average materially better or worse off due to the Zionist influx was for them irrelevant. They wanted to design and run their own economy.

The **power imbalance** was such that the Palestinians never stood a chance. Albeit referring only to the last decade of the Mandate, one scholar lists "the considerable losses incurred in human life and economic dislocation; the dissolution of all political organizations; the arrest, exile, or disarming of the Palestinian peasantry (even while the Yishuv was being systematically armed and trained); the death, detention, and scattering of thousands of the most active members of the rebellion..." – and correctly concludes that "The Palestinians never really recovered from the results of their confrontation with Britain." (W. Khalidi 1986, pp 106-07) The Palestinian polity **could not** win.

To be sure, the Palestinians neglected to form a **Government in Defiance**, located either in Palestine or elsewhere, and although they did organise in Moslem-Christian Associations, Palestine Arab Congresses and Arab Higher Committees, national institutions were

lacking. (R. Khalidi 2006, pp 62-63) I believe that even if they had set up a government-in-exile, made no mistakes and shown twice as much suicidal courage: **'It was too late in the beginning.'**

Many historians, even those who condemn the net injustice of the Mandate, are much too nice to the British. I see no need to show **respect** for colonialists, to pose as academically neutral or necessarily maintain a polite tone. The Mandate should be treated as a brutal, undemocratic, racist chapter in history. I can think of several other oppressive regimes towards whom the use of respectful, polite language would indeed (rightly) be considered scandalous. Why make an exception for British Palestine?

While researching and writing this book I several times suddenly felt how crazy it is to take the Mandate seriously. The racism, contempt for democracy and convoluted arguments on the pro-Zionist side, in a post-Enlightenment century, are laughable. The idea of an Asian nation's being exclusively turned over to a group of Europeans is simply **absurd**, even if the damage it has done is real.

It was always **preposterous** for the Westerners to claim they had to mount investigations of the situation in Palestine to find out what the people wanted, resp. what they were griping or rebelling about: King-Crane, Palin, Haycraft, Shaw, Hope Simpson, French, Peel, Woodhead, Anglo-American, Morrison-Grady, UNSCOP. A combination of 1) introspection, 2) knowledge of their own countries' histories and 3) knowledge of the *Zeitgeist* of self-determination was more than enough to render these costly **charades** superfluous. We should not play along with the absurdity that there was anything to find out. Everybody knew the score from the beginning. These Commissions served one purpose only: equivocating, obfuscating and gaining time in order to gradually fulfil what the Balfour Declaration called the "Jewish Zionist aspirations" in Palestine.

As with any citizenry, the Palestinians disagreed on numerous things, including at times tactics, but never on **the goals** of 1) independence, 2) stopping immigration, 3) stopping land sales and 4) ending privileges for the unwanted immigrants. These were the fundamental issues, and when it comes to them it is inaccurate to speak of internal conflict amongst the Palestinian people. The fight for liberation should also not be conflated with class struggle.

I lean towards the view that only violence reached the minds of the British. Violent manifestations in 1929, of course backed up by ten years of frequent and sound reasoning, led to the relatively pro-Palestinian plans of John Chancellor, Walter Shaw and John Hope Simpson. The Rebellion in 1937-39 defeated partition and was a necessary condition for the pro-Palestinian MacDonald White Paper. The lack of military strength after 1945 sealed the Zionist victory of 29 November 1947. British Cabinets, despite many British voices arguing for justice, were unmoved by words, arguments and documents. **Violence in self-defense** did move them.

Britain's rule was **illegal** in international law. However, I believe the weaker party usually has a better chance of success in changing world opinion by arguing ethically, not legalistically.

Britain already in 1919-1920 knew that its policy meant **bloodshed** for its own soldiers and functionaries as well as for the natives. Yet it drank tea and carried on regardless.

The two most successful British Zionists, by a long shot, were **Herbert Samuel** and **Winston Churchill**. Along with Lloyd George, Ormsby-Gore, Weizmann, Amery, MacDonald the Elder, Webb, and probably Attlee, they were not dialogue partners because they had always already made up their minds; Palestinian opinion was of no meaning to them whatsoever. They were except in 1938-40 the more powerful faction in HMG.

The **anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism** explicit in many texts and implicit in the Mandate itself needs a separate, book-length study.

The Palestinians consistently begged for a **normal constitutional democracy** with proportional representation in undivided Palestine, including Jews – usually even all recent immigrants. Time and again, that is, they demanded the secular democratic state which would be explicitly called for by the PLO between 1964 and 1988. I find no evidence for Edward Said's view that the PLO thereby "broke sharply with all past ideas". (Said 1979 p 220) Today's ideology of **One Democratic State** is simply the standard, unanimous Mandate-era program of the Palestinians.

It is wrong to place primary **responsibility** on the international, largely Jewish, Zionists. Britain was responsible. "The British were the prime causers of the disaster, and on them lies its responsibility." (Alami 1949, pp 373-74; also Abu Lughod 1981, p 407) "Britain stole Palestine from the Palestinians." (Salhab 2021, quoting Avi Shlaim)

Britain was cowardly, especially towards the end of the Mandate, in placing **blame** on the two groups whose wishes and interests were strictly contradictory: it self-pityingly said it had done its best tutelage for its children, but they simply refused to get along with each other. (see al-Wahid 2011)

Not only were the British responsible, but they were a **necessary condition** for the destruction of Palestine and its replacement by Israel. "Zionism owes its success entirely to this improbable [West-Zionist] partnership. On their own, the ship of the Zionist enterprise could not have sailed from European shores and docked in Palestine. ...The West-Zionist partnership was indispensable for the creation of a Jewish state." (Alam 2009, pp 36, 95-99)

In contrast to the Zionist and British definition of the Jewish nation in ethno-religious terms, the Palestinians defined themselves free from **racial concepts** – as the people who had always lived on the land of Palestine. At most they defined themselves as culturally and linguistically **Arab** – whether of the Moslem, Jewish, Druze, or Christian persuasion.

During the Mandate **partition** was never embraced by more than a literal handful of Palestinians. Their representative leaderships were adamant against giving up any piece of their homeland, and thousands of Palestinians died fighting such a **two-state solution**. Only with the Declaration of Independence of the PLO and PNC in 1988 did a Palestinian leadership in this way betray Palestine.

The partition schemes of both Peel and the UN **were insincere** because they prescribed for each of the two ('Jewish' and 'Arab') states normal ethnicity-blind democracies but re-

jected a normal ethnicity-blind democracy for all of Palestine. They were also **dumb** because as human-rights-based democracies there would be nothing Jewish or Arab about either of them.

The Palestinians at appropriate times pointed out that the British were acting on the principle that **two wrongs make a right** when trying to justify the forcible introduction of European Jews into Palestine by reference to their persecution in Europe. The Arabs had never persecuted Jews.

Did Palestinian **boycotts** of various conferences, inquiries, elections and institutions pay off? Participation was under duress, and after all, cooperation is complicity only if it is done with no gun pointing at your head. If participation were regularly accompanied by a clear **caveat** that Britain did not have a right to be in any dialogue with them in the first place, this would not imply recognising the legitimacy of Britain's presence. I humbly suggest that the boycotts of talks – as opposed to elections to fig-leaf councils – was unwise.

Two examples of British **disdain** for and **mistrust** of the Palestinians were their demands that the 'holy places' needed international protection and that the Palestinians, in order to be given independence, had to do more than just swear that their constitution would provide for fair treatment of the Jewish minority. As if the holy places had not gotten along perfectly well for two millennia, usually under Moslem rulers, and as if the locals could conjure up a constitutional clause that would guarantee, once and for all, on a mere piece of paper, minority rights.

The **style or tone** of the documents adds to understanding the interaction. The Palestinians' straightforward, unwavering and usually terse opposition to colonialism, Zionism, paternalism, partition and political parity with the Jewish collective contrasted with British documents which were long, complex, ambiguous, and often mendacious. The book attempts by means of many direct quotations to capture this stylistic aspect beyond the nuts and bolts of what was being demanded and refused.

I find as well that the Palestinians were by no means **timid or subservient** in what they said and wrote. The problem was rather that "commissions are themselves a method of persuading Palestinians and others that dialogue and civility are the means to resolve the conflict, and that international management of the conflict is happening on a firm basis of objective fact". (Allen 2017, p 411) The Palestinians knew this all along – that their enemy entered the civil dialogue with a 'firm basis of power', or dominant 'subject position' – yet almost always kept their language polite.

The **Attlee Government** could have insisted on the MacDonald White Paper. They could have voted against Resolution 181. They could have at least voted for Subcommittee 2's motion to refer key questions to the International Court of Justice. But they ran away. Anti-indigenous Zionist policy was after all in the British Labour Party's DNA, from Ramsay MacDonald, Sidney Webb and Harold Laski on (in fact up to today's Keir Starmer).

Ahmad H. Sa'di has written, "The Palestinians' position remained unchanged from the beginning of the British Mandate to its end: they opposed partition and supported the establishment of a political system that would reflect the wishes of the majority. Al-

though they were ready to discuss the modalities of independence, they never doubted their natural right to be the masters in their homeland. Palestinians' sentiments regarding the UN resolution for the partition of Palestine were summarized by the historian Walid Khalidi (1991: 305-306 [*Before Their Diaspora*]): 'The Palestinians failed to see why they should be made to pay for the Holocaust..., and recalled that Zionism was born in the 1880s, long before the advent of the Third Reich. They failed to see why it was not fair for the Jews to be a minority in a unitary Palestinian State, while it was fair for almost half of the Palestinian population – the indigenous majority on its own ancestral soil – to be converted overnight into a minority under alien rule in the envisaged Jewish State.'" ('Reflections' in: Sa'di & Abu Lughod 2007, p 292)

Britain carried out the Zionist Mandate **selflessly**, on behalf of world and British Zionists. By normal criteria for computing self-interest – economic, military, and reputational **costs** over against perceived **benefits** – the Zionist Mandate was for the British a terrible investment. The imperial or natural-resource or military benefits imagined by many writers (not all of them Marxist ideologues) and all pro-Zionist politicians in the Mandate era did not exist. Had Britain wanted to avoid costs in money and lives, benefit from peace with the Arab world, and assure its access to petroleum – that is, had it pursued its self-interest – it wouldn't have touched Zionism with a ten-foot pole. The Palestinians, as well as many Britons, pointed this out again and again, to no avail.

All the Palestinians' and other Arabs' words and efforts from early April through late November 1947 were a **waste of time** in the sense that the deep convictions of the powerful and the political strength of those profiting from those convictions were not shakeable. It is less a case of politics winning out over both logic and justice than of logic and justice never really entering the ring.

Although not perfect, I believe the **rape analogy** holds water. Fadwa Tuqan's poetic figure Hamza says, "This land, my sister, is a woman." For Hamza this was because it gave birth to freedom-fighters, but there is also the ancient identification of the earth with the feminine; the land literally nurtures and nurses us. Britain's behaviour was patriarchal, aggressive, penetrating, and against the will of Palestine. There was the powerful victimiser and the innocent victim, even if saying a person was raped is not saying they didn't resist. Rape can also give birth to something new, in this case a new ruling state.

This book is a *chronology* of the dialogue, as captured in documents, between the colonised Palestinians and their British colonisers running from November 1917 through May 1948. It contains *490 separate entries*, each dealing with a manifesto, letter, statement of policy, petition or minutes of a meeting. It traces the ins and outs of the three decades of robbery of Palestine from its rightful owners, setting the stage for Palestine's takeover by Egypt, Jordan and the Zionist state of Israel. The story is nothing if not simple: The Palestinians demanded their independence, the British denied it. The book is dedicated to *the Palestinians* who fought and suffered, or died, for their self-determination.

The author writes articles on the current state of Palestine and works for the vision of One Democratic State in Palestine. He lives with his wife Özlem in Zürich, Switzerland.

