



# History of Arab Jewish Conflict

**Dr PJ Vincent**

**The History of  
Arab – Jewish Conflict  
1881-1948**

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## Foreword

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There is an interesting story in wider circulation about Ariel Sharon, the former Prime Minister of Israel and the champion of Israel's victory over the Arab forces in the 1967 War and the chief architect of Israel's unauthorized occupation in the Palestinian land. The story sounds as follows:

Sharon was put on trial as a part of probing his alleged involvement in a massacre in an Arab village in the 1948. The judge asked him, "What made you commit such a heinous crime (killing innocent Arabs)?" "It was the false promise of the state of Israel that made me doing so", he replied in an resolute and unwavering manner. "What? How come a false promise of the State motivated one to kill the Arabs, the judge went on asking. Sharon's argument was logically placed, "You only tutored us, 'Palestine is a land without people, and the land without people is for the people without land.' So, when I saw people (Arabs) here I shot at them. Who is the culprit then, you or me? The blame no doubt goes to the State of Israel," argued Sharon.

Amos Oz, one of the most prolific Israel authors writes in his autobiographical work, *Under This Blazing Light*:

When Israel declared its independence, I was nine years old. I remember my father coming to my bed lying beside me in the darkness. "When I was a boy, I was beaten in school in Russia and then in Poland for being a little Jew", he said. "You may still get beaten in school, but not for being a Jew. This is what the state of Israel is all about. In the darkness, I could suddenly feel his tears. It was only time in my life that my father cried in my presence."<sup>1</sup>

Above are two short narrative texts provide channels for knowing best how the formation of Israel in the 1948 impacted up on the lives of different people in different ways. There is perhaps little direct point in taking the popular oral narrative about Sharon in the context of this book; but in the general context there is every point as it deals with a widely accepted and shared colonial construct about the land of pre-occupied Palestine-an empty land and a land of wilderness. By raising the slogan *land without the people for people without land* and equating Palestine to uninhabited barren land, Zionists were creating a set of oriental fantasies around the land of Palestine. They not just ignored the Arab population, but also negated the very existence of a land and its culture.<sup>2</sup>



It is interesting to note in this context that Theodore Herzl had made no references to Arabs in his diary or his written reports afterwards while passing through the Arab villages during his visit to Palestine.<sup>3</sup> The early European Zionists, on their part, subscribed to a euro-centric view by assigning themselves as the representatives of a civilising mission; bringing the light of modernity and European rationality to the socially as well as religiously backward Palestine.<sup>4</sup> The east had not been perceived by the Jewish pioneers from Europe in Palestine as a political or cultural reality, but a territory of 'otherness.' They considered the Palestinian Arabs who were still living in a pre-modern feudal set up, as socially inferior 'other'. In their views, Jews themselves were the agents assigned to modernise the Arabs on the virtue of their link with both civilised Europe and 'yet to be civilised' West Asia.<sup>5</sup> This Oriental attitude was much evident even in Herzl's word. He says:

It is more and more to the interest of the civilised nations and civilisations in general that a cultural station be established on the shortest road to Asia. Palestine is this station and Jews are the bearers of culture who are ready to give property and lives to bring about its creation.<sup>6</sup>

The orientalist approach continued to exist and reflect in the building of Israel with fixing Arabs as its 'significant other' for the national formation. As Yaacov Yadgar observes, the Zionist meta-narrative "depicted the Jewish hero as representing an over-arching front of the European nations, standing against an Asiatic primitive, portrayed Arab culture as an archaic, unrooted desert culture."<sup>7</sup> Just in opposition to this image, the same narrative "positioned western nationalism-of which the revived Jewish nation was a part- as symbolising morality, humanism and dynamic nationalism."<sup>8</sup>

This book also shows a critical academic vigour in assessing some of the major events and movements in the history of Palestine issue. The second chapter, for instance, spends larger part of the time on contextualizing the history of evolution of Zionist movement and on investigating the specific politico-economic conditions of the European continent in the last few centuries that are said to have set in motion an imagining of 'Jewish Home Land.' A detailed account of the Biblical discourse related to the land of Palestine given in the first chapter adds strength to the overall academic design of the work.

With an extensive examination of literature available, Vincent places the history of Palestinian nationalism in two much wider contexts; Arab Nationalism and *Ottomanism*. This is interesting as most of the works on the history of Palestinian Nationalism seldom keep concern over the Ottoman policies of reform, the land tenure system, trade and agricultural expansion and European penetration which drastically transformed the pre-capitalist and traditional Palestinian society and spawned a national consciousness among Palestinian population by the turn of the nineteenth century. This book also exposes the failure of much-hyped Arab nationalism for its alleged inability to address the issue of Palestinians despite the grand assertions of its exponents. This is done through a methodical investigation into a plurality of related but divergent even fractious tendencies that characterized Arab nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As mentioned earlier, the Indian position in the question of Palestine has engendered tremendous amount of interesting works, works that have, in effect, opened new fields of academic enquiry. This work in that sense does not address an uncharted territory. But it contains much promise as it creates a different terrain of understanding of the issue by discussing it from

different vantage points. That is what makes it interesting and intellectually stimulating.

– Prof. M.H. Ilias\*

## Endnotes

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\* Director, School of Gandhian Thought and Development Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University, Formerly Professor & Director, India-Arab Cultural Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia & Formerly Professor, Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark.



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Finally, my thanks go to my wife Bindu Varma and our children Neha and Nila. Writing of this book would have been impossible without their love, support, patience and encouragements.

I dedicate this book to my beloved wife and children.

P. J. Vincent

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## Introduction

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Mankind witnessed numerous conflicts and wars varying in scope and destructiveness, which have caused heavy losses to life and property and brought about incredible sufferings to people. Many of these conflicts have been resolved but the West Asian crisis still remains a burning issue in the international politics. The core of West Asian crisis is the question of Palestine. Various political, strategic, economic and religious elements are superimposed in this issue. The heart of this ongoing struggle is the Palestinian people who are denied the right to national independence and sovereignty. The persistence of the problem, its intensity, the recurring violence it has caused and its potential threat to international peace and security, have transformed this conflict into one of the most explosive and destabilizing conflicts in the contemporary politics.<sup>1</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that the Arab-Jewish/Israeli conflict is unparalleled among today's regional conflicts.

The emergence of political Zionism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent planned colonization of Palestine by European Jews precipitated a bitter conflict between the Arabs and Jews in the region. The emergence of a political Zionist movement organized by Theodor Herzl marked the beginning of a lengthy chapter in the history of the conflict between Arabs and Jews for the possession of Palestine. This conflict has major international repercussions both for the past and for the future. According to Sami Hadawi, "without international action, Middle East conflict will increase in intensity and then not likely to be confined only to the Middle East."<sup>2</sup> Similarly in this connection Paul Warburg wrote: 'the conflict has threatened to engulf the entire world in flames.'<sup>3</sup>

The present study places the problem in its historical perspective, with an emphasis on the national identity and rights of Arabs and Jews in Palestine. The attempt is to survey the course of the problem from the starting of first 'aliyah' in 1881 to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. It also covers the British policies, the role of League of Nations and United Nations in the problem. The study analyses the issue in an Indian perspective.

The historical background of the issue can be traced back to the Biblical days. The present study is focused on the Biblical and historical background of the Jewish question. The ideologies and movements that coloured the political texture of Palestine during the period of the study is analysed and its impact on Arabs and Jews in Palestine is placed in proper perspective.

The modern Zionist movement was driven by the search for a homeland for the stateless and

persecuted Jewish people. It was born in the fires of Russian Pogroms and in the tumult of the highly controversial Dryfus Affair. The aspiration for political independence, collective grievances and a deep historical consciousness of people hood enabled the Jews to materialize their nationalist dreams. In course of time, Zionism became one of the most powerful ideologies of the world. To take an unprecedented look at Zionism, this work undertook political, social and psycho analytical study on different aspects of origin and development of Zionism as a modern political ideology.

The messianic fervor of Zionism is unique which coloured the self-image of Israel to this day and transformed the movement as a psychological and historical force. This aspect has been analysed to present its role in providing a psychological bond, which brought in an immutable identity. Zionism, at the same time, rejected the political inertia sustained by the mythology of Diaspora Messianism.

The Jews has developed a 'sacred geography' on the Mount Zion. The Jerusalem temple was imaginatively associated with it. The temple also represents the garden of Yahweh. This made Mount Zion and city of Jerusalem the holiest places for Jews and centre of their socio-cultural and spiritual life. The historical narratives of Jewish historian Josephus has been analysed to present the correlation between Jerusalem cult and Zionism. Zionism's worldview and its own historic task and destiny are based on Judaism especially on Jerusalem cult. The modern Zionists politicized this aspect of Zionism to develop an effective response to racial anti-Semitism. The political Zionism succeeds miraculously but tragically in fulfilling its aspirations and dreams.

The Zionist writings of Leo Pinsker, Ahad Ha'Am, and Moses Hess were analysed in detail. The political Zionism preached by Theodor Herzl is different from religious Zionism which has a history of over 3 thousand years. His pamphlet 'Der Judenstat' (The Jewish State) is the 'Bible' of political Zionism. Herzl criticized the idea of assimilation and piece-meal emigration as a remedy to Jewish question. Instead, he advocated 'British sponsored Jewish colonization in Palestine' to establish a 'national home' there. The present study focuses on the socio-cultural and political dimensions of the 'Jewish State'. A comparative study was made between the cultural Zionism of Ahadta'Am and political Zionism of Herzl. Labour Zionism emerged during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century alongside Marxism, revolutionary socialism and anarchism in Europe. Labour Zionists sought to liberate Jewish masses particularly those in Eastern Europe and Russia from both capitalist exploitation and anti-Semitic persecution. An attempt has been made to analyse the ideology and politics of Nachman Syrkin (1867-1924) and Ber Borochov (1881-1917) – the original theorists of the labour Zionism. The detailed analysis and critical reinterpretation of the primary works on modern Zionism forms one of the thrust areas of the present study which exposes the political and metaphysical soul of modern Zionism.

This book offers a new explanation to the development of Palestinian nationalism. The political activity in Palestine has been located within the larger context of Arab nationalism and Ottomanism. The study covers the ideological affiliations of Palestinian political elite and explores the social forces, which has shaped Palestinian nationalism. The Ottoman reforms, the land tenure system, trade and agricultural expansion and European penetration drastically transformed the pre-capitalist and traditional Palestinian society by the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the new context of socio-economic transformation, the urban notable class in Palestine emerged as a dominant political force by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The aristocratic families of 'urban notable' class produced a disproportionate number of leading Ottomanists (1856-1918),

Arabists (1908-1914), Arab Nationalists (1914-1920) and Palestinian Nationalists (1918-1920).<sup>4</sup>

The Arab awakening in modern times was connected to the broad changes in the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also linked to the failure of the Turks in defending Islamic civilization against the European inroads. The present study explored several contradictory forces, which fostered the development of nationalist consciousness among Arabs. Arab loyalty and hostility to Ottomans and their religious intensity and secular rationalism helped to generate sentiments, which led to nationalism. The present study locates Palestinian nationalism within the social and political milieu in which it grew, namely Arab nationalism and explores social forces, which shaped the ideology and politics of Palestinianism.

Initially the political activity in Palestine was a response to the policy of ‘Turkification’ – an agenda of imposing Turkish language and culture over the cultural groups under the Ottoman Crown. Zionist colonization made it anti-Zionist, and the pro-Zionist British policies especially the Balfour Declaration (1917) made it anti-British and anti-colonial. In this study an attempt has been made to trace the political background of the Arab-Jewish conflict. The Arab-British alliance in the War against Ottomans and the impact of Great Arab revolt on the destiny of Palestine are to other focal themes of the present study. The study also concentrates on the British policies during the mandatory period (1922-48), Zionist diplomatic success, revolutionary transformation of Palestinian politics and Jewish terrorism. A train of facts ranging from Zionist organizational strength, money power, and diplomacy; British imperial interests, strategic and religious importance of the land mass (the Levant as a whole) to the inherent weakness of the traditional and pre-capitalist Palestinian Arabs, contributed to the plight of the native Palestinians in the post World War I period. The present study has traced these aspects and tried to explore the dynamics and changing patterns of power relations in Palestine during this period.

The present study also explores the relations between Indian National Congress and National Movement in Palestine within the broad framework of anti-colonial struggle against British imperialism. The common interests shared by Indian National Congress and the Arab Nationalists and the long standing historical, cultural and political interaction between India and West Asia lead India to take a position in favour of Arabs in Palestine. India viewed the question of Palestine as a ‘colonial question’. Zionism was viewed as a colonial settler movement under the protection of British imperialism. Gandhiji’s position on this issue and its relative merits and demerits are discussed in this study. A comparative study between Gandhian perception and that of Jewish philosopher Martin Buber is made.

The strong anti-colonial anti-imperialist sentiments in India, the presence of a large politically active Muslim community and ideological factors like ‘Asianism’ are the major determinant factors that shaped India’s approach to the struggle in Palestine. Nehru, following Gandhiji, strongly criticized Zionist-imperialist nexus in Palestine and extended wholehearted support to Palestinians in their struggle against British Imperialism and Zionism. The major political groupings in India generally followed this position. However the revivalist Hindu organizations and ultra rightists within the Indian National movement extended their support to Israel. The study also touches various aspects and development in Indo-Israel-Palestine relations in the post independence period.

The present study traces the historical origin and evolution of the Arab-Jewish conflict from 1881 to 1948. Various socio-political and cultural forces that defined and determined the colour

of political activity in Palestine during this period has been analysed and made use of exposing the inner dynamics of 'West Asian Crisis'. The popular perception on Arab-Jewish conflict concentrates on the political aspects of the problem. The metaphysical cultural and religious aspects have been undermined by the popular political reductionist approach. The origin and the development of the issue and its contemporary manifestations are based basically on the metaphysical identity of Zion that determined the course of political process in Palestine. The attempt is to look into the matter giving due attention to this aspect alongwith colonial exploitation, Arab nationalism and Zionism. A perspective from Indian side in the colonial context has been presented. It is also aimed to provide a scientific explanation of the role of ideology in the Arab-Jewish conflict. The study in totality is the analysis and interpretation of various historical, socio-political, economic and ideological dimensions that shaped the origin and evolution of the Palestinian and Israeli national aspirations which had major repercussions on contemporary world.

The book has been made relying on the analysis and reinterpretation of the existing original sources in the light of new ideological innovations and paradigm shift in international politics. The book is divided into 4 chapters beside introduction and an epilogue. [Chapter I](#) deals with the geographical setting of the land of Canaan or Palestine in a general geographical sense. The geographical delimitations of ancient Palestine, different cultural zones, peoples and movements and early history of Israelites are the central points explored in this chapter. Particular attention has been given to trace the Biblical past.

[Chapter II](#) explains the socio-economic condition of Ottoman Palestine and the origins of Zionist ideology and movement. It analyses the Messianic fervor of Zionism, the idea of sacredness of geography and the psychological reasons that have transformed the religious Zionism into a political ideology. The study looks into the impact of modern Zionist discourse on the belief system of Judaism and the development of Zionism as an identity. The study traces the origin, mentality and aspirations of Zionism as an ethnocentric and racially exclusive nationalist ideology to the conditions of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

[Chapter III](#) deals with the political movements in Palestine during the first two decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter concentrates on the genesis, characteristic features and ideology of Arab resistance. Various political, economic and religious elements that superimposed in the Arab-Jewish conflict are explored. In this chapter attempt has been made to locate the issue in the historical background of Jews and Palestine Arabs emphasizing national identity and rights of both parties. The impact of World War I on Arab Jewish conflict, the imperialist interests and the effectiveness of Zionist diplomacy are also explored.

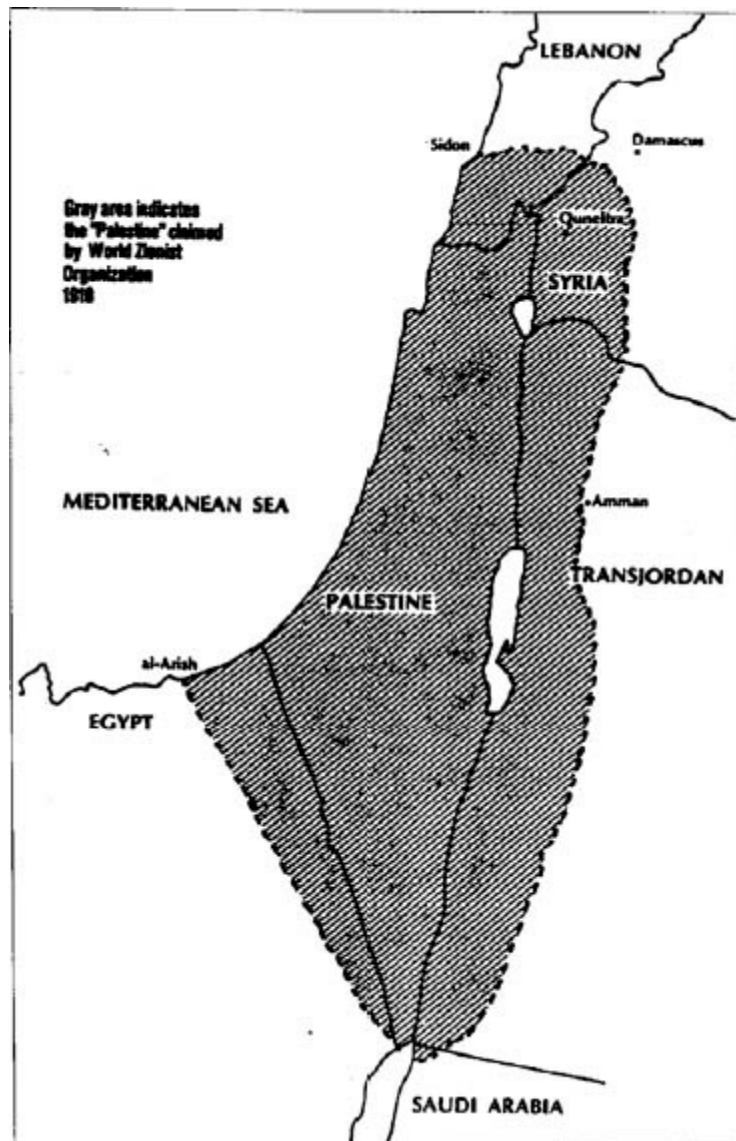
[Chapter IV](#) looks into the inner dynamics of the crisis in Palestine under British mandatory government. The chapter explores the role of League of Nations, United Nations, British policies, Zionist strategies, and Arab Nationalism. The study also looks into the experience of socio-political peripheralisation of the Palestinians in their homeland and the subsequent transformation of popular grass-root patriotism into Palestinianism.

## Endnotes

1 The Need for Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, United Nations, (New York, 1989), p.l.

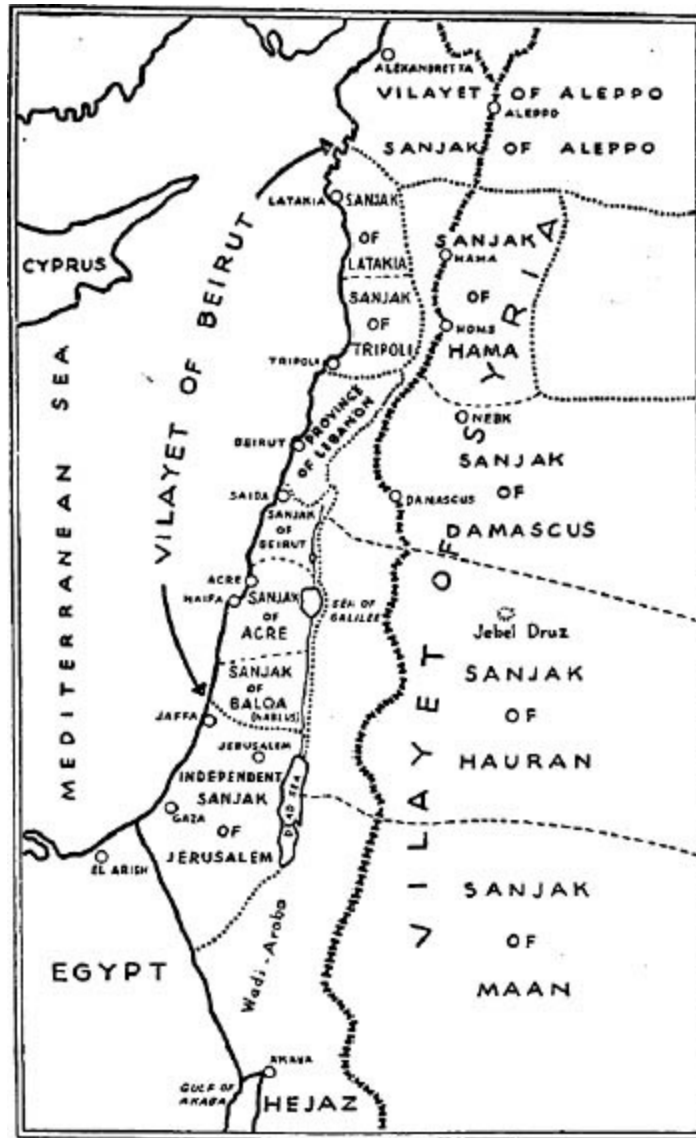
- 2 Sami Hadawi, *The Arab Israeli Conflict* (Institute for Palestinian Studies, Beirut, 1969), p.48.
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- 4 Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (Columbia University Press, New York)

**Grey Areas indicate the Palestine claimed by World  
Zionist Organisation in 1818**



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## Palestine and Syria in 1915



Source : *Prospects for Peace in the Middle-East – An Israeli Palestinian Dialogue* (UN, New York, 1992).

## Palestine Ottoman Administrative Areas 1916





Source : Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Palestine Documents* (Pharos, New Delhi, 1998).

**Jewish or partly-Jewish areas in Palestine in the beginning of the British Rule (1918)**



Source : Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Palestine Documents* (Pharos, New Delhi, 1998).

## Chapter 1

### Palestine in History

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In a general geographical sense, Palestine has always been regarded as the South-West extremity of Syria – the land mass that stretches from Dan in the north, at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon Mountain range to below Beersheba in the south and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Taurus mountains, the river Euphrates, the desert fringes of Transjordan and the wilderness of Sinai in the east. ‘Palestine’ is a relatively recent geographical term. It is derived from Philistines, the Aegian people who made their appearance on the southern coastal part of the Levant, some three thousand years ago.

The Levant, the land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean which is divided into Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan, constitute one geographical area, bounded on the west by the Mediterranean and on the east by the Syrian Desert. It measures some five hundred miles from north to south but only about eighty miles from west to east. Since the appearance of Philistines on the Levantine Coast, the name ‘Palestine’, has been used continuously to denote the landmass by Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks and the British Mandatory government. But each gave different geographical delimitations to ‘Palestine’. The area called Palestine by Biblical scholars, more or less coincides with the territory controlled by the kingdom of Israel (Northern Kingdom) and the kingdom of Judah (Southern Kingdom) around 860 B.C. ‘Its boundaries extended westward from the base of the Golan Heights in present-day Syria to the Mediterranean Sea; then southward to Gaza; where the coast bends west to tip of the Gulf of Aqaba; then north to beyond the eastern edge of the Dead Sea; and finally, northwest, to touch Lake Tiberias at the foot of the Golan’<sup>1</sup>.

The Land area of Palestine is divided into sharply marked strips running from north to south. The deep broad Jordan Valley cuts Palestine into two from north to south. Its southern end is marked by the Wadi-el-Arish, which the Bible called ‘River of Egypt’, and the Jebel-et-Tubeiq, in Southern Jordan. The northern end of Gulf of Aqaba and the north most point of Hejaz also marks the southern limits of Palestine. The river Yarmuk, a tributary of river Jordan, marks the northern limit of Palestine. It once divided the Biblical provinces of Golan and Gilead and marks today the border between Syria and Jordan. The eastern border is the great Arabian Desert and the natural limit is marked by a range of mountains, Anti-Lebanon, Jaulan, Gilead, Moab and Edom, according to the Biblical names.

These mountain ranges present steep slopes and cliffs to the west and fall gradually to the east into the high plateau of the Syrian Desert. The northern end of Jordan Valley and the southern slopes of Mount Hermon are other clear landmarks that denote the boundary of Palestine. To the west, transition from the hills and mountains of Galilee sloping southwards to the high plateau of Lebanon sloping northwards marks another portion of the natural boundary of Palestine. This area is about 45,000 square miles roughly the size of Ireland<sup>2</sup>.

The Palestine is divided into eight natural geographical units<sup>3</sup>. First there is a coastal plain along the Mediterranean, about ten miles wide and divided in half approximately at Joppa, near modern Tel Aviv. The northern half is the plain of Sharon extended to Carmel range near modern Haifa. The southern half is the Philistine plain or Philistia. The plain Acco lies north of Sharon between Carmel mountain and Acco. The plain of Phoenicia lay along the coast, separated from Acco and the rest of western Palestine by mountain ranges.

The second geographical unit, the Shefelah, that lies to the east of and parallel to Philistia, is separated by longitudinal valleys from the central Hill Country and forms the transition to it. The Hill Country starts from southern Syria in the form of hills and mountains and extends down to the extreme south. The third unit is the northern Hill Country or Galilee which is usually subdivided into upper and lower Galilee. The Jezreel or Esdraelon (or simply 'the valley') is the fourth unit, which cuts right across Galilee. It provides tracts for traders and invaders to reach Transjordan. The fifth unit is Central Palestine which is divided into Samaria in the north and Judah in the south. The rest of the Western Palestine is the vast semi-arid area in the south, the Negev, which forms the sixth division.

The seventh part of Palestine is a geologically marvelous 'rift valley', the corollary of the long range of hills and mountains which forms the hill country. The rift valley separates the territory west of the Jordan from Transjordan. This rift begins in Syria, separates and forms Mount Lebanon and Mount Anti-Lebanon (Biblical Hermon), and continues south in the form of the Jordan Valley, the Orontes, the Beqaa and the Wadi-Araba to the Gulf of Aquabah and the Red Sea. The Jordan River flows through this valley, forms lake Huleh and the Sea of Galilee (Chinnereth) and finally falls into the Dead Sea (or Salt sea). At the Dead Sea, the 'rift' is about 1,275 feet below the sea level, which is the lowest depression in the world<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, the Jordanian Plateau, which forms the eastern most division of Palestine. This geographical unit is divided up by four rivers into five main parts. The Yarmuk River flowing into the river Jordan separates Bushan and Gilead. The river Jabbok or Wadi Zerqa emptying into river Jordan separates Gilead and Ammon. The Arnon Wadi Mojib provides a natural barrier between Ammon and Moab. The boundary between these two countries varied during Biblical times but usually lying north of the Arnon. Finally, the Wadi Hesa or the Zered runs to the Southern end of Dead Sea separates Moab from Edom. Only during the rainy season these Wadies became real streams. Otherwise they were mostly dry riverbeds. These eight geographical units combine together and forms four regions running north to south. On the west lies the coastal plain, next and parallel to it is the central mountain region. East of these mountains lies the 'rift valley', and the eastern most region is the 'Jordanian Plateau'.

The cultural divisions of Palestine have been greatly influenced by the topographical divisions. Each region has developed its own distinctive culture with specific characteristics. Among the four topographical regions, the coastal plain has been better exposed to the outer

world because of its harbours and proximity to the international highway of sea-borne trade. The coastal plain was frequently subjected to foreign invasions and influences. Trade was the main economic activity of the coastal land. The culture of the coastal people was largely influenced by the ancient Mediterranean cultures. Development in the early Bronze age was mainly confined to the coastal plain, the fertile Jezreel valley and the Negev, where the Egyptians had established trade depots.

The Central mountain region had only secondary importance in the history of Palestine. The main occupation of the people was cattle breeding. Trade activities are limited here because the tough mountain tracts posed a challenge to easy transport and communication.

The Jordan valley, a peculiar geographical region, appears to have highly favored the development of early cultures. Being surrounded by high mountains, the Jordan Valley is isolated from the rest of the country, forming a thin unit about sixty miles long, with many independent cultural characteristics. Its northern and central parts are fertile and well-watered, highly suited for agriculture. Natural resources are abundant in the southern part, which include salt, copper, bitumen, sulphur etc. Moreover, the Jordan River is navigable in most parts and thus provides easy transport and communication throughout the valley.

The Jordanian Plateau is a peripheral region. Hunting and herding has been the major occupation of the people. Cultivable land, water resources and other natural resources are scanty in this region.

Palestine today is comprised of three geo-cultural areas based on ecological condition. First, the Negev region, which covers the peninsula of Sinai, most of Arabia and the Syrian Desert. Nomadic life is the prevailing pattern of life in this area. The nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral 'Bedouins' and the Oasis dwellers are the inhabitants who rely mainly on stock raising and the date palms.

The western part of the Jordanian Plateau, the Jordan valley, western Jordan and large parts of northern Israel together with Lebanon and Syria, form the second cultural area<sup>5</sup>. The Arab-speaking agricultural population of this area is based on a social structure of 'extended families.'<sup>6</sup>

The third cultural area is highly industrialized Israel which is more an extension of the West. The majority Jewish population of this area is concentrated in urban centers and their social organization is similar to that of American towns. The agrarian population of this area is living in collective or half-collective settlements. This cultural area is a recent formation, formed as a result of organized migration of Jews from different parts of the world under the auspices of World Zionist Organization. The country has two ecological and cultural sub divisions also – the northern Palestine and south-eastern Palestine. These divisions are formed due to cultural separation. The northern Palestine is connected directly to the cultural centre of the North and the South Eastern Palestine is linked to the arid and semi-arid zones of the inner Near East, hence the cultural difference. The main ecological and cultural divisions and sub-divisions persisted throughout history.

The present political boundaries are not natural borders of Palestine. The geographical and cultural area of Palestine is the land between the peninsula of Sinai to the south and the mountains of Lebanon to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the great Arabian Desert to the east.<sup>7</sup>

It was only after the First World War that Palestine acquired definite political boundaries for the first time in its history.<sup>8</sup> Until then, the name denoted different geographical, historical or administrative meanings at different times. Palestine included a land area of about 26,320 sq. kilometres<sup>9</sup> within her post -1922 boundaries. In addition to this land mass contained 704 sq. kilometres<sup>10</sup> of inland water including Lake Huleh, Tiberias and half the Dead Sea. This land area has been bounded by the Mediterranean on the west, the old frontier between Egypt and Ottoman Empire (which ran from Rafah on the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea) on the south west; the Ladder of Tyre (Ras-al-Naqura), the lower slopes of Mount Hermon and the upper stretches of the Jordan at Banias (Dan) on the north; and Lakes Huleh, Tiberius, the Jordan River and half the Dead Sea on the east. These boundaries for Palestine were established after continuous negotiations for more than 7 years (1916-1923) between Britain, France, the World Zionist Organization and the Arab leaders.

Today new political boundaries have spread over Palestine. At present, Palestine is a region with new political boundaries which include two major countries – Israel and Jordan – and demilitarized zones, patches of no man’s land, West Bank, Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula.

## **Palestine in History**

The history of the Jews in Palestine begins as one can read in the Bible, with their return to Palestine after their captivity in Egypt, about 1200 BC.<sup>11</sup> Their ancestors, the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, lived with their families, servants and flocks in Palestine, centuries before the establishment and consolidation of Jewish authority in Palestine. The Patriarchs were associated with sites in the thickly wooded hill country of Palestine.<sup>12</sup> Around 3000 years ago the land of Palestine or Canaan had been known to the Hebrews as ‘Eretz Israel’ or ‘the land of Israel’. Since the dawn of history this land mass known as either Canaan, Palestine or Israel had attracted successive waves of nomadic tribes from the deserts of Arabia and the settled peoples from the fertile crescent. The south-west extremity of the land was already occupied by the Semitic<sup>13</sup> peoples such as, the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Aramaeans long before the coming of Israelites.

The Canaanites belonged to the North-West Semitic peoples of Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, of which the Jews were also a part.<sup>14</sup> Their cultural tradition was derived from Mesopotamia. They built villages and towns and their civilization was identified with the city of Ebla in Northern Syria. The Canaanites settled in the plains on the coast and remained there for most of the third millennium and the first half of the second millennium BC. The land west of Jordan River, the coastal Lebanon (Ancient Phoenicia) and Southern Syria were occupied by the Canaanites. In the Bible this area is called ‘the country of Canaanites’<sup>15</sup> or the land of Canaan’.<sup>16</sup>

The Canaanite towns and cities were very wealthy, and the life of their citizens must have been exceedingly luxurious. The place of the Canaanites were described in the Bible as ‘a good and broad land, flowing with milk and honey.’<sup>17</sup> The inscriptions of the period described their chariots of silver and gold; many silver and gold articles, inlaid tables and other valuables, which were taken by the Egyptians as spoil.<sup>18</sup> The Canaanites developed a sophisticated and literate culture in the ‘land of Canaan’. It was the Canaanites who developed the linear alphabet, which was transmitted to Greece and became the basis of Western writing systems. The Semitic language of Canaanites was spoken throughout the region. The Hebrew, the language of the Israelites, was a dialect of the Semitic language of the Canaanites. According to John Bright,

“the dominant pre-Israelite population was..... in race and language not different from Israel itself.”<sup>19</sup>

Throughout its recorded history the ‘land of Canaan’ had been strung with city-states paying tribute to the one or the other of the powerful empires to the South or the North. The country was under the nominal rule of an absent Suzerain (associated with the emperor), whilst the actual power was in the hands of a number of petty despots or of municipalities, ever ready to seize the opportunity of benefiting themselves at the expense of their neighbours<sup>20</sup>. The whole land was overrun by bands of foreign mercenaries who were ready to serve any city as long as it could pay, and they would join its enemies, to sack the city if it was no longer able to pay their hire. The city-states of the Canaanites were run on feudal lines. The local princes were subject to Egyptian Jurisdiction. The corruption of Egyptian bureaucracy and the continuous raids of the nomads made the land of Canaan a place full of disorder and insurrections, and internally weak during the arrival of Israelites from Egypt in the early twelfth century BC.

The non-Biblical data available seems to suggest that various nomadic groups, both Semitic and non-Semitic, but generally known as ‘*Hapiru*’ or ‘*apiru*’ began to appear in ancient Palestine about 2000 BC.<sup>21</sup> Before the end of second Millennium, Habiru groups became associated with specific territories and acquired new, national names such as, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites etc. The rest of the Habiru had become absorbed by the various settled communities in which they found themselves. The story of the name ‘*Hebrew*’ is much the same. Originally associated with some of these widely scattered Habiru groups, the Hebrews of the Bible came in time to lead a career of their own in a specific region, namely Canaan; and the name Hebrews gave way to the name Israelites (children of Israel), when the nation came into being.<sup>22</sup> The term ‘*Habiru*’ and the Biblical term ‘*Hebrew*’ were never employed for a nation.

Egyptian supremacy in Palestine was not of long duration. Towards the end of the 13th century BC, the Egyptian hold on Palestine was weakened and almost at the same time the Israelites entered Palestine across the River Jordan from the east. Almost simultaneously, the Philistines, a people of Greek origin, (probably from Illyria) entered and settled in the coastal plain, roughly between Jaffa and Gaza, across the sea from the west. It was this non-Semitic Philistines who gave the country its universally familiar name ‘Palestine’.

The Jews penetrated the highlands of the Land of Canaan and seized the middle part of it. There are numerous unsettled problems connected with the date of the Exodus and their entrance into Canaan. It would seem most probable that the Israelites left Egypt around 1300 BC.<sup>23</sup> Instead of taking the direct way into Canaan by the sea-coast, the Israelites turned towards the wilderness of Sinai, since the passage through the sea-coast could only have been made by fighting the settled people and the Egyptian forces. After wandering 40 years in the wilderness of Sinai the Israelites entered the hill country. An important Egyptian epigraph, the Stele of Menepthah (1224-1216 BC) dating from the fifth year of his reign, narrated his victories over Libya and the eastern Asiatic lands, including Israel.

‘Devastated is Tehennu; the Hittite land is pacified;

Plundered is Canaan with every evil;

Carried off is Ascalon; seized upon is Gazer;



Yenoam is made a thing of naught;  
Israel is desolated, her seed is not  
Palestine has become a defenceless widow for Egypt;  
Everyone that is turbulent is bound by King Meneptah...<sup>24</sup>

On the 'Stele' Israel is the only name written with the determinative symbol indicating 'people' rather than 'land' implying sedentary occupation of Western Palestine. With a very high sense of corporate people hood, created by the traditions of the Exodus from Egypt, the Covenant with Yahweh in Sinai and the concept of 'promised land', the nomadic Israelites defeated the Canaanites and Philistines. Though the Israelite tribes invaded and defeated the Canaanites, they did not become firmly established in their new home until the early decades of the 12th Century BC.<sup>25</sup> The struggle of Israelites against Canaanites is vividly depicted in the pages of the Book of Joshua: 'The tribes of Israel, though small in numbers and relatively late to arrive, were destined to remain unique among the many peoples who appeared in Western Asia at the dawn of history. Out of their way of life grew three great religions, the Jewish, the Christian and the Muslim.'<sup>26</sup>

The land of Canaan has a unique status in the life and history of Israelites because according to the Bible, this land was promised to the descendants of Abraham. "Abraham was lived in the Chaldean city of Ur and his father, Terah, with his family, left Ur to the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there."<sup>27</sup> After the death of Terah, by divine order,<sup>28</sup> Abraham left Haran to the land of Canaan.

The first explicit promise of the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham was at Shechem (now Nablus); "When they (Abraham and his men) had come to the land of Canaan, Abraham passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were lived in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land'.<sup>29</sup> This promise is repeated in Genesis 15:7, "And He (the Lord) said to him (Abraham), "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess"<sup>30</sup> And again in Genesis we read; 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt (River Nile) to the great river, the river Euphrates, the Land of the Kenites, the Ken'izzites, the Kad'monites, the Hittites, the Peri'zzites, the Raph'aim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gir'gashites and the Jeb'usites."<sup>31</sup>

When Abraham made a covenant with God through circumcision again God promises:

"And I will give you the Land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."<sup>32</sup> The promises made to Abraham are repeated to Isaac and to Jacob. In Genesis, we read the promise of God to Jacob; "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, the Land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants."<sup>33</sup> "Behold I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you."<sup>34</sup> The Lord restated the promise while talking to Moses; 'Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel.'<sup>35</sup>

It is generally supposed that these promises were made to the Jews, the selected people of

God. But it is clear that to the descendants of Abraham, God made the promise and the word “to thy seed” (to your descendants) includes the Arabs who can claim descent from Abraham through his son Ishmael born to Sarai’s (Abraham’s wife) Egyptian maid Hagar.<sup>36</sup> Ishmael was the patriarch of many Arab tribes and it was Ishmael who was circumcised when the Land of Canaan was promised as an ‘everlasting possession’ God promised Abraham that ‘I will make a nation of the son of the slave women (Ishmael) also, because he is your offspring.’<sup>37</sup> The study of the divine promises reveals that the first promise inevitably includes all the descendants of Ishmael (including the Arabs). But afterwards in the time of Isaac and Jacob the promise was narrowed to their descendants though not in such a way as to exclude explicitly their Arab brethren.<sup>38</sup> Many Arabs accompanied Moses and Joshua into Palestine in the course of conquest. It is well known that the hospitality and kindness of Jethro the Priest of Midian who was an Arab and father-in-Law of Moses, contributed much to the success of Moses.<sup>39</sup>

## **Conquest of Canaan**

The military victory over the prior inhabitants of the land were promised by God to Israel:

And He said, “Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth or in any nation, and all the people among whom you are, shall see the worth of the Lord, for it is a terrible thing that I will do with you. Observe what I command you this day: Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.”<sup>40</sup>

The Book of Joshua and Judges gives a detailed description of the violent conquest of Palestine by Israelites. Joshua the son of Nun<sup>41</sup> commanded the Israelites into Palestine. The Israelites had a clear idea of the land to be conquered. The boundaries of the Land of Canaan were revealed to them by God through Moses:

“... When you enter the Land of Canaan, your south side shall be from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern boundary shall be from the end of the Salt Sea on the east, and your boundary shall turn south of the ascent of Akrabbim, and cross to Zin, and its end shall be south of Ka’deshbar’nea; then it shall go on to Ha’zarad’dar, and pass along to Azmon; and the boundary shall turn from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the sea. For the western boundary, you shall have the Great Sea and its coast....

This shall be your northern boundary from the Great Sea you shall mark out your line to Mount Hor; from Mount Hor you shall mark it out to the entrance of Hamath, and the end of the boundary shall be at Zedad; then the boundary shall extend to Ziphron, and its end shall be at Hazarenan;.....

You shall mark out your eastern boundary from Hazarenan to Shepham; and the boundary shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of A’in; and the boundary shall go down and reach to the shoulder of the sea of Chinnereth on the east; and the boundary shall go down to the Jordan, and its end shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land with its boundaries all round.”<sup>42</sup>

In the course of the conquest, the Israelites resorted to violence, mass slaughter and enslavement of the inhabitants. After the violent capture of city of Ai. “Israel smote them, until

there was left none that survived or escaped.”<sup>43</sup> The city of Jericho was also met with the same fate. Then Joshua defeated the five Kings of the Amorites.<sup>44</sup> He put them to death and hang them on five trees.<sup>45</sup> “Joshua and the men of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were wiped out...”<sup>46</sup> When Joshua took Makke’dah, he left none remaining<sup>47</sup>. He smote all Kings of Libnah and killed all men and women.<sup>48</sup> Joshua smote the city of Lachish and killed every person in it.<sup>49</sup> Then he defeated Horam, the King of Gezer, who came up to help Lachish and killed him and his people<sup>50</sup>. The King and the towns of Hebron was then taken and every person in it were killed<sup>51</sup>. ‘So, Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their Kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed....’<sup>52</sup>

The Israelites penetrated the hill country and defeated the Canaanites, Amorites, the Hittites, the Per’izzites and Jebusites of the area<sup>53</sup> They did not leave any that breathed. Then, the people of Israel defeated the Kings and took possession of their land beyond Jordan<sup>54</sup>. Under the leadership of Joshua, the people of Israel defeated thirty-one kings.<sup>55</sup> After the death of Joshua the men of Judah tribe fought against Jerusalem and took it.<sup>56</sup> Under the leadership of Ehud, people of Israel defeated the Moabites and killed about ten thousand of them at that time.<sup>57</sup> The people of Israel made successive inroads into the Land of Canaan. But the Coastal Lebanon (Phoenicia) and coastal Palestine (Land of Philistines) remained impregnable. Israelites failed to subdue them because they had chariots of Iron<sup>58</sup> and well-trained army.

According to the Biblical accounts, the people of Israel had either killed or enslaved the vanquers (fallen foes). For example, the people of Gibeon, who made peace with Israel, were made ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’<sup>59</sup>. The Canaanites and Amorites were subjected to forced labour.<sup>60</sup> The Bible is the major source of our knowledge of the history of Israel in ancient times. Much of the Biblical data is found to be reliable historical documents of antiquity. Yet its value for the historian has not always been appreciated sufficiently. Modern historians disagree with some Biblical accounts of violent capture and massacre of cities and peoples by the people of Israel. K.M. Kenyon, a noted archaeologist did not agree with the Biblical account of Joshua’s capture and destruction of Jericho. She argued that Jericho had already been destroyed several centuries before.<sup>61</sup> Prof. Martin North observes that the Israelites did not conquer or destroy Canaanite cities, but in general, settled in unoccupied regions without displacing the original inhabitants.<sup>62</sup> There are many scholars who adhere to this view and conclude that Israel emerged gradually and peacefully from within Canaanite Society instead of conquering it violently from the outside.

The book of Judges 3:56 substantiates this argument. We read: “So, the people of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and they took their daughters to themselves for wives; and their own daughters they gave to their sons; and they served their God.”<sup>63</sup> According to Prof. Adolphe Lods;

“The people of Israel at the royal period were a mixture of Hebrews and Canaanites.... Being more civilized, the Canaanites naturally compelled the new comers to adopt their culture, and in this sense, one can say that the Canaanites conquered their victors. But on the other hand, the Hebrews possessed and preserved the consciousness of conquerors; they succeeded in imposing their social framework, their name, their God, on the entire population of Palestine.”<sup>64</sup>

The Hebrew was assimilated with the Canaanites in due course. They learned the art of agriculture and other arts of settled life including the art of writing from the settled population of the Land of Canaan. Unlike the Palestinians, the Hebrews and Canaanites were Semitic people. This commonality might have contributed for an easy merger between the two groups of people.

The Bible mentions the existence of various groups of people at one time in the land of Canaan. Of these peoples, the Canaanites, Philistines and Israelites played a leading role in the history of the land. In due course, the strong sense of corporate people hood enabled the Israelites to dominate the entire region. The Israelites believed that it was the fulfillment of God's promises to their patriarchs. Besides the land of Canaan and military victory, economic prosperity was promised to the Israelites. We read;

“And because you hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love which he swore to your fathers to keep; he will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the young of your flock, in the land which he swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.”<sup>65</sup>

After the conquest, to some extent, there was peaceful coexistence between the Israelites and Canaanites. But the Philistines and Israelites were constantly at war.<sup>66</sup> The self-definition and reinforced group self-consciousness based on their status as God's 'chosen people' – a myth of the ancient Hebrews – the twelve Israelites tribes united under Saul and fought the Philistines. Saul became their first King about 1030 BC and was killed by the Philistines at Gilboa.<sup>67</sup> A climax was reached, when David<sup>68</sup>, the son-in-law of Saul reunited the twelve tribes and became their King.

Saul and then David were the first kings chosen to lead the people of Israel against Philistines. The Israelites triumphed under David. The territorial expansion under King David necessitated the selection of a capital in a neutral territory so as to unite the northern and southern tribes. The ultimate choice was Jerusalem, the city of Jebusites, a Canaanite subgroup. The site had been occupied from 3000 BC; and as early as 2000 BC, it was mentioned by the name 'Jerusalem' in Egyptian texts.<sup>69</sup> In or about the year 1000 BC, David captured the city of Jerusalem and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty three years.<sup>70</sup> Jerusalem was known as the city of David.<sup>71</sup> David expanded the territory of his kingdom northward through much of Syria to the Euphrates river. An analysis of Assyrian provincial records shows that the Davidic empire extended from the Gulf of Aqaba to the pass of Hamath.<sup>72</sup>

After the death of David, his son Solomon the celebrated 'King of Wisdom', became the King. He acquired huge wealth by expanding the trading networks of Israel. With Phoenician aid, Solomon built a large fleet of merchant ships based at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea, just south of Edom. These vessels journeyed to Ethiopia and south-west Arabia once in three years.<sup>73</sup> Solomon made an everlasting contribution to Judaism by constructing the first temple to Yahweh in Jerusalem. From that time onward, the 'Jerusalem temple' became the focal point of the social and religious life of the Jewish people. They believed that their God Yahweh dwells in the temple. We read in the first Book of Kings that God appeared before Solomon and said, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before me; I have consecrated

this house which you have built, and put my name there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time.”<sup>74</sup> Solomon ruled the Kingdom for 40 years (972-932 BC). During his reign he lost Syria.

The unified Kingdom of 12 Jewish tribes had lasted just over seventy years, from about 1000 BC to 927 BC. After the death of Solomon, the northern tribes refused to accept the principle of hereditary succession within the family of David. The people of North and South Israel had never really been one. During David’s own reign there was friction between the two sections of the people of Israel. David seems to have represented the southern tribe in its desire to gain supremacy after the death of Saul.

Solomon put heavy burden on the people and favoured his own tribe at the expense of the rest.<sup>75</sup> Rehoboam, the son of Solomon was quite incapable of dealing with the situation. He proudly said, “my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”<sup>76</sup> The schism was inevitable and ‘Eretz Israel’ split into two kingdoms. The northern ten tribes formed the kingdom of Israel and the other two formed the kingdom Judah in the south. Jerusalem was controlled by the Kingdom of Judah. The two kingdoms were irretrievably weakened by continuous wars between each other and the encroachment of powerful neighbours. The stability of these two kingdoms had depended on the relative strength or weakness of the Pharaonic Egypt and the warrior states of Mesopotamia.

The kingdom of Israel maintained a precarious existence until 722 BC. The Assyrian King Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria about 727 BC when Hoshea of Israel (c.731 – 722 BC) refused to pay tribute and instead sought to ally with Egypt.<sup>77</sup> Samaria fell in 722 BC before Sargon II (c. 722-705 B.C.), the successor of Shalmaneser, who overthrew the Israelite monarchy and carried the Israelites away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.<sup>78</sup> In the Khorsabad annals Sargon II boasted of his achievements; “I besieged and captured Samaria, carrying off 27,290 of the people who dwelt therein. 50 chariots I gathered from among them.”<sup>79</sup> The kingdom of Israel became politically extinct after the Assyrian conquest. ‘Never again did it gain full independence, for in the time of the Hasmoneans and their successors, the House of Herod, it had only a limited local authority.’<sup>80</sup>

The southern Kingdom of Judah lasted until 586 BC. Its capital, Jerusalem, was periodically besieged, taken and sacked by the Assyrians, the Philistines, the Arabs, the Syrians, the Babylonians and the Egyptians.<sup>81</sup> In 586 BC, the Kingdom of Judah was destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. He burned down Solomon’s temple and carried off all the treasures of the temple and the treasures of the King’s house and cut in pieces all the vessels of Gold in the temple of the Lord, which Solomon had made.<sup>82</sup> Subsequently, the Kingdom of Judah was absorbed into the Babylonian Empire. Many of its State and religious elite were transported to Babylon. The Babylonian Emperor carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour and all the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained, except the poorest people of the land.<sup>83</sup> The Babylonians had taken Philistia also and she became a tributary. And then the Philistines had disappeared from history as mysteriously as they entered it.

The Assyrians and Babylonians carried away the cream of the manhood of Israel and Judah. The introduction of contingents from Mesopotamia and elsewhere resulted in the further depletion of the Jewish population. As a result, ‘the Hebrew language disappeared from Palestine

and was replaced by Aramaic which was used alongside the Arabic language for several centuries.<sup>84</sup> It is to be noted that Aramaic was the language of Jesus Christ. After the fall of Judah, the Jews formed a majority of the population only in the South. These national calamities seem to have inspired the spiritual aspects of Judaism. "Through the mediations of a series of prophets, Yahweh, the tribal deity of the primitive Israelites, who often sanctioned slaughter and destruction, was transformed into a more universal God enjoining lofty ethical and moral principles that made Judaism the first of the three monotheistic religions."<sup>85</sup> The prophetic tradition enabled Judaism to prevent the intrusion of Hellenism and to retain much of its original exclusiveness.

The Babylonians ruled ancient Palestine from 587 BC to 539 BC. Following the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, the Achaemenid Emperor of Persia, in 539 BC, Palestine came under the sway of Persians. Cyrus permitted the Jews, who had been sent into exile, to return to Palestine. Those who returned had rebuilt the Jerusalem Temple and revived the Judaic way of life.<sup>86</sup> A significant number of Jewish population remained in Mesopotamia and few had emigrated to other parts of Asia.

Alexander the Great captured Palestine from the Persians in 332 BC. And after his death in 323 BC the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt controlled Palestine until 198 BC. After that the Seleucids, based in Syria, ruled over Palestine. The Greeks implanted their culture, language and religion throughout their domain. It was during the Greek Period that the country became known as Philistia or Palestine. Under Antiochus Epiphanies IV (175-163 BC) the process of Hellenisation of Palestine had intensified. He rededicated the temple of Jerusalem to the Greek God Zeus. This act inspired a violent rebellion which overthrew the Greek rule and established the Maccabean Kingdom,<sup>87</sup> a theocracy based on Jerusalem around 164 BC. The Maccabean independence did not last long because in 134 BC Antiochus Sidetes, King of Syria, besieged Jerusalem and levied a tribute upon the Jews. However, the rule of the Maccabees, who established the Hasmonean dynasty, lasted for eighty years until 63 BC. The Maccabees were religious zealots. They forcibly converted the non-Jewish population predominant in the northern districts of Israel and the Galilee. The Maccabean rule came to an end in 63 BC when the Roman General Pompey captured Palestine.

The Romans incorporated Palestine, which was known briefly as Judea, into their Empire as an autonomous unit and made Herod, an Idumean,<sup>88</sup> at its head as a vassal King. Herod was given the title, 'King of the Jews'. He rebuilt the 'Jerusalem temple' on a magnificent scale and embellished Palestine (Judea) with Roman amphitheatres, hippodromes and public buildings. It was in the days of King Herod, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem<sup>89</sup>. Christ lived in Nazareth and Galilee and was crucified and buried in Jerusalem. So, these places became Christianity's holiest places and the entire Palestine itself became the Holy Land for Christians all over the world.

The Roman Emperor Augustus granted Herod mastery over much of southern Syria, extending almost to Damascus, to facilitate Jewish control of pilgrimage routes between Babylon and Jerusalem<sup>90</sup> not long after Herod the Great's direct Roman rule was introduced. The fundamental Jews considered their rulers collaboration with the Romans as a corruption of Jewish values and believed that Jewish submission before Romans was intolerable. Imbued with 'religious nationalism' the Jews revolted twice, first in AD 66 to 73 and again in AD 132 to 135. In AD 67, Vespasian, the future emperor with his son Titus arrived with a force of 60,000 men.

The Roman retaliation had been fierce, and the war became so bitter. In AD 70, Roman General Titus razed Jerusalem and the Temple perished in flames. All that remained was the Western (Wailing) wall of the temple. Jerusalem became the permanent garrison town of the Roman Legion. All resistance of the Jews had ceased by AD 73 and Palestine became a Roman province known as the Province of Judaea, administered by a legate of senatorial rank commanding the Roman Legion, with the title 'Legatus Augusti pro praetore provincia Judaeae.' The second Jewish rebellion, known as Bar Kokhba revolt, was initially successful. But Hadrian had brutally crushed the revolt in AD 134 destroying villages one after another throughout Palestine and killing and enslaving thousands of Jews. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed and renamed as 'Aelia Capitolina'. An altar for Jupiter was constructed on that of the 'Jerusalem Temple'. The Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem. The city became the permanent garrison town of a Roman Legion. After the revolt, the Jews were dispersed to the four corners of the Roman Empire. 'In Judea proper, the Jews seem to have been virtually exterminated, but they survived in Galilee.<sup>91</sup> The Galilee did not form a part of Palestine (Palaestina) during Roman period and Byzantine period.<sup>92</sup> It was a part of Phoenicia during this period.

The Graeco-Roman period in the history of Palestine has been marked with a high level of racial, linguistic and general cultural fusion. Greek language, Graeco-Roman customs and practices and civilization penetrated the lives of the Palestinians. However, the Semitic element continued to be prominent and Aramaic was a common vernacular, only the conservative Jews continued to use Hebrew. The Nabataeans (Arabs) clung to Arabic and Aramaic. Greek was the language of culture. It is to be noted that the Gospels were originally written in Greek language.

The Romans established cities and good roads and brought security and peace to the land. During the Roman period the Jews enjoyed a remarkable level of autonomy. They were allowed practical self-government in all their internal affairs and were able to set up their own administrative machinery."<sup>93</sup>

During the decline of Roman power in the first half of the 3rd century, the Palestinian Jews were almost free to carry out their affairs. At the end of the 3rd century, emperor Diocletian tried to restore the imperial authority. He imposed heavy tax throughout the empire as a measure to stabilize it. Unable to pay the heavy tax demand, a large number of Jews left Palestine. 'By A.D. 300, Jews made up one-half of the total population in the Galilee and less than one-fourth in the rest of the region."<sup>94</sup>

The disciples of Jesus Christ preached the gospel for the first time at Jerusalem. It was Peter who delivered the first sermon.<sup>95</sup> The apostles and the small band of followers were powerless before Jewish opposition and persecution. About 90 AD, the rabbis introduced the cursing of Christians in the Synagogue.<sup>96</sup> Apart from the doctrinal differences<sup>97</sup>, the pacifist attitude of the followers of Jesus Christ towards the Jewish revolts against Romans created a strong sense of anti-Christian feeling among the Jews. According to tradition, James, the brother of Jesus Christ and the first Bishop of Jerusalem was stoned to death by the Jews. Because of opposition and persecution, the disciples of Christ were compelled to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles in and outside Palestine.

Christianity has been more accommodative than Judaism. It was mainly through Paul's<sup>98</sup> efforts, Christianity came to terms with Hellenism and thus became more acceptable to the Gentiles. But the triumph of Christianity came very slowly. It was recognized as 'religiocita' in



AD 313. The conversion of Roman emperor Constantine (306-337 AD) to Christianity and the adoption of Christianity as the religion of Roman empire had marked the real triumph of Christianity. Then after Christianity spread further, under the political auspices of Roman empire, paganism was suppressed, and all pagan altars were destroyed. The Jews in Palestine were persecuted and many of them left the country. A Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church was established at Jerusalem in A.D. 451.

Palestine became a part of the Byzantine Empire when the Roman Empire was partitioned in AD 395. For more than 200 years after this, there was relative peace and prosperity in Palestine. The Byzantine was predominantly an ecclesiastical age.<sup>99</sup> The church was its greatest institution and the saints were its heroes. The socio-religious life was effectively controlled and directed by Priests, Bishops, Monks and anchorites. Monasticism became a favoured way of life. Monastic ideals of celibacy, poverty and obedience became popular and revered throughout the empire. During this period a number of monasteries were established in different parts of Palestine and the cult of pilgrimage to the Holy places in Palestine was developed among the Christians. Thus, the entire land of Palestine became a Holy Land. The predominant non-Christian population of Palestine was converted to Christianity. The country became generally Christian, however, its population remained mixed racially, culturally and linguistically. The Jewish element in population became increasingly insignificant during this period. The Byzantine age was marked with original contributions in the realms of art and architecture. Byzantine art was basically Christian. Diverse elements of Jewish, Greek, Roman, Hellenistic and Eastern traditions in art and architecture got blended to produce a distinct artistic expression during this period. In structure and symbolism, synagogue was adopted as a model for the church. Byzantine architecture began with Constantine the Great. He built the church of Holy Sepulchre and his mother Helena built two other churches, – the church of Nativity at Bethlehem and the church of Ascension at Jerusalem. Antioch, Alexandria and Ephesus became great centres of architecture and minor arts. ‘From Constantine days, we have remains in the Holy Sepulchre, dedicated in 336 AD. The original building, constructed in the form of a rotunda, survives in shape in the existing complex structure. Other remains are in the ‘church of Nativity’ with its five naves, apse and apsidal transepts.’<sup>100</sup> These two churches are the most important centres of Christian pilgrimage and considered to be the holiest shrines of Christendom. The Emperor Justinian (527 – 565 AD) had carried out elaborate building operations in Jerusalem. The ‘Golden Gate’ of the Temple area and part of the church, which is now al-Aqsa Mosque at Jerusalem, are attributable to him<sup>101</sup>. Under Justinian, the Byzantine style of architecture and decoration reached its zenith. Its masterpiece was saint Sophia (“divine wisdom”) Cathedral, completed in 537 AD.<sup>102</sup>

There was a relatively long period of peace and tranquility in Palestine, which abruptly ended in AD 611 when Khosrau II, the King Persia, overran Syria and captured Jerusalem. The Jews aided the Persians and joined in the plunder, destruction and massacre of Christians.<sup>103</sup> Many churches were razed to the ground. The Holy Sepulchre was destroyed and its treasures carried off including the ‘true cross’ to Ctesiphon, the Sassanid capital. The Patriarch of Jerusalem was made a prisoner and for a time the province of Syria with Palestine was lost to the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor Heraclius (610-641) rolled back the Persian tide and recovered the city of Jerusalem and Syria-Palestine. In 630 AD he entered Jerusalem triumphantly and amid great rejoicing returned the holy cross. He took vengeance on the Jews and revived Hadrian’s edict, barring the Jews from the city of Jerusalem. The triumph of Heraclius was short-lived because of the invasion of Arabs under the banner of Islam. On the banks of the river Yarmuk, the Arab

army of 25,000 under Khalid ibn-al-Walid, a young Qurayshite, encountered a Byzantine army of twice their size led by a brother of Emperor Heraclius on 20<sup>th</sup> August 636 AD. ‘The day was excessively hot and clouded by blinding wind-blown dust. The Arabians could manage the dust storms, but to the Byzantines it was a new experience. Many of them were relentlessly slaughtered; some were hurled into the river; only few escaped’<sup>104</sup> Khalid’s forces swept on through Syria. Damascus fell in 636 AD and Jerusalem surrendered to the Caliph Omar in 638 AD.

The request of the Byzantine Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius, was accepted by Caliph Omar and based on that, the terms of surrender was made which embody the elements of future Arab policy.

“In the name of Allah, merciful, the compassionate. This is the covenant which ‘Omar’, the servant of Allah, the commander of the faithful, granted to the people of Aelia. He granted them safety for their lives, their possessions, their churches, and their crosses... They shall not be constrained in the matter of their religion, nor shall anyone of them be molested. No Jew shall live with them in Aelia. And the people of Aelia shall pay the poll-tax.... Whoever leaves the city shall have safe conduct for his person and his property until he reaches his destination.”<sup>105</sup>

The policy of exclusion of Jews from the city of Jerusalem was merely a continuation of the Hadrian ban re-imposed by Heraclius. This might have been made at the insistence of the Christians. The Arab Muslims came in terms with the Christians in Palestine and the terms of peace imposed upon them were moderate but there was no evidence of understanding reached between the Muslim Arabs and Jews.

It was Caliph Omar who formalized the holiness of city of Jerusalem in Islam. Omar visited the Holy Rock (the prayer place of David and site of Jewish Temple) and personally located the places associated with the mystical journey of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem and then to heaven. He discovered the Rock from which the Prophet is believed to have ascended to heaven. The Rock was covered with filth and was concealed under a dunghill. Omar and his followers in person cleaned it and erected a small mosque. Later it was rebuilt and a ‘dome’ was made over the Rock which is called ‘the Dome of Rock’. Jerusalem thus became the first Kibla and third holiest sanctuary of Islam. Omar appointed Ubadah ibn Samit as ‘judge and teacher’ in the city. In 639 the Arab General Muawiya was appointed Governor of all Syria.

The Arabs were no strangers to Syria-Palestine region. It has been recorded that the Philistine army that attacked Jerusalem in 850 BC had a contingent of Arab tribes and the Arab warriors actively participated in the defence of Gaza against Alexander the Great.<sup>106</sup> In 5th Century AD an Arab tribe had converted to Christianity and set up camp near Jerusalem. Its chief was ordained as bishop.<sup>107</sup> The Muslim Arab conquest of Palestine was not the starting point of their occupation of the country. The Palestine Arabs are the original inhabitants of Palestine.<sup>108</sup> According to Maxime Rodinson, ‘the Arab population of Palestine was native in all the senses of that word and were Arabized as a result of the Arab conquests in the 7th century.’<sup>109</sup> Ethnically and linguistically, the Arabs related to the northern Semitic tribes to which the Hebrews and Canaanites also belong. The term ‘Arab’ first occurs in Assyrian texts of the 8th Century BC, referring to camel herders of the desert.<sup>110</sup> From 4th century BC, the Nabataean Arabs from their capital Petra controlled the ancient ‘south-north trade route’ between Arabian Peninsula and

Syria-Palestine. The Nabataean Arab Kingdom extended its sway over southern Palestine. They were finally subjugated by imperial Rome.

The Muslim Arab conquest of Syria-Palestine introduced improved conditions and religious toleration. Under the Byzantines, the Jews and Christian ‘heretics’ had been persecuted. Most of the Egyptians and Syrians belonged to the Monophysite Christian denomination which was condemned by the Orthodox Byzantines. They were considered as heretics and persistently harassed and persecuted. For the Monophysite Syrians and Egyptians, as well as for Persian Nestorians, Islam looked like a new Christian sect. The Muslim Arabs practiced complete toleration and so the Syrian and Egyptians in general preferred their rule. ‘As Semites, Syrians and Iraqis must have sensed that the invaders were closer of kin than the Byzantine masters. To some extent, the Egyptian Hamites shared this feeling. For a millennium these nationalities had been submerged under western domination. In the conquest of Islam, they vaguely saw a promise of self-reassertion.’<sup>111</sup> Like the ‘Christian heretics’, the Jews were also persecuted by the Byzantine rulers. Under Muslim Arabs, the Jews received religious freedom. The Jews and Christians (‘heretics’) generally welcomed the Arab conquest because of the tyrannical rule of their previous masters. “Therefore, the God of Vengeance delivered us out of the Romans by means of the Arabs..... It profited us not a little to be saved from the cruelty of the Romans and their bitter hatred towards us.”<sup>112</sup>

The Arabs were a very small minority in the territories they conquered. It is usually estimated that they numbered no more than a few hundred thousand in the early days of the caliphate.<sup>113</sup> The Arab language spread rapidly among the people of the conquered territories. This process was conditioned by the progress of Islam the religion. Everywhere Arabic was accepted as the religious language and the Lingua franca – the language of expression. Latin was replaced by Arabic in all Romanised areas. The Arab policy of tolerance and lighter taxation made them readily acceptable among the indigenous population. In Palestine, after the Arab conquest a large number of Indigenous people were converted to Islam. As a result, ‘the predominantly Christian population became predominantly Muslim.’<sup>114</sup>

The general adoption of Arabic and the acceptance of Islam by the indigenous population of Palestine was a spontaneous process. Even though Islam was the guiding spirit, the Arabs did not impose it at the point of sword and the active state manipulation. As Ibn Khaldoun pointed out in the fourteenth century;

“Only when their nature has been permeated by a religious impulse are they transformed, so that the tendency to anarchy is replaced by a spirit of mutual defence consider the moment when religion dominated their policy and led them to observe a religious law designed to promote the moral and material interests of civilisation.”<sup>115</sup>

Prophet Mohammad, throughout his life, recognized the close relationship between his own preaching and the Judeo-Christian traditions. Muhammad called his religion ‘Islam’, or surrender (to God), which is viewed to be the culmination and perfection of Judaism and Christianity. Allah is also the God of Jews and Christians. Being the recipients of divine messages through prophets, the Jews and Christians are “the People of the Book”. So, they are to be tolerated because of their place in the lineage of Islam. A system of communal autonomy was devised for the Jews and Christians who did not embrace Islam. They were permitted to regulate their own religious and communal affairs under their spiritual leaders. They were granted protection in

return for their submission to Muslim rule and their payment of the 'Jizya', a poll tax paid by non-Muslims and became known as "dhimmis". Though freedom of religion was granted to Jews and Christians they were treated inferior to the Muslims and kept in a humble status because of their denial of the divine message, according to Muslim tradition. Under the new dispensation, the Christians felt more degraded as they were now equated with the Jews, after having ruled them and discriminated them for over two centuries by Byzantine authority.<sup>116</sup>

Since the Arab conquest, Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular, became an integral part of the Arabic-Islamic civilization, except for a short interruption during the Crusader period. Caliphs and Sultans of West Asia and North Africa embellished Jerusalem with religious and charitable institutions. The city became a seat of Islamic learning. Scholars and students from all over the Islamic world flocked to it for learning, prayer and teaching. The Muslim rulers always considered the fact that Jerusalem and Palestine were also holy to the Jews and Christians. There are several Jewish authors of the 10th and 11th centuries, e.g., Ben Meir, Rabbi Samuel ben Paltiel, Solomon ben Judah, and others, who write about the Jews repairing the wailing wall for devotional purposes.<sup>117</sup> The coming of Jews to Jerusalem annually was testified by an anonymous Christian pilgrim of the 11th century.<sup>118</sup>

The traffic of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was interrupted in the second half of the 11th century, first by the Seljuk's seizure of Anatolia from the Byzantines and then by the conflicts within the Seljuk empire which raged over Syria and Palestine.<sup>119</sup> This created widespread indignation throughout the Christian West and the first crusade was initiated to recover the Holy land in 1096 A.D. On 15 July 1099, the crusaders captured Jerusalem and the leader of the assault, Godfrey of Bouillon, was made the ruler of the city. The crusaders massacred thousands of Muslims and Jews. As a result, Jerusalem became for a time 'a Christian city where no Muslim or Jewish cult was permitted, and no non-Christian could take residence permanently'<sup>120</sup> The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was actually 'a rude military settlement, without the impulse, or at any rate without the time, for the creation of any achievements of civilization'<sup>121</sup>

The Crusaders then set up a series of small feudal states in Palestine. The impulse of the crusade and establishment of tiny Christian states was the combination of genuine, if misguided, religious spirit with land hungry and aggressive instincts of the younger sons of the feudal nobility, the commercial ambitions of the Italian port states and the opportunism of the still half-barbarous rank and file.

The Crusaders at first treated the Jews badly but later became more tolerant. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish pilgrim who visited the Holy land about 1170-1171 A.D. reported that during the later crusader period, the wailing wall was a place of constant prayer.<sup>122</sup> The number of Jews residing in Jerusalem during this period was reduced to its maximum extent. Nahman Gerondi, another Jewish pilgrim, reported to have found only two Jewish families in Jerusalem.<sup>123</sup>

The Christian control of Jerusalem lasted less than a century. In 1187 A.D. Saladin (Salah-ed-Din) a Kurd and now ruler of Egypt and Syria recaptured Jerusalem and resumed its Muslim character. Arab historians viewed that the recapture of Jerusalem was miraculously providential as the city fell on 27 'Rajah', the traditional anniversary of the Prophet's mystical night journey to it. In the year 1193 AD an area in front of the wailing wall was constituted Waqf<sup>124</sup> by King Afdal, son of Saladin and about 1320 AD the houses which are now called the Moghrabi

Quarter<sup>125</sup> was constituted Waqf by a certain Abu Madian.<sup>126</sup>

The Ottoman Turks captured Palestine in A.D. 1516 from the Mameluke rulers of Egypt and remained in occupation till the end of First World War, save for a short interruption of nine years from the year 1831 when the country was invaded by the Egyptians. The change of rulers did not bring forth drastic changes in the general condition and administration of the country. Under the Ottoman Crescent, the Palestinians enjoyed equal rights with the Turks with regard to national representation. Many of them were appointed officers in the administrative positions. As George Kirk has observed:

“The Turks made no attempt at the general colonization of the conquered provinces.... whatever a man’s race or birthplace, he was eligible for government service and could attain the highest office..... While the bulk of senior officials were Turks, Syrian and Palestinian townsmen gained by their innate keenness of intellect an appreciable number of senior posts.”<sup>127</sup>

The Ottomans divided the country into districts known as ‘Sanjaks’, such as Gaza, Jerusalem, Nablus, Lajun and Safad. These Sanjaks were incorporated to the province of greater Syria governed from Damascus. Local governors were appointed to the Sanjaks from Constantinople where revenues were annually sent. Later on, the Ottomans, relied upon the leading Arab clans of the country to carry out the administrative functions. As a result, the prominent Palestinian families such as the Khalidis, Nusaybas, Alamis, Husaynis and Nashshashibis were firmly established during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

As a part of administrative reforms introduced in 1887-88 the Ottomans divided the country into three ‘mutassarifiyehs’ (Administrative units) of Acre, Nablus and Jerusalem. Jerusalem and its surrounding area enjoyed autonomous status and was linked directly to Constantinople in view of its importance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The administrative unit of Jerusalem, comprised the greater part of the territory of Palestine and more than three quarters of its population.

The Ottoman society was pluralistic. Non-Muslim communities enjoyed political and legal rights with the Turks. As one study noted: ‘Remarkably this polyethnic and multireligious society worked. Muslims, Christians, and Jews worshipped and studied side by side.... The legal traditions and practices of each community, particularly in matters of personal status, death, marriage and inheritance were respected and enforced throughout the empire.’<sup>128</sup>

The principle of equality of rights which existed was reaffirmed by the Turkish constitution of December 23, 1876. The constitution provided an elected parliament and proportional representation of all nationalities.<sup>129</sup> As orthodox Sunni Muslims, the Ottomans viewed the dhimmis as inferiors, but their status was much better than that of the Jews in Medieval and early modern Europe. The dhimmis were given freedom to practice their religions, and to manage their internal affairs through Millet system.<sup>130</sup> Jews and Christians, while allowed to practice their religions and run their own sectarian affairs, they were regarded as practicing a less perfect form of monotheism than that of the Muslim majority living in Palestine.

During the Ottoman period Palestine was a predominantly Muslim country with a Christian minority and a small number of Jews. ‘The Muslims constituted the core of the inhabitants of the cities, most of the villages and all the Bedouins. They owned most of the land, controlled much

of the commerce, monopolised the civil service and were alone required to serve in the imperial army and the local Militia.<sup>131</sup> They did not think of themselves as Palestinians, but as Syrians who were part of the Moslems world and part of the Arab people.<sup>132</sup>

The Christian minority concentrated in the cities as merchants and craftsman and a considerable number lived in a few villages in Galilee. They shared the Arabic language and tradition with the Muslims. To expand the commercial and political influence in the Ottoman empire, the European powers extended patronage to the native Christians. European commercial and Consular agencies usually employed native Christians as sub agents and middlemen. Ottoman attempts to resist European pressures were unsuccessful. The emerging conflict between Ottomans and European powers led to the redressing of the nature and form of Muslim – non-Muslim relations in the middle of the 19th century. In Ottoman territory, European powers increasingly used various pretexts to claim the right of protecting Christian community or minority group. It has been noted that this concern for the Christians was more political than Christian in spirit.

Throughout the last two thousand years, the country has never wholly lacked Jewish inhabitants. But it is difficult to ascertain that a considerable number of native Jews continued to live in Palestine after successive waves of wars, massacres and exiles. ‘The majority of Jews who were in the country in 1839 were descendants of the refugees from Spain<sup>133</sup> commonly known as ‘sphardim’, and the minority were immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe commonly known as ‘Ashkenazim.’<sup>134</sup> The Jews concentrated in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad and Tiberias.

Palestine underwent great transformation in the second half of the 19th Century. During this period, as a result of great European expansion, trade and commerce came increasingly under European control. France acquired the right to grant special status (the *berat*) to Roman Catholic Ottoman subjects and gave them the trading privileges and legal immunity. The French Ottoman treaty of 1740, granted the French the right to protect Roman Catholics in the Empire and to represent their interests before the Sultans.<sup>135</sup>

Russia’s early interest in Palestine was concerned with pilgrims. The Ottomans guaranteed the Russians, the safe conduct of pilgrims to the Holy land in the second half of the 17th century. The exemption of pilgrims from tax was obtained a century later. They were permitted to build an Orthodox church in Istanbul. A Russian consul was installed in Beirut with Jurisdiction in Jerusalem, mainly to safeguard the welfare of pilgrims. Later a Russian Bishop with an ecclesiastical mission was installed in Jerusalem. To give religious education and to carry out philanthropic works an Imperial Orthodox Palestine society was established. All these activities created an effective Russian presence in Palestine.

Unlike France and Russia, Britain did not initially seek the protection of non-Muslim communities to weaken Ottoman empire and expand trade and commerce. For most of the 19th Century, Britain stood for political stability in Middle East in order to ensure the safety of their routes to India. British Policy was primarily directed to reduce the increasing Russian influence in Middle East and to cut off her access to Mediterranean which could pose a threat to Britain’s routes to India. The Southward expansion of Russia has already been posed as a threat to British India. Consequently, during this period, Britain wished to maintain stability, if possible, the territorial integrity of Ottoman empire.

Great Britain, France and Russia were the major European players in Middle Eastern affairs. The Ottoman Empire became a focal point of larger imperial rivalries, with the European powers eager to use trading rights and control of non-Muslims as tools to wield influence against their competitors as well as against the Turks.<sup>136</sup> The European intrusion into Ottoman affairs produced a number of local conflicts inspired by religious, ethnic and national feeling and finally paved the way for 'Eastern crisis'.

## Endnotes

- 1 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict*, IVthEdn., (Bedford / St. Martin's, Boston, 2001) P.2
- 2 Anati Emmanuel, *Palestine Before the Hebrews* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1963) P.12
- 3 See Harry M. Orlinsky, *Ancient Israel*, (II. Edn.) Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1960 pp. 37,38
- 4 *Ibid.*, P. 38
- 5 Anati Emmanuel, *op.cit.*, p.18
- 6 In the extended family all the offsprings of a family for at least three generations – all the cousins, uncles and aunts – live together as a single family.
- 7 Anati Emmanuel, *op.cit.*, P.12.
- 8 A.L. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine 1914-21* (Luzac & Company, London 1978) P.1
- 9 See Report of the Executives to the XII Zionist Congress, Part I pp. 33-39. Also see Rony E. Gabbay, *A Political study of Arab-Jewish Conflict*, (Paris, 1959), P.1
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 See Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna), *The Beginning of History of Israel*, (Integral life foundation, USA, 1995)
- 12 Genesis 13:18, 26:23, 28:10, 33:18, 35:1, 37:17
- 13 The word 'Semite' is derived from Shem, Noah's son in the Bible, from whose progeny some two dozen Middle Eastern peoples including the Jews and the Arabs claim decent according to their various traditions.
- 14 Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p.1
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- 16 Numbers 34:1 and 35:10.
- 17 Exodus 3:8
- 18 See L. Elliott Binns, *From Moses to Elisha*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1929), p. 14. Also see L. Elliott-Binns, 'Modern Discoveries and the Old Testament', in *Little Books on Religion* (SPCK, London).
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- 23 R.K. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.42. Also see Israel Finkelstein, *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (Washington D.C., Biblical Archaeology Society, 1994); Thomas Levy, *The Archaeology of Society in the*



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- 24 S.L. Caiger, Bible and Spade, p.111, Quoted in R.K. Harrison, Ibid.
- 25 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.17 (William Benton, London, 1964) p.126
- 26 Harry M. Orlinsky, *op.cit.* p.1
- 27 Genesis 11:31
- 28 Ibid., 12:1
- 29 Ibid., 12:6,7
- 30 Ibid., 15:7
- 31 Ibid., 15: 18,19,20,21
- 32 Ibid., 17:8
- 33 Ibid., 28:12
- 34 Ibid., 28:15
- 35 Numbers. 13:2
- 36 See Genesis. 16:15
- 37 See Ibid., 21:13
- 38 Prof. Alfred Guillaume, 'Zionists and the Bible', in Palestine and the Bible, (The Institute of Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1960) p.15
- 39 See Exodus. 18
- 40 Exodus. 34:10,11 See also Genesis 15: 19, Deuteronomy 7: 1,2; 8:20; 9:1,2,3; 19:1,2,3
- 41 See Joshua. 2:1
- 42 Numbers. 34: 1 –12
- 43 Joshua. 8:22.
- 44 The five Kings were the King of Jerusalem – Ado'ni-Zedek; King of Hebron – Hoham; King of Jarmith – Piram; King of Lachish – Japhi'a and King of Eglon – Debir; See Joshua. 10: 1-6.
- 45 Joshua. 10:26
- 46 Joshua. 10:20
- 47 Joshua. 10:28
- 48 Joshua. 10:29
- 49 Joshua. 10:31
- 50 Joshua. 10:33
- 51 Joshua. 10:37
- 52 Joshua. 10:40
- 53 Joshua. 11: 1-15
- 54 Joshua. 12:1
- 55 For names and places of the kings see Joshua. 12:7-24
- 56 See Judges. 1:8
- 57 See Judges. 3: 28, 29

- 58 See Judges. 1:19
- 59 Joshua. 9:27
- 60 See Judges. 1:30 and 35
- 61 See K.M. Kenyon, Digging up Jericho (London, 1957) pp – 256-265
- 62 Martin Noth, Histoire d'Israel (Payot, Paris 1970) p.159. Also see Robin Lane Fox, The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible, (London, 1991), pp. 225-33.
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- 65 Deuteronomy 7: 12-14. See also Deuteronomy 6:3; 8: 7-10
- 66 See Samuel I and II, Kings I and II, Judges
- 67 See Samuel I
- 68 The Mari letters C.1700 BC used 'davidum' as the title means 'chieftain' consequently it has been suggested that Elhanan was the original name of David.
- 69 Prof. R.K. Harrison, *op.cit*; p-65.
- 70 2 Samuel 5:5
- 71 2 Samuel 5:9
- 72 ARI, p.130 f, cited in Prof. R.K. Harrison, *op.cit.* p.66.
- 73 ARI p.134, cited in *Ibid.* p.67
- 74 1 Kings 9:3.
- 75 See 1 Kings 12:4, 7
- 76 1 Kings 12:11
- 77 See 2 Kings 17: 3,4,5
- 78 Albert M. Hyamson, Palestine Old and New (Methuen, London, 1928), p.76
- 79 2 Kings 17:6
- 80 ARAB, II, sect.55; ANET, p.284 f. Quoted in Prof. R.K. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.78
- 81 Palestine and Transjordan, Geographical Hand book Series, Cited in Henry Cattan, Palestine, The Arabs and Israel, (London 1969), p.4
- 82 2 Kings 24:13
- 83 2 Kings 24:14 also see 24:16
- 84 Henry Cattan, The Palestine Question (Croom Helm, London, 1988), p.5
- 85 A.L. Tibawi, *op.cit.* p.2
- 86 See the Book of Ezra, chapters 1,2,3
- 87 See the First book of Maccabees (1 maccabees) and the Second Book of Maccabees (2 Maccabees). The history written by Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquitates Judaicae and Bellum Judaicum) is another important ancient source for the period.
- 88 The rise of Arab Power in the fifth century BC forced the Edomites to migrate to Judaea, where they were known as Idumeans
- 89 The Gospel According to Mathew 2: 1
- 90 Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p.3
- 91 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.17, (London, 1964) p.166

- 92 During the Roman period and the Byzantine period, Palestine was called 'Palestina' and was divided into three parts: The central portion called 'Palestina Prima' with capital at Caesarea; the northern part called 'PalestinaSecunda' with capital at Tiberias; and the southern part which was not clearly demarcated, called 'PalestinaTertia' with capital at Petra.
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- 94 Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p.4
- 95 See Peter's Address, *The Acts of the Apostils*, Chapter-2
- 96 John Bagot Glubb (Glubb Pasha), *Peace in the Holy Land. A Historical Analysis of the Palestinian Problem* (London, 1971), p.169
- 97 The followers of Jesus believed that he was the Messiah, the Jews were expecting. However, the Jews believed that Messiah was yet to come.
- 98 See the Letters of Paul to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians (Two letters) and Timothy (Two letters)
- 99 Philip K. Hitti, *A Short history of Near East*, (D. Van Nostrand Company, INC, London, 1966), p.84
- 100 *Ibid.*, p.86
- 101 *Encyclopedia Britannica, op.cit.*, p.130
- 102 Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, pp.86-87
- 103 *Encyclopaedia, op.cit.*, p.131
- 104 Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.* p.97
- 105 A.L. Tibawi, *op.cit.* p.6
- 106 I Samuel 17:1-54. Also see A.L. Tibawi, *op.cit.*, p.4
- 107 A.L. Tibawi, *op.cit.*, p.4
- 108 Henry Cattan, *Palestine, the Arabs and Israel: The Search for Justice*, (Longmans, 1969, London), p.6
- 109 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, (Penguin Books, 1968), p.216
- 110 See Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p.5
- 111 Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.100
- 112 Quoted in Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (London, 1958), p.58
- 113 Peter Mansfield, *The Arabs*, (Penguin Books, London, 1976), p.41
- 114 John BugotGlubb, *op.cit.*, p.167
- 115 Ibn Khaldoun, *Muqadimma*, Beirut, 1900, P.152, Quoted in N. Barbour (ed)., *A Survey of North-West Africa*, (London, 1959), pp.15-16
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- 118 *Ibid.*, p.20
- 119 Peter Manfield, *op.cit.*, p.64
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- 121 T. Arnold and A. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam* (London, 1931), p.54
- 122 Quoted in *The Rights and Claims of Muslims and Jews....., op.cit.*, p.20
- 123 Cited in Reverend Charles T. Bridgeman's letter to the President of the Trusteeship Council, January 13, 1950. General

Assembly Official Records, 5th Session, Supplement No.9 UN Document / A / 1286, p.13

124 According to Muslim Sharia Law, the Waqf property is detached for “religious or charitable” purposes

125 This Quarter was donated for the benefit of Moroccan pilgrims and derives its name from that

126 See, The Rights and Claims....., *op.cit.*, p.20

127 George E. Kirk, A Short History of Middle East (Methuen, London, 1948) pp. 59-60

128 Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., Christians and Jews in Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society, vol.1, (The Central Lands, New York, 1982) p.1

129 S.N. Fisher, The Middle East (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1960), p.322

130 A practice which granted non-Muslim subjects a limited autonomy under their chief religious leaders. This practice proved to be a system of simplified administration. The term Millet derived from the Arab word ‘Milla’ which means religious community

131 A.L. Tibawi, *op.cit.*, p.10

132 James Parkes, Palestine, Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, No. 31, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1940), p.5

133 The Ottoman Empire was a haven for Iberian Jews who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula following ‘reconquista’ that was completed in 1492.

134 A.L. Tibawi, *op.cit.*, p.11.

135 Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p.11.

136 *Ibid.*, p.12

## Chapter II

### Zionism: Ideology and Movement (1881-1914)

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At the beginning of the 18th century the political weakness of Ottoman Empire left the way open to the European powers to dominate the Middle East. During the 19th century the Ottomans virtually lost all their European provinces and as a result the Empire was transformed into an overwhelmingly Eastern and Islamic Empire. By the end of the century Ottoman Empire declined, both politically and economically due to inherent weakness and European incursions and was known as 'the sick man of Europe'. The European powers maneuvered to establish and extent spheres of influence over the territories of the disintegrating Ottoman empire. The eastern question got foremost importance in European diplomatic battle by the turn of the 19th century. It was correctly argued that the dynamics of the eastern question lay in Europe.<sup>1</sup> As imperial Turkey waned, imperial Europe waxed. The issue was finally resolved by the defeat of Turkey in the first World War and the subsequent total disintegration of the Ottoman empire.

#### **Palestine in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

As the century progressed, Palestine underwent various transformations. Medieval Palestine was administratively subsumed under the province of greater Syria. The inhabitants used the name 'Palestine', to describe the 'country' (ard or bilad) they were living in. In administrative terms Palestine was known as 'Jund Filastin' or the district of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> The mameluk state stopped using this term in 1250 A.D. and they were followed by the Ottomans after 1517<sup>3</sup>. There was no political unit named Palestine under Ottoman rule. During Ottoman regime (1517-1918) Palestine was better known by its Arab-Muslim name of 'al-Ard al-Muqadassa' (the Holy Land)<sup>4</sup>. In terms of geography and culture Palestine was an extension of greater Syria. Being a part of geographical Syria, Palestine was also known as Surya alJanubiyya (Southern Syria) Syria. Palestine-Syrian connection was so close and provided an important channel for the dissemination of various ideas, including the idea of Arab nationalism into Palestine.

The land area later which came to be known as Palestine was estimated at 26.3 dunums (One dunum = approximately 1,000 sq. metres or 1/4 acre. 1 sq. mile = approx. 2.560 dunums), two-thirds of which were semi-arid Land.<sup>5</sup>

The central mountain terrain was the most thickly populated region. The total population of Palestine by the middle of 19th Century was around one-half million, of whom the vast majority were Muslims who formed more than 80 percent of total population, Christians formed about 10 percent, and Jews 5 to 7 percent.<sup>6</sup>

There was steady increase in the population during the second half of the 19th century. This was partly due to better security, better nutrition, better public health, and a steady economic growth, as well as Jewish immigration.<sup>7</sup> The Jewish population of Palestine expanded rapidly through immigration. The most attractive destination of Jewish immigrants was the city of Jerusalem. In 1865 only, half of the Jerusalem population of about 18,000 was Jewish while by 1884 about two-thirds of the city population became Jewish.<sup>8</sup>

The following table gives the estimated population growth of the large towns in Palestine from 1860 to 1922.<sup>9</sup>

City	1860	1880	1922
Jerusalem	19,000	30,000	62,500
Acre	10,000	8,500	6,400
Haifa	3,000	6,000	24,600
Ramla	3,000	3,500	7,400
Gaza	15,000	19,000	17,500
Hebron	7,500	10,000	16,600
Bethlehem	3,570	4,750	6,600
Nablus	9,500	12,500	16,000
Nazareth	4,000	6,000	7,500
Tiberias	2,500	3,000	7,000
Safad	6,50	7,500	8,800
<u>Jaffa</u>	<u>6,520</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>47,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>120,750</b>	<b>228,600</b>

The Ottomans adopted the Millet system for the treatment of their non-Muslim subjects. This system defined the identity in the Ottoman Empire along religious lines. However, the political identity of Muslims and non-Muslims was “Ottoman”. The ‘Ottoman political identity’ was at variance with the idea of nationality developed in Western Europe. The multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious Turkish-Islamic Empire had to maintain loyalty to the Ottoman fatherland to prevent the centrifugal forces. Loyalty to the Ottoman state waned and new political identities were formed as a result of Westernization.

### **Land reforms and new social groups in Ottoman Palestine:**

Between 1839 and 1876, the Ottoman government introduced a sustained program of reform (Tanzimat). The principles were intended to centralize the various instruments of government, differentiate their functions based on rational principles of Justice, and to apply these principles

equally to all Ottoman citizens.<sup>10</sup> To promote equality and stability in the Empire, the Ottoman's issued the Hatti Humayun in 1856. The Ottoman Land Reform Laws passed in 1858 and 1867 which addressed the crucial issue of Land ownership. The goal of the land law of 1858 was to assume control over state land, regularize the structure of land ownership and to check the growth of large private-land ownership. By this law the government hoped to raise more revenues, primarily through direct tax and through the disposal of state land and the successful collection of taxes on title deeds.<sup>11</sup>

By establishing clear proof of title to possession or use of land, the Ottomans could make the holders of these titles liable to taxes. It was expected that the 'fallahin' (agricultural labourers) would register their land and keep it under the provisions of this Land law. But the opposite took place as the peasants were afraid that the registration of their land would burden them with conscription and additional taxes. The Ottoman Palestine peasants were frequently in debt and owed considerable amounts of back taxes. So, they were often unable or unwilling to pay land tax for the use of state land or for the title to land they held by custom. In addition, many peasants, having the capacity to pay to establish title, did not do so as they afraid that once their names appeared on the tax rolls, their sons would be recruited to military service. In this context the peasants registered their title deeds in the name of deceased relatives and wealthy urban and rural notables. As a result, the land was accumulated mainly in the hands of a few urban notables. The peasants lost their right to ownership and became sharecroppers or hired labourers.<sup>12</sup> It was estimated that "only 20 percent of the land in Galilee and 50 percent in Judea was in the hands of peasants" at the turn of the 20th century.<sup>13</sup>

The land accumulated in the hands of urban notables can be seen from the list below provided by Granott.

Area	Number of owners	Dunums in their possession
Jerusalem & Hebron	26	240,000
Jaffa	45	162,000
Nublus and Tulkarm	5	121,000
Janen	6	114,000
Haifa	15	141,000
Nazreth	8	123,000
Acre	5	157,000
Tiberias	6	73,000 <sup>14</sup>

This process of Land accumulation brought about considerable power and influence to the urban notables in the central government and in the local administration. The 'majalis al-idara' or local administrative councils were dominated by the urban notables and they, "authorized the assessment and collection of taxes, approved land registration, decided questions of land ownership, and expressed influential opinions about the ultimate fate of lands that reverted to the state."<sup>15</sup>

“Among the prominent urban notable families, the Jerusalem notables enjoyed a special status because of the importance of city of Jerusalem. The prominent Jerusalem notables were the al-khalidi family, Nusayba family, Nashashibi family and Husayni family. These families by virtue of their positions and wealth wielded a high level of political power. James Finn, the British consul who lived in Ottoman Palestine from mid-1840’s to the early 1860’s, made political alliance with them to utilize their social status and political power for the benefit of British consulate.’’<sup>16</sup>

In Nablus the Tuqan and Abd al-Hadi families enjoyed a dominant social status and political authority. In Jaffa, the families of al-said, al-Bitar, al-Dajani, Tayyan, Baydas and Abu Khadre were the influential local force. The most prominent family in the port city of Haifa was al-madi family. The Greek-orthodox Christian families of al-Hakim and Nassar and the Moronite family of al-Bustani were other notable families in Haifa. The al-Taji and al-Ghusayn families in Ramla, the al-Shawwa and al-Husayni in Gaza and the family of Amar in Hebron enjoyed dominant socio-political status. The city of Acre was virtually controlled by the alShuqayri family.

The notable Arab families in Ottoman Palestine formed an economic class sharing common interests. At the same time, they were groups competing for local dominance. Their independent power base, social status, tradition and their influence on the Ottoman government enabled them to act as a cohesive group. The rise of political consciousness and the formation of an Arab political community in Palestine were primarily connected to the work of urban notables. Initially, the notables focused their attention on the expansion of their wealth and power, and later the struggle against Zionism.

The process of westernization, the impact of Tanzimat and migration brought about social stratification in Ottoman Palestine during 19th Century. The Palestine society has been roughly divided into three major groups; the Urban notable families, the commercial bourgeoisie and the foreign colonists.<sup>17</sup>

After the Crimean War (1853-1856), a class of commercial bourgeoisie emerged in the coastal plain and in Jerusalem. This class comprised mainly of Palestinian and Lebanese Christians, Jews and Europeans. The economic growth experienced by Palestine following the Crimean War contributed to the emergence of this class.<sup>18</sup> The European economic penetration of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean periphery and the gradual integration of Palestine economy into the world economic system were the main reasons for the growth of Palestinian economy in the post Crimean war period.<sup>19</sup>

The Land Reform Law of 1867 had granted foreigners the right to own land. According to this Law the foreign land owners (mainly Europeans) were required to submit a detailed description of land owned by them to Ottoman jurisdiction and pay taxes in return for their investment in land. This Law enabled the foreign merchants and bankers to purchase land in Ottoman Palestine and to play what Owen Roger called the ‘triple role’, of land owners, money lenders and tax-formers.<sup>20</sup> They introduced European Agricultural techniques and increased agricultural productivity. More land was cultivated in response, mainly to world market developments. The main crops of Palestine during this period were wheat, barley, maize, olive oil, sesame and oranges. There was vast expansion of citrus cultivation, especially of oranges. According to Alexander Scholch, “The garden area of Jaffa (Orange plantations and vegetable gardens) was quadrupled between 1850 and 1880..... (with) the annual yield of the orange



harvest ..... cited as 20 million in 1856 and 36 million in 1882.”<sup>21</sup> By 1908-13, Jaffa oranges constituted about 40 percent of the total foreign sales of Palestine.<sup>22</sup> Similar expansion also took place in the production of other crops especially wheat and olive oil.

Palestine experienced major industrial growth along with growth in cultivation in the second half of the 19th century. The first Palestine industrial census of 1927-28 indicated that the commodity production by machine and hand was expanding from the second half of the 19th century, up to 1914<sup>23</sup>. It is estimated that before 1914, there were 1,236 factories and workshops employing a capital of more than one million pounds.<sup>24</sup> About 75 percent of the factories and workshops were owned by Arabs.<sup>25</sup> They continued to use traditional methods of production while the European colonists, especially the Jews used modern technology and imported machinery. So, the main reason for the industrial upswing was the capital and expertise of the Jewish settlers. The relative inefficiency of indigenous production methods in comparison to those introduced by European colonists, pushed back the Palestinian Arabs in case of industrial and agricultural production.

The foreign settlers, mainly comprised of the German Templars<sup>26</sup>, the Jews and to a lesser degree, some businessmen from Beirut, were largely responsible for the economic upswing in Palestine. The Ottoman reforms (Tanzimat) and European penetration and subsequent integration of the region into world economic system prepared the soil for agricultural and commercial expansion. The historic tourism and pilgrim traffic to the Holy Land grew rapidly during the 19th century and contributed substantially to the economic growth of the region. Several surveys have been conducted to identify the Biblical sites during this century. These surveys “were concerned with the geography of the region in relation to its past,”<sup>27</sup> especially the Biblical past. In 1899, for instance, 2,300 tourists and 13,400 pilgrims visited Palestine and the income from this ranges between 60,000 and 80,000 pounds.<sup>28</sup> Pilgrimage and sale of devotional articles became an important channel to generate income in large scale for Ottoman Palestine during nineteenth century.

The economic and political changes in 19th century affected the basic texture of Ottoman Palestine. The emergence of landowners who owned large estates and a small class of commercial bourgeoisie who allied with the landed elites transformed the traditional production methods and thus effected social change. These classes were responsible for a major expansion of Palestinian agricultural and industrial productivity before Zionist colonization. Political coalitions were formed around these classes. They articulated the local demands and represented the Palestinian people before Ottoman Sultan and later before British authorities. In the last decades of the Ottoman rule the process of modernization, more specifically Europeanization, was intensified with large scale Jewish immigration which started with the first Aliyah<sup>29</sup> of 1882.

## **Zionism: Its Origins and Evolution**

The modern Zionist movement dates from the second half of the 19th century. It was born in the light of the incendiary fires of Russian pogroms<sup>30</sup> of 1882 and in the tumult of the Dreyfus Affair<sup>31</sup>. Zionism was the Jewish national movement to establish a Jewish nation in Palestine. Zionism represented a reinvention of the fundamental elements of Jewish ‘nationality’ that were present since antiquity. It sought to rebuild and reinvent the Jewry as a nation in an era of nationalism, revolution and anti-semitism<sup>32</sup> in Europe. The aspiration for political independence and a deep historical consciousness of people hood enabled the Jews to materialize their

nationalist dreams.

Zionism<sup>33</sup> is one of the youngest of European national movements. The dramatic rise of two political ideologies and practices, nationalism and colonialism, in the second half of the 19th century had decisive role in shaping Zionism. The colonial and imperialist elements in Zionism are exposed by the critics of Zionism especially the New Historians.<sup>34</sup> They pointed out that the total subordination of native Arab economy to Israel, economic exploitation, acquisition of land through dubious methods and Zionism's, perception of itself as a modernizing force and high culture in a backward environment, are imperialist elements in Zionism.<sup>35</sup> The pro-Zionist writers viewed Zionism as a genuine national liberation movement that evolved as a legitimate reaction to anti-Semitism. From this point of view, Zionism addressed the Jewish question of physical security, economic existence, and collective identity – rather to exploit and extinct others.<sup>36</sup>

Both these scholarly approaches differ in their normative presuppositions but similar in their attempt to contextualize Zionism and see it through comparative lenses that deemphasize its distinctiveness.<sup>37</sup> With its unique characters and in several essential ways Zionism differ from Western and Eastern nationalisms.

## **Zionism and the Biblical Past**

The history of modern Jewish nationalism begins with the basic fact of a cohesive ethnic group, living as a separate nation in Eastern Europe, apparently inassimilable, clinging to ancient folkways, costumes, diet, language as well as to a common religion. The Czars called it 'a nation within a nation.' The Bible portrays the Israelites as a group with a strong sense of peoplehood. This was carried over into the post-Biblical period. Whether this is properly called 'nationhood' is debatable, especially because 'nation' and 'nationalism', are generally viewed by historians as a later phenomenon.<sup>38</sup> Like all nationalisms, Zionism views the historic past in the light of the present. The Zionists revisited the Biblical past and considered it as authentic and scientific history. Hobsbawm was true to the core when he put it 'more history than ever is today being revised and invented by people who do not want the real past, but only a past that suits their purposes. Today is the great age of historical mythology.'<sup>39</sup> The Zionist movement originated in the search of 19th century European Jews to create a synthetic system in which a Jewish world caught up in the complexities of emancipation and enlightenment could retain its own identity while participating in modern civilization.<sup>40</sup> The Jewish identity undoubtedly involves unique and specific elements. The cult on mount Zion, an indestructible belief in a single God with a superior ethnical feeling and the Biblical concept of 'selected people' enabled the Jews to preserve their distinctiveness. As Edward Said put it in the new afterward to 'orientalism', "... the development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another different and competing alter ego. The construction of identity involves the construction of opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of their differences from 'us'."<sup>41</sup> The Jewish racial and religious identification produced their distinctiveness with Gentiles throughout history.

For the Jews, Biblical past is a dimension of the present. They have developed a sacred geography that had nothing to do with the scientific map of the world. Palestine – the Promised Land-especially the city of Jerusalem is central to the sacred geography of Jews. The Psalms celebrate the enthronement of the God of Israel on Mount Zion which is called 'the city of

peace', 'the holy mountain', and 'the eternal heritage of Yahweh.'<sup>42</sup> The Exodus tradition put the spirituality of the Israelites on Mount Zion. Moses climbed the Holy Mountain of Sinai to meet his God and he came down from Mount Sinai in the midst of a violent earthquake, fire, smoke and thunder.<sup>43</sup> God made a covenant with Israel and made them His own people with the words. "and you shall be to me a Kingdom of priests and a Holy Nation."<sup>44</sup> He gave Moses the Torah or Law, which included the ten commandments.<sup>45</sup>

King David brought the Ark of the Covenant, the most sacred object of his people, which was lodged in Kireath-Jearim on the Western border of his Kingdom. Henceforth, Yahweh selected Zion as his permanent mundane sanctuary. David purchased the threshing floor of Araunah (Ornan), who may have been the last Jebusite King, to construct a temple for Yahweh. He provided materials in great quantity and charged his son Solomon to build an exceedingly magnificent temple.<sup>46</sup> Solomon built a royal acropolis on the crest of Mount Zion which consisted of an elaborate royal palace and the great temple to Yahweh.<sup>47</sup> The temple of Yahweh, later came to be known as the 'Jerusalem temple' was designed to house the Ark of the Covenant. 'Once the Ark was installed there, the site became for the Israelites, a 'centre', that linked heaven and earth and also had its roots in the underworld represented by the Primal Sea.'<sup>48</sup>

The Jerusalem temple was imaginatively associated with Mount Zion. The temple also represented the 'Garden of Yahweh'<sup>49</sup> The temple made Mount Zion and City of Jerusalem the holiest places of Jews and centre of their spiritual and socio-cultural life. 'By building His temple and enthroning Yahweh on Zion, Solomon was, in Canaanite terms formally taking possession of the land in the name of the Davidic dynasty.'<sup>50</sup> Yahweh promised the lands sojourned by Abraham to his descendants. With the enthronement of Yahweh at Mount Zion, His people, the Israelites, has taken the land for eternal possession. This religious aspect made an irrevocable bondage for the Jews with Palestine.

Psychologically the Zionist movement derived inspiration from the little Kingdom of Judah rampaged by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. It was the Roman attacks of AD 70 and AD 135 which gave the final blow to the Jewish presence in Palestine. The city of Jerusalem was devastated, the Temple of Yahweh was completely destroyed, and the Jews were exiled from their Biblical homeland. The diaspora (exiled) Jews nourished the idea of return to Eretz Israel, a hope that had bound them together for centuries. On the ninth day of the month of Ab, which commemorated the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, Jews of a hundred generations later fasted and mourned as though they had been witnesses and victims of that ancient catastrophe. At Jewish weddings, the grooms crush a glass underfoot to commemorate the lost Temple of Jerusalem. The daily prayers of Jew's (thrice daily) were directed at the Zion and were reinforced by the annual prayer expressing the longing, 'next year in Jerusalem' The mystical yearning of the Jewish people to return to Zion was evoked by its forcible dispersion and innate tendency to preserve its separate identity as a community.

## **Zionism and Messianism**

Judaism expects the advent of a Messianic Age. It is believed that when that age comes 'the Jews will be gathered from all corners of the world, restored to the land of Israel, and given an honoured position among the nations; peace and justice will permeate human relations and human interaction with nature; society will cease to exist; and the Lord will reveal Himself fully to humans, becoming transparent and knowable.'<sup>51</sup> Zionism deflated the mythology of diaspora

Messianism fostered by Jewish theorists of emancipation and religious reform.<sup>52</sup>

‘In the history of Judaism’, writes Scholem, the influence of messianism. “has been exercised almost exclusively under the conditions of the exile as a primary reality of Jewish life and of Jewish history.”<sup>53</sup> According to Chaim Weizman the idea of ‘Jewish State’ (Der Judenstaat) propounded by Herzl immediately won the hearts of the Jewish masses because there was something messianic in it.<sup>54</sup> The conditions of the exile and the sense of helplessness provided a breeding ground for mystical and messianic hopes. The Jews in dispersion passionately pursued the idea of a messiah who would lead them back to Zion.

The historical notion of exile had become a cosmic symbol in Judaism. Palestine became the historic destitution and was elevated to cosmic stature. Aron David Gordon, Labor Zionism’s secular mystic and saint, said: ‘What we have come to find in Palestine is the cosmic element.’<sup>55</sup> Fueled by the historic needs of the ingathering of Jews in Palestine, Zionism raises itself to the heavens. In the words of Abraham Issac Kook, mentor of Israel’s redemptive religious wing and the first chief rabbi of Palestine, ‘the anticipation of redemption is the force which keeps exilic Judaism alive, and the Judaism of the Land of Israel is salvation itself.’<sup>56</sup> The Jewish messianism is fueled by the narrative of historic catastrophe that is the destruction of Jerusalem temple and the dispersion from Palestine. In its origins and by its nature Jewish messianism is a theory of catastrophe.<sup>57</sup> Messianic redemption is therefore a form of historic revenge, a way of settling scores. The violence of a cruel history repeats itself as its own cure.<sup>58</sup>

## **Judaism, Zionism and emancipation of Jews**

Judaism connotes a spiritual cultural complex. It was and is intimately bound up with Palestine the ‘historical’ (‘organic’ or ‘integral’ etc) homeland of Jews. With common traditions, symbols, ceremonies and a unity based on the one God idea, a galaxy of great historic figures, heroes, martyrs, scholars, saints and the common hope of restoration to the Holy Land with God as the acknowledged ruler of the universe, Judaism maintained the consciousness of the Land both as history and as messianic promise. The reference to the ancestral land (Palestine) was the potent myth of biological or tribal unity of Jews. The myth is religious in its origin. The vital core of Jewish survival has been the myth which inextricably linked the spiritual and social dimension of Jewish identity. The religion buttressed the sense of social unity, and the tribal consciousness maintained the force of traditional religion.<sup>59</sup> The social and political unity of Jews has been a product of religious solidarity. ‘The religious content of social unity and the social content of faith were both primarily expressed in terms of history, geography and law. Israel as the original environment of the Law, the land of Israel itself as history and geography and messianic promise, is the link between the two facets of Jewish identity.’<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the exile, Jews never ceased to be spiritually a nation. The enforced segregation (ghetto) reinforced distinctive socio-cultural and religious identity of Jews. The ghetto structure boosted the vigor of religious and communal institutions. It insulated their way of life and contributed to its survival. Throughout the centuries ‘Israel’ denoted a non-political characterization of the Jewish people. As a political entity, ‘Israel’, did not exist after the fall of northern kingdom of the Ten tribes in 721 BC, at the hands of Assyria. Thereafter ‘Israel’ became vested with only a religious connotation as in the Biblical term ‘children of Israel’, and symbolized Jewish peoplehood.<sup>61</sup> The formula of the presentation of the wedding ring at a marriage ceremony concluded with a phrase. “In accordance with the Law of Moses and Israel”<sup>62</sup>

This surely does not mean the 'state of Israel', but the 'Children of Israel'. For the traditional Jews, Judaism means nothing but an affirmation of the threefold concept: God, Torah and Israel, which are one and indivisible.

The Jews have been persecuted in most societies they have lived for more than two thousand years. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Christians, Muslims, Socialists, Communists, Fascists and Nazis have all taken exception to the Jews in their midst. Anti-Jewish prejudice, feeling of suspicion, contempt and hatred towards Jews are the important components of Anti-Semitism. In the view of Zionists and in part, Jewish Orthodox, anti-Semitism is an inevitable effect of Jewish existence in the Diaspora. "The source of all the misfortunes of the Jewish people is the loss of its historic country and its dispersion in all countries", declared the Marxist delegation of the 'Poale-Zion' to the Dutch-Scandinavian committee.<sup>63</sup> It is been conceived that emancipation of Jews is possible only with the establishment of a state to which the Jewish people could claim fully as their own.

The history of Western civilization is tainted with anti-Semitism and stained with the blood of Jews. The attitude of anti-Semites has been "assimilate, emigrate or die", or in the case of the Nazis, simply, 'die'. Gandhiji deeply resented the sufferings and hardships of the Jews in Central and Eastern Europe and in sorrow described them as the 'untouchables of Christianity.'<sup>64</sup>

Numerous contrasting features and varied views are categorized into 10 main forms of Anti-Semitism by B.D. Weinryh. They are:<sup>65</sup>

- (a) Anti-Jewish beliefs, attitudes and sentiments.
- (b) Defamation of Jews and things Jewish.
- (c) Personal withdrawal from and resentment of members of the Jewish group (avoidance)
- (d) Denunciation in speech or writing of Jewish religion, culture, traditions and attitudes as being inimical to a nation's welfare.
- (e) Opposition by word and deed to the equal participation of Jewish people in the social and legal rights which a nation affords its people generally.
- (f) Exclusion from citizenship and Economic boycotts
- (g) Political anti-Semitism (as part of a broader political ideology or policy)
- (h) Persecution of Jews
- (i) Physical attacks or pogroms
- (j) Exterminatory anti-Semitism.

It became common to qualify every and any unfriendly act toward Jews as anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism accompanied the origin and evolution of capitalist system in Europe. For the emerging Christian bourgeoisie, the competition that the Jews presented, have been quite difficult to deal with. The Jews were expelled from England in 1290 AD and from France in 1306 AD. The Spanish reconquest led to the expulsion of Jews into the Mediterranean World, especially to the European parts of Ottoman Empire. The traditional religious antagonism or mythical 'eternal' anti-Semitism was reinforced in the context of ascending capitalism. As a

result of the drastic changes in the capitalist system and newly formed democratic consciousness, the Jews were readmitted to England, France and some German states under state sponsorship during the eighteenth century. The French revolution (1789) and its Declaration of Rights of man provided legal and social equality to all. The Jews got the opportunity to assimilate as individuals into French Society. Emancipation, the product of early enlightenment, liberated the individual Jew, offering the possibility of full assimilation or integration within the larger society of individuals. It was thought that the Jews could enjoy freedom and equality only by asserting a national identity. During the nineteenth century, majority of Western European Jewry opted for assimilation. Even though, latent and sporadic open hostility toward the Jews remained throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. The existence of anti-Semitism was due to the conviction that the Jews are an unassimilated national group. Pogroms in Western Europe were rare, but psychologically, to live in an atmosphere of contempt was more injurious.

To regard Russia as the classical home of anti-Semitism would not be far wrong. Its vast Jewish population-some five to six million on the eve of the First World War – was kept legally, and for the most part socially herded away from the rest of the inhabitants of the country.<sup>66</sup> The partition of Poland which occurred in three stages in 1772, 1793 and 1795 and portions of the country went to Russia, Prussia and Austria. As a result, a large Jewish population was transferred to Russia.

The religious anti-Semitism<sup>67</sup> has been deep rooted in Russian society. Peter the Great (1672-1725) was alleged to have said: “I would rather see in our midst nations professing Muhammadanism and Paganism than Jews, who are all rogues and cheats.”<sup>68</sup> His widow, Catherine I and Catherine II, the Great (1762-1796), almost purged Russia of Jews. In 1790 and 1791, laws were passed to create the Pale of Settlement. The Jews were confined to the former Polish territories and certain areas of South-West Russia. They were not permitted to live in the major Russian cities of the interior and also in cities such as Kiev and Sebastopol in South-West Russia.

A large element of Russian anti-Semitism, both official and popular arose from the fact that the Jews followed a faith alien to the national Russian Orthodox Christianity. Dostoevsky openly voiced the view that the Jews were a harmful and alien element in the Orthodox community.<sup>69</sup> In the nationalist way the Russians viewed that the Jews did not belong to the Russian way of life, that the aims and ideals associated with them – such as capitalism or a progressive philosophy – made them a creature apart in the traditional Russian world, less than human even. There was also some latent, indigenous or mythical ‘eternal’ anti-Semitism in the areas of the Jewish Pale of settlement in Russia based on primitive prejudice. In this ‘folk anti-Semitism’, the Jew was seen as a merciless exploiter of his innocent Christian victim in the towns and villages of the Jewish Pale and this bred hatred. The Russians believed that the Jews cannot assimilate to Russian society. The question of assimilation was to some extent, true. According to a census of 1897 fewer than a quarter of Russian Jews could read and write in Russian.<sup>70</sup> Count Witte told Theodor Herzl in 1903 that 50% of all Russian revolutionaries were Jews and attributed this to the unjust way in which the Jews were treated. For young Jews, to embrace revolution was a way out of their humiliation predicament<sup>71</sup>. This idea was to some extent shared by Jakob Wassermann when he said “every iconoclastic incident, every convulsion, every social challenge has seen, and still sees, Jews in frontline. Whenever a peremptory demand or a clean sweep is made, wherever the idea of governmental metamorphosis is to be translated into action with

frenzied zeal, Jews have been and still are the leaders. Jews are the Jacobins of our age.”<sup>72</sup>

Modern Zionism found its roots among Russian Jews. A modernist movement called ‘Haskalah’ arose in the 1850’s among Russian Jews. The members of ‘Haskalah’ were influenced by Western European literary models and stood for legal equality with non-Jews. The assimilationist hope of ‘Haskalah’ has been encouraged by relatively tolerant regime of Czar Alexander II. But the pogroms erupted in 1881 because of the assassination of Alexander II which shattered the hopes for legal emancipation. The malaise of anti-Semitism soon spread to East Europe, the Balkan countries and Germany. The result was the beginning of a vast emigration movement especially from Russia. A great majority of them moved to bountiful America and a few young zealots directed their attention to Palestine.

During the 1880’s small numbers of nationalist zealots organized Zionist groups in the cities of the Pale and revived interest in the Holy Land. An organization emerged in 1881-82, which later came to be known as ‘Hibbat Zion’ (The Love of Zion) conducted courses in Hebrew language and Jewish history and tried to reconstruct the Jewish identity around Palestine. The members of ‘Hibbat Zion’ called themselves ‘Hovevei Zion’ or ‘Lovers of Zion’. They organized gymnastic and self-defense organizations called Maccabee clubs, which were the pioneer militant groups in the history of modern Zionist movement.

The mass emigration of Jews from Russia after 1881 was unquestionably motivated by the pogroms and the propaganda of Hibbat Zion. The aim of Hibbat Zion was to create a virile new agricultural society in Palestine. The young Zealots of Hibbat Zion were emotionally charged but miserably lacked practical considerations. So, after they reached Palestine, many of them drifted aimlessly into the cities of Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Hebron instead of penetrating into the rural Palestine and establish agricultural settlements. Only a few acquired lands and developed citrus plantations and vineyards. The majority settled in the cities, especially in Jerusalem. It is estimated that by the end of the period of the first immigration in 1903, the total Jewish rural population in Palestine numbered only 5,210, operating some 7000 farming units distributed among twenty-five new villages.<sup>73</sup> The Lovers of Zion movement expanded greatly and by 1895 they had approximately 10,000 members in Russia.<sup>74</sup>

The distinguishing feature of the Lovers of Zion was that its members were quite specific about the need to return to Palestine. There was a subsidiary movement within it known as the BILU, an acronym for ‘Beit Ya’akov’ lehu Venelha’<sup>75</sup> (‘O House of Jacob, come, let us go’). This association was founded by Young Jews in Kharkov, Russia. Its members advocated the revival of the Hebrew language and decided to settle in Palestine as farmers or labourers. The BILUim combined the Jewish nationalist fervor with Marxism. They issued a pamphlet which expressed the hope that the ‘interests of our glorious nation will rouse our national spirit in rich and powerful men, and that everyone, rich and poor, will give his best labours to the ‘holy cause’<sup>76</sup> Being committed to socialist ideals, the BILU combined the passionate nationalism with a very un-Marxian religiosity and added, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, and our land, Zion, is our only hope.”<sup>77</sup>

The members of ‘Biluim, all of them young men in their teens and early twenties, were the only group among the settlers of first, ‘aliyah’, imbued with a strong sense of altruism and idealism. The first group of 14 landed at Jaffa on July 6, 1882. Two years later, a second group came, comprising of 34 young members, including four women.<sup>78</sup> They tried to establish a model

agricultural village based on equality, co-operation, mutual aid, group discipline and self-defense. But the lack of experience and resources destroyed their illusions. The Biluim left their imprint on the country and their ideas, books and memoirs influenced later movements, especially the Labour Zionism. Being the precursors of the idealist 'aliyah' they profoundly inspired later immigrants to Palestine.

## **Leon Pinsker and Jewish emancipation**

Leon Pinsker (1821-91), a relatively assimilated Russian Jew born in Poland (Odessa), has been considered as the founder of the modern Zionist movement in its preliminary pre-political phase. He was a medical doctor and leader of the assimilationist movement among Russian Jewry. He was one of the founders of a Russian language weekly which encouraged Jews to speak Russian and a regular contributor to *Rassviet*, the assimilationist weekly. After a violent pogrom in Odessa in 1871, Pinsker realized the futility of assimilationist activities and returned to medical practice. Soon he became a prominent figure in public life. The series of government sponsored pogroms, erupted in 1881 in Southern Russia forced Pinsker to conclude that equality within Russia was a vain hope. Pinsker undertook a trip to Europe in 1882, visited various capitals and tried unsuccessfully to popularize the idea that Jews need to set up a nation of their own to solve the question of Jews. He returned to Odessa and published a pamphlet 'selbstemanzipation'<sup>79</sup> (Auto-Emancipation) in German in 1882. In this book he analyzed the roots of anti-Semitism and declared that Jews would never be the legal and social equals of gentiles as long as they did not have a state of their own. This book contained nearly all the basic elements of the classical Zionist concept.

Pinsker pointed out that the source of Jewish persecution was the peculiar 'ghost' status of Jews: "A fear of the Jewish ghost has passed down the generations and the centuries. First a breeder of prejudice, later in conjunction with other forces, it culminated in Judeophobia. Judeophobia, together with other symbols, superstitions and idiosyncrasies, has acquired legitimacy phobia among all the peoples of the earth with whom the Jews had intercourse. Judeophobia is a variety of demonopathy .... a psychic aberration .... and a disease transmitted for two thousand years. it is incurable"<sup>80</sup> Pinsker presented the wretched existence of Jews in Europe in a very clear way: "to the living the Jew is a corpse, to the native a foreigner, to the homesteader a vagrant, to the proprietary a beggar, to the poor an exploiter and a millionaire, to the patriot a man without a country, for all a hated rival."<sup>81</sup> Pinsker strongly believed that "Like the Negroes, Like Women, and unlike all free peoples, the Jews must be emancipated."<sup>82</sup>

Pinsker believed that the Messianic strand of Judaism caused Jews to abandon the idea of national liberation. For the orthodox Jews the redemption was the task of Messiah. Pinsker strongly disagreed with both Jews in the West who favoured a Jewish Diaspora, and with the religious approach advocating suffering in silence until the arrival of the Messiah. For Pinsker "the belief in Messiah, in the intervention of a higher power to bring about our political resurrection, and the religious assumption that we must bear patiently divine punishment, caused us to abandon every thought of our national liberation, unity and independence."<sup>83</sup> The only solution to Jewish problem conceived by Pinsker was to acquire a Jewish homeland somewhere on the globe. He wrote: "The Jews are not a living nation; they are everywhere aliens; therefore, they are despised.... The civil and political emancipation of the Jews is not sufficient to raise them in the estimation of the peoples.... The proper, the only solution, is in the creation of a



Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil, the auto-emancipation of the Jews; their return to the ranks of the nations by the acquisition of a Jewish homeland.”<sup>84</sup>

Pinsker suggested that the national regeneration of the Jews must be initiated by a congress of Jewish notables. Pinsker’s pamphlet was an appeal to the Jews in the West to save their Russian brethren. He became the leader of Lovers of Zion to materialize his dreams. He was instrumental in the original founding committee of the local Hibbat Zion movement in Odessa, which held a founding convention in Kattowitz in November 1884. He was the chairman of this convention and continued as the leader of the Hibbat Zion until his death in 1891. Pinsker was not specifically committed to Palestine but the Hibbat Zion did. He, at first did not realize the importance of Palestine but later accepted the primacy of Palestine for the creation of a national home for Jews. His pamphlet and activities inspired largely the evolution of Zionist ideology and movement. Theodor Herzl read the pamphlet ‘auto-emancipation’ just after the publication of his own (Der Judenstaat) and commented that “astonishing agreement in the critical and great similarity in the constructive part. Pity that I didn’t read the pamphlet before the printing of my own. And yet it is a good thing that I didn’t know it – I would perhaps have refrained from writing my work.”<sup>85</sup>

The first effective criticism of the Lovers of Zion movement was made by Ahad Ha’Am<sup>86</sup> (1856-1927), the famous Jewish writer and perhaps the most acute Zionist theorist. He published his essay ‘This is not the way’<sup>87</sup> in 1889. In this book he argued that ‘the settlement activities of Lovers of Zion was bound to fail so long as it appealed to self-interest and the desire for personal emancipation rather than to the inspiring vision of national regeneration with its cultural potentiality.’<sup>88</sup> He embraced the notion of Jewish cultural renewal based on the fundamental spirit of Judaism and called on the Jews to be true to the Jewish tradition, embodying ethical values in its highest form. AhadHa’am believed that the reinvigoration of Jewish education in the Diaspora is needed for the revival of Judaism. He viewed the rebuilding of a Jewish community in Palestine as a part of the ‘spiritual’ or ‘cultural’ revival of Zionism. He placed Palestine and Hebrew language at the center of his scheme. For him, Palestine was not only the ancestral land to which the Jews are passionately attached but also the only possible source of the spiritual strength that would recreate a sense of nationhood in the Jews. ‘In the place of the purely religious tradition he envisaged a metaphysical national soul capable of giving spiritual leadership to the nations of the modern secular world.’<sup>89</sup> He forged an untenable concept of national identity based on the essentialist and monolithic depiction of the Jewish tradition. But he failed to realize the fact that a merely secularized version of the diasporic culture would not be enough to energize a national revival.<sup>90</sup>

Ahad lived for Zionism as the concrete source of a rebuilt Jewish national culture and his ‘Zionism’ addressed first and foremost the question of Judaism in the modern world. The spiritual regeneration of Jews has been conceived as the paramount task for Zionism. AhadHa’am presented this theme for the first time in his work ‘The Wrong Way’<sup>91</sup>. He became the chief driving force of ‘Bnei Moshe’ (Son of Moses) – a semi-secret society within the Hibbat Zion. Its membership was open only to 20-year-old individuals who knew Hebrew and were willing to commit two percent of their annual income to the organization. They dedicated themselves to their own spiritual and cultural regeneration and to prepare their people for a new culture.<sup>92</sup> He also addressed in 1861, the fundamental though neglected problem of Zionism in Palestine – the Arab problem. He pointed out that there was little uncultivated land in Palestine

and warned that the Jewish settlers must not arouse the wrath of native Arabs. He criticized the settlers for doing the very opposite. “They (Jewish settlers) treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination. We think that the Arabs are all savages, who live like animals and do not understand what is happening around. This is however, a great error”<sup>93</sup>. He dedicated his entire life for the cause of Judaism and combined the biblical spirit of courage dignity and aesthetic creativity with modern Zionism. His approach was basically ‘cultural’ rather than political. He was rightfully regarded as the father of ‘spiritual’ or ‘cultural Zionism’.

Moses Hess (1812-75), a German Jew and a gifted writer advocated a Jewish state in Palestine in his book ‘Rome and Jerusalem’<sup>94</sup> published in 1862. This book is a reaffirmation of the Zionist idea, imbued with a social pathos rooted in the belief of the prophets in a better world and universal peace.

Moses Hess was known as ‘Red Rabbi’ and ‘the first Trotskyist’ as he combined Zionism with communism.<sup>95</sup> He influenced Marx and Engels in formulating the communist ideology. He joined International Working Men’s Association (Communist International) in 1867 and sided with Marx in his dispute with Bakunin. He originated the expression “religion is the opium of the people’, which was used in the Communist Manifesto<sup>96</sup>. He inspired the Kibbutz<sup>97</sup> and Histadrut movement<sup>98</sup> and preached for the social ownership of the economy. He was the founder of Israeli National Socialism.

Moses Hess, in his early stage of Intellectual activity, was so critical to Judaism, that he identified Judaism with the cult of money and asserted the dominant role of Jews in World finance in his essay ‘On the Essence of Money’.<sup>99</sup> Marx was highly influenced by the opinion of Hess and he equated Judaism with capitalism in his book, “The Holy Family” published in 1845.<sup>100</sup> Marx had an anti-Semitic myth about the ‘Judaized essence of bourgeois society. According to Marx: “Money is the jealous God of Israel’ and ‘in the last analysis the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism.”<sup>101</sup>

Moses Hess later rejected assimilation and returned to Judaism and stood for the establishment of a Jewish socialist state in Palestine. He declared the Jews a race and a nation. According to him, “the Jewish race is one of the primary races of mankind that has retained its integrity, in spite of the continual change of its climatic environment, and the Jewish type has conserved its purity through ‘the centuries.’<sup>102</sup> The idea of ‘Jewish race’ seems to be baseless because religion is the primary identification of being Jewish and in the Biblical sense Jews are only a ‘nation’ not a race.

He pointed out that everything Hebraic have their origin in the patriotism of the Jewish nation.<sup>103</sup> The fundamental Zionist idea of Jewish self-segregation has been emphasized by Hess when he wrote ‘Judaism does not allow either spiritualistic or materialistic sects to exist in its midst. Jewish life, like its divine ideal and goal, is undivided...’<sup>104</sup> Hess believed that in exile Jews could not devote themselves successfully to productive labour, in the first place, because they lack the most necessary condition – an ancestral soil; and, secondly, because they cannot assimilate with the people among whom they live without at the same time denying their national religion and tradition.<sup>105</sup>

The restoration of Jewish nationality in Palestine is conceived as the only solution for Jewish question. Hess was so specific to Palestine and was in full agreement with the declaration, composed by the representatives of the progressive Jews at their meeting in Frankfurt, which stated: “We acknowledge as our fatherland only the land where we are born and to which we are inseparably united by the bonds of citizenship.”<sup>106</sup> and “Judaea would be permitted to extend its boundaries from Suez to the harbor of Smyrna, including the entire area of the Western Lebanon range.”<sup>107</sup>

The acquisition of the common ancestral soil Palestine, as Moses Hess viewed, is a precondition for political and social progress. So, he called on every Jew, even the converted, to cling to the cause and labour for the regeneration of Israel. He expected that Europe would facilitate the restoration of a Jewish state in Palestine by means of colonization. He said ‘Let only the germ be planted under the protection of the European powers, and the tree of a new life will spring forth by itself and bear excellent fruit.’<sup>108</sup> Hess expected that with the liberation of the eternal city on the Tiber, that of the Eternal city on Mount Moriah (Jerusalem) commences too; with the renaissance of Italy also begins the resurrection of Judea.

Moses Hess expressed almost all the fundamental tenets of modern Zionism. His approach was political, but it lacked a practical programme to materialize the end. ‘Rome and Jerusalem’ went largely unnoticed because it failed to invoke the shared cultural and religious identities to facilitate ‘collective action’ of Jewish community.

## **Theodor Herzl and Political Zionism**

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) conceived the doctrine of political Zionism, which had been passionately pursued by his successors and supporters in later generation – the self-styled ‘Herzliion’. Herzl had previously been assimilated into Austrian society and culture. He was a native of Vienna and was a journalist by profession. As an assimilated Jew, Herzl showed little interest in Judaism and Jewish communal life initially. He viewed that assimilation and conversion to Christianity are the only solution for Jewish question. In a letter, he wrote in 1893. “The real and definitive solution (of the Jewish Problem) could only be in the complete disappearance of the Jews through baptism and intermarriage”<sup>109</sup> In his early writings there are ‘scarcely a dozen lines of passing references to Jews’<sup>110</sup> He proposed a mass conversion of Jews to Roman Catholicism in return for the Pope’s help in putting an end to the anti-Semitic onslaughts in Europe. He even envisaged the conversion of his own children.<sup>111</sup>

Herzl had lived in Paris from 1891 to 1895 and during this period he realized the depth of anti-Semitism in the French society; the most progressive and tolerant of European societies at that time. The Dreyfus Affair of 1894, demonstrated the depth of modern French anti-Semitism.

## **Racial anti-Semitism and Political Zionism**

The religious anti-Semitism was replaced by modern anti-Semitism or racial anti-Semitism in Europe in 19th century. It was based on pseudo-scientific theories that Jewish people are a subgroup of Semitic people and are basically different from Aryan or Indo-European populations. They are discriminated on the account of their supposed hereditary or genetic or racial characteristics such as greed, a special aptitude for money making, aversion to hard work, clannishness and obtrusiveness, lack of social tact, low cunning and especially, lack of

patriotism.<sup>112</sup> The modern progressive European society viewed prejudices on the account of religion as baseless but the supposed 'scientific' connection to genetics as fully justified discrimination and prejudice based on 'nationality' or race.

Pseudo-scientific theories based on 'race' had become widespread in Europe in the second half of the 19th century. For example, Prussian nationalistic historian promoted racial anti-Semitism and, in his writings, 'Semitic' was practically synonymous with Jewish<sup>113</sup>. German political activist Wilhelm Marr coined a related German word 'Antisemitismus', in his book 'The way to victory of Germanism over Judaism' published in 1879. For him, the phrase 'Antisemitismus' means Jew-hatred or 'judenhass'. He used this new word to make hatred of the Jews seem rational and sanctioned by scientific knowledge. He advocated the expulsion of Jews from Germany. His book became very popular among Germans and in 1879, he founded an organization named 'League of Anti-Semites' ('Antisemiten-Liga), to combat the alleged threat posed by Jews to Germany. This was the first German organization of this kind.<sup>114</sup>

Modern researches have undoubtedly proved that the concept of 'race' is a sociological construct which had no scientific or 'genetic' basis. The UNESCO has suggested that the concept race reflects more a social image, bound up with the physical appearance of individuals, than anything based on specific biological data.<sup>115</sup> UNESCO Declaration (1967) referred to racism as consisting of;

'anti-social beliefs and acts which are based on the fallacy that discriminatory inter-group relations are justifiable on biological grounds..... Racism falsely claims that there is a scientific basis for arranging groups hierarchically in terms of psychological and cultural characteristics that are immutable and innate. In this way it seeks to make existing differences appear inviolable as a means of permanently maintaining current relations between groups.'<sup>116</sup>

The concept of human races does not correspond to any biological reality. According to Ruth Benedict 'Racism is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority'<sup>117</sup>

The advent of racial anti-Semitism was linked not only to racism but also to the growing sense of nationalism in Europe. The elites of many European countries used modern anti-Semitism for political end. A French election poster in 1889 for self-described 'candidatantisemite', Adolf Willette, made it clear by writing that 'the Jews are a different race hostile to ours..... Judaism is the enemy.'<sup>118</sup>

The treason conviction of Alfred Dreyfus demonstrated French anti-Semitism to the core. The Dreyfus affair was a political scandal centered on the 1894 treason conviction of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French Army. "A mort! A mort les Juifs!"<sup>119</sup> howled the mob, when Dreyfus was led to trial in December 1894. He was, in fact, innocent and the conviction was based on false documents. The writer Emile Zola exposed the affair to the general public in the literary newspaper L'Aurore (The Dawn) in a famous open letter to the French President de La Republique Felix Faure, titled J'accuse! (I Accuse) on January 13, 1898.<sup>120</sup> The high-ranking officers realized the plot and the case was disposed in 1899. Dreyfus was readmitted to the Army and made a knight in the Legion of Honour. The Dreyfus Affair split France between the Dreyfusards (those supporting Dreyfus) and anti-Dreyfusards (those against him). The quarrel

was especially violent and invoked anti-Semitic epithet.

Theodor Herzl was assigned to report on the trial and its aftermath. The injustice of the trial and anti-Jewish passions it aroused forced him to consider the implications of anti-Semitism. The following passage illustrates the analysis of Herzl of Dreyfus affair;

‘The Dreyfus case embodies more than a judicial error; it embodies the desire of the vast majority of French to condemn all Jews in this one Jew. Death to the Jews! howled the mob as the decorations were being ripped from the captain’s coat..... where? in France, in republican, modern, civilized France, a hundred years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The French people, or at any rate the greater majority of the French people, does not want to extend the rights of man to Jews. The edict of the great Revolution has been revoked.’<sup>121</sup>

Herzl was seriously preoccupied with anti-Jewish prejudice and discrimination long before he encountered the insane Jew-baiting of the anti-Dreyfusards in civilized Paris. Herzl was obsessed with the consequences of Jewish ‘material’ powerlessness. As a solution for the bitter anti-Semitism he encountered everywhere in Europe, the idea of a Jewish homeland was presented. Herzl presented his plan for a Jewish state to the celebrated Jewish publicist, Dr. Max Nordau and encouraged by his support, he prepared a remarkable pamphlet, titled ‘Der Judenstaat’<sup>122</sup> – ‘The Jewish State’, with a subtitle ‘*Versucheinermodernenloesung der Judenfrage*’- an attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question, which was published in 1896. Originally, it was a sixty-five-page pamphlet called “Address to the Rothschilds”, outlining a state where the Jews could live at least as freemen on their own soil. The Rothschilds were silent and disapproving. His friends, like Gudemann – the Chief Reform rabbi of Vienna and the de Hirsch, rejected his idea. But the Maccabean Society of London encouraged Herzl and his views were published in an article in the ‘Jewish Chronicle’. In England, this paper became the first to be published, in condensed form, the material later to appear as the ‘Judenstaat’. A month afterwards, a revised version of the pamphlet under the title ‘Der Judenstaat’ was published in Vienna.<sup>123</sup> Herzl analyzed contemporary anti-Semitism and argued that no reversal of the tide of enmity would be expected. All analysis summed up in classic Berlin Phrase ‘Judenraus’ – ‘out with the Jews’<sup>124</sup> So, he urged the creation of a state. His analysis added nothing to that of Pinsker except the optimistic faith that the prominent European powers would aid for the creation of a Jewish state and guarantee its sovereignty.

Herzl placed the problem of Jews in the wide framework of issues related to all oppressed peoples of the world. He wrote: “I believe that electric light was not invented for the purpose of illuminating the drawing rooms of a few snobs, but rather for the purpose of throwing light on some of the dark problems of humanity. One of these problems, and not the least of them, is the Jewish question. In solving it we are working not only for ourselves, but also for many overburdened and oppressed beings.”<sup>125</sup> For Herzl, ‘the Jewish question exists wherever Jews live in perceptible numbers.’ and “is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council.”<sup>126</sup>

In the context of an ever-increasing anti-Semitism and failure of assimilation, the creation of a new state was envisaged as the only solution for the Jewish question. According to Herzl ‘Anti-Semitism increases day by day and hour by hour among the nations; indeed, it is bound to

increase, because the causes of its growth continue to exist and cannot be removed. Its remote cause is our loss of the power of assimilation during the Middle Ages; its immediate cause is our excessive production of mediocre intellects, who cannot find an outlet downwards or upwards....”<sup>127</sup> He believed that persecution had bound the Jewish people together and now they possess all human and material resources necessary to form a state, indeed, a model state. For Herzl, the creation of a new state was neither ridiculous nor impossible. With great confidence, he wrote, “Let the sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation; the rest we shall manage for ourselves.”<sup>128</sup>

‘The plan’ for the creation of a new state; simple in design, but complicated in execution, will be carried out by two agencies. The society of Jews and the Jewish company. The scientific plan and political policies which the society of Jews will establish will be carried out by the Jewish company. ‘The Jewish company will be the liquidating agent of the business interests of departing Jews and will organize commerce and trade in the new country.’

Herzl was not committed to Palestine like the Lovers of Zion. He wrote “shall we choose Palestine or Argentina? We shall take what is given us and what is selected by Jewish public opinion.”<sup>129</sup> At the same time, Herzl never discredited the primacy of Palestine and viewed migration to it as the ideal solution.

He said, ‘Palestine is our ever-memorable historic home. The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvelous potency.’<sup>130</sup> He argued in favour of Palestine and presented the benefits to Turkish Sultan if he grants Palestine to Jews. He also presented the benefits of European powers if there is a Jewish state in Palestine;

“If the Majesty, the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should there form a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence. The sanctuaries of Christendom would be safeguarded by assigning to them an extra-territorial status such as is well known to the law of nations. We should form a guard of honour about these sanctuaries, answering for the fulfillment of this duty with our existence.”<sup>131</sup>

The modern Zionist colonization of Palestine began under the leadership of Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalishcher – the first organizer of Zionist activity in the 19th century. In 1860, a doctor called Hayyim Lurie organized a society at Frankfurt in order to promote Jewish settlement in Palestine. Rabbi Zvi joined this group and published a pamphlet titled, ‘Derishat Zion’ – ‘Seeking Zion’, making the case for colonization. He wrote, “without such a settlement, how can the ingathering begin? These settlements would be farms and vineyards, the healing virtue of physical labour and rural life.... Jewish farming would be a spur to the ultimate Messianic redemption”<sup>132</sup>. Herzl criticized the emotional approach of early Zionists and of Lovers of Zion movement and believed that the Land in Palestine should be secured by international law. He saw Jewish migration to Palestine as a movement of colonization similar to European colonization in the era of modern times. Addressing a German – Jewish audience in Berlin, Herzl opined that “as a consequence of overpopulation, and of the resultant ever more acute social question, many nations are endeavoring to found overseas colonies in order to channel the flow of emigration there. “This is the policy which England has been pursuing for decades.... Germany, Too, has taken steps to become a Greater Germany. I think that... Mr. Klausner... will

find places suited for settlement in the territory of Palestine – and there is a Palestine; it is located on the Mediterranean.....’ what is a state? A big colony. What is a colony? A small state. Mankind seems never to have seen anything terrible in that...”<sup>133</sup>

Herzl was spectacularly wrong about the ‘Jewish Society’ which he conceived as a homogeneous body of people in agreement with each other. He was also mistaken to the core in his analysis of anti-Semitism. He naively believed that the anti-Semitic governments would facilitate the Jewish migration and assist to obtain a sovereign state. He wrote “the Jews will leave as honoured friends.... Their exodus will have no resemblance to a flight.... The movement will not only be inaugurated with absolute conformity to law, but it cannot even be carried out without the friendly co-operation of interested (anti-Semitic) governments, who would derive considerable benefits from it.”<sup>134</sup>. But History had proved that no anti-Semitic government in any country has helped the Jews to leave by any other door than death.

The primary goal of the Zionist movement, according to Herzl was to secure a legal charter for the colonization endorsed by the powers of Europe under international law. This could be materialized only by practical diplomacy supported by the wealthy and distinguished among world Jewry. The Zionist diplomatic style and geo-strategic perspectives had an enduring influence on the conduct of Israeli foreign policy. Zionist diplomacy transmogrified the abstract and spiritual inspirations into a viable policy.<sup>135</sup> Herzl believed that a territory could be occupied and built into a state not by infiltration nor by a back door but only by legal right. According to Noah Lucas, Herzl’s view was dubbed ‘political’ Zionism in contradistinction to ‘practical’ Zionism.<sup>136</sup> Herzl argued that the ‘practical Zionist’ strategy of immigration and ‘gradual infiltration’ was ‘pointless unless it is based on our guaranteed sovereignty.’<sup>137</sup> The decline of the First Aliyah made it clear that the step by step approach of Hibbat Zion was impractical. In an article in 1900 Herzl complained that the practical Zionists sent ‘settlers for show’, and ‘want to start going to Eretz Israel ever before it belongs to us. The political Zionists.... Say: First it has to belong to us and then we will go there.’<sup>138</sup>

To provide the political Zionist movement with a mass base and to gain the support of the leading Jews of the West, Herzl summoned a World Zionist Congress on August 29, 1897 in the Swiss city of Basel.<sup>139</sup> Some 197 delegates had arrived from all corners of the world. Russian Jewry’s response to Herzl’s call was overwhelming and of the participants 66 were from Russia.<sup>140</sup> Herzl was unanimously elected President of the Congress. He presented an intelligible program for the re-establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, openly recognised and legally secured. The delegates, belonging to all schools of thought in Judaism, sensed the political realism of Herzl’s programme and voted overwhelmingly in favour of it. The word ‘home land’ was substituted for ‘state’ and ‘public law’ for ‘international law’ in order to avoid ottoman objections.<sup>141</sup> The programme adopted at the first Zionist congress is known as ‘the Basel program’, which declared that the aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a homeland (‘Heimstätte’ – homestead) in Palestine secured by public law. It was decided to take the following means for attainment of this end:

- (a) The promotion on suitable lines of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
- (b) The organization and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.

- (c) The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
- (d) Preparatory steps towards obtaining government consent necessary to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.<sup>142</sup>

The Basel Conference established the World Zionist Organization with Herzl as its president. A Jewish flag and a national anthem, 'Hatikvah', were adopted. The organization was pyramidal in structure. 'Power tended towards the center and it could indeed be characterized as an 'elective aristocracy', or as a form of democratic elitism.'<sup>143</sup> The Congress elected an 'Action Committee', also known as 'General Council' to run affairs between Congresses. Its members represented various countries. An Executive Committee of five was selected with Herzl at its head. Vienna was made its initial headquarters for the convenience of Herzl. A Zionist newspaper 'Die Welt' was launched.

The delegates of the first Congress belonged to educated middle class and were profoundly influenced by European modernity. The Jewish traditional elite or the 'notables' were noticeably absent.<sup>144</sup> The social and class background of organized Zionism was connected closely to the Jewish bourgeoisie. The national movement of European bourgeoisie to create a national base of production was closely linked to the ascending phase of capitalism. In this phase of flowering of nationalisms, Jewish bourgeoisie was profoundly assimilationist, and formed an integral part of national bourgeoisie. The rise of modern anti-Semitism and Zionism' are related to the decline of capitalism. The Jewish tragedy of 20th century is a direct consequence of the declining phase of capitalism.<sup>145</sup> In this period of crisis in the capitalist system, the Jewish bourgeoisie realized that the objective framework for the development of its productive forces have to some extent, disappeared. To create a national base of production, was now all important for Jewish bourgeoisie. As a result, 'Zionism' was coloured by bourgeois nationalist ideology. Nahman Syrkin of Mohilev, a socialist delegate attending the first congress, wrote that at the first Zionist Congress: "Zionism assumed a reactionary bourgeois character in keeping with the social group which was its protagonist..."<sup>146</sup> Syrkin argued that only a classless society could solve the Jewish problem and he called on the Jews to join the socialist movement.

The Zionist Congress was convened annually up to 1901 and thereafter biannually. The Congress inspired the formation of new Zionist groups throughout Eastern Europe, Russia and even in the West. The old Lovers of Zion branches were incorporated to the Zionist Congress. At the 4th congress (1900 AD) Russian Zionists were represented by more than 200 delegates.<sup>147</sup> Inspired by Zionist Congress, the first All Russian Zionist Congress met in 1902 at Minsk.

The Zionist organization gradually evolved machinery for materializing Jewish colonization. The Second Congress in 1898 formed a 'Jewish Colonial Trust' to finance the movement registered in London. In 1903, its first branch in Palestine was established and started providing credit for all types of enterprise. The 5th Congress (1901) established a Jewish National Fund for land acquisition in Palestine. To assist, promote and co-ordinate the settlement activities a 'Palestine department' was set up within the Executive in 1907 and a 'Palestine office' was opened in Jaffa in 1908. The Palestine office established the 'Palestine Land Development Company' for land amelioration preparatory to settlement. Palestine office, was instrumental in founding the city of Tel Aviv, on the initiative of its first director Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943).<sup>148</sup>

After establishing the structural framework for Zionist Organization, Herzl concentrated on



diplomatic negotiations to get a Charter from Turkish Sultan to colonise Palestine. In October 1898, he met Sultan's friend and ally, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. During the course of the hour-long interview, he proposed the creation of a chartered Land Development Company, which would be operated by the Zionists under German protectorate. The Kaiser seemed favourably disposed to the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and promised that he would take up the matter of a 'Chartered company' with the Sultan when the two monarchs next met. A second meeting with the Kaiser took place in Palestine on 2nd November 1898 and this time Kaiser announced his opposition to the proposal, realizing that such a German-sponsored intervention in Ottoman affairs would give alarm to Britain, France and Russia.<sup>149</sup>

Herzl's next move was to reach the ear of the Turkish Sultan directly. He obtained his interview with the Sultan Abdul Hamid in May 1901. In return for a charter of Jewish settlement in Palestine, Herzl suggested, the wealthy Jewish bankers of Europe would take over the funding of the Turkish debt. Actually, Herzl had no such connections with the Jewish bankers, but he was convinced that the promise of charter would produce them. He also promised that the Jews would help to develop the natural resources of Ottoman Empire. The Sultan replied that the Turkish government would not approve mass immigration of Jews into Palestine but they could develop scattered settlements throughout the Empire, especially in Syria and Iraq.<sup>150</sup> The Sultan informed Herzl through Nevlinski the following: "If Herzl is your friend in the same measure as you are mine, then advise him not to go a single step further in the matter. I cannot sell even a foot of land for it does not belong to me' but to my people..... The Jews may spare their millions, when my Empire is divided, perhaps they will get Palestine for nothing. But only our corpse can be divided. I will never consent to vivisection."<sup>151</sup> "Small, shabby, with a badly dyed beard, long yellow teeth, ill-fitting coloured shirt-cuffs, bleating voice, diffidence in every word timidity in every glance – and that man rules!"<sup>152</sup> Herzl wrote of the Sultan in disgust. Herzl realized the tragic beauty in the words of Sultan which foresaw the collapse of the empire. The dream of acquiring Palestine is possible with the dismemberment of Ottoman Empire which was already weakened to the core. The Jewish elements in Turkey, particularly the 'Dunmeh', who professed Islam while retaining their old Jewish faith in secret, set out to dethrone Sultan.<sup>153</sup> This group had close connections with World Zionist Movement and disgruntled minorities of the Empire and played a key role in staging the 'Young Turk' revolution in 1908. Corosso Effendi, one of the Young Turks and a Jew, was one of the three persons who broke the news of dethroning to Sultan Abdul Hamid.<sup>154</sup> The Zionists were partially responsible for the downfall of Sultan.

Herzl's diplomacy failed to obtain a charter from Kaiser and Sultan. Then he turned to the British in 1902 and foretold: "England the great, England the free, England with her eyes fixed on the seven seas, will understand us"<sup>155</sup> With the help of Lord Nathan Rothschild, Herzl secured an interview with Joseph Chamberlain, Britain's Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs in October 1902. Herzl proposed that al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula might be a feasible area of Jewish colonization. Herzl explained that he needed an assemblage center for Jews in the neighbourhood of Palestine. In Al-Arish and Sinai there is empty land. England can give us that in return she could gain an increase of power and the gratitude of ten million Jews."<sup>156</sup> Following three meetings with Herzl, Chamberlain agreed to the proposition of Jewish colonization in Sinai if he could obtain permission of the authorities in Egypt. Herzl moved to Cairo but unfortunately, owing to certain Egyptian stipulations and Turkish intrigue, the negotiations broke down.<sup>157</sup>

The Sinai scheme failed for economic and political reasons. The proposed colony needs water resources and river Nile was the only source. Being more than 95% arid Egypt could not afford the sharing of Nile waters. The idea of Jewish autonomy and Egyptian nationalism posed objections to the scheme. The growing spirit of Egyptian Nationalism posed strong opposition to land alienations. The Ottoman Sultan was alarmed at this proposal on strategic grounds. The sultan realized the danger of Jewish settler's possible raid into Palestine from Sinai. Sinai was a jumping-off base for Palestine and, also for Herzl.

Chamberlain promised to explore other alternatives. In the following year, he proposed an offer of territory, with internal autonomy in East Africa.<sup>158</sup> As a result of misinformation at the time this has become known in Zionist historiography as the 'Uganda' proposal. The territory offered was actually a part of Kenya. England thus became the first country to negotiate officially with the Jews as a political entity and the first to make them an offer of territory.<sup>159</sup>

Joseph Chamberlain was sympathetic to the plight of Eastern European Jewry. Yet, he had some preconceived notions about Jews based on racial considerations. He once told an Italian statesman: "There is, in fact, only one race I despise, the Jews, Sir. They are physical cowards."<sup>160</sup> Chamberlain's approach to the idea of Jewish colonization in Palestine was based on British imperialist interests in the Middle East. For him, Herzl's proposal was another opportunity to extend British influence and rule. "A Jewish Palestine dependent on Britain was viewed as a counterweight to the ambitions of France and Russia, who both had clients in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Russians patronized the orthodox (Christians) while since the days of Louis XIV the French had taken an interest in the Maronites (Christians) of Mount Lebanon. Britain lacked a client minority..."<sup>161</sup> Chamberlain was interested in acquiring colonizers for the development of what was virtually British territory. He viewed the Jewish presence in Palestine as a useful instrument for extending British influence there. Zionism, for Chamberlain, was both an end to the age old Jewish problem and a means for advancing British imperialist interests in the Middle East and India.

Herzl accepted the East Africa offer as a temporary measure or as a short-term strategy. He hoped that a show of serious interest in East Africa might induce the wavering Sultan to reconsider the Palestine proposal. He started again to work for a Turkish Charter, perhaps in Mesopotamia, anywhere in Middle East with an eye on Palestine. Herzl tried to persuade the Sixth Zionist Congress meet at Basel to accept the 'Uganda' proposal.<sup>162</sup> Various national delegations met separately to debate the issue. The passionate attachment to Palestine was so great that the delegates opposed the proposal. The Russian delegates, the most devotedly Palestinophile strongly argued against the proposal. The Zionist Congress did not propose any concrete action other than sending of an investigating Committee to East Africa. There was voting even to decide this matter and when it was taken, for 295 votes against 178, the delegates from Eastern Europe walked out of the auditorium en bloc. There was weeping and rending of clothes in the traditional rites of mourning with cries of 'Traitor!' at Herzl's name.<sup>163</sup> Ussishkin, a 'Zion Zionist' published a letter in 'Die Welt', in which he pointed out that by agreeing to send the exploratory committee, the Congress betrayed Zionism. He made it clear that "all the majorities in the world....will not dissuade me from Eretz Israel.... Only those who were so blinded by diplomacy and extravagant political talk failed to notice in their naivete that the decision of the Zionist Congress to send an expedition to any other country constitutes a renunciation and abandonment of Palestine".<sup>164</sup> Herzl criticized Ussishkin for his 'utter

inexperience in politics' and believed that he misconceived practical Zionism.<sup>165</sup> For Herzl, a land could not be obtained by purchasing parcels of it and colonizing it gradually.

The 'Uganda' proposal divided the Zionist movement into fractions. The Russian Zionists convened their own conference at Kharkov and proclaimed their exclusive commitment to Palestine. They called themselves 'Zion Zionists'. Another faction favouring East Africa, split off under the leadership of Israel Zangwill to form a group called the Territorialists. The group, which stood for an immediate solution to the Jewish question by settling down in Palestine or elsewhere with international sanction came to be known as the 'political'.<sup>166</sup> This group supported Herzl's view. The Palestinophiles were called 'Practicals' who opposed Herzl's view. The Seventh Zionist Congress (1905) was dominated by the 'Practicals'. A resolution declaring Zionism was concerned solely with Palestine was passed at this Congress and thus rejected the Uganda proposal outright.

The titles – 'Political' and 'Practical' attached to the two dominant factions that rose within 'political Zionism' at the time of sixth Congress are misleading. 'Both groups were adherents of political Zionism, the only difference being that one accentuated legalization and the other stressed colonization of Palestine with a historico-cultural revivalism.'<sup>167</sup> The dispute was about emphasis and method rather than ultimate aims.

Herzl was a dynamic leader and worked indefatigably to materialize the Zionist aspirations. His diplomatic venture to secure a Charter from Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) for an autonomous Jewish settlement in Palestine failed. More over his efforts to ensure the support of the European powers (Germany, Britain and Russia) to pursue the Zionist agenda also did not become successful. Even though it was his charismatic personality and dynamic leadership that laid down the ideological and material bases of the future state of Israel. History proved that the statement of Herzl, 'At Basel I founded the Jewish state', was true to the core. Herzl often meditated on his death and on the continuance of the movement after it. On one occasion (March 15, 1903), he said to his friend Adolf Friedman, "If I have any merit, it is that I have arranged everything on an impersonal basis. If I were to die today, the machine would continue to work smoothly."<sup>168</sup> Warned by frequent spells of heart trouble, he expected death always at his back. A massive heart attack on July 3, 1904 made him rest forever at the age of 44. Perhaps the best epitaph for Herzl was penned by himself, "Zionism was the Sabbath of my life. I believe that my influence as a leader is based on the fact that while as man and writer I had so many faults, and committed so many blunders and mistakes, as a leader in Zionism, I have remained pure of heart and quite selfless."<sup>169</sup>

With the pre-mature death of Herzl the control of the World Zionist Movement passed largely to the practical Zionists.<sup>170</sup> David Wolffsohn, a Lithuanian Jew settled in Cologne, Germany, became the next president of the movement. His diplomacy and healing leadership brought about an 'official' fusion of 'practical' and 'political' Zionism at the 1907 Congress. Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), later President of Zionist organization coined the term 'synthetic Zionism' or 'organic Zionism; to emphasise the relation between these two different approaches. Weizmann was associated with AhadHa'Am so that his doctrine of 'Synthetic Zionism' also embraced the basic tenets of cultural Zionism. Later, the Labour Zionists very efficiently combined the goals of 'political', 'practical' and 'cultural' Zionisms and Marxism. They became the predominant ideological treasury governing the Zionist constructive efforts in Palestine. It became the most important source of social and economic institutions, values and myths, and

political culture of modern Israel.

Labour Zionism emerged during the second half of the 19th century alongside Marxism, revolutionary socialism and anarchism in Europe. They sought to liberate the Jewish masses, particularly those in Eastern Europe and Russia, from both capitalist exploitation and anti-Semitic persecution.<sup>171</sup> Labour Zionism was a synthesis of socialism and Zionism. The original theorists and creators of the labour Zionist movement were Nachman Syrkin (1867-1924) and Ber Borochov (1881-1917) in its European phase. Syrkin was an evolutionary socialist,<sup>172</sup> who founded Poale Zion (Workers of Zion) party. He posited a perennial tension between Jews and non-Jews that had reached a critical point with the rise of bourgeois society. Syrkin viewed that the bourgeoisie had been using racial anti-Semitism to overcome the threats of unstable life and proletarian revolution. He argued “.....the greater the danger to the middle class and the fear of proletarian revolution ..... the higher the wave of anti-Semitism will rise. The classes fighting each other will unite in their common attack on the Jew. The dominant elements of capitalist society, i.e, the plutocrats, the monarchy, the church, and the state, seek to exploit the religious and racial struggle as a substitute for the class struggle.”<sup>173</sup> Syrkin combined the utopian socialist and populist ideas with nationalism. He wrote ‘a classless society and national sovereignty are the only means of completely solving the Jewish problem’<sup>174</sup> He proposed a socialist Zionist state based on communal settlements. There would not be class struggle as the development of socialist structure would prevent the need for it. He strongly criticized the reactionary bourgeois Zionists’ for capitalist colonization which introduced ‘those class interests and social conditions which will destroy Zionism.’<sup>175</sup> “When class-hatred and bankruptcy will come instead of liberation and rebirth, he warned, “the reactionary Zionists will be adjudged guilty before the tribunal of history.”<sup>176</sup> He envisaged, ‘a Jewish commonwealth built on co-operative foundations.’

Ber Borochov was a marxist young intellectual from Poltava, Ukraine. Borochov applied Marxian concepts to the ‘national question’ which he felt had been neglected by Marx and Engels and misunderstood by their followers. He developed a general theory of nationalism in his essay ‘The National Question and the Class Struggle’<sup>177</sup> in 1905. To address nationalism, Borochov supplemented Marx’s notion of ‘relations of production’ with his own concept, ‘conditions of production’. By ‘conditions of production’ he meant the total historical, geographical and anthropological context in which relations of production arose. In Marxian concept the relations of production determined class struggle. Just like, in the view of Borochov, the conditions of production determined national struggles. He sought to explain the birth of nations and national conflicts in different times and places under different conditions. Under normal conditions of bourgeois development – wherein a nation inhabits a particular territory and there are class antagonisms- national conflicts tends to be reactionary from the point of view of the proletariat. Under abnormal conditions, for example the subjugated nationalities as in the case of colonial people or scattered nationalities which lacks a territory or strategic base to wage the class struggle as in the case of Jews, the national struggle would become identical with or complementary to class struggle. Borochov, with the Jews clearly in mind, envisaged the need for a progressive nationalism of an oppressed proletariat which seeks to create normalized conditions of production.<sup>178</sup>

Borochov in association with Ussishkin organized the dispersed Poale Zion groups, that had formed under the influence of Syrkin and established a United Poale Zion Party in late 1905,

wedded to Zionism and Palestine while simultaneously advocating autonomy for the Russian Jewry and their participation in the revolutionary struggles there.<sup>179</sup> In the winter of 1906, Borochof with his close friend Itshak Ben-Tsvi convened a conference in Poltava and established 'The Jewish Social Democratic Workers Party' – Poale Zion.<sup>180</sup> The party programme was a fusion of Zionism and Marxism. Borochof wrote an essay titled 'Our Platform' for the new party in which he pointed out that "our national consciousness is negative in that it is emancipatory. If we were the proletariat of a free nation which neither oppresses nor is oppressed, we would not be interested in any problems of national life."<sup>181</sup>

Poale Zion's 'maximum programme' was 'socialism' by means of class struggle according to the Marxist doctrine while its 'minimum programme' was Zionism or the establishment of a Jewish nation in Palestine. The necessity of territory in the case of the Jews results from the unsatisfactory economic strategic base of the Jewish proletariat. The anomalous state of the Jewish people will disappear as soon as the conditions of production prevailing in Jewish life are done away with"<sup>182</sup> Once the Jews were normalized in their own land (Palestine), the Jewish proletariat would wage class war on its own grounds like all other national proletariat.<sup>183</sup>

In the case of Palestinian Arabs, Borochof viewed that, they had no national consciousness as Palestinians. But his understanding differed from other version of Zionism because of Marxist orientation. In his analysis the Arabs would not be subjugated or colonized by the Jews but would be economically and culturally assimilated to them, because the new conditions of production was launched by the Jews.<sup>184</sup> He argued that in the absence of Palestinian Arab nationalism, the Arabs would become part of the Jewish nation.

Borochof provided an ideology which linked the socialist or liberal aspirations of middle-class Zionist youth and socialist intelligentsia with Jewish national idealism. His analysis with scientific overtones gave its followers a conviction of historical relevance and confidence in the ultimate victory of the movement. As an ardent Marxist, Borochof posited that; "The bourgeoisie regulates the creative factors of the spontaneous process; the proletariat regulates the liberating factors."<sup>185</sup>

The eruption of fresh pogroms in Russia in the years 1903-08 inspired the second wave of migration (1904-1914) to Palestine. Syrkin and Borochof stirred the minds and shaped the spirit of the second 'Aliyah'. The Zionist Socialist party (Z.S.) founded in 1904-05 in Russia devoted its main attention to the problems of Jewish migration. Another socialist group with a Zionist background emerged in 1905-06. It opposed both the Palestinian and other territorialist solutions and advocated Jewish national autonomy in Russia. They were called 'Sejmists' from the Polish term 'Sejm' (Diet). Both groups later merged in a United Socialist Party known as the 'Fareinikte'. By the spring of 1917, their combined membership was estimated at 13,000.<sup>186</sup>

The Labour ideology of the second Aliyah (1904-14) was not just the product of Syrkin and Borochof but of the collective experience of the early settlers themselves. The BILU were advocates of Jewish 'self-labour'. A short lived agudat ha-Poalim (Workers Association) was formed in 1887. Another labour organization formed in the 1890's was Histadrut ha-Poalim (Workers Union) which survived until the turn of the century.<sup>187</sup> In 1905 two Zionist labour parties were formed in Palestine. The members of these parties were mostly immigrants of second 'Aliyah' and eastern European in origin.

The most influential pioneers in the history of Zionist movement came to Palestine during the second 'Aliyah'. They intended not just to establish a socialist commonwealth, but to rebuild their nationhood, their very manhood, by the sweat of their brows. The emphasis of the second Aliya was upon physical labour on the soil of Palestine. They resolved to be men of the soil and were determined to transform themselves into a race of hard-handed farmers. They carried on violent agitation for 'Jewish employment' and later for 'Jewish products.' To this end, they boycotted Arab workers and products. The prominent figures in the second Aliyah were the brothers Lavee of Plonsk, Berl Katznelson of Bobruisk, Issac Ben Zvi of Poltava, David Remez of Mogilev, Aaron David Gordon, Joseph Baratz and David Green from Plonsk, who changed his name after arriving in Palestine to David Ben-Gurion in 1906. The leading ideologue of the movement in its initial Palestine phase was Aron David Gordon (185-1922). His socialist agriculturist ideals transformed Eurocentric Zionist into a thrusting ideology in the near East. They were all imbued with socialist-aspirations of Labour Zionism.

The labour Zionists promoted projects for the creation of socialist pioneering settlements (Kibbutzim). They organized militant groups, which became the 'Haganah' the main military arm of the pre-state Yishuv. A general trade union – the Histadrut – was set up by the Labour Zionists. 'On these three pillars – the Kibbutzim, the Haganah and the Histadrut, Labour Zionism built the power base enabling it, eventually, to rule the new state of Israel.'<sup>188</sup> The Labour Zionists identified their personal crises and development with those of their people and envisaged the emerging Jewish proletariat in Palestine as the universal class of the Jewish nation.<sup>189</sup> For them the interests of the workers and the general national interests are one and the same<sup>190</sup> and 'the national goal of the working class is the transformation from a working class to a working nation'<sup>191</sup> The prophet of this "religion of labour" was Aron David Gordon. He conceived that the 'vital element in nationhood was creativity, and labour was the bedrock of creativity. Without labour, the Jews would remain an island in an Arab sea. According to him: "The land will not be ours and we shall not be the people of the land without our own labour."<sup>192</sup>

The transformation of Jewish settlement into a state owes much to ideology and movement of Labour Zionism.

## Endnotes

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- 3 Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (Frank Cass, London 1974), pp.4-7
- 4 See *Ibid* p.5; Also see J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York, Schocken Books, 1976), p.17
- 5 Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p.3
- 6 Janet L. Abu-Lughod, "The Demographic Transformation of Palestine", in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the origin and Development of the Arab-Israel Conflict*, (Evanston, North Western University Press, 1971), p.140
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- Century According to Western Sources”, in Ma’oz, Moshe, ed., *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1975), p.68.
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  - 12 See A. Granott, *The Land System in Palestine: History and Structure* (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1952), pp. 54-77.
  - 13 Alexander Scholch, *op.cit.*, pp.23-24.
  - 14 A. Granott, *op. cit.*, p.39.
  - 15 Kenneth W. Stein. *op.cit.* p.10.
  - 16 James Finn, *Stirring Times or Records from Jerusalem Consular Chronicles of 1853 to 1856, Vol.I* (London, Keganpaul, 1878) 1:181; Also see Arnold Blumberg, ed., *A View from Jerusalem 1849-1858: The Consular Diary of James and Elizabeth Anne Finn* (Cranbury, N.J, Associated University Press, 1980), p.96.
  - 17 Muhammed Y. Muslih, *op, cit.*, p.24
  - 18 *Ibid.*, p.37
  - 19 Charles Isswai, “Middle East Economic Development, 1815-194: The General and the Specific”, in M.A. Cook, ed., *Studies in the Economic History of Middle East*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1979), p.395
  - 20 Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, (London, Methuen, 1981), p.175
  - 21 Alexander Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882, Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development*, trans. William C. Young and Micheal C. Gerrity (Washington D.C., 1993), p. 285.
  - 22 Roger Owen, *op.cit.*, pp 177-178, 265
  - 23 *First Palestine Census of Industries 1928*, (Jerusalem, Government Printers, 1929), pp. 5-6.
  - 24 *Ibid.*, p.8.
  - 25 Said B. Himadeh, ‘industry’, in Said B. Himadeh, ed. *Economic Organization of Palestine* (Beirut, American Press, 1936), p.221
  - 26 The German Templars were religious settlers who started coming to Palestine in 1867 and established agricultural colonies with the idea of settling in Palestine and Christianizing it if possible. They founded their first colonies in Haifa and Jaffa in 1869, followed them with a colony in Sarona (1871), Jerusalem (1878), Wilhelma (1902), Galilean Bethlehem (1906) and Waldheim (1907). The agricultural colonies of Templars provided a model for Zionist colonization of Palestine.  
  
For details see Alex Carmel, ‘The German Settlers in Palestine and Their Relations with the local Arab Population and the Jewish Community’, in Moshe Ma’oz ed., *Studies on Palestine, op. cit.*, pp. 442-466; Also see, Muhammad Muslih, *op.cit.*, p.41.
  - 27 C. Gordon Smith, “The Geography and Natural Resources of Palestine as seen by British writers in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth century”, in Moshe Ma’oz, ed., *Studies on Palestine, op.cit.*, p.90.
  - 28 Roger Owen, *op.cit.*, p. 341
  - 29 Aliyah means the wave of Jewish immigration usually following some major anti-semitic upheaval. The word meaning of ‘Aliyah’ is ‘Rebirth’ or ‘uplift’. The ‘Aliyah’ for Jews is ‘going up’ to Israel.
  - 30 Pogroms were a form of race riots in Russia and Eastern Europe aimed specifically at Jews, and often government sponsored, which consisted of assaults on Jewish quarters accompanied by rape, looting and some killing. The first series of such attacks erupted in 1881, after Jews were wrongly blamed for the assassination of Czar Alexander II.
  - 31 The trial of Alfred Dreyfus, a French-Jewish officer falsely accused of treason and sentenced to Devil’s Island. The trial of Dryfus evoked anti-semitism in liberal France.
  - 32 Anti-Semitism (alternatively spelled anti-Semitism) is a hostility towards or prejudice against Jews, which can range from individual hatred to institutionized violent persecution, of which the highly explicit ideology of Adolph Hitler’s National socialism was the most extreme form. The word anti-Semitic (antisemitischin-German) was probably first used in 1860 by

- the Jewish Scholar Moritz S teinschneider in the Phrase 'antisemitic prejudices' ('antisemitischenvorurtheile') Steinschneider used this phrase to characterize Ernest Renan's ideas about how 'Semitic races' were inferior to 'Aryan races'. Many scholars like Emil Fackenheim (Hebrew University) or Yehuda Bauer argued that 'Antisemitism, especially in its hyphenated spelling is inane because there is no Semitism that you can be anti to' (See Yehuda Bauer, A History of the Holocaust, (London 1981) p.52. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Semitism> (12.12.2005).
- 33 Zion is the name of a hill in Jerusalem. The royal palaces of King David and Soloman and the Jerusalem temple were situated on the crest of Mount Zion. The term Zionism was derived from Mount Zion and it was coined by Nathan Birnbaum in 1893. See the ESCO Foundation for Palestine, Inc., Palestine: A study of Jewish, Arab and Britsih Policies (New Haven, Yale Univeristy Press, 1947) I, p.39.
  - 34 The critics of Zionism in Israel are often called the 'New Historians'. The self-proclaimed 'New Historians' are a group of Jewish academics who have been exposing the 'sacred lies' embedded in official Israeli policy, since the early 1980's. Its members are Benny Morris, IlanPappe, AviShlaim, Tom Segev, Baruch Kimmerling, SimhaFlappan and Joel Miqdal. They deal with the following 'sacred lies'. Arabs are racially inferior to Jews; Israel is a small country surrounded by enemies; All Palestinians are terrorists who wanted to destroy Israel; and these crazy terrorists deserve every kind of retaliation. The Zionists devised a term. "the self-hating Jews' to slander the New Historians and present them as traitors, suffering from some psychological dilemma. For details see Jonathan Mahler' "Uprooting the past-Israel's New Historians Take a hard look at their nation's past", <http://www.linguafranca.com/9708/mahler.9708.html> (11.11.2005)
  - 35 See Gershon Shafir, Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict – 1882 – 1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); IlanPappe, The Making of the Arab-Israeli-Conflict, 1947 – 1951) (New York: T.B.Press, 1994); and Benny Morris, 1948 and after: Israel and the Palestinians (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)
  - 36 In Israel, Historians such as Ben Zion Dinaburg and Yitzhak Baer, presented this line of interpretations. See Yitzhak Baer, Galut (New York: Schocken Books, 1988)
  - 37 See EyalChowers, 'Time in Zionism: The Life and Afterlife of a Temporal Revolution', Political Theory, Vol. 26, No.5, October 1998, p. 655-56
  - 38 See Mitchell Cohen, Zion and State: Nation, Class and shaping of Modern Israel (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987), p.45.
  - 39 Eric Hobsbawm, Interesting Times (Allen Lane, London, 2002), p. 296.
  - 40 Alan R. Taylor, The Zionist Mind (The Institute of Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1974), p.193.
  - 41 Edward Said, Orientalism, 2nd Edn. (New York, Vintage, 1994) pp.331-332.
  - 42 Karen Armstrong, A History of Jerusalem: One city, Three Faiths (Harper Collins, London, 1997), p.20.
  - 43 Exodus: 19: 17,18
  - 44 Exodus 19:6
  - 45 See Exodus 20: 2-19.
  - 46 See I Chronicles: 21:18-30 and 22:5-8
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## Chapter III

### The Crisis in Palestine: From World War I to Mandate (1914-1922)

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The Arabs had always been conscious of themselves as a distinct cultural and ethnic group throughout their history. Even before the advent of Islam, the Arab tribes who were always fighting each other, realized their common cultural and ethnic identity. The Arabic languages and a common origin, real or fictitious, brought about a feeling of cultural and ethnic unity among the Arab tribes that transcended their political differences. The Arabs had great respect for literary Arabic expression. The sixth and seventh centuries was the great period of Arab heroic poetry.<sup>1</sup> According to Ibn Rashid, well known scholar of the eleventh century:

“Whenever a poet emerged in the Arab tribe, the other tribes would come and congratulate it. Feasts would be prepared, and the women would gather together playing on lutes, as people do at weddings; men and boys alike would exchange the good news. For the poet was a defense to their honour, a protection for their good repute; he immortalized their deeds of glory and published their eternal fame. On three things they congratulated one another – the birth of a boy, the emergence of a poet in their midst, or the foaling of a mare”<sup>2</sup>

The importance of Arabic in the mental make-up of Arabs is best exposed in the popular expression, “jamal-al-insan fi fasahat al-lisan” (The beauty of man lies in the eloquence of his tongue).<sup>3</sup>

Arabic as the language of Quran evoked sentiments and respect all over the Islamic world. The introduction of Arabic press reinforced the position of Arabic. This was an important turning point in the way of the nationalist movement in stimulating intellectual activities. The Arabs maintained and strengthened the sense of difference by virtue of their ethnicity, language and religion. Islam brought people of different ethnic origins to the Arab stock and gave the Arabs a distinguished status. For the Arabs the central fact of history is the mission of Prophet Mohammed and the memory of the Arab Empire. In addition, they conceived the Arabic tongue and its rich cultural heritage as their most cherished possession.

The Arab feeling of distinctness continued during the Ottoman period, but it was not so deep as to break the Ottoman bond based on Islam. The Arabs felt that they belonged to the larger Muslim Ottoman ‘Umma’ and gave allegiance to the Sultan as the head of the Islamic

community (Caliph). The differences between Turks and Arabs were gradually growing in the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

‘Arab awakening’<sup>5</sup> in modern times was first felt about the middle of the 19th century in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Origin of Arab nationalism was connected to the broad changes in the Ottoman empire during the second half of the 19th century. A modernized administrative and legal system, new patterns of trade and production, improved means of communication and increasing expansion of Europe were to have great impact on all communities and classes in the region. The rise of ‘Arabism’ also linked to the failure of the Turks in defending Islamic civilization against the European inroads. Several contradictory forces were operating simultaneously to foster the growth of national consciousness among Arabs. Both loyalty and hostility to Ottomans, both religious intensity and secular rationalism helped to generate sentiments which led to nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

The emergence of Arab nationalism as a movement to materialize political and cultural independence for the Arabs was a product of the rise of Turkish nationalism and the Young Turk’s policy of ‘Turkification’, i.e., the policy of imposing Turkish language and culture on the non-Turk subjects of the Empire.<sup>7</sup> The Young Turks especially those in the inner circle followed the idea of racial superiority of Turks and had nurtured the feeling of their ethnic separateness. They considered the Arabs as an inferior ethnic group and even referred to them as “the dogs of the Turkish nation.”<sup>8</sup> ZiyaGokalp (1875-1924), the ideological founder of modern Turkish nationalism, blended the ethnic pride with a new concept of Islamic society. He accepted Western modes of rationality without rejecting Muslim values and claimed that Muslims would not cease to be Muslims if they abandoned a defunct oriental civilization in favour of a vibrant, occidental one.<sup>9</sup> Gokalp strongly advocated the ‘Turkification’ of Islam and suggested that the Quran should be taught in Turkish. He reiterated that the Arabs must adopt Turkish traditions, rituals and practices.<sup>10</sup> The process of Turkification adversely affected the relations between Turks and Arabs. Zeine N. Zeine has made it clear that ‘the seeds of the Arab separatist movement began to sprout from the soil of Turkish nationalism from 1909 onwards.’<sup>11</sup>

Arab nationalism was initially a response to ‘Turkification.’ Other contributing factors are the spread of Western education and European concepts of patriotism and nationalism. European missionaries opened many schools, where the young Arabs destined to lead the Arab literary revival, studied. The Arab awakening implies the rise of a new awareness in the Arabs of their own race, history, language and personality.<sup>12</sup> There was an intellectual revival of classical Arabic and the study of Arab history and literature. Pride in a common Arab heritage was renewed. Historical, cultural, religious and socio-cultural societies were created which became the first outward manifestation of a collective national consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

The Arab national movement had been slowly coming into existence during the first two decades of 20th century. Its roots were in Syria and Mesopotamia. It was at a secret gathering of certain members of the Syrian Scientific Society in 1868 that the Arab national movement is said to have born.<sup>14</sup> ‘Awake, O Arabs, and arise!’ – begins the famous ode of Ibrahim al-Yaziji, written in 1868 in Lebanon, was one of the earliest poetic expression of Arab national consciousness.<sup>15</sup> The British Consul General in Beirut reported the appearance of ‘revolutionary placards’ in Beirut on 28 June, 1880. The main demands raised in the placards according to British Consul’s report were:

- (a) The grant of independence to Syria in union with the Lebanon.
- (b) The recognition of Arabic as an official language in the country.
- (c) The removal of censorship and other restrictions on the freedom of expression and the diffusion of knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

A secret society led by Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim Pasha was behind the 'Placards'. George Antonius called this infant movement a 'false start' and traced the origins of the Arab nationalism to it.<sup>17</sup> The Society was composed of educated Arab Christians, the products of Catholic and Protestant mission schools. They wanted to secede from Ottoman Empire because being Christians they were treated as second-class citizens. They published some seditious posters and pamphlets, but all went largely unnoticed. They soon realized that without the support and co-operation of Syrian Muslims, their demands could not be realized. They tried to find some common ground with Syrian Muslims in their demand for Arabic to be recognized as the official language in Syria. The idea of Muslim solidarity was strong and at this stage, Syrian Muslims were not interested to break-up with Ottoman Empire. All the Muslim subjects of the Ottoman house saw themselves as participants and beneficiaries in the shared Islamic enterprise of defense and expansion of Islam and they drew no distinction between Arab and Turk. On the basis of the evidence given by the last surviving member of the secret society, Faris Nimr Pasha, (who later became George Antonius's father-in-law) it was noted that the society soon abandoned their objectives as hopeless.<sup>18</sup>

Arab nationalist feeling was very strong among the Christians who played a special role in the revival of the Arabic language and culture in the 19th century. The Christian Arabs could not subscribe to the Muslim idea of unity or pan-Islamism-the modern political expression of the religious community of Islam. So, they gave a nationalist expression, rather than religious, to the solidarity of the East against the imperialist West. "For Muslims", as Bernard Lewis put it, "the two forms of expression (National and Religious) were never really distinguished. The basic sentiment of identity was religious and social, the complete society of Islam expressed sometimes in national terms, sometimes in religious terms as synonymous and interchangeable sets of words denoting the same basic reality."<sup>19</sup> The 'Arab awakening', Christian and Muslim, failed to produce a strong and combined social criticism or a truly modern language of politics. Ultimately it would defeat itself by its apologetic defense of tradition and religion.<sup>20</sup> Though the 'awakening' had seriously shaken the confidence of Arabs in the legitimacy of Ottoman rule.

Based on the consciousness of a common Arab identity, opposition movements were gradually taking shape in the Arab speaking territories. Denis de Rivoyre, a Frenchman who travelled throughout the Arab world in 1884 reported:

"Everywhere I came upon the same abiding and universal sentiment: hatred of the Turks.... The notion of concerted action to throw off the detested yoke is gradually shaping itself.... An Arab movement, newly risen, is looming in the distance; and a race hitherto down-trodden will presently claim its due place in the destinies of Islam."<sup>21</sup>

The 'Muhammadan Union Societies', which were popular in the Arab World, were the chief vehicle of Arab nationalist movement. Thousands of Arabs including local notables had joined these societies.<sup>22</sup> Educated young Arabs set up a number of secret and public societies in addition to their membership in Muhammadan Union Societies. Among these societies, al-Fatat (Young



Arab Society) and al-Lamarkaziyya (Decentralization party) deserve specific mention because of their valuable contribution to the development of Arab nationalism. Al-Fatat was founded by young Muslim Arab students in Paris in 1911. The prominent figures among the founders were 'Awni' Abdal-Hadi of Jenin and Rafiq al-Tamimi of Nablus. The others were Jamal Mardam (Damascus), Muhammad al-Mahmasani (Beirut), Rustum Haydar (Baalbek), Tawfiq al-Natur (Beirut), Abdal-Ghani al-Uraysi (Beirut).<sup>23</sup> AlFatat aimed at complete administrative independence for the Arab provinces from Ottoman rule. It moved its headquarters from Paris to Beirut, and then to Damascus. The influence of al-Fatat increased rapidly in Syria. The ultimate aim of the al-Fatat was to "raise the Arab 'umma' (nation) to the level of living nations." It did not imply complete independence of Arab countries. 'What it meant was that the Arab and Turkish nationalities should combine together, each having equal rights and obligations in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>24</sup>

Another important Arab secret society was al-Qahtaniya, led by Major Aziz al-Masri.<sup>25</sup> It aimed at the unification of Ottoman Arab provinces in a single kingdom within the Empire, which would then become a Turco-Arab dual Monarchy along the lines of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>26</sup> The arrest and trial of Aziz al-Masri in February 1914 aroused strong anti-Turkish feeling which was reinforced by active British support. Eventually he was released and sent to Egypt.

The Decentralization Party was founded in Cairo in January 1913 by Syrian notables. The Executive Committee of the Party was composed of eight Syrian Muslims, five Christians and one Druze.<sup>27</sup> The party demanded for administrative decentralization in the Arab provinces, the recognition of Arabic as an official language in provincial business, the appointment of a greater number of local Arab officials, and the granting of wider powers to provincial councils.<sup>28</sup>

On the initiative of al-Fatat, a group of individuals, mostly members of Decentralization Party organized an Arab National Congress at Paris in June 1913. Muhammad Izzat Darwaza pointed out that the idea of holding the Congress was conceived early in 1913 by five members of al-Fatat who were students in Paris: Muhammad al-Mahmasani, Abdal al-Ghani al-Uraysi, Tawfiq Fayid (Beirut), Awni Abdul-Hadi (Nablus), and Jamil MardamBey (Damascus).<sup>29</sup> Out of the 25 delegates all except for two Iraqis, were Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians.<sup>30</sup> The CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) sent their secretary to Paris to enter into negotiations with the leaders of the Congress. Subsequently an agreement was reached between both parties which appeared to be an important victory for the Arabs. A greater measure of autonomy was granted. Arabic became the official language and medium of instruction in the Arab provinces. Finally, it was agreed that there were to be five Arab Governor-general and a minimum of three Arab ministers in the Ottoman government.<sup>31</sup> It was soon realized that the CUP had no intention to fulfill their promises. The gap between the policy of Turkification and anti-Turk political ambitions of Syrian and Palestinian group of reformers were widening. By the beginning of 1914, the cleavage between the CUP and the great majority of the leading Arabists went down to the roots.

In the pre-war period, Arab Nationalism shifted from an implied Islamic to a nationalist vocabulary in the course of the struggle for autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. In this period the Arab nationalist movement was not widespread among the populace in Syria or Palestine. It was rather a minority movement led by Arab intellectuals and notables.<sup>32</sup> The conservative and politically unsophisticated Arab traditional elite failed to transform the idea of Arab nationalism

into a popular form of political loyalty. Though, the dissident Arabist groups and intellectually inclined youth sowed the seeds of national movement that later fought for complete Arab independence.

### **The Arab Response to Zionism 1882-1914:**

In the early stage, the Arab Nationalist consciousness did not express any particular form of anti-Jewishness even though civil strife and tension between various religious sects were frequent in Palestine. The Arab population of Palestine was predominantly Sunni Muslim. Despite local rivalries, the idea of Arab unity, based on shared culture, historical experience, and shared interests, brought them together. A sense of community was strong among the Arab Muslims in Palestine, which was empowered by religious festivals and by the influence of the highest religious official, the Mufti of Jerusalem. The ancient and notable family of alHusayni controlled the post of Mufti from the mid-nineteenth century and consequently attained great authority and influence in the northern Vilayet and in the independent governorate of Jerusalem.<sup>33</sup> The British government recognized the then Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, as the leading representative of Palestinian Arabs during the mandatory period. (1922-1948).

The wave of Jewish immigration (Aliyah) that started with the first Aliyah (1881) had gradually affected the Arab politics in Palestine. The number of Jews living in Palestine in 1880 was 25,000.<sup>34</sup> The majority of them were apolitical Jews who lived mostly in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias. The Arabs saw no political threat in the presence of those religious Jews. But the arrival of politically motivated Jews from 1882 onwards produced ill feeling among the Arabs and they began to view Jewish settlements with fear and suspicion.

The basic struggle between Jewish settlers and Palestinians from the very beginning has been the issue of the control or sharing of the land of Palestine.<sup>35</sup> The European Jewish immigrants were ignorant of the Arab ways and local customs in Palestine. They did not care about the Ottoman civil law and courts. For example, the Jewish settlers fenced their land and thus blocked the customary pasture rights of nearby villages. They rounded up trespassing flocks and fined the villagers (Arab) who owned them in lines with European property rights.<sup>36</sup>

The quarrels over land questions or grazing and crop rights led to numerous violent conflicts between Jewish settlers and local peasants. One of the earliest conflict was the 'Petah Tikva'<sup>37</sup> incident which took place in 1886. The Jewish colonists of Petah Tikva denied grazing access to the adjacent village of al-Yahudiyya. The infuriated Arab peasants attacked the colony, killed one settler and injured four<sup>38</sup> and destroyed many houses and crops.

The land purchase of the Jewish colonists and subsequent peasant dispossession was central to the Palestinian struggle against Zionist colonization.<sup>39</sup> Rashid Khalidi made it clear that it was the resistance of Palestinian peasants that made the issue of Zionist colonization central to the Arab political discourse before world war I.<sup>40</sup> There was peasant uprisings in Tiberias (1901-1902) and in Affula (1910-1911) against land purchase. The Affula incident was particularly noted in which the Arab peasants of Merhavia staged a violent uprising against the Jewish settlers of Affula in May 1911, when they realized that their land was sold to them by the Sursuqs in Beirut.<sup>41</sup> Many big landholders in northern Palestine resided in Beirut. The Zionist agents opened an office for land purchase in 1900 in Beirut. The willingness of the Ottoman officials to ignore the regulations and the readiness of the absentee landlords to sell the land

facilitated land sales to Jews in the northern Vilayet. In Jerusalem also, the Ottoman governors from 1901 onwards permitted Jews to buy land. The Anglo-Palestinian Company, the first Zionist organization to be established in Palestine found that local Ottoman authorities would permit land purchase for colonization in return for loans from the Company to the Governor of Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup> Despite Ottoman regulations and violent protests of Arab peasants, land purchase and Jewish immigration to rural Palestine continued unabated.

The influx of Jewish immigrants from 1881 onwards alarmed the urban elite including merchants and craftsmen who felt threatened by the competition posed by the Jews. In response to Jewish settlement, the notables of Jerusalem sent a telegram to the Grand Vizier of Ottoman Empire, asking him to stop Jewish land purchase and mass immigration.<sup>43</sup> A Syrian Christian-owned Journal 'al-Muqtataf', based in Cairo, published an article in 1898 warning the Jewish attempts to control trade in Palestine.<sup>44</sup> In 1899, Yusuf Dia Pasha al-Khalidi, a prominent Jerusalemite, (He was the Mayor of Jerusalem and later, a member of the imperial Parliament), wrote a letter to Zadok Kahn, the chief rabbi of France and a friend of Theodor Herzl, telling him that Palestine was part of Ottoman empire inhabited by Muslims and Christians. Although "historically it is your country", Palestine could only be acquired by "brute force". He pleaded with the rabbi to leave Palestine alone "in peace", since the world had enough uninhabited land for Jewish colonization.<sup>45</sup> In response Herzl replied to al Khalidi that Zionism meant no harm and that European Jewish colonization would benefit the Arabs.<sup>46</sup>

Muhammad Rushid Rida, a Muslim reformer and a Pan-Islamic ideologue born in Beirut Vilayet but emigrated to Egypt in 1897 and living in Cairo, published an article in his monthly journal 'al-Manar' criticizing Zionist enterprise. He pointed out that the Jewish immigrants would try to establish national sovereignty in Palestine.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to the position of Rida, the editors of 'alMuqtataf', Yaqub Sarruf and Faris Nimr, viewed that the Zionist movement to establish a national home in Palestine would be failed because the Ottoman Sultan, Abdul Hamid himself was strongly opposed to such a programme.<sup>48</sup> They believed that the Zionists would monopolize trade and commerce, if their numbers increased but they would not devote to cultivation since they were basically non-agrarian people.<sup>49</sup> Rida was very indignant at the views presented by Sarruf and Nimr on Zionism and in response he wrote in 'al-Manar';

"You complacent ones, raise your heads and open your eyes. Look at what peoples and nations do. Are you happy to see the newspapers of every country reporting that the poor of the weakest peoples (the Jews), whom the governments of all nations are expelling, master so much knowledge and understanding of civilization methods that they are able to possess and colonize your country, and turn its masters into labourers, and its wealthy into poor? Think about this question (Zionism) and make it the subject of your discussion to determine whether it is just or unjust, sincere or insincere."<sup>50</sup>

The idea of Muslim solidarity and pro-Arab sympathies were central to the position of Rida. His doctrine had a traditional Arab Muslim cast. He believed that the Jews would become an important political power with their capital. He preached the revival of Islam and acquisition of modern science and technology to face the new challenge.

A Maronite Christian from Beirut, Naguib Azoury published a book in 1905 in French titled 'Le Reveil de la Nation Arab' (The Awakening of the Arab Nation). He was an Ottoman civil servant in Palestine. After leaving his position, he formed the 'League of the Arab Fatherland.'

He called for the secession of the Arab provinces from Ottoman rule 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.”<sup>51</sup> He advocated that the government would be a constitutional sultanate based on the freedom of all religions and the equality of all citizens before the law. “It will respect the interests of Europe, all the concessions and all the privileges granted to her.... by the Turks. It will also respect the autonomy of the Lebanon, and the independence of the principalities of Yemen, Nejd, and Iraq...”<sup>52</sup>

Azoury strongly criticized Sultan Abdul Hamid, whom he described as pernicious ‘beast’ running the Empire through intrigue and espionage from his ‘cave’ in Istanbul.<sup>53</sup> He also questioned the claim of Sultan to the Caliphate and pointed out that the Sultan had not performed hajj even at the age of 65 and did not know Arabic—the language of Quran. Being a catholic he believed that France had the right to protect catholics in the Ottoman Empire. He had close connections with many politicians in Paris. Azoury predicted violent clashes between Arabs and Jews in Palestine:

“Two important phenomena, similar in nature and yet opposed to each other.... are now manifesting themselves in Asiatic Turkey, namely the awakening of the Arab nation and the concealed effort of the Jews to re-establish the ancient Monarchy of Israel on a grand scale. These two movements are destined to a continuous struggle, until one of the two prevails over the other. On the final outcome of this struggle between these two peoples, representing two opposing principles, will depend the destiny of the entire world.”<sup>54</sup>

Azoury’s opposition to Zionism was based on a secular Arab nationalist perspective. His conception of the boundaries of independent Arab Nation recalls those later established by the Sharif Husayn in the Husayn-McMohan Correspondence<sup>55</sup> in 1915. Azoury seems to be profoundly influenced by European brand of anti-Semitism. He might have developed his anti-Semitic strands under the influence of the Dreyfus affair and French catholic propaganda.<sup>56</sup> He was a student in Paris at that time. Azoury viewed Zionism in terms of politics. His call for Arab independence and his nationalist idea reflected a Christian approach to the future of the region as opposed to that of the Muslims. The feeling of Islamic solidarity prompted majority of the Muslims to be loyal to Ottoman Sultan, at that time, even though some circles were becoming critical of Ottoman authority.

The Labour Zionism invoked strong opposition from Palestinian Arabs because of their campaign to put an end to Jewish employment of Arabs. The Arab peasants gradually accepted Jewish landowners because they were employed by Jews. But the Labour Zionist enterprise caused both land dispossession and unemployment to the Palestinians.

A full-blown Arab campaign against Zionism was developed in the years from 1908 to 1914. Anti-Zionist views were popularized by the concerted efforts of the Arab press. Four trends of Arab opposition could be noted: opposition based on the perception that Jews were not loyal to Ottoman Empire, Islam, Arabism, and Palestinian patriotism. The editors of the papers most emphatically campaigned against Zionism were Greek Orthodox Christians.<sup>57</sup>

Hanna Abdullah al-Isa started a biweekly publication in Jaffa in September 1908 titled “al-Asmai”<sup>58</sup> This paper opposed Jewish immigration and viewed Jews as a threat to the Arabs. It opposed capitulations – a system under which the Europeans enjoyed extraterritorial rights and

privileges all over the Ottoman Empire and the situation in which the Jewish labour compete the Arab labour.

In 1908 Najib Nassar founded 'al Karmil', a weekly paper published from Haifa. Al-Karmil was openly pro-Ottoman and upheld Palestinian patriotism. After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, it became increasingly critical of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) for their failure in promoting the interests of Palestinians. Alarmed by Jewish immigration and land acquisition, Najib Nassar concentrated on the campaign against land sales, regarding them as a threat to the Ottoman Empire in general and to the Palestinians in particular.<sup>59</sup> He criticized the Arabs who migrated from Palestine saying;

“While societies are being established for the purchase of our country and for its colonization, and while these societies are concentrating on reviving every aspect of their nationality, we migrate to foreign countries to make room for others. There are among us those who work against our community and eliminate our nationality just to promote their interests. When will the real Ottoman spirit awaken in us, and when shall we know our interests?”<sup>60</sup>

Nassar published a book titled 'al-Sahyuniyya' (Zionism) in 1911, in which he argued that Zionism was a racist movement with a political goal and warned that the Jewish settlements in Palestine would result the ingathering of Jews from different parts of the world.<sup>61</sup> Nassar realized that to empower the Arabs internally through acquisition of modern science and technology and promotion of Arabs own commerce and industry were needed. In this respect, he played a leading role in founding an association in Haifa which persuaded the local population to purchase their own goods and economically boycott the Jews.<sup>62</sup> The Association effectively pressurized the Ottoman government to stop land sales to Jews.

'Filastin' (Palestine) founded in 1911 in Jaffa stressed local nationalism (Palestinianism) rather than Ottoman allegiance. Yehoshua Porath dated the first appearance of the term 'Palestine' to 1911, when it was published in 'Filastin'.<sup>63</sup> This paper referred to Palestine as a socio-political entity and to its readers as 'Palestinians.'<sup>64</sup> It backed the Committee of Union and progress. The newspaper named 'al-Mufid' founded in Beirut in 1909 by Abd al-Ghani al-Uraysi and Faud Hantas advocated the cause of Arabism. Al-Uraysi's editorials expressed his Islamic-Arabist views and modern socio-political concepts developed in the West.<sup>65</sup> The central themes of 'al Mufid' were Arabism, Islam and Zionism. It viewed Zionism as a European colonizing movement aimed at dismembering Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. Another newspaper named al-Muqtabas' edited by Muhammad Kurd Ali started publishing from Damascus. Al-Muqtabas strongly criticized land sales, Jewish colonization and the indifference of Ottoman government to this process. These issues were also raised in the columns of 'al-Ahram', "al-Muqattam" 'al-Muayyad', and alManar in Egypt.<sup>66</sup>

Local Palestinian identity clearly existed in the country before the British and before the rise of Zionism. Benny Morris viewed that there could be no Palestinian cohesiveness because there was no Palestinian nation: “On the whole, save for the numerically small circle of the elite, the Palestinians were unready for the national message or for the demands that the national idea was to make upon the community.”<sup>67</sup> He continues:

“Commitment and readiness to pay the price for national self-fulfillment presumed a clear

concept of the nation and of national belonging, which Palestine Arabs, still caught up in the village-centered (or at best a regional) political outlook, by and large completely lacked. Most Palestine Arabs had no sense of separate national or cultural identity to distinguish them from, say, the Arabs of Syria, Lebanon or Egypt.”<sup>68</sup>

The opinion of Morris on Palestinians during the formative mandatory period was a continuation of the position of earlier Israeli historians. Yehoshua Porath in his highly documented study made it clear that Palestinians had a feeling of being a nation during the Mandatory period.<sup>69</sup> A recent historical anthropological study by Ted Swedenburg shows that common people participated in the Arab – Palestinian movement.<sup>70</sup> Whereas Morris and others viewed that Palestinian nationalism was confined to the elite. It is possible that Morris’s conclusion is partly based on the Palestinian’s surprisingly weak aggressive force in the 1948 war.<sup>71</sup>

Palestinian cohesiveness and identity consciousness existed as early as 1882. Palestinian peasants, urban notables and merchants together with Arab intellectuals began to express their opposition to ‘Turkification’ and Zionism. Palestinian self-perception manifested in the form of an uneasy, discontented feeling about Zionism. The peasants were incited by land dispossession and loss of grazing and crop rights. The landowners were afraid of the rise in the standard of living. The merchants were afraid of Jewish competition.

Anti-Zionism became a popular phenomenon between 1909 and 1914. On the basis of a study of the Palestinian press, Rashid Khalidi has shown that the full-fledged Palestinian nationalism made its first appearance, propelled by Zionism, after 1911. The Palestinian identity per se was not at all invented in response to Zionism. The idea of nationalism – albeit Ottoman nationalism – was familiar at least to the educated Arab elite. The notion of Ottoman nationalism was apparently natural and appropriate for the Arab citizens of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>72</sup>

In the context of their opposition to Zionist enterprise, the Palestinian Arabs increasingly became local patriots after 1909. It was in the Arab context that the Palestinian nationalism was born. Zionism posed an ideological and physical threat to the existence of Palestinian community. The process of political education connected the crude patriotic feeling to broader Arab nationalism and brought about a strong sense of internal cohesiveness among Palestinians. The cohesive power of shared suffering of Palestinians developed into full-blown Palestinian nationalism.

## **Diplomacy and War: The Palestinian Experience**

The outbreak of World War I on August 1, 1914, brought about basic transformation in the existing power relations in Palestine. Most members of the Palestinian traditional elite remained loyal to Ottoman Sultan and identified themselves with Ottomanism on religious grounds. The initial Arab antagonism towards the Turks was more cultural than social or political. The Arab reformers wanted to transform the Ottoman monarchy into an accountable government in order to strengthen the Empire and professed a vague admiration for the liberal democracies of the West, especially of England and France. Arabism in the pre-War period did not develop into full-fledged nationalism. Most adherents of Arabism had no vision of an ‘independent’ Arab nation state’ to be established in the fashion of European nation states. The Arab nationalists addressed their grievances which were “local and specific; they related to the quality of government

services or to the proper scope of local administration; and those who sought redress for such grievances were mostly men well known in their communities, able perhaps to conduct a sober constitutional opposition but not to entertain grandiose, limitless ambitions.”<sup>73</sup>

The Ottoman Empire entered the World War I on the side of Germany. On 5 November the Sultan declared war on Britain, France and Russia. Britain and France took swift action to fan every member of dissent in the Empire. Sultan Muhammad Rashad proclaimed ‘Jihad’ (Holy War) against Allies at the start of hostilities. The call for ‘Jihad’ evoked immediate response throughout Palestine.

The Palestinian notables and great majority of the people raised the banner of ‘Ottomanism’ and stood prepared to defend it. In Jerusalem the urban notables supported the war efforts of Ottomans. The prominent figures were Shukri al-Husayni and Raghīb al-Nashashibi. The powerful and attractive speeches of al Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Muzaffar, gathered large crowds of Palestinians in favour of Ottomans.<sup>74</sup> Al-Nimr, a notable family in Nablus gathered a big crowd at their palace and slaughtered a camel as a symbol of loyalty to Sultan. The crowd chanted in a resounding voice: ‘God grant victory to the Prince of the Muslims, our Sultan.’<sup>75</sup> With the help of local notables such as Sadiq Agha al-Nimr, a large number of Nablusites were recruited to Ottoman army. When the British took over Nablus in September 1918, they deported leading Nablusite notables and religious heads such as al shaykh said al-Karmi, al-shaykh Rifat Tuffaha, Abd al-Fattah Agha Tuquan and Fayiq Effendi al-Inibtawi.<sup>76</sup> Asad al-Shuqayri of Acre served as Mufti of the Fourth Army in Palestine, Syria and Sinai. ‘Filastin’ newspaper, (Jaffa) continued its pro-Ottoman position and unleashed fierce campaign for the unity of different nationalities of Ottoman Empire in order to maintain the integrity and unity during the War years.

The Palestinian Arabs in general subscribed to Ottomanism and did not actively participate in the Arab revolt against the Turks. In spite of the ruthless suppression of Arab nationalists by Jamal Pasha, which was considered as “one of the determining factors which helped most of the Muslim Arab leaders to make up their minds once and for all to break away completely from the Ottoman Empire”<sup>77</sup>, some Palestinians portrayed him as the ‘dispeller of grief’ (Mufrij al-Karbat) and the ‘beauty of religion’ (lil-din jamal).<sup>78</sup>

The World War I forced a choice upon the adherents of Arab nationalism. The Allies proposed ‘Arab independence’ and formation of an ‘Arab Nation’. The repression of Jamal Pasha already widened the gulf between Arab nationalists and Turks both in Palestine and Syria. But the lack of political consistency and organizational weakness prevented the Arab nationalists in Syria to stage a revolt or to contribute substantially to the revolt of Sharif Husayn. The execution, exile, and imprisonment of young Arab nationalist leaders also affected adversely the ‘Arab political aspirations’ in Syria and Palestine.

The Arab Revolt (1916) against the Ottoman Empire began in Arabia. The ‘Arabism’ that had emerged in the geographic Syria (Greater Syria) provided only a vague ideological framework for the Revolt. More faithfully it expressed the dynastic ambition of Sharif Husayn, a member of the Hashim Clan and the official guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The heart land of ‘Arabism’ and for all practical purposes, its birth place was ‘Greater Syria’, where the Arab Revolt did not rally much popular support.<sup>79</sup> Sharif Husayn’s sons, the Amir Faysal and Amir Abdullah, established contacts with the existing Arab societies in Damascus

and in Palestine but only a small number of Syrians and Palestinians responded positively. The Arab movement was elitist in character and there was a gulf between the leaders and Arab people. Religious conservatism and loyalty to Ottoman caliphate coupled with anti-Western or more specifically anti-Christian-anti-Zionist feeling and Turkish security measures limited the people's participation in the Arab Revolt in Syria-Palestine.

The Arab Revolt was led by the Hashemite family and its epicenter was Hijaz, which was a quasi-autonomous province governed by Sharif Husayn – a traditional Arab ruler. Hijaz was purely Arab and Muslim and included Mecca and Medina. Britain invoked nationalist feeling of the Arabs and held out the prospect of independence for something they called “the Arab Nation”. Lord Kitchener, former High commissioner in Egypt and the then War Minister, wrote two letters in November 1914 to Sharif Husayn and his son Amir Abdullah offering support to channelize Arab discontent with the Young Turks for staging a revolt which would eventually lead to Arab independence. The letter to Sharif Husayn said:

‘Till now we have defended and befriended Islam in the person of the Turks. Hence forward it shall be that of the noble Arab. It may be that an Arab of true race will assume the Khalifate at Mecca or Medina, and so good may come by the help of God out of all the evil, which is now occurring.

It would be well if your Highness could convey to your followers and devotees who are found throughout the world in every country the good tidings of the freedom of the Arabs and the rising of the sun over Arabia.’<sup>80</sup>

Lord Kitchener assured Amir Abdullah that England would protect Arabia against external foreign aggression if the Arab Nation supports the War efforts of England. As soon as the war broke out Britain had decided to dismember the Ottoman Empire. ‘The Times’ wrote on 3 November 1914; ‘Turkey had betrayed the interests of Islam by making wanton war on the Allies and has thereby pronounced her own death sentence.’ Insofar the future of Turkey’s Arab provinces were concerned the British War Cabinet did not take a decision. Five months later, Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary revealed the Cabinet decision to French Ambassador that, ‘When Turkey disappeared from Constantinople and the straits, there must, in the interests of Islam, be an independent Moslem political unit somewhere else. Its center would naturally be the Moslem Holy Places and it would include Arabia. But we must settle what else should be included.’<sup>81</sup>

It was against this background that Sharif Husayn began to bargain with the British officers. British interest in Husayn was clear that they believed that he might inspire an Arab Revolt that at least could divert Ottoman troops from positions threatening the Suez Canal Zone. It was also expected that a massive uprising of the Arab populace against the Turks would hamper the Ottoman security in the entire Arab land. In return, Lord Kitchener and Ronald Storrs-oriental secretary at the British Agency in Cairo-promised Arab independence and installation of the caliphate in Mecca, with Sharif Husayn, presumably as Caliph. The Arab nationalist societies in Syria offered support to Husayn and agreed to take part in a revolt against the Turks.<sup>82</sup> They accepted him as spokesman for the Arabs’. The policy of ‘Turkification’ had created a number of discontented Arab officers in the Ottoman Army who sought at least autonomy for the Arab lands of Ottoman Empire. To encourage the separatist sentiments among Arab officers, Ronald Storrs sent a letter to Amir Abdullah in December 1914, which addressed the ‘natives of Arabia,



Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia' and promised them 'independence without any intervention in their internal affairs, if they rebelled and drove out the Turks.'<sup>83</sup>

Arab nationalism shifted from the 'Islamic' framework to a nationalist one in the course of the struggle for autonomy within Ottoman Empire in the pre-war era. During the war years, Arab nationalist aspirations moved from 'autonomy' to Arab independence and creation of an Arab State. 'Arabism' rather than Islam became the dominant discourse, displacing the traditional vocabulary of political affiliation and political action.<sup>84</sup>

The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence (July 1915 – January 1916)<sup>85</sup> expressed the Arab aspirations for independence to be backed by Britain. Husayn offered Arab support to Britain. He wrote "I wish to give you and your government my assurance that you need to have no anxiety about the intentions of our people, for they realize how closely their interests are bound to those of your government."<sup>86</sup> In the course of the protracted correspondence. Husayn demanded the independence of Arab countries which are bounded; "On the north, by the line Mersin Adana to parallel 37° N and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat (ibn 'Umar) – Amedia to the Persian frontier; on the East, by the Persian frontier down to Persian Gulf; on the south, by the Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden whose status will remain as at present); on the West by the Red sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin' and 'Great Britain will agree to the proclamation of an Arab caliphate for Islam."<sup>87</sup> McMahon, in reply, confirmed that 'the government of Great Britain would welcome the reversion of the Caliphate to a true Arab born of the blessed stock of the Prophet.'<sup>88</sup> But as far as the question of frontiers and boundaries were concerned, McMahon said that 'negotiations would appear to be premature and a waste of time on details at this stage'<sup>89</sup> Husayn showed reluctance on this statement and pointed out that the proposed boundaries and frontiers were "the demands of our people who believe that those frontiers form the minimum necessary to the establishment of the new order for which they are striving."<sup>90</sup> In response, McMahon wrote to Husayn that: "The districts of Mersin and Alexandretta, 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 must on that account be excepted from the proposed delimitation."<sup>91</sup> Subject to this modification and without detriment to the interests of France, McMahon pledged on behalf of the government of Great Britain to recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sherif of Mecca.<sup>92</sup> McMahon also pointed out that 'as regards the two vilayets of Baghdad and of Basra, the Arabs recognize that the fact of Great Britain's established position and interests there will call for the setting up of special administrative arrangements to protect those regions from foreign aggression...."<sup>93</sup> In reply Sherif Husayn wrote: 'we no longer insist on the inclusion of the districts of Mersin and Adana in the Arab Kingdom', but in the case of Baghdad and Basra, "we should find it impossible to persuade or compel the Arab nation to renounce..."<sup>94</sup> In the third note to Husayn, McMahon pointed out that the interests of France were involved in the two provinces of Aleppo and Beirut. So, the question of those two provinces need careful consideration.<sup>95</sup> In the fourth note McMahon wrote, "we have noted what you say with regard to the vilayet of Baghdad, and we shall examine the matter with the utmost care after the defeat of the enemy, when the time comes for the conclusion of peace."<sup>96</sup>

The Husayn-McMahon correspondence, unequivocally promised Arab independence. Though the correspondence involved a startling piece of double-dealing. Sir Henry McMahon had technically shielded Great Britain from fulfilling her commitment. Sherif Husayn was never

promised personal rule of the Arab territory instead ‘the reversion of the caliphate to a true Arab born of the blessed stock of the prophet’ was promised. An Arab caliphate was only obliquely approved in the correspondence. According to McMahon’s letter of 24 October; British assurances are to be materialized as far as she is free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally, France. This position seems, at least technically, to be an anticipatory bail to free Britain from her responsibility and to justify the allegedly contravening Sykes-Picot Agreement. It remains difficult to acquit McMahon and his superior officers of the charge that Sharif Husayn was misled. The nature of the ‘Correspondence’ itself is misleading. Britain did not make a formal treaty with Husayn. Although she had always made formal treaties with Arab Chiefs in her dealings in the past.

## **Husayn-McMahon Correspondence and Palestine**

The question whether the land of Palestine was included in the area of Arab independence or not was of great significance. Sherif Husayn neither accepted nor rejected the claim of McMahon in his second note (October 24, 1915) that portions of Syria lying to the West of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo’ were not purely Arab and so excepted from the proposed delimitation. This area would appear to correspond to the coastal areas of present-day Syria and the northern part of Lebanon, where the French interests converge. It did not appear to cover the land of Palestine which formed the independent Sanjak of Jerusalem and the Sanjaks of Acre and Balqa under the Ottomans. The British apologists used dubious logic to claim that Palestine lay to the west of Damascus.<sup>97</sup>

In 1939 shortly after the full texts of Husayn-McMahon correspondence were officially released, a committee consisting of both British and Arab representatives was set up to consider this land question. The committee failed to reach an agreed view. The British delegation admitted that the Arab “..... contentions relating to the meaning of the phrase ‘portions of Syria lying to the West of the districts of Damascus, Hama, Homs and Aleppo’ have greater force than has appeared hitherto... they agree that Palestine was included in the area claimed by the Sherif of Mecca in his letter of 14 July 1915, and that unless Palestine was excluded from that area later in the correspondence it must be regarded as having been included in the area which Great Britain was to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs..... But they agree that the language in which its exclusion was expressed was not so specific and unmistakable as it was thought to be at the time.”<sup>98</sup> The Report, referring to Balfour Declaration, pointed out that ‘His Majesty’s Government were not free to dispose of Palestine without regard to the wishes and interests of the inhabitants of Palestine.’<sup>99</sup>

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....”<sup>100</sup>. An appendix to the Memorandum noted that ‘the whole of Palestine.... lies within the limits which His Majesty’s Government have pledged themselves to Sherif Husayn that they will recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs.’<sup>101</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, who as a member of the British foreign office at the time of Paris Peace Conference, dealt with the Palestine issue, wrote in 1968:

“..... as I interpret the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, Palestine had not been excepted by the British Government from the area in which they had pledged themselves to King Husayn to recognize and support Arab independence. The Palestinian Arabs could therefore reasonably assume that Britain was pledged to prepare Palestine for becoming an independent Arab State.”<sup>102</sup>

The British commitments to Sherif Husayn were so naturally put within the veil of diplomatic language. The wordings were ambiguous and sometimes self-negating. As a result the Husayn-McMahon papers produced a lot of confusion and misunderstanding. Even though, behind the diplomatic language there appears recognition that the land of Palestine was not unequivocally excluded from the boundaries of Arab independence.

The Arab Revolt broke out in Hijaz in the spring of 1916 against the Ottoman Sultan. On 10 June 1916 by symbolically firing a rifle at the Turkish barracks in Mecca, Sherif Husayn raised the flag of Arab Revolt. Soon Mecca and Jeddah fell to the rebels. The ill-trained and ill-equipped Arab troops fought boldly against lightly armed Turkish troops, but they often ran away from artillery. After one such retreat, The Arabs explained that they had ‘withdrawn to make ourselves some coffee.’<sup>103</sup> The Arab force was recruited partly from Bedouin of Western Arabia and partly from prisoners and deserters from the Ottoman Army. The Arab forces fought alongside the Allied forces in the occupation of Syria and Palestine and contributed to the Allied victory on the Eastern front. The military significance of a few thousand Bedouin irregulars in battles involving vast regular armies might have been minor. But the Arab army, led by the Sharif of Mecca—a descendant of the Prophet and keeper of the Holy sanctuaries of Islam, fighting the Turks denouncing Sultan and his so-called ‘jihad’, was of immense moral significance. This aspect provided justification to British and French Empires in maintaining their authority over their Muslim subjects.

Great Britain, France and Russia began to contemplate the division of Ottoman Empire’s territory in the Middle East among them soon after Turkey entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers. The appropriation of portions of Ottoman territory was decided between them in an exchange of diplomatic notes. The secret Anglo-French-Russian accord generally known as the ‘Sykes-Picot Agreement’<sup>104</sup> was reached in 16 May 1916. Britain’s negotiator was Mark Sykes, a Member of Parliament and Assistant Secretary to the British War Cabinet. Francois-George Picot, a diplomat who had served as Consul General in Beirut represented France in the negotiations. Britain and France officially ratified the agreement of 1916 in an exchange of letters in London on 9 May and 16 May between British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey and France’s ambassador to Britain, Paul Cambon.

The Sykes-Picot agreement defined areas of direct and indirect British and French control in the Arab lands and South-East Turkey as well as spheres of interest. Britain’s authority was to extent in Iraq (Mesopotamia) from Bagdad south to the Gulf and from the Egyptian border through eastern Palestine into northern and southern Iraq. This area was identified as ‘red zone’. The French authority was to include Lebanon, coastal Syria, a portion of Palestine west of the Jordan River, and south-eastern Turkey (Cilicia). This area was identified as ‘blue zone’. French sphere of influence was identified which included the rest of the Syria from just west of the ‘districts’ of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo through northern Iraq, including Mosul to the Iranian border. The agreement also identified an internationally administered area called ‘brown zone’. Palestine, including Jerusalem, was part of the internationalized area, where the type of

administration would be determined after discussions with Russia, other Allies, and Sherif Husayn.

A compromise agreement was reached between France and Russia, in an exchange of notes between Sazanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Paleologue, the French Ambassador in Petrograd on 26 April. By this Russia got a 60,000 square-mile band of territory between the Black Sea and the Mosul area, including the provinces of Erzurum, Trebizond, Van, and Bitlis in Ottoman Armenia, and a substantial parts of northern Kurdistan.<sup>105</sup> A few weeks later, Britain gave its formal approval to the modified Sykes-Picot Agreement in an exchange of notes between Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the French and Russian ambassadors in London, Paul Cambon and Count Benckendorff.<sup>106</sup>

The Agreement became known to Sharif Husayn after its publication by the Bolshevik Government of Russia.<sup>107</sup> Jamal Pasha, Governor of Syria, sent a copy of the agreement with a letter to Sherif Husayn, telling him that 'if he is a true Muslim and has the qualities and sentiments of a real Arab, he will turn against the British and return to the fold of the Caliph and of Islam.'<sup>108</sup> Husayn referred it to the British for comment. They denied it totally and described the Agreement as 'a figment of Bolshevik imagination'<sup>109</sup>

Arab writers such as George Antonius described the Sykes-Picot agreement as a 'shocking document'<sup>110</sup>. The Agreement declared that "France and Britain are prepared to recognize and uphold an independent Arab State or Confederation of Arab states..."<sup>111</sup> At the same time it was stated: "France in the Blue area and Great Britain in the Red area shall be at liberty to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they may desire or as they may deem fit to establish after agreement with the Arab State or confederation of Arab States."<sup>112</sup> In the spheres of influence, France and Britain "shall have a right of priority in enterprises and local loans" and shall alone supply foreign advisers or officials on the request of the Arab State or the Confederation of Arab states."<sup>113</sup> In the Brown area "there shall be established an international administration."<sup>114</sup>

It is clear from the Sykes-Picot Agreement that Britain had no intention of fulfilling her commitment in the Husayn-McMahon correspondence. The Agreement met British territorial objectives in the Middle East. According to Don Peretz "The secret agreements concerning partition of the Ottoman Empire among the various Allied Powers (Sykes-Picot Agreement) conflicted with promises made by Great Britain to both Zionist and Arab Nationalists (Husayn-McMahon Correspondence)"<sup>115</sup> Whatever the Arab expectations it seems that only in the thinly populated, backward and impoverished 'Arabian peninsula' were the Arabs to be given real independence. Some scholars view that there is no basic contradiction between the Sykes-Picot agreement and British promises made to the Arabs in the Correspondence. For example, Efraim Karsh argued that "by providing for the establishment of a large independent Arab State or Confederation, the Sykes-Picot Agreement acted as a catalyst for Arab unification rather than fragmentation. There was no fundamental contradiction between the territorial provisions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and those of the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence"<sup>116</sup> Elie Kedourie opined that..."The division into areas to be annexed or to be protected by England and France respectively, the stipulations about economic activities and administrative supervision were all arranged to fit in with the preferences and desires of the Arab leaders, as far as these could be ascertained."<sup>117</sup>

Isaiah Friedman also shares the view that Sykes-Picot agreement did not contradict with McMahon's pledges to Sherif Husayn.<sup>118</sup> The position of these scholars seems doubtful. The British were not serious in the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence itself. Defending himself against the charges of promising too much to Husayn, McMahon argued that 'what we have to arrive at now is to tempt the Arab people 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.'<sup>119</sup>

Later on the Sykes-Picot Agreement itself was viewed by British officials and diplomats as a temporary wartime collusion. British imperial goal was to take total control of the Arab land either through direct occupation or through the establishment of a puppet Arab State in Damascus. The contradictory agreements and understandings reached during the World War I was to facilitate this goal. The pledges to Husayn became a device to block British commitments to France under Sykes-Picot agreement and in turn the Sykes-Picot became a means to put aside the commitments made to Husayn.

As the World War I progressed, Britain made a deal with Sherif Husayn's neighbour and adversary, Abdal-Aziz Ibn Saud of Nejd. In September 1915, six weeks later the McMahon letter of October 24, 1915 to Sherif Husayn, a treaty of independence was signed with Ibn Saud by Sir Percy Cox, the chief political officer with the force at Basra.<sup>120</sup> The deal was made at the instance of government of India which administered the Aden protectorate. Ibn Saud responded favourably to the overtures of British government of India and while assuring of his friendship with Sherif Husayn, he entered into agreements to keep aloof and refrained from the Caliph's (Ottoman Sultan) call to Jihad. He was not in a position to make a substantial military or moral contribution to the war against Turkey. The value of the Agreement lay mainly in their negative results. By the Agreement the British 'secured Ibn Saud's help in preventing supplies from reaching the enemy through the Persian Gulf and made it no longer possible for the Turks to use the seaboard as a hostile base against Allied shipping in the Red Sea.'<sup>121</sup>

The McMahon's letter of October 24, 1915 did not dovetail with the treaty made between Ibn Saud and the government of (British) India. The Sykes-Picot Agreement did not communicate to Sir Percy Cox. In May 1917, Mark Sykes apologized to Cox for this: "I was assured that you had had a copy of it as far back as ten months ago."<sup>122</sup> The Government of India, which was in fine tune with Ibn Saud, was uncooperative about the 'Arab Revolt' lead by Sherif Husayn.

## **The Balfour Declaration: Its Meaning and Impact**

From the very beginning Britain was sympathetic towards the Zionist cause. The British-Zionist connection grew strong with the emergence of Chaim Weizmann in the World Zionist organization.<sup>123</sup> Weizmann, an assimilated English Jew of Russian parentage, made valuable scientific contributions in the field of explosives and thus became so close to Lloyd George who headed the British Ministry of Munitions. Weizmann, in full agreement with Herzl, was of the conviction that the British were the most promising potential sympathizers of Zionism. He passionately tried to establish rapport with British politicians and in 1906 he met Arthur Balfour. Later, in reference to this fateful meeting, Balfour called Weizmann, 'the man who made me a Zionist.'<sup>124</sup>

In the context of World War I, Weizmann tactfully made full use of his connections to ensure

British support for establishing a national home in Palestine. Weizmann met C.P. Scott, then Editor of the Manchester Guardian, and influenced him to make his mind in favour of the Zionist cause. It was Scott, who introduced Weizmann to Lloyd George and Herbert Samuel, both members of the Cabinet. Zionist diplomatic ventures were successful in making a number of strong supporters in the high political circles in Britain. The easy acceptance of Zionist cause among British politicians and people was viewed as a product of Christian millenarianism by Christopher Sykes.<sup>125</sup>

Many Christians have supported Zionism because they felt that Bible legitimizes the return of the Jews to Palestine. The Evangelicals and Puritans, were strongly infused with the Hebraism of the Bible. For them Zionism was easily digestible. Arnold Toynbee pointed out that the gentile Zionism in Britain might have been a product of guilt consciousness raised out of a subconscious anti-Semitism.<sup>126</sup> He also attributed Gentile Zionism to a... “characteristically Anglo-Saxon attitude of combining an unavowed yet patent Machiavellianism with a suspect yet sincere Quixotry...”<sup>127</sup>

Dr. Weizmann prepared a description of the main facts of Zionist war policy in November 1914 and presented it to C.P. Scott in a letter, which read: ..... “we can reasonably say that should Palestine fall within the British sphere of influence, and should Britain encourage Jewish settlement there, as a British dependency, we could have in twenty or thirty years a million Jews out there, perhaps more; they would develop the country, bring back civilization to it and form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal.”<sup>128</sup>

Herbert Samuel discussed the controversial issue of the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine with Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary.<sup>129</sup> Grey was sympathetic to the Zionists and he agreed to work for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine in the future.<sup>130</sup> Samuel presented an official memorandum titled ‘The Future of Palestine’ in January 1915 to the Prime Minister Herbert Asquith in which he advocated a mass immigration of three or four million Jews into Palestine under British sponsorship.<sup>131</sup> Asquith found it distasteful and said: “I confess I am not attracted by this proposed addition to our responsibilities.”<sup>132</sup> At this juncture, the attempts of pro-Zionists in the Cabinet did not produce fruits because Prime Minister Herbert Asquith opposed their plan. Asquith was of the opinion that the Turks should be replaced with Arabs as friends of Great Britain in the Arab Middle East including Palestine.<sup>133</sup>

Lloyd George became Prime Minister and Arthur Balfour, Foreign Secretary in December 1916. Then the British Government began seriously to consider a public statement of policy on Palestine. The accession of Lloyd George to Prime Ministership was coincided with a reassessment of Britain’s war objectives by the British Military Command. The General Staff proposed a campaign to undertake Palestine in the autumn of 1917. The British Cabinet approved the proposal in January 1917. In February 1917, the British Government assigned Mark Sykes, then Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet to oversee Middle Eastern Affairs, to open official negotiations with the Zionists. Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Harry Sacher presented the position of Zionists and their fundamental desires were finally summarized as follows:<sup>134</sup>

(a)An internationally recognized right of the Jews to Palestine (b) the establishment of juridical nationhood for the Jewish community in Palestine (c) a chartered Jewish company with rights to acquire land to be created in Palestine (d) the union of Palestine under one administration and (f) the establishment of extra-territoriality in the holy places of Palestine. The

last two points were designed to sooth Great Britain and Russia respectively.

Being an astute politician Lloyd George realized that Zionist movement could be utilized to introduce British control over Palestine. Britain tried to woo to the Allied cause with the Jews who generally sympathized with Germany out of their hatred for anti-Semitic Czarist Russia. It was believed that British support of Zionism would lead American Jews to encourage President Woodrow Wilson to enter the War or at least ensure American financial assistance to the war effort. All these factors, combined with intense lobbying by Dr. Weizmann and other prominent Zionists, led to the 'Balfour Declaration' of November 2, 1917, which promised the Jews a national home in Palestine.

Towards the end of January 1917, Dr. Weizmann submitted a memorandum to Sir Mark Sykes, entitled 'outline of Programme for the Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in accordance with the aspirations of the Zionist movement'. The document reads: 'The Jewish population of Palestine (which in the programme shall be taken to mean both present and future Jewish population), shall be officially recognized by the Suzerain Government as the Jewish nation, and shall enjoy in that country full civic, national and political rights'<sup>135</sup> Leonard Stein, the authoritative historian of Zionism, described in detail the consultations between British Government and the Zionist organization. According to him....

'The conference of February 2 was, in fact, the starting point of a prolonged exchange of views between the Zionist organization and the British government..... In July 1917, a formula for a proposed declaration was submitted to the government by the Zionist representatives. This formula recognized Palestine as 'the national home of the Jewish people and provided for the establishment of a Jewish National Colonizing Corporation for the resettlement and economic development of the country. The government replied with an alternative draft which formed the basis of ..... the Balfour Declaration'<sup>136</sup>

The original Zionist draft sent to Balfour by Lord Rothschild had proposed that "His Majesty's Government accept(s) the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people", and "His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievements of this object, and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organization"<sup>137</sup> The final version of the Declaration was drafted after most careful examination. There was sixty-seven words in the Declaration, and the meaning and implications of each of these was considered with extreme importance. In the words of Lloyd George, 'the Declaration was prepared after much consideration, not merely of its policy but of its actual wording.'<sup>138</sup>

The Balfour Declaration was an important policy statement on Palestine by Great Britain which came in the form of an official letter from Lord Arthur James Balfour, Foreign Secretary in the coalition government of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, to Lord Rothschild, a wealthy influential British Jew and Zionist leader. The full text of the Declaration reads as follows:<sup>139</sup>

The Balfour Declaration arose out of the convergence of British imperial interests in the Middle East with Zionist aspirations. Professor W.T. Mallison, an eminent authority in international law summarized the negotiating objectives of both the British government and the Zionist organization:

“The British Government had two principal political objectives during the period of negotiations. The first was to win the war and the second was to maximize the British power position through the ensuing peace settlement.” “The consistent Zionist objectives before and during the negotiations were to obtain public law authority for their territorial ambitions.....

“The Zionists entered the negotiations with the expectation of obtaining their full territorial demands. These expectations, however, were necessarily limited by two objective factors. The first was that the number of Jews in Palestine during the World War was only a small fraction of the entire population of the country. The second was that the Zionists could not expect anything from the British Government which did not accord with its actual or supposed imperial interests.”<sup>140</sup>

The declaration served British design to plant a buffer to the Suez Canal and to win the support of the world Jewry to the Allied cause. Balfour argued in the War Cabinet, which met on October 31, 1917:.... “from a purely diplomatic and political point of view, it was desirable that some declaration favourable to the aspirations of the Jewish nationalists should now be made..... if we could make a declaration favourable to such an ideal, we should be able to carry on extremely useful propaganda both in Russia and in America.”<sup>141</sup> Lloyd George was reported to have said: ‘The Zionist leaders gave us a definite promise that if the Allies committed themselves to giving facilities for the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, they would do their best to rally Jewish sentiment and support throughout the world to the Allied cause.’<sup>142</sup> He came to the conclusion that ‘it was one of the darkest periods of the war. At this state it was vital that we should have the sympathies of the Jewish community.’<sup>143</sup>

The basic British policy was to win the War and emerge from it as firmly entrenched in the Near East as possible. To materialize this goal, the British were pursuing whatever pragmatic means seemed necessary at the moment. According to Winston Churchill the Declaration ‘must not be regarded as a promise given from sentimental motives; it was a practical measure taken in the interests of a common cause at a moment when that cause could afford to neglect no factor of material or moral assistance.’<sup>144</sup> Eric Hobsbawm had said about the Declaration that, “the British Government anxious for international Jewish support during World War I, had incautiously and ambiguously promised to establish ‘a national home for the Jews.’<sup>145</sup> A Famous English Journalist Michael Adams wrote:- Balfour Declaration conflicted with the earlier promise to the Arabs; indeed, it could only be fulfilled at the expense of the Arabs and in this contradiction lies the essence of the Palestine problem.<sup>146</sup>

British imperial interests were self-evident in Balfour Declaration. It was deliberately contrived to allow the British to renege on earlier promises to France and Arabs regarding Palestine. Llyod George, reportedly said that British control over Palestine would prevent it from falling into the hands of the agnostic atheistic French.<sup>147</sup> The Zionists were really to facilitate British interests in Palestine. Chaim Weizmann in a letter to Winston Churchill, then British Colonial Secretary, pointed out that the Jewish Palestine would be a bastion to Egypt. ‘The existence of a Jewish Palestine leaves you absolutely free to follow whatever policy may be most convenient to you, and enable you, if you wished, to evacuate altogether and to concentrate on the Canal Zone with your army based on Palestine.’<sup>148</sup> Zionist leaders had constantly urged the British that a strong Jewish national home would be guarding the road to India, just because it was a counteracting force to Arab Nationalism. Later, Ronald Storrs expressed the hope that the Jewish settlements and state building enterprise, augmented and legalized by Balfour



Declaration, would yield for England, “a little, loyal Jewish Ulster”, is a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.<sup>149</sup>

Along with the imperialistic and pragmatism motives, the Balfour Declaration represents a culmination of a long tradition in Britain that supported restoration of the Jews in Palestine. Philosophical and religious motives were the basis of this Gentile Zionism. A number of influential politicians were strongly pro-Zionist including Prime Minister Lloyd George, Mark Sykes and Arthur Balfour.

Balfour had a particular interest in the “People of the Book”. His motive was basically Biblical. According to his niece, companion, and biographer, Mrs. Dugdale, it was a ‘lifelong’ interest that originated in the Old Testament training of his mother and in his Scottish upbringing.<sup>150</sup> He strongly believed that ‘Christian religion and civilization owes to Judaism an immeasurable debt, shamefully ill repaid’<sup>151</sup> To him the Jews were, neither tools of the Christian millennium nor agents of a business imperialism, but simply exiles who should be given back, in payment of Christianity’s ‘immeasurable debt’, their homeland’<sup>152</sup> Balfour was specific about “Palestine”, he wrote ‘for the Jews race, religion and country (Palestine) are inter-related as they are inter-related in the case of no other religion and no other country on earth.’<sup>153</sup> In the Declaration, Balfour saw an opportunity of “doing something material to wash out an ancient stain upon their own civilization”<sup>154</sup> Even before the final statement of British Policy on Palestine, Balfour prophetically said to Weizmann: ‘You know, after the war you may get your Jerusalem.’<sup>155</sup>

After the announcement of Balfour Declaration, leaflets were dropped over German and Austrian troops urging the Jews to support the Allied forces. American Jewish groups became more active in supporting the war efforts of the Allied forces. After the great October Revolution, the Bolsheviks denounced wartime treaties and entered into negotiations for peace. The Soviet-German Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed in March 3, 1918. Russian withdrawal might have seriously affected Britain and France if the United Nations had not committed fully to the Allied forces and to send large detachments of troops, beginning in January 1918. The active American presence in favour of the ‘Allied forces, which compensated Russian withdrawal was mainly attributed to the influential American Jews.

The Balfour Declaration was described as a document in which “one nation solemnly promised to a second nation, the country of a third”<sup>156</sup> The Declaration did not mention the Palestinians, who comprised over 90% of the population and owned about 97% of its land.<sup>157</sup> Instead, the Declaration refers to them as the ‘existing non-Jewish Communities in Palestine.’ For Jeffries, this formulation was just like calling the British people’ the non-continental communities in Great Britain.<sup>158</sup> The Declaration denied the right of self-determination to the people of Palestine. The Declaration specified that the civil and religious rights of the Palestinian people would be respected, but in the case of more fundamental political rights, it remains singularly silent. The political rights would be reserved for the prospective Jewish community once it attained a majority. It was clear that the achievement of a Jewish majority in Palestine would assure the establishment of a Jewish State. The Declaration indirectly facilitated and to some extent ‘legalized’ the illegal immigration of Jews to achieve Jewish majority in Palestine. Prime Minister Lloyd George summed up British policy on Palestine with a clear statement that ‘when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them and had become a definite majority of the

inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish commonwealth.’<sup>159</sup>

Balfour Declaration became a highly controversial document. It disturbed the non-Zionist Jewish circles also. Sir Edwin Montagu, the only Jewish member of the British Cabinet, in a secret memorandum (later made public), wrote:

“Zionism has always seemed to me to be a mischievous political creed, untenable by any patriotic citizen of the United Kingdom....”

“I deny that Palestine is today associated with the Jews or properly to be regarded as a fit place for them to live in. The Ten Commandments were delivered to the Jews on Sinai. It is quite true that Palestine plays a large part in Jewish history, but so it does in modern Mohammedan history, and, after the time of the Jews, surely it plays a larger part than any other country in Christian history....”<sup>160</sup>

Sir Montagu strongly opposed Balfour Declaration and prophetically stated that ‘Palestine become the world’s ghetto.’<sup>161</sup>

Balfour Declaration violated other British promises and agreements. It contradicted with Husayn-McMahon correspondence and Sykes-Picot Agreement. The pledges of Arab independence were tactfully sidelined. The disposition of Palestine was determined in consultation with World Zionist movement. The Declaration was a deliberate violation of the fundamental rights of the native Palestinians. Clifford Wright, former staff fellow at the Institute of Arab studies, Massachusetts wrote: “it is difficult to imagine how a letter from a British Foreign Minister, Lord Balfour, to a British Zionist leader Rothchild, could be the legal basis for dispossessing an indigenous population in the Middle East.”<sup>162</sup>

Authorities in international law held the view that the Declaration was legally invalid.<sup>163</sup> It was clear that when the Declaration was made, Palestine was formally part of the Ottoman Empire. ‘The most significant and incontrovertible fact is, however, that by itself the Declaration was legally impotent. For Great Britain had no sovereign right over Palestine, it had no proprietary interest, it had no authority to dispose of the land’<sup>164</sup> The Zionists and later the Jews of the State of Israel successfully marketed the Balfour Declaration as a ‘legal document’. It was used effectively by the Zionists to legitimize the illegal immigration of Jews to Palestine, unilateral declaration of the State of Israel, expropriation and takeover of Palestinian Arab lands and property, and finally the expulsion of the majority of the Arabs of Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration could be called rightfully as a product of well-planned Zionist diplomacy. The diplomatic skills and personal influence of Dr. Weizmann enabled him to play a leading role in this process. The popular legend in England was that the Balfour Declaration was a reward to Dr. Weizmann for his solution of the acetone shortage during World War I.<sup>165</sup>

Sir Charles Webster, a British official close to Dr. Weizmann, commented on the diplomatic victory of Weizmann in the following words:

“One of the best examples of successful diplomacy is that by which Dr. Weizmann brought into existence the Jewish national home.... The task which Dr. Weizmann set himself was more difficult than that of any statesman of the smaller powers.... He once told me that 2,000 interviews had gone to the making of the Balfour Declaration”<sup>166</sup>

With the Balfour Declaration, the long-cherished Zionist dream of a recognized and legalized Jewish political status in Palestine was materialized. The Declaration sowed the seed of prolonged conflict in Palestine as it denied the inherent rights and the wishes of the Palestinian people.

By the end of 1917 Palestine fell to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force of the British led by General Allenby after a long-drawn military campaign eastward since January 1917. The Turks retreated from Jerusalem. In the following year, British force extended its control over the whole Ottoman-Syrian province. The Revolt of Sherif Husayn played an important role in British victory. The Arab irregulars under Amir Faisal carried out valuable guerrilla operations on the right flank of the British Expeditionary Force. Their activity 'immobilized some 30,000 Turkish troops along the railway from Amman to Medina and prevented the Turco-German forces in Syria from linking up with the Turkish garrison in Yemen.'<sup>167</sup> T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and Auda, 'the Hawk', a famous tribal leader captured the strategically important port town of Aqaba in July 1917. The Arab Force succeeded in controlling the shipping through the Red sea. It was very clear that without 'Arab Revolt' the British victory could not have been achieved.

The Holy city of Jerusalem was surrendered to the British on 9 December 1917. In the Jerusalem surrender document dated 8th December, 1917, the Governor of the Governorate of Jerusalem wrote: "The Ottoman Government, in order to safeguard religious places from ruin and destruction, has withdrawn its forces from the city and has commissioned (civil) officials to take care of the religious places like The Holy Sepulchre and the Aqsa Mosque."<sup>168</sup> On 11 December General Allenby took a stroll around the holy city and proclaimed, 'today the Crusades have come to an end'<sup>169</sup> Likewise, General Gauraud, the French Commander, after taking Damascus in July, 1920, went straight to the tomb of Salahuddin (Saladin), placed his boot on his grave and announced, 'Saladin', we are back.'<sup>170</sup> These statements indicate the true crusading spirit that guided Britain and France in taking possession of Syria-Palestine. It is true that the crusades were completely forgotten soon after 1291 but was reinvented again in the 20th century.<sup>171</sup>

Before the end of 1917, the Arabs charged of betrayal against the Allies especially against Britain. The King Sherif Husayn was alarmed at the British and French policies after the war was almost over.<sup>172</sup> It was in this context, commander D.G. Hogarth of the (British) Arab Bureau<sup>173</sup> in Cairo sent a message on 4th January 1918 to King Sherif Husayn of the Hejaz at Jeddah. The letter assured that "The Entente powers are determined that the Arab races shall be given full opportunity of once again forming a nation in the world."<sup>174</sup> As far as Palestine was concerned the letter made it clear:

"Since the Jewish opinion of the World is in favour of a return of Jews to Palestine, and in as much as this opinion must remain a constant factor, and, further, as His Majesty's Government view with favour, the realization 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 should be put in the way of the realization of this ideal."<sup>175</sup>

The Allied victory marked the end of war and Turkish rule in Palestine. On the basis of the war time promises, the Arabs believed that the victory of Britain would have resulted in the

declaration of independence for the Arab provinces of Turkish Empire. The Arab revolt culminated in triumph when Amir Faisal with the assistance of T.E.Lawrence led his followers into Damascus and there formed an 'Arab Government'. Faisal participated in the Paris Peace Conference representing the Arab people. The delegation of the Hijaz, led by Amir Faisal was the only Arab delegation at the conference. He vehemently argued that the Arab-speaking people of Asia be recognized as 'independent sovereign peoples' and that "no steps be taken inconsistent with the prospect of an eventual union of these areas under one sovereign government."<sup>176</sup> But on the eve of the Peace conference Amir Faisal and Chaim Weizmann had reached an agreement to achieve their own distinct goals in Syria-Palestine. Article III of the Agreement read as follows: '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 (Balfour Declaration) of the 2nd of November 1917.'<sup>177</sup> The Agreement was made without consulting the native Palestinian's view. The General Syrian Congress meeting at Damascus in July 1919 in a resolution implicitly repudiated the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement and claimed political independence for a united Syrian state covering the present Syria, the Lebanon, Jordan and Israel.<sup>178</sup> In the meantime, the British support for Faisal was weakened by their backing of Zionist aspirations. In this context Faisal repudiated out rightly the 'Faisal-Weizmann Agreement' of January 3, 1919. Finally, in 1920, General Syrian Congress declared the independence of the 'United Kingdom of Syria' including the entire Levant and proclaimed Amir Faisal, King of Damascus. An 'Iraqi Congress' proclaimed, the independence of Iraq with Amir Abdullah as King.<sup>179</sup>

## **Palestine and Post War Political configuration**

After the conquest of Near East, General Allenby divided the area into three administrative divisions in October 1918. The conquered territory was called Occupied Enemy Territory (OET) and the divisions are: North (Lebanon and Coastal Syria), South (Palestine), and East (Transjordan and the interior of Syria). General Allenby headed the Military government. In December 1919, OET-North was transferred to French control and OET-East was put under the control of the provisional Arab government under Amir Faisal.<sup>180</sup>

The headquarters of OET-South were in Jerusalem and its authority has been extended to the entire Palestine. But the boundaries were not clearly determined. At the beginning, Palestine was divided into 13 administrative districts but in 1919 these were reduced to 10. Military Governors were appointed to each district. On July 1, 1920, the military regime was replaced by civil administration.

The internal political control of Palestine was in the hands of older notables at the time of Allied conquest. Many of the notables were supporters of 'Ottomanism.' The Allied victory and the subsequent disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a provisional Arab government in Damascus by Amir Faisal transformed the political affiliations in Palestine. 'Ottomanism' lost its significance as an attractive and viable ideology. The end of Ottomanism created an ideological vacuum which was filled by the ideology of Arab nationalism. The notables, especially the older generation, who had subscribed to Ottomanism embraced Arab nationalism to protect their interest and position in the local society in the new context. The Zionist threat transformed the local patriotism into Palestinian nationalism. At the beginning, local patriotism and Ottoman loyalism were the factors that fueled anti-Zionist activities in

Palestine. From 1910 onwards, the Palestinians “increasingly spoke of themselves as ‘Palestinians’ in the context of Zionism.”<sup>181</sup> The establishment of separate military administration in Palestine, Zionist policy and British support to Zionism prompted the Palestinian notables and educated younger generation to focus on ‘Palestine’. The new ‘Palestine centred thinking’ manifested in politics in the form of a geographically defined Palestinian nationalist ideology.

Following the British conquest of Palestine, two trends in ‘nationalism’ surfaced. The younger politicians<sup>182</sup> and educated elite in general stood for the union of Palestine with Syria. On the other hand, the older politicians of Palestine notable class called for the establishment of a separate government and political entity for Palestine. For example on November 2, 1918, the Jaffa MCA<sup>183</sup> submitted a memorandum to General Sir Gilbert Clayton, chief political officer and policymaker of the military administration which made no mention of Palestine being part of Syria and referred to it as ‘Our Arab home land, Palestine’<sup>184</sup> Older politicians did not want to put Palestine under Faisal’s rule because of the fear that their positions of leadership would be lost to the younger politicians. Another reason was that they did not want to frustrate their dream of ‘Palestinian independence’ which surfaced after the conclusion of the World War I.

The younger politicians most of whom came from influential aristocratic families viewed that Faisal’s leadership would bring them more political opportunities and could become the leaders of Palestine. Moreover, they expected that a united Syria-Palestine would be the first step towards Pan-Arab independence. Patriotic Arab sentiment, the Zionist threat and the Arab nationalist orientation were the other motivating factors of younger politicians. The younger politicians submitted petitions to the Paris Peace Conference and to the United States demanding the union of Palestine with Syria. In a petition to United States, they urged the American Government to decide against the ‘detachment of Palestine from Syria’<sup>185</sup>. Meanwhile, the representatives of 14 Palestinian cities and villages submitted a memorandum to Paris Peace Conference on February 5, 1919, demanding that ‘Southern Syria’ (Palestine) should not be separated from Syria. The memorandum read: Southern Syria (Palestine) should be “Inseparable from the independent Arab Syrian Government that is bound by Arab unity, and free from all foreign influence or protection.”<sup>186</sup>

## **The First Palestinian Arab Congress**

The Zionist activities and Patriotic sentiment prompted the Palestinians to convene the Congress. The leading Palestinian notable families took the lead to convene the Congress under the auspices of Jaffa and Jerusalem Muslim Christian Associations (MCAs). The political future of Palestine and the British sponsored Zionist activities were the focus of the Congress. The Congress was held in Jerusalem between January 27 and February 9, 1919. The younger politicians (Arab nationalists) seem to have dominated the First Congress. The following resolutions of the First Palestinian Arab Congress justifies this view;

- (a) We consider Palestine nothing, but part of Arab Syria and it has never been separated from it in any stage. We are tied to it by national (Qawmiyya), religious, linguistic, moral, economic and geographical bonds.
- (b) The statement made in the speech of M. Pichon, France’s Foreign Minister, claiming that France has rights in our country... has no foundation and we reject everything in this speech of December 29, 1918 and our hopes rest only in Arab unity and complete

independence.

- (c) Based on the above, we desire that this district of ours, meaning Palestine, remain undetached from the independent Arab Syrian government that is bound by Arab unity, and free from all foreign influence or protection.
- (d) The government of the country will seek the assistance of its friend Great Britain in case that is needed for development, on condition that this will not prejudice in any way its independence and Arab unity, while maintaining good relations with all the allied countries.<sup>187</sup>

According to Ronald Storrs, “the original intention of the majority when the assembly first met was to apply to Great Britain for an independent autonomous Palestine under British protection on condition of guarantees against Zionist government or immigration.”<sup>188</sup> To counter the influence of Arab nationalists and Britain, France tried to pass a resolution in favour of a united Syria under French protection. The two pro-French Arab delegates from Jerusalem, Shukri Al-Karmi and Abdul Hamid Abu Ghawsh vehemently argued for such a resolution but failed to materialize it. In response they announced that they only endorsed the two resolutions (‘a’ and ‘c’) demanding Syrian-Palestinian unity and disassociated themselves from the pro-British and anti-French resolutions.<sup>189</sup>

The Arab Nationalists, through their ties to ‘Al-Nadi alArabi’ and ‘Al-Muntada al-Adabi’, were able to win a majority vote in favour of Syrian-Palestine unity at the first Palestinian Arab Congress. Muhammad Muslih has prepared a table of the delegates of the first Congress based on a comparative analysis of sources such as J.N. Camp’s report on the first Palestinian Arab Congress (ISA, Record Group 2, File 155), AkramZuaytir’s Papers (File A/MS 16, Institute of Palestine Studies, Beirut) and Zionist-Intelligence Report, (C.Z.A, Jerusalem, Record Group L4, File 768). The table provides a clear picture of the political affiliations and preferences of the delegates of the First Palestinian Arab Congress<sup>190</sup>.

## **Palestine Mandate**

The question of political status of territories and people formerly under Ottoman Empire was one of the most difficult problems faced by the victorious Allied Powers. It was finally decided at Paris Peace Conference that these territories were to be put under the Mandate System<sup>191</sup> introduced by the Covenant of the League of Nations signed on 28 June 1919, as an integral part of the Treaty of Versailles. The League of Nations adopted the ‘mandates’ concept, an innovation in the international system, ‘as a way to accommodate the demands of the colonial age with the moral and political need to acknowledge the rights of the colonized’<sup>192</sup> Article 22<sup>193</sup> of the movenant established the mandates system. The mandate (A) applied to Arab Lands read: “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.”<sup>194</sup>

Article 22 laid down no rules for the selection of the mandatory powers or for the distribution of mandates between them. The conference of the Allied Powers meeting at San Remo on 5 May

1920, took the decision to divide the former Ottoman territories. The 'Greater Syria' was partitioned into two separate states of Syria and Lebanon and placed under French tutelage. Iraq and Palestine (including Transjordan) were placed under British mandate. The Mandate for Palestine<sup>195</sup> (24 July 1922) carried with it the terms of Balfour Declaration on the request of the British Government. The Council of League of Nations, on 16 September 1922, approved a separate administration for Transjordan. The Palestine Mandate came into force on 29 September 1922.

## **The Palestine Mandate and the Zionists**

The Zionist delegation including Dr. Weizmann and Sokolow presented the Zionist case at the Paris Peace Conference convened in January 1919. The official memorandum, submitted to the Supreme Council on 3 February by the Zionist delegation, called for 'the recognition of the historic title of the Jews to Palestine and the right of Jews to reconstitute their national home in Palestine.'<sup>196</sup> The British delegation discussed with the Zionist delegation the matter of drafting the official Mandate for Palestine. Felix Frankfurter, a Zionist delegate in a letter (28 March 1919) to David Hunter Miller, a member of the British delegation, outlined the following points which the Zionist Organisation wished to include in the text of Mandate.<sup>197</sup>

- (a) the Balfour Declaration be re-stated in the text of the Mandate.
- (b) the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish national home.
- (c) when the people of Palestine became ready for autonomy, a representative government should be established.

The proposals were revised in July 1919 and in August 1919. The third revision suggested that the proposed Jewish national home should comprise all of Palestine. The Zionist proposals, in essence, asked that the Mandate for Palestine be devoted to the strengthening of the Jewish element in Palestine and to continue in control of the country until there were sufficient Jews to make possible the establishment of a de facto Jewish state.<sup>198</sup>

The British Government decided to send a Zionist Commission to Palestine in 1918. It was composed of Dr. Weizmann, Levi Bianchini of Italy and Sylvain Levi, a non-Zionist French Jew.<sup>199</sup> The telegram to the British High Commissioner in Egypt outlined its task;

"...object of the Commission is to carry out... any steps required to give effect to government declaration in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

"Among the most important functions of the Commission will be the establishment of good relations with the Arabs and other non-Jewish Communities in Palestine, and to establish the Commission as the link between the military authorities and the Jewish population and Jewish interests in Palestine".<sup>200</sup>

There was a high degree of apprehension and hostility on the part of Palestinians over the intents of the Zionist Commission.

On March 20, 1919, US President Woodrow Wilson proposed to the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers at Paris Peace Conference to form an inter-Allied Commission for understanding

the opinion of the people of Syria and Palestine regarding the mode of settlement. It was an attempt to resolve an acrimonious dispute between Britain and France over the future disposition of the Arab territories of Ottoman Empire. The Commission would travel to the Middle East to elucidate the state of opinion and the soil to be worked on by any Mandatory.<sup>201</sup> President Wilson appointed Henry Churchill King, President of Oberlin College and Charles R. Crane, Chicago businessman and Trustee of Robert College in Constantinople as US representatives to the Inter-Allied Commission. The Supreme Council adopted President Wilson's suggestion, but fearing the consequences of such a move, the French refused to appoint their representative and the British representative withdrew from the Commission. "Britain and France backed out rather than find themselves confronted by recommendations from their own appointed delegates which might conflict with their policies."<sup>202</sup> As a result the Commission became a US Commission and commonly known as King-Crane Commission<sup>203</sup> by the name of its two commissioners. The Commission traveled to Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Anatolia in the summer of 1919 and conducted extensive interviews and meetings with the people.

The commission's report found that the local people (Syria-Palestine) wanted complete independence under Faisal. In view of the opposition to French influence in Syria, the Commission recommended an American Mandate over Syria, who had no history of imperialism in the Middle East, or at least a British Mandate, whose army was already there. The Commission called for the reduction of Zionist Programme and recommended that "serious modifications of the extreme Zionist programme for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a Jewish State."<sup>204</sup>

The Commission made the following statement referring to President Wilson's principle of 'self-determination':

'If that principle is to rule, and so the wishes of the 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 Programme.... To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land, would be a gross violation of the principle just quoted, and of the peoples' rights...'<sup>205</sup>

The recommendations of King-Crane Commission were discretely buried. King Faisal and his supporters hoped that the Commission would persuade President Wilson to favour the Arabs. Unfortunately, he suffered a paralytic stroke before he found time to read the report. The report was concealed and kept secret for several years. It was published only in 1947.<sup>206</sup> Susan Boyle has opined that 'based on popular Arab opinion and respecting President Wilson's principle of self-determination, the King-Crane Report could have formed basis for just and lasting post war Arab peace'.<sup>207</sup>

During the war, the Jewish population in Palestine had fallen to some 60,000. But in the autumn of 1919 once again the Jewish population began to increase due to large scale immigration encouraged by the hope that there is possibility for the realization of Zionist dreams. Between 1919 and 1923, 35,000 Jews entered Palestine.<sup>208</sup>

Arab response to Jewish immigration and Zionist activities was manifested in a most violent fashion in Palestine. The first explosion of rioting against the Jewish settlers broke out on 1



March 1920; in which armed Palestinian Arabs attacked Metulla and Tel Hai Jewish settlements. Captain Joseph Trumpledor and six other settlers were killed.<sup>209</sup> The first outbreak of big communal rioting occurred on the Easter Sunday (4 April) 1920, between Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem. The Jewish settlers' attack on an Arab procession during the Muslim festival of prophet Moses (Idal-Nabi Musa) was the starting point of the riot. There were 251 casualties according the official records including 5 Jewish and 4 Arab fatalities.<sup>210</sup> The Palin Commission Report<sup>211</sup> found that the Jewish settlers had already established armed 'self-defence' groups called 'Haganah' led by Jabotinsky and Rutenberg. The Commission warned in its report that 'the situation at present obtaining in Palestine is exceedingly dangerous and demands firm and patient handling, if a serious catastrophe is to be avoided.'<sup>212</sup>

The outbreak of communal rioting prompted London to remove the military personnel who often disapproved the Government policies and to establish a civil administration. Herbert Samuel was appointed the first High Commissioner for Palestine on 1st July 1920. A year later, Dr. Weizmann wrote on this appointment as follows: 'I was mainly responsible for the appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel to Palestine. Sir Herbert Samuel is our friend. At our request he accepted that difficult position. We put him in that position. He is our Samuel.'<sup>213</sup> Ministerial responsibility for Palestine and other Mandated territories was transferred from Foreign Office to the Colonial Office under Sir Winston Churchill in March 1921. After the installation of civilian administration in Palestine, the Balfour Declaration was made public.

On May Day 1921, riots erupted in Tel Aviv. The fighting spread into adjacent areas of Arab Jaffa. In this fighting, 14 Arabs and 43 Jews were killed, and 49 Arabs and 143 Jews were wounded.<sup>214</sup> As a result of May Day riots, Samuel immediately halted Jewish immigration temporarily and assured the Arabs that the British Government "would never impose on [the people of Palestine] a policy that people had reason to think was contrary to their religious, their political and their economic interest."<sup>215</sup> In this context, the Zionists were disappointed with the action and speech of Samuel. They viewed that he had betrayed his official obligations. He continued in the office till 1925 and facilitated the Zionist programme though he put certain restraints on it as a device to manage and maintain orderly situation in Palestine. As the administrative head of Palestine, Samuel claimed the powers of Ottoman Caliph and thereby distributed public lands to the Jews. He made Hebrew an official language along with Arabic, and this act provided employment for a large number of Jews in all departments of Palestinian administration. Being a Gentile Zionist, Samuel used his authority to materialize the Zionist dreams and laid the foundation of Jewish homeland.

The Balfour Declaration was a vague and rhetorical commitment. It was ripened to a full-fledged undertaking when it was incorporated into the Mandate. The Zionist diplomacy succeeded in securing approval for Zionist aspirations from the League of Nations. Dr. Weizmann wrote: 'fought the battle of the Mandate for many months. Draft after draft was proposed, discussed and rejected, and I sometimes wondered if we should ever reach a final text'.<sup>216</sup> The final text of the mandate restated the Balfour Declaration.

".....whereas the principal Allied powers have also agreed that Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of this Britannic Majesty...."

".....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.....”<sup>217</sup>

Article 2 empowered Britain to foster the Jewish National Home. “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, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.”<sup>218</sup> Article 4 of the Mandate recognized the Zionist Organisation as an appropriate Jewish agency. ‘An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the administration of Palestine.... ‘The Zionist Organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate’ shall be recognised as such agency<sup>219</sup> to assist the administration in the establishment of the national home and development of the country. Article 6 laid down provisions to ‘facilitate Jewish immigration’ and ‘settlement by the Jews on the land’.<sup>220</sup>

Article 11 provided that...“The Administration of Palestine shall take all necessary measures to safeguard the interests of the community in connection with the development of the country, and subject to any international obligations accepted by the Mandatory, 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.”<sup>221</sup> These provisions gave opportunity to the Zionists to control land and to develop semi-autonomous social and economic institutions.

The Mandate was not directed to the well-being and development of the native Palestinians but to the promotion of the Zionist interests. The mandate gave official status to Jewish Agency. No such agency to serve the interests of the native Palestinians was established. They were denied any representation at all. “It is clear that by failing to consult the Palestinian people in the decision on the future of their country, the victorious powers ignored not only the principle of self-determination that they themselves had endorsed, but also the provisions of Article 22 of the League’s Covenant.”<sup>222</sup>

The Mandate system was conceived as a measure to promote the interests and well-being of the people of the Mandated territory. But in the case of ‘the ‘Mandate for Palestine’, it served the interests of the World Zionist Organization. Prof. Henry Cattán, an authority in international law argued that on three grounds the Palestine Mandate was invalid:

- (a) Endorsing the Balfour Declaration and accepting the concept of the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, it violated the sovereignty of the people and their natural rights of independence and self-determination.
- (b) The Palestine Mandate violated in spirit and in letter, Article 22 of the covenant of the League of Nations.
- (c) The denial of Palestinian Arabs of their independence and the subjection of their country to the immigration of a foreign people were a breach of pledges and assurances given to the Arabs during the first World War.<sup>223</sup>

By the Mandate over Palestine and Jordan, Britain intended to rule the country without any

regard to the expressed desires of the native population. It was clearly the denial of justice and fundamental rights of the Palestinians. Professor Keith has observed that adoption of principle of a Jewish National home ran counter to the doctrine of the right of each people to self-determination.<sup>224</sup> The Palestinian Arabs were described as ‘the non-Jewish communities’ (Balfour Declaration) or simply as ‘the other sections of the population’ (Palestine Mandate). These were the products of Zionist-British nexus which invariably denied the national existence of Arabs in Palestine.

There are many scholars, both pro-Zionist and anti-Zionist with the view that Britain have the right to dispose Palestine. Douglas Feith, Middle East specialist on the White House National Security Council Staff during the Reagan administration, wrote:

“Traditional international law would have supported the Allie’s right, as victors, to dispose of Palestine as they saw fit. It is noteworthy, however, that Britain and the League took pains to ensure that their ‘legislative’ decision in favour of Jewish national home was associated harmoniously with the Jew’s claims of historical ties to the land of Israel.”<sup>225</sup>

This view goes in par with the primordial concept that ‘might is right’. The right of the vanquished and their desired interests are put aside comfortably. The Jew’s claim of historical ties to Palestine is a highly controversial issue. The Arabs of Palestine are probably more closely related to the ancient Judaeans than Modern Russian or German Jews.<sup>226</sup> Alan Dershowitz, law professor at Harvard University argued that, ‘A de facto Jewish homeland already existed in parts of Palestine, and its recognition by the Balfour Declaration became a matter of binding international law when the League of Nations made it part of its mandate.’<sup>227</sup>

The existence of a Jewish state 3000 years ago did not justify the establishment of a modern state by international law. The Biblical legitimization of the claim over the land of Palestine could not be sustained on moral or political grounds. The Bible portrays ‘Palestine’ not as a political entity but as a geographical tract. It is clear, that before the rise of political Zionism and formation of World Zionist Organization, the return to Zion has been a religious act. The ESCO Foundation for Palestine took a more balanced position in their study on Jewish Arab and British policies. It goes as follows:

“It was not, obviously, an arbitrary act when the League of Nations with the concurrence of fifty-two of the leading nations of the world and with the formal approval of the United States, recognized the Jewish claim to establish a national home in Palestine (Balfour Declaration). It is not the single fact that the Jews once occupied Palestine, but a whole complex of facts that makes the Jewish claim acceptable to the international conscience.”<sup>228</sup>

A train of facts ranging from Zionist organizational strength, money power and diplomacy; British imperial interests; strategic and religious importance of the land mass (The Levant as a whole) to the inherent weakness of the traditional and pre-capitalist Palestinian Arabs, contributed to the plight of the native Palestinians in the post-World War I period.

## Endnotes

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## Chapter IV

### The Struggle for Palestine: From Mandate to State (1922-48)

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With the conclusion of Treaty of Lausanne between Britain and Turkey, the British Mandate got jurisdiction de jure over Palestine in September 1923. When the Mandate became public law, Britain 'self-assumed' an international obligation in terms of 'Real Politic'. The 'obligation was, as expressed in the preamble and articles of the Mandate, to promote the establishment of the 'Jewish National Home'.

The British Government elaborated its policy in a statement on 1 July 1922 known as the 'Churchill Memorandum.'<sup>1</sup> It was a product of re-thinking in London on Palestine based on the practical implications of ground realities in Palestine. The Churchill Memorandum disclaimed any intent to create 'a wholly Jewish Palestine'<sup>2</sup> or to affect the sub-ordination of the Arab population, language or culture in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> At the same time the statement assured the Jewish community that '...the Balfour Declaration is not susceptible to change...' But it rejected the exaggerated interpretations of Balfour Declaration by the Zionists that Palestine is to become 'as Jewish as England is English' and pointed out that 'the Balfour Declaration did not refer to contemplate that Palestine as a whole, should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be founded in Palestine.'" The memorandum also made it clear that 'Jewish immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals.'"<sup>4</sup>

The Churchill Memorandum reaffirmed Balfour Declaration and gave an untrue interpretation to the McMahon Pledge of Arab independence to Sherif Hussain that it excluded Palestine. The Memorandum offered the establishment of a full measure of self-government in Palestine and as an immediate step a legislative council with a majority of elected members would be set up.

Dr. Weizmann accepted the Churchill white paper as it reaffirmed the Balfour Declaration and the historic connection of the Jews' with Palestine.<sup>5</sup> The white paper succeeded in defeating the opposition to the mandate in the British Parliament and secured the road for the World Zionist Organization to establish a Jewish State in Palestine.

There was strong opposition against Zionist activities and British policies in Palestine in early 1920s. In an attempt to limit Arab resentment against Britain, the British gave the throne of Iraq to King Faisal after his expulsion from Damascus in a brief battle in July 1920 with the French forces under General Gouraud. Transjordan was separated from Palestine and Abdullah, the brother of Faisal, was installed as the Amir of Transjordan and there by placed it beyond the scope of Jewish settlement. In this context as a tactful move based on complete realism, Dr. Weizmann did not press the Zionist claim to Transjordan. But he believed that Trans-Jordan would later become an integral part of the Jewish state. Later in 1926 in a speech in Jerusalem, Weizmann pointed out that ‘the road to Allenby Bridge along which we shall cross over to Trans-Jordan will not be paved by soldiers but by Jewish labour and the Jewish plough.’<sup>6</sup>

After the establishment of Mandate system, the Arab nationalists increasingly charged that Ottoman rule had been replaced by British and French imperialism. The Arab nationalists nursed a deep grievance against Britain and France over the partition of the Arab territories. Five new states were created from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire – Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan and Palestine. During the Mandatory period, Arab nationalism became a shared ideology of both the political elite and the class of intelligentsia. The shared desire for political independence, a new awareness of modern political identity corresponding to the western nation state structures and the need to integrate non-Muslim minorities into the political system brought about the coalescence of political ideologies. The Arab awakening, once inspired by Western Liberalism, began to redefine itself as a negation of Western imperialism. With the disintegration of Ottoman Empire, the Arabs lost the political structure within which most of them had lived for centuries. In the new context the politically conscious Arabs tried to redefine their political identity. Collective grievances, common culture and historical experience, shared interests and search for a new political identity, all came up against the Anglo-French imperialism in the years after the World War I.

From the very beginning the Palestinians resisted the Judaization of their country by the Zionists under the auspices of British colonial authorities. British officials made several unsuccessful attempts to establish self-governing institutions in Palestine. A constitution for Palestine was drafted which was officially promulgated on August 10, 1922. It presented a plan for a 23 member legislative council with eleven official members (the High Commissioner and ten government officials) and 12 elected members from the population in proportion to the size of respective communities (eight Muslims, two Christians and two Jews).<sup>7</sup> The Arab nationalists, both Muslims and Christians, through the Arab Executive, rejected the plan because the Arab Executive was denied the right to discuss matters related to British-Zionist connections. Again, in the spring of 1923, Herbert Samuel reconstituted the old advisory council with the same proportion of representatives as in the proposed Legislative Council. But the Arab nationalists, forced members of their community to resign. A year later Samuel encouraged the Arabs to establish their own self-governing Arab Agency, parallel to Jewish Agency representing the Zionists. This attempt too failed because the Arab leaders rejected it as they felt that such a move would be recognition to British Mandate. The Arabs opposition to the Mandatory Government prohibited them from presenting Arab views from within the administration of Palestine.

There was a crucial forty to fifty-year gap in the levels of political development between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine.<sup>8</sup> The Palestinian Arabs led by their fragmented political elite failed to develop internal cohesion among them. The notables of Jerusalem played the leading role in

the total political process of Palestine. The prominent notable families of Jerusalem were the families of al-Khalidi, al-Nusayba, al-Nashashibi, al-Hussaini, al-Dajani and al-Alami. Shortly after a municipality was set up in Jerusalem in the 1880s, Salim al-Hussaini became the Mayor. His two sons, Hussain and Musa Kazim Pasha also became mayors in the 1920's.<sup>9</sup> By virtue of holding the important posts of Mayor and Mufti of Jerusalem, the Hussainis outranked the other notable families and thus emerged as the most dominant political elite in Palestine until 1948.<sup>10</sup> There was conflict between the Hussainis and Nashashibi Camp on the question of Arab relations to British Mandate government. The Nashashibi Camp privately favoured participation in the government. They secretly supported the idea of the legislative council proposed by Samuel. As the Mayor of Jerusalem Raghیب al-Nashashibi wanted a good working relation with the High Commissioner for the smooth functioning of his office. In 1920s the fact was that what al-Hussainis opposed would be approved by al-Nashashibis. This conflict was not based on specific policies but based on pragmatic gains.<sup>11</sup>

The Arab Executive (AE) and the Supreme Muslim Council was dominated by al-Husseinis. The Arab Christians in general disliked the prominence of Hajj Amin al-Husseini in the Palestinian politics as a Muslim leader. The members of the Jewish Executive promoted in every viable way the opposition to the al-Hussainis. The Zionist donations encouraged the Nashashibi Camp. The Zionist funding went also to 'Filastin' and 'al-Karmil', the major newspapers, and subsequently they started supporting the al-Nashashibis.<sup>12</sup> All these factors contributed to the victory of al-Nashashibi party in the Municipal elections held throughout Palestine in 1927. The Arab Executive headed by Musa Kazim al-Husseini failed to secure any concessions from the British Mandatory government to check the Zionist programme or at least to reduce it effectively. In this context there developed general resentment among the Muslims at al-Husseinis and their control over Arab Executive. The extent of the opposition was such that the Arab Executive closed its office in 1927.<sup>13</sup>

The moderate al-Nashashibi party from 1925 onwards, especially after the replacement of Herbert Samuel by Lord Plumer as the new High Commissioner, openly stated their support for Arab participation in a Legislative Council as proposed earlier. The Arab Executive decided to support the project in 1927. At the Palestinian Arab Congress meet in June 1928, the al-Husseinis and al-Nashashibis agreed to push for representative institutions. Raghیب al-Nashashibi and Musa Kazim al-Husseini jointly worked for a Legislative Assembly. Sir John Chancellor, Lord Plumer's successor, accepted the demand in principle and announced in January 1929 that he would implement the proposal.<sup>14</sup> The discussions were ongoing to finalize different aspects of the formation of a legislative assembly among Arabs, Jews, Christians and the Mandatory authority. However, the outbreak of communal riots in August 1929 (Wailing Wall issue) disrupted the progress in this direction. The course of events and Zionist back play foiled further developments towards self-governing institutions in Palestine.

The Mandatory government was successful in facilitating Jewish immigration to Palestine. Despite the violent opposition and continuous protest of Palestinians, the Jewish immigration continued unabated with the political and administrative support of the Mandatory authorities. During the 1920s about 100,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine. The total population of Palestine was officially estimated at about 750,000<sup>15</sup> in 1922. In absolute terms the Jewish population more than doubled. The influx of Jews had a marked impact on the communal balance of Palestine. The table below shows the immigration into Palestine, 1920-29.

## Immigration into Palestine, 1920-29. Recorded Immigration<sup>16</sup>

Year	Jews	Non-Jews
1920 (September - October)	5,514	202
1921	9,149	190
1922	7,844	284
1923	7,421	570
1924	12,856	697
1925	33,801	840
1926	13,081	829
1927	2,713	882
1928	2,178	908
1929	5,249	1,317

The immigration was completely under the control of Zionist organizations. The Colonization Department of the Zionist organization actively engaged in land acquisition for Yishuv or Jewish settlements and for individual immigrants. The Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PICA)<sup>17</sup> had been operating in Palestine since the nineteenth century. In 1920, the Jewish land acquisition was estimated at about 6,50,000 dunums, which was about 2.5 percent of the total land area.<sup>18</sup> In 1929, it was about 1,200,000 dunums, just below 5 percent of total land area.<sup>19</sup> Organised land acquisition and immigration had been a long-term strategy for the liquidation of the native population of Palestine. This process was perfectly in accordance with Herzl's idea of state building in Palestine. He wrote:

‘We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our own country. The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly. Let the owners of immovable property believe that they are cheating us, selling us things for more than they are worth. But we are not going to sell them anything back. The voluntary expropriation will be accomplished through our secret agents.’<sup>20</sup>

The commission headed by Sir John Hope Simpson inquired into the questions of Land transfers and immigration and clearly pointed out the discriminatory policy of the Jewish Agency. The Commission viewed that they violated the Article 6 of the Mandate. The Commission wrote: “The principle of the persistent and deliberate boycott of Arab Labour in the Zionist colonies is not only contrary to the provisions of that article (Article 6) of the Mandate, but it is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country. Further it is stated that “Actually the result of the land purchase in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that land has been extra territorialized. ...by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish National Fund, he (Arabs) is deprived forever from employment on that land.”<sup>21</sup>

The original inhabitants of Palestine, Muslims and Christians, opposed the flow of immigrants and land purchase. Their opposition took the forms of protests, demonstrations, civil disturbances and even an armed rebellion against the mandatory government. Major riots and disturbances occurred in 1920, 1921, 1929, 1933 and almost continuously from 1936 to until 1939, when they assumed the proportions of a rebellion.

## **The Revolt of 1929**

The Palestinian resentment on Zionist activities again broke out into communal violence in August 1929, triggered by a dispute over the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. With the establishment of British Mandate in Palestine the Zionist militants tried to change the 'status quo' at the Wailing Wall, which is the Western Wall of the Aqsa Mosque, where the Jews had been traditionally allowed access.

The Commission appointed by British Government to determine the rights and claims of Muslims and Jews in connection with the Wailing Wall, stated that "the Wailing Wall forms an integral part of the Western exterior shell of the Haramesh (Haram-al-sherif) which itself is the site of the ancient Jewish temple, at the present day supplanted by Mosques. The Haramesh-Sherif in actual fact is a vast rectangular platform, several hundred meters in length and width. One of the said mosques, the mosque of Aqsa, is contiguous to the southern exterior wall of the Haram and extends up to the Wailing Wall at its southern end. The other mosque, the Dome of the Rock (in Arabic Qubet al Sakhra), or, as it is usually called, the Mosque of Omar, is situated in the Middle of the Haram area."<sup>22</sup>

On the Jewish Day of Atonement<sup>23</sup> (Yom Kippur), Sept. 24, 1928 the Jews erected screens to separate men and women at the Wailing Wall while praying. This was the immediate cause of the revolt. The Muslims viewed this incident as a deliberate attempt to violate the 'status quo'. On receiving a complaint from an Arab the authorities ordered the Jews to remove the screen. But they did not remove it. The police then forcibly removed the screen. The Zionist officials and the chief rabbi protested to the British Government in London and the League of Nations. Claims of police brutality were spread among Jewish circles. The Zionists claimed the incident as Muslim pogrom even though no Muslims had taken part in the events at the Wall.<sup>24</sup>

The growing rivalry led to several clashes between Jews and Arabs at Jerusalem, Hebron and Safad. A widespread campaign of protest, against Zionist intentions to take possession of the 'AlAqsa Harem-esh-Sherif Complex' swept over Palestine. A 'Society for the Protection of the Muslim Holy Places' was established with the encouragement of Hajj Amin al Hussaini and secret messages were dispatched to the Muslims of India.<sup>25</sup>

For nearly a year, there were no major communal clashes. In July 1929 the Mufti of Jerusalem resumed building activities around the wall. The infuriated Zionists rose in rebellion. On August 15, members of Betar, the Revisionist Party's youth organization at the instance of Jabotinsky, marched to the wall and raised Zionist flag. In response, the next day thousands of Arabs marched to the wall and burned the slips of paper inscribed with prayers inserted by the Jews.<sup>26</sup> Sermons and rumors fired the situation.

'The clashes between Palestinians and Jews left 220 dead and 520 injured on both sides, and British reinforcements, including aircraft, naval vessels and armored cars, had to be called in



from outside Palestine before the situation was brought under control.<sup>27</sup> The riots were quickly suppressed and the British Government appointed a special commission headed by Sir Walter Shaw to investigate into the causes of this outbreak. The issue of political representation and economic grievances of the Arabs were placed as the underlying factors of the outbreak. The Shaw Commission reported:

“.....if there was in Palestine in August last a widespread feeling of resentment amongst the Arabs at the failure of His Majesty’s Government to grant them some measure of self-government, it is at least probable that this resentment would show itself against the Jews, whose presence in Palestine would be regarded by the Arabs as the obstacle to the fulfillment of their aspirations.” Further it is stated that “....their disappointment at the continued failure to obtain any measure of self-government was a contributory cause to the recent outbreak.....”<sup>28</sup>

The real intentions of the Zionists were the root cause of the outbreak. The report of the Commission, December 1930 pointed out that ‘, what we have to deal with here is a Zionist Movement that has in view the securing of advantages for the Jews to which they have no right. In spite of all their statements to the contrary, the real aim of the Zionists is to obtain possession of the Haramal-Sherif.’<sup>29</sup> In this connection, the Shaw Commission admitted that the fears of the Arabs were reasonable.<sup>30</sup>

The rise of Zionist militancy created insecure feelings among the native Palestinians. Vladimir Jabotinsky, leader of an extremist Zionist fraction known as the Revisionists made it clear in a speech that ‘Palestine is a territory whose chief geographical feature is that the River Jordan does not delineate its frontier but flows through its centre.’<sup>31</sup> In the same speech he demanded that the British Mandatories should ‘organize the necessary administrative machinery to open up territory on either side of the Jordan for the reception of great colonizing masses.’<sup>32</sup> As Christopher Sykes has rightfully commented in this connection that ‘It is not altogether surprising that utterances of this kind, followed by a demonstration of all Jews of all parties in favour of a national home policy gave Arabs the idea that the Jews of the world were massing for an attack on them.’<sup>33</sup>

In January 1930, it was reported that as a consequence of the recent outbreaks, a wave of the Pan-Arab nationalist sentiment had swept over Palestine and neighbouring Arab countries.<sup>34</sup> The political strategy of the native Palestinians, hitherto confined to resisting Jewish immigration, now shifted its attention to get rid of the British rule and attain national independence. The Palestinian Arab radicals started advocating organized violence as a means to check Zionist hegemony and directed their spear head to British Mandate itself.<sup>35</sup> The close co-operation between the British government and the Zionists and lack of effective institutions for crisis management often led the native Palestinians to resort to the use of violence to show their disapproval and resentment which are basically of a political nature.<sup>36</sup>

The Shaw Commission and John Hope-Simpson Commission reports recommended curtailment of land transfers and Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Ramsay McDonald government felt threatened by these recommendations. The curtailment of land transfers to Jews would result in the loss of tax revenues and the limitation of Jewish immigration would result the loss of enormous capital brought to Palestine by the immigrants. The capital brought in by the Jewish immigrants enabled Britain to maintain and continue their imperial structure including the

military over mandatory area at comparatively little expense, whereas the dilemma was that the same immigration causes Arab alarm and violence which severely affects the security of the British position there.<sup>37</sup>

Hope-Simpson's recommendations were included into the Passfield<sup>38</sup> White Paper of October 1930. The white paper called on Jewish leaders to make 'concessions ....in regard to the independent and separatist ideas which have developed in some quarters in respect of the Jewish National Home.'<sup>39</sup> It confirmed the dual obligation of the Mandate to the Jews and to the Arabs based on various reports. The Zionists and their supporters in the US, Europe and among the British opposition mounted such pressure that the minority cabinet of Ramsay McDonald, repudiated the Passfield White Paper in a letter to Dr. Weizmann which was published by the London Times (14 February 1931) next day. McDonald letter to Weizmann (13 February 1931) was referred to by the Arabs as the 'Black Letter'. McDonald wrote that: 'His Majesty's Government intended to stand by the mandate, which they viewed as an obligation to World Jewry and not only to the Jews of Palestine, to uphold the Jewish National Home Policy by further land settlement and immigration by Jews and to condone Zionist policy of insisting on Jewish labour for work on Jewish enterprises.'<sup>40</sup> Dr. Weizmann summarized the significance of the 'Black Letter' as follows: ".....it was under McDonald's letter to me that the change came....., which enabled us to make the magnificent gains of the ensuing years. It was under McDonald's letter that Jewish immigration into Palestine was permitted to reach figures like forty thousand for 1934 and sixty-two thousand for 1935, figures undreamed of in 1930."<sup>41</sup>

The issuance of the McDonald letter made it clear that the Zionist-British nexus would not do justice to the native Palestinians. The Arabs internalized the fact that 'the British were the root of the evil.' The Palestinians decided to seek the help of the Arab and Muslim world. To rally the support of the Arab and Muslim World, a number of conferences were held. In Palestine the Arabs launched a non-co-operation movement. An Arab Bank was established in Jerusalem in 1930, followed by the Nation's Fund (Sunduq-al-Ummah) in 1931 to support the political struggle. The most important manifestation of this new type of opposition and resistance was the convention of the Great Islamic Conference at Jerusalem in December 1931. The conference was presided over by Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, the Mufti of Jerusalem and was attended by 250 delegates from 22 Muslim countries.<sup>42</sup> Some of the well-known figures included Mohammed Iqbal (the Indian Muslim poet), Sayyid Rashid Rida, Abdul Rahman Azzam, Shukri alQuwwatli, Abdul Aziz al-Thaalibi, Shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali Allouba.<sup>43</sup> The following is the summary of the important resolutions.<sup>44</sup>

- a. Palestine is important to all the World of Islam.
- b. To boycott Jewish goods produced in Palestine all over the World of Islam.
- c. Condemnation of the imperialist British and Jewish policies in Palestine.
- d. Establishment of an Islamic Company to safeguard land (in Palestine)
- e. Condemnation of Russian injustice and imperialist policies in the lands of Turkistan and Tatars and Italian policies in Libya and French policies in Syria, Lebanon and the Arab Maghrib and British policies in Egypt, Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula.

The Mandatory government in 1930s practiced the policy of 'divide and rule'. The rivalry

between the leading notable families in Palestine was accelerated by providing them liberal Zionist funding and higher posts like the Mayorship of Jerusalem. They succeeded in dividing Palestinian political leadership into 'villager' and 'urban' by directing them against each other.

The resolutions of the Great Islamic Conference in Jerusalem had facilitated the 'divide and rule' policy, because it approached the Palestine question from an Islamic point of view. The Islamisation of the Palestinian political struggle for a while adversely affected the Muslim-Christian ties as the basis of a national Arab coalition opposing Mandate and Zionism. The Christian Arabs, the torch bearers of Arab Nationalism, always stood for a secular Arab national identity in Palestine.<sup>45</sup> Jewish immigration and the fear of compulsory 'transfer' of the Arab population to make way for a Jewish state created a tense situation in Palestine and there was sporadic escalation of violence from the mid-1930s.

The Arab community was in a state of rapid socio-economic transition in the 1930s. The traditional and pre-capitalist Arab society was slowly integrated into the world capitalist system. There was an upturn in Palestinian economy. This development was not a function of internal imperatives determined by a process of growth but was a result of growing confrontation with modern Jewish colonizing establishment and relatively modern British mandatory government. There was an influx of foreign capital (30 million pounds Sterling between 1932 and 1936) and bank credit in this period of world deflation rose rapidly and even inordinately.<sup>46</sup> The currency circulation almost doubled between 1933 and 1936.<sup>47</sup> Palestine was one of the few countries, relatively unaffected by great depression.

In such a climate of economic boom, the Arab workers were able to re-enter the Jewish agricultural sector (Citrus fruit plantations), construction sector and other emerging industries.<sup>48</sup> The economic boom began to deteriorate at the end of 1935. Foreign capital became scarce.<sup>49</sup> As a result of the general slowdown of economy a large number of Arab workers lost their jobs, and many were forced to return to their villages. Consequently, there was increased pressure on agriculture which accelerated rural tension.

The influx of Jewish capital in early 1930s resulted in large scale land purchase. As a result, 'in the early 1930s, Arab land sales and Jewish land purchase contributed to the evolution of an Arab landless class.'<sup>50</sup> The landless peasants moved to the urban centres and became a part of the expanding Arab proletariat. It was reported that in Haifa in the mid-1930s, 11,160 Arab workers were living in 2,500 gasoline-can huts.<sup>51</sup> The general economic depression in the mid-1930s, impoverished the peasantry as well as the Arab proletariat.

The educated younger generation of Palestinians started to strongly criticize the exploitative and oppressive colonial structure jointly sponsored by the British and Zionists. They were aware of the anti-colonial struggle taking place all over the world. They advocated open defiance of British authority. The political scene in 1930s was coloured by Al-Hussaini-Al-Nashashibi rift. The politically active youth in general associated with Hajj Amin-alHussaini, the mufti of Jerusalem, who successfully incorporated pan-Arabic and Islamic themes in the struggle against Zionists and British.

To confront immigration, the Palestinian youth formed Boy Scout troops and branches of Young Men's Muslim Association. A congress of Arab youth was convened for the first time in January 1932. But the Husseini-Nashashibi rift adversely affected further progress in this

direction. In August 1932, the Young Arabs formed the Istiqlal (Independence) Party. Most of the Arab political groups formed in 1930s had a traditional political-familial character. But the Istiqlal had a modern political structure and character. It advocated Pan-Arab unity as a solution to Arab plight in Palestine.<sup>52</sup> Integration of Palestine with Syria and formation of a unified 'Greater Syria' was a favorite theme of the Istiqlal Party. Raghīb al-Nashashibi founded the National Defense Party in December 1934. In response the al-Husseini bloc established Palestine Arab Party in March 1935. The al-Khalidi family sponsored a party in late 1934 named the Reform Party headed by Hussein al-Khalidi. The al-Nashashibi bloc and al-Khalidi bloc opposed each other. At the same time, they are in full agreement in opposing the power and influence of Hajj Amin al-Husseini.<sup>53</sup>

During the early 1930s, several secret societies were formed in Palestine inspired by the Islamic themes like Jihad (holy war). Abdul Qadi Al-Husseini, the son of Musa Kasim created a clandestine organization called 'Holy War'. He sought international Islamic assistance for an armed struggle against British authority and Zionist organization. The first major armed challenge to British rule and to Zionist movement was mounted by Sheikh Izzal Din al-Qassam, a Syrian born Muslim preacher in the late 1935.<sup>54</sup> He organized clandestine military cells among peasants and rural migrants in the Haifa area possibly as early as 1925.<sup>55</sup>

A series of successful guerrilla attacks were conducted on Jewish and British targets in 1931-32. But internal split and police suppression reduced the movement. Qassam reorganized his fighting group by recruiting and training peasants in 1934 until November 1935. This time, he located at the Jenin area where he built a rural base for military operations. While preparing for open resistance, Qassam and his two followers were killed in the very first encounter with the police in November 1935.<sup>56</sup> His death was mourned as the death of an Arab hero. His method of armed struggle and martyrdom inspired the Palestinians and provided them a model for the organized widespread rebellion in April 1936. The surviving members of his organization played an influential role in the great Arab Revolt of 1936.

The advent of Nazism and the notorious persecution of the German Jewry and subsequently of all European Jewry caused large scale migration. The majority of the European Jews fleeing the Nazi terror chose the United States and Britain. Large numbers took refuge in Palestine. For many, Jewish immigration to Palestine became not the ultimate political ideal, but an immediate necessity.<sup>57</sup> Between 1933 and 1936 Jewish immigration sharply increased.

The following figures show Jewish immigration in 1930's.

Immigration into Palestine 1930 - 1939 <sup>58</sup>	
1930	4,944
1931	4,075
1932	9,553
1933	30,327
1934	42,359
1935	61,854
1936	29,727
1937	10,536
1938	12,868
1939	16,405

In 1935, under the two- fold pressure of massive Jewish immigration and an approaching economic crisis, a number of Arab political groups including the al-Husseinis and al-Nashashibis came closer to form a political front. At the end of November 1935, the Arab Front presented three demands before the High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope.<sup>59</sup> They are:

- (a) An immediate stoppage of Jewish immigration.
- (b) Prohibition of land purchase.
- (c) Establishment of an Arab government reflecting Arab majority.

Sir Wauchope rejected the first two demands but accepted Arab demand for internal autonomy. His proposal for a legislative council was rejected by the British Parliament in February-March 1936. In this circumstance, large scale Jewish immigration, unemployment caused by the Jewish land purchase, smuggling of arms by the Zionists<sup>60</sup> and the collapse of the proposal for the legislative council combined to foment violence. Soon the Palestinian discontent broke out into a major rebellion.

An attack on Jewish passersby in Jaffa by excited Arab crowds on April 1936 was the starting point followed by minor Arab-Jewish clashes. Quickly these clashes flared into a widespread revolt. The feuding political parties and groups joined together and formed the Arab Higher Committee under the headship of Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, on April 25, 1936. The Committee consisted of 10 members from six political parties<sup>61</sup> among whom, two were Christians and thus represented a cross-section of the Palestine Arabs. The committee called for a general strike that lasted from mid-April to October 21. The strike was concentrated in the urban areas. The successful fifty-day strike organized by Syrian nationalists against French government was the model and inspiration of Palestine general strike.

As the strike prolonged civil violence became widespread. British troops, police posts, Jews and Jewish settlements were attacked. There was a general boycott of Jewish goods or sales to Jews and sabotage of roads, railways, pipelines and so on. The mandatory government, imposed curfews, and resorted to mass arrests, internments in concentration camps and other collective

punishment measures. Large parts of the Arab quarter in the town of Jaffa were demolished by the authorities in the midst of the revolt. Armed struggle shifted to the mountainous regions and a number of guerrilla units were formed there. They were recruited from local young men, unemployed youth, professional bandits and soldiers from neighbouring countries.<sup>62</sup> In the beginning the guerrilla groups were under the control of Arab Higher Committee but later they began to operate independently. The poorly disciplined armed bands attacked all symbols of British authority and Jewish settlements in the rural Palestine. The government called in troop reinforcements from Egypt, Malta and Britain. By early fall almost 20,000 British troops had arrived and quickly suppressed the revolt.<sup>63</sup> This stage of the revolt lasted from mid-April to early November 1936.

The relative failure of the general strike and the mediation by the ministers of surrounding Arab states especially the mediation by Nuri Said, the Prime Minister of Iraq, compelled the Arab Higher Committee to call off the strike.<sup>64</sup> The settlement was in favour of the Palestinians. The colonial office agreed that only 1800 Jewish immigrants would be permitted to enter Palestine from October 1936 to March 1937. The Jewish Agency requested for 11,200 entry permits during this period. But permission granted was 1,800, that is 17 percent of it.<sup>65</sup>

The Arab general strike failed to achieve its desired objectives. The strike did not strike the economic base of Jewish enterprises in Palestine as it was firmly based on Jewish labour. The continuance of strike led to the closing of the Jaffa port, the only large port for Palestine. It gave a very good opportunity to the Jewish Agency to have developed Tel Aviv as a modern port for Jewish goods. In response to Arab uprisings, there was organized and armed Jewish reprisals. The Haganah,<sup>66</sup> a covert paramilitary terrorist force formed the backbone of Jewish resistance. Along with Haganah, Irgun Tzevaii Leumi<sup>67</sup> and Special Night Squads<sup>68</sup> (SNS) trained by Major Orde Wingate (a serving British officer) were active. Christopher Sykes has observed that the SNS gradually became what Wingate secretly intended, the beginning of a Jewish army.<sup>69</sup> In short the general strike and Arab revolt enhanced Jewish self-reliance and self-defense. According to Dr. Bauer;

‘The strike led to a paradoxical development in the Jewish Community. The port of Tel Aviv was built, and the expansion of the port of Haifa was speeded up. Strategic roads were built, which were very useful to the Jewish Community... Jewish agriculture no longer had to face the competition of abundant and cheap Arab agricultural products, which the Jewish sector could not meet... The increased strength of the Jewish agricultural sector as a direct result of the general strike and the revolt was itself a severe defeat for the Arabs.’<sup>70</sup>

With the call off, of the general strike, the hostilities temporarily ended. The official count of casualties was 275 dead and 1,112 wounded, but the Royal Commissions estimate was 1,000 deaths.<sup>71</sup> As a political measure to find a solution to the struggle, the government appointed the Royal (Peel) Commission headed by Lord Robert Peel, former Secretary of State for India. The Commission submitted a 400-page report which is considered as one of the most important document for the study of Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine. On the basic nature of the ‘disturbances’, the Commission observed that unlike earlier uprisings the 1936 was an attack on the Palestinian government. ‘Jewish lives were taken, and Jewish property destroyed; but the outbreak was chiefly and directly aimed at the government. The word ‘disturbances’ gives a misleading impression of what happened. It was an open rebellion of the Palestinian Arabs, assisted by fellow-Arabs from other countries against British Mandatory rule’<sup>72</sup> It is to be noted

that the first military commander of the revolt was Fawzi Kawkji, a Syrian by birth and an officer in the Iraqi Army.

The desire of the Arabs for national independence and their hatred and fear of the establishment of the Jewish national home were identified by the Commission as the only 'underlying' causes.<sup>73</sup> On the existing Arab-Jewish relationship, the Commission observed:

"An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country. About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews. There is no common ground between them. The Arab community is predominantly Asian in character, the Jewish community predominantly European. They differ in religion and in language. Their cultural and social life, their ways of thought and conduct are as incompatible as their national aspirations. These are the greatest bar to peace."<sup>74</sup>

The Palestinian demands for independence were taken seriously by the Commission. The Arab revolt was viewed as a problem of insurgent nationalism. The Commission found that "Palestinian Arab nationalism is inextricably interwoven with antagonism to the Jews. In this context the Commission realized that the terms of the Mandate, with its inclusion of the Balfour Declaration, were not viable." Its maintenance needs the application of brute force with no assurance of success. The commission acknowledged that, contrary to the previous official position, the 'dual obligations' (to both Jews and Arabs) were not reconcilable. The operation of the Mandate at every point is becoming more difficult, because 'the people of Palestine cannot accept the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. And they refused to cooperate in any form of government other than a national government responsible to the Palestinian people.'<sup>75</sup>

The Commission did not favour the maintenance of a system of government by constant repression. 'And the worst of it is that such a policy leads nowhere. However vigorously and consistently maintained, it will not solve the problem. It will not allay, it will exacerbate the quarrel between the Arabs and the Jews.'<sup>76</sup> After analyzing the causes of Arab uprising and the ground reality in Palestine, the Commission recommended the partition of Palestine into separate independent Arab and Jewish states. The Commission stated that;

".....Manifestly the problem cannot be solved by giving either the Arabs or the Jews all they want. The answer to the question, 'which of them in the end will govern Palestine', must surely be 'neither'... Partition seems to offer at least a chance of ultimate peace. We can see none in any other plan"<sup>77</sup>

Twenty percent of Palestine was awarded to the proposed Jewish state, comprising the northern region of Galilee, the Jezreel plain South of Nazareth and the coastal plain from Lebanon to a point south of Jaffa. But Jaffa was not included in the Jewish part. The rest of Palestine was awarded to the Arabs. The commission envisaged that the Arab Palestine would be united with Transjordan. The Commission recommended for the institution of a new British Mandate over Jerusalem and Bethlehem to ensure free and safe access to them for the entire world. A narrow corridor connecting them with the sea should also remain Mandatory territory.<sup>78</sup>

The recommendations of the Royal Commission were accepted by the British government. Based on the Commission Report, 'a Statement of Policy' was issued on 20 July 1937. The new

white paper stated: ‘.....there is an irreconcilable conflict between the aspirations of Arabs and Jews in Palestine, that these aspirations cannot be satisfied under the terms of the present Mandate, and that a scheme of partition on the general lines recommended by the Commission represents the best and most hopeful solution of the deadlock....’<sup>79</sup> The report further stated that “The Arabs would obtain their national independence .... On the other hand, the partition would secure the establishment of the Jewish national home... It would convert the Jewish national home into a Jewish state.”<sup>80</sup>

The Royal Commission’s report was subjected to intense criticism at the 20th Zionist Congress convened at Zurich in August 1937. Dr. Weizmann urged acceptance of the partition plan with fundamental modifications. But the Congress apparently viewed that ‘it was too early – the ultimate aim was to establish the Jewish state in all of Palestine, and at this point the number of immigrants were too small and, in Zionist eyes, the mission of the Mandate was unfulfilled.’<sup>81</sup>

The Congress declared that it ‘.....rejects the assertion of the Royal Commission that the Mandate has proved unworkable, and demands its fulfillment.’<sup>82</sup> The Congress also declared that the scheme of partition put forward by the Royal Commission was unacceptable. A tactical position was taken by Ben Gurion at the Congress. He accepted partition in principle, on the ground that it justifies the Zionist claim of Palestine. He stated, “there could be no question ..... of giving up any part of the land of Israel.... It was arguable that the ultimate goal would be achieved most quickly by accepting the Peel proposals.”<sup>83</sup>

The partition plan aroused unprecedented levels of opposition from the native Palestinians. They were not offered an independent state. The Arab state proposed might be under King Abdulla of Transjordan. The most fertile area of Palestine had been granted to the Jews. The neighbouring Arab governments joined the Arab Higher Committee in condemning the partition plan and an Arab Congress was held in Bludlan, Syria in September 1937 to call for united Arab resistance.<sup>84</sup>

The ensuing tension exploded into a more violent armed struggle, from September 1937 to January 1939. At the peak of the rebellion, Palestine mujahidin took control over much of the countryside and exerted considerable influence in towns. The insurgents set up their operational basis in the hills and were directed by the Mufti of Jerusalem. They collected funds from wealthy Arabs, forced levies on Arab villages, and obtained help from neighbouring Arab countries and from German and Italian sources.<sup>85</sup> According to Dr. Baur, “in the spring and summer of 1938 the rebels held most of the non-Jewish portions of the country... and British administration had become a fiction. The rebels levied taxes, administered justice and provided civilian administrative services in the vast territories under their control.”<sup>86</sup>

A new leadership, based on the broad alliance of peasants, workers and radical elements of the middle class, emerged in the second phase of the rebellion. They began to implement radical political and social programmes that challenged the traditional notable leadership of the national movement and threatened the base of mercantile landlord dominance.<sup>87</sup> The Arab Higher Committee lost its control over the rebels. The agrarian tension and the general Arab peasant discontent directed them against their great landowners. There were a number of peasant attacks on leading Arab landowning families. Armed Arab bands took control of much of central Palestine.



The differences between al-Nashashibis and al-Husseinis destroyed the unity of Arab Higher Committee. Consequently, in July 1937, the National Defense Party left the Committee. The factionalism among the land-owning notables contributed heavily to the Palestinian defeat. Raghīb al-Nashashibi fled to exile in Egypt following assassination attempts ordered by the Mufti of Jerusalem. Many villagers were pressurized and sometimes brutally tortured both by the armed bands demanding assistance and British troops seeking information. Meanwhile Fakhri al-Nashashibi organized counter-revolutionary squads to fight the rebels and gave vital information to British troops and Zionists.<sup>88</sup> Some villages responded positively to Fakhri al-Nashashibi and cooperated with the Mandatory government.

During 1938, nearly 1700 Arabs were killed in repressive measures, of which 1,138 were officially defined as rebels and 486 as civilians. In addition, 292 Jews were killed and over 600 wounded.<sup>89</sup> Finally the British turned out to be victorious in 1939. Even before that internal conflicts had considerably weakened the Arab resistance. The counter-insurgency campaign gave the final blow to the uprising. ‘The country was reconquered by the British during the months of October and November 1938. Militarily, the revolt had been crushed. Arab resistance collapsed. Internal dissension, terror, economic scarcity and British reprisals – all contributed to the gradual withdrawal of support for the rebellious villagers. The revolt was not crushed, it died a slow death...’<sup>90</sup>

During the uprising 5,032 Palestinians died, 14,700 were wounded and 50,000 were detained—of whom 2,000 received life sentences and 146 were hanged.<sup>91</sup> It was noted that the British forces ‘presumably killed a great many more rebels than officially listed.’<sup>92</sup> The rebellion caused a very great loss of property also. It was estimated that 5,000 homes were demolished in reprisals.<sup>93</sup>

The Jewish community generally adopted a policy of ‘Havlaga’ which means ‘self-control’ or ‘self-restraint’. Jewish armed groups concentrated on defence of Jewish villages under attack. The Mandatory government permitted Hagana to arm itself legally and the British troops cooperated with Hagana in counter-insurgency operations. The Special Night Squads (SNS) carried out night attacks on the operational bases of rebels in co-operation with British forces. In response to Arab attacks the Irgun Zvai Leumi (LEHI) took terrorist methods.

The Revolt (1936-39) had not one but several component targets. It was a peasant war where Arab gangs fought against Jews, the Mandate Government, and amongst themselves.<sup>94</sup> There was strategic and tactical failure from the part of Palestinians. The rebels concentrated their attacks on British government and army. The counter-attacks considerably reduced the Arab military strength in Palestine. The counter-insurgency measures partially eliminated the Arab leadership in Palestine. During this period the Jews were under the protection of British and received their support in building up their own strength.

The revolt of 1936-39 was led by traditional feudal and religious elite. They lacked the modern political or ideological orientation. The Istiqlal party and the radical youth groups provided an Islamic and Pan-Arab orientation to the struggle. Proto-loyalties of Kinship and religion determined the course of revolutionary action which was at the final stage, obstructed by disunity and ingrained traditionalism. At the beginning, the Mufti of Jerusalem succeeded in providing a centralized leadership. But factional feuds weakened his position and he failed to establish a unified command. The semi-feudal structure of Palestinian Arab society, with its

divisions and lack of national unity contributed to the failure of the movement. The 1936-39 rebellion contained all elements required for a popular revolution, but the Palestinian political elite and the Arab Higher Committee failed to co-ordinate and lead the uprising into a full-fledged revolution. However, the 1936-39 revolt had demonstrated that even small, poorly armed groups could cause severe disruptions and immobilize large forces.

## **The London Conference, 1939**

Throughout the period of 'Great Arab Rebellion', Britain tried to resolve the crisis as early as possible because of the developing tension in Europe. Italy could easily disrupt the maritime communication in the Mediterranean. So, the military stressed the importance of safeguarding the security of the overland route to the Far East passing through Palestine and other Arab countries. The Palestine rebels could disrupt the strategically important land routes. British strategists in the Committee of Imperial Defence warned in January 1939 that there was 'strong feeling.... in all Arab States in connection with British policy in Palestine... We assume that, immediately on the outbreak of war, the necessary measures would be taken... in order to bring about a complete appeasement of Arab opinion in Palestine and in neighbouring (Arab) countries.'<sup>95</sup>

In this context, the British government became prepared to grant political concessions to the Arabs. The British government appointed a technical commission headed by Sir John Woodhead on 4 January 1938 to examine the practicability of the Royal Commission's partition plan. The Report<sup>96</sup> submitted in October 1938 concluded that Royal Commission's plan is impractical because almost half of the population of the proposed Jewish state is Arab. Mass Arab population transfer by force will endanger British position in Palestine. The Commission itself expressed reservations over the viability of any partition scheme.

In the context of renewed Arab violence, the partition plan proposal was abandoned, and the British Government announced a new statement of policy. The new 'white paper' concluded that '.....the practical, 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 impractical... The British government therefore continue their responsibility for the government of the whole of Palestine, and were prepared to make a determined effort to promote an understanding between the Arabs and the Jews...'<sup>97</sup>

The White Paper proposed a conference at London of representatives of the Palestinian Arabs, neighbouring Arab states and Jewish Agency to determine the future policy on Palestine. The admission of other Arab states as parties to the conference was a departure from British precedent. It reflected the foresight of the British to reach a deal with the Arab in the context of emerging tension in European politics and of the possibility of another world war.

The London Round Table Conference was held in February-March 1939. Separate Anglo-Arab and Anglo-Jewish conferences were held because the Arabs refused to recognize the Jewish Agency. All the independent Arab States-Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan and Yemen participated. It was for this conference that the British government made public the Hussein – McMahon Correspondence, which was examined by the Anglo-Arab Committee.<sup>98</sup>

The London conference closed on 27 March 1939 without any tangible results. British

government then went ahead and published the 'Statement of Policy' on Palestine known as 'The MacDonald White paper', on 17 May 1939. The White Paper accepted that the Royal Commission's Partition Plan was impractical as shown by the Woodhead Commission. It addressed the issue of certain ambiguous expressions such as 'a national home for the Jewish people' and made it clear that it did not mean that 'Palestine is to become as Jewish as England is English.'

The White Paper disclaimed any intention to create a Jewish state. "...and His Majesty's Government therefore now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State"<sup>99</sup> The Arab's demand for Palestine to become an independent Arab state was rejected. "..... The objective of His Majesty's government is the establishment within 10 years of an independent Palestine in.... treaty relations with the United Kingdom.".....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....."<sup>100</sup>. It was further stated that immigration would end, after the admission of 75,000 new immigrants over the first five years and the Government would strictly regulate transfer of land.

Both the Jews and the Arabs rejected the McDonald White Paper. It came as a major setback to Zionist diplomacy. The Jewish Agency declared that the White Paper provisions were contrary to international law and a violation of British promises to the Jewish community. The shock of White Paper compelled the Zionist leadership to reconsider their ties to Britain. In the summer of 1939 Ben-Gurion told the Mapai Political Centre: "The period of mandate lasted from 1920 to 1936. It has gone, never to return"<sup>101</sup> Ben-Gurion insisted the Jewish Community to determine their own course, regardless of British policies. The Zionist movement started looking for American support. The Hitler holocaust resulted in moving the masses of American Jews to support Zionism.

The absolute importance of immigration to the fulfillment of Zionism has been well known. But Nazi Jew-hunt transformed the situation and now immigration became an immediate necessity. The White Paper (1939) came in this 'blackest hour of Jewish history' as Dr. Weizmann pointed out. As a consequence of this new departure in British policy, untold numbers of Jews were prevented from escaping from Europe and hence were caught up in the Holocaust. The Zionists viewed that if the Arabs had accepted the Royal Commission's partition plan, there would be a Jewish State in Palestine, which could save hundreds of thousands – perhaps even a million or more – European Jews. This position is based on the fact that until 1941, the Nazi programme called for Jews to be expelled from Europe but not necessarily murdered. The 'final solution' became the solution of choice for the Nazis only when it became clear that there was nowhere for the Jews of Europe to go except to the gas chambers and killing fields. The Zionists condemned the British that their White Paper immigration restrictions played an indirect role in the destruction of the European Jewry. This position based on 'might have been theory' did not have much value. Moreover, much of the Jews fleeing from Nazi terror opted United States and Britain, not Palestine. The Zionist condemnation of Arabs and British policy were exaggerated interpretations of the ground reality.

The Arabs unanimously rejected the White Paper and called it 'Black Paper.' The Arab Higher Committee repudiated it as it did not promise them complete independence with immediate halt to land purchase and immigration.

## **From 1939 to the End of Mandate (1948)**

The collapse of the 'Great Arab Rebellion' was overshadowed by the outbreak of World War II. With the outbreak of war in September 1939, despite its new and formidable preoccupations, Britain continued to implement the White Paper, restricting immigration to Palestine and refusing to co-operate with the emigration of German and Austrian Jews. Illegal Jewish immigration intensified with the implication of stringent restrictions. Illegal immigrants who managed to reach Palestine were rounded up and interned. Later arrivals were generally shipped to Mauritius. 'Legal' immigration was halted for three months on 26 December 1940. The British policy towards the Jews within Palestine was restrictive. In 1940, the land purchase regulations set out in the White Paper preventing the sale of land by Arabs to Jews were put into force.

Throughout the war years, the Zionists developed a coordinated programme to put an end to the Mandate. The Jewish community in Palestine and the World Jewry agitated for this. Ben Gurion insisted that Jewish immigration be increased, and Jewish holdings be extended. He explained the effect of "white paper" restrictions as follows 'no Jew may acquire in Palestine a plot of land, a building, or a tree, or any right in water except in towns and a very small part of the countryside. They not only violate the terms of the Mandate but completely nullify its purpose.'<sup>102</sup> Zionism's new policy of activism reached its peak in early 1940's. Ben Gurion informed the General officer commanding in Palestine at the beginning of 1940 that he had no intention to take active steps to stop anti-British activities of the Jews in Palestine<sup>103</sup>. The same position was restated before Jewish leaders in Palestine in March 1943 by Ben-Gurion: "there will be no co-operation between us and the White Paper authorities.... We are preparing our own plans."<sup>104</sup>

During the World War II (1939-45) anti-Semitism reached its most horrific manifestation. The Nazi regime carried out a systematic campaign to eliminate the Jewish communities of Europe in which about 6 million European Jews, including 1.5 million children were murdered.<sup>105</sup> Many of the Jews who survived the Holocaust waged a tenacious struggle for their right to immigrate and live freely in 'Eretz Israel'. Few survivors of the death camps reached Palestine through illegal migration and they spread the horrific stories of Jew-hunt among the Palestinian Jews. They reeled under the impact of the horror being inflicted on European Jewry and as a result there developed the firm determination that when the war ended a Jewish state would make it possible for the Jews. On 29 March 1941, Dr. Weizmann announced at Chicago that after the war a Jewish Commonwealth could be set up in Palestine side by side with an Arab Federation.<sup>106</sup> Nahum Goldmann defined the territory of 'Jewish national interest', including Palestine as well as Tran Jordan.<sup>107</sup> In 1940's the Western Jewry, especially the American Zionists, with an activist spirit provided money and material and diplomatic backing to the Palestinian Jews for the establishment of Israel after the conclusion of the War. The Zionist organization of USA, demanded in September 1941 that a Jewish Commonwealth should be created within the historic boundaries of Palestine.<sup>108</sup>

On 6 May 1942, with the first indications of the scale of the killings in Poland reaching Britain and the United States, and the British War Cabinet formally deciding that "all practical steps should be taken to discourage illegal immigration into Palestine", an extra ordinary Zionist Conference was held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. Its theme, expressed by David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, was that Jews could no longer depend on

Britain to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, and that to secure this goal the Jewish Agency should replace the British Mandate as the Government of Palestine. On 11 May, the Conference adopted a set of resolutions, formally made public in what is known as the 'Biltmore Programme'. It called for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, unlimited immigration and a free hand for the Zionists to develop the unoccupied and uncultivated land in Palestine. The programme stated:

"The conference affirmed its unalterable rejection of the White Paper of May 1939 and denies its moral or legal validity. The White Paper seeks to limit, and in fact to nullify Jewish rights to immigration and settlement in Palestine, and, as stated by Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons in May 1939, constitutes, "a breach and repudiation of the Balfour Declaration....

"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 upbuilding 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."<sup>109</sup>

During the war years small Jewish units served in the British Army. Eventually about 25,000 Palestinian Jews were recruited in various British formations. These Jews fought in Greece, Crete, North Africa, Italy and Northern Europe. The Zionists with greater foresight co-operated fully with the Allies, both because of their intense hatred of Nazi Germany and because of their desire to build up political credit with the Allies. At the same time an extremist Jewish fringe group in Palestine went to negotiate with the Germans for help in liberating Palestine from British, which they regarded as the top priority of Zionists. Yitzhak Shamir, who later became the Prime Minister of Israel, involved in this mission.<sup>110</sup>

British policy to appease the Arabs failed. The Palestinian Arabs in general supported Britain's enemies in the Second World War. During the war years, the Palestinian Arabs were a 'leaderless' community as most of their leaders were in exile due to counter-insurgency measures unleashed by the Government to suppress the 1936-39' rebellion. The mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husaini had been officially banned from Palestine following his escape in October 1937. When the war broke out, the British began making overtures to the Mufti who was in Baghdad in exile. The British sought his support for war efforts as well as for the White Paper. The Mufti rejected these requests and strongly opposed the White Paper itself. He associated himself closely to the aborted anti-British uprising in Iraq in April 1941. In the course of the uprising, the Iraqi nationalists inspired a pogrom against the Jews of Baghdad. Following the failure of the Iraqi rebellion he made his way, via Iran, to Italy and Germany. Initially al-Husaini sought German/ Italian support to liberate Palestine from British. He subsequently, under Nazi influence adopted extreme anti-Semitic position and even supported the "final solution'. His statements referring to Jews were later used to tarnish the Palestinian resistance with the label of anti-Semitism.<sup>111</sup>

In early 1940's the Istiqlal Party, the Reform Party and Palestine Arab Party re-established themselves in Palestine. These political groupings kept a distance from the Mufti and his extremist policy. To some extent, they supported the White Paper (1939) and extended full support for immigration and land purchase restrictions. The War boosted the Palestinian

economy. The former rebels now in Palestine showed willingness to co-operate with the British Government. The Allied military presence in Palestine was strong. In such a circumstance, despite intense Axis propaganda, which included the Mufti's call to stage an anti-British rebellion, Palestine maintained innocuous neutrality in the World War II.

The economic boom in Palestine has been used to advance the Palestinian Arab economic basis. The Istiqlal party gave special preference to economic advancement under the leadership of Ahmad Hilmi, Awni Abdal-Hadi and Rashid Ibrahim. They believed that a sound Palestinian Arab economy was needed to fight Zionism. They had acquired control over Arab National Bank and Arab National Fund. The emerging Arab bourgeoisie supported the political programme put forward by the Istiqlal party. The Arab National Fund has been used to purchase uncultivated land in Palestine. These processes, to some extent prevented land acquisition by the Zionists.

Major structural changes occurred in the Arab Palestine during 1940's. The Arab peasants started showing increased interest in modern education. 'Between 1943-45 Arab peasants voluntarily contributed (the equivalent of) more than \$1.5 million for educational purposes as compared to \$187,200 for the years 1941-42.'<sup>112</sup> The number of Palestinian women acquiring professional qualifications increased substantially. They even entered the medical and legal profession. New professional groups like lawyers, doctors and bankers emerged in Palestinian Arab society. Palestinian Arab Medical Association was formed. The emergence of educated middle class and commercial bourgeoisie, qualitatively transformed Arab politics. A considerable level of moderation in Arab politics during 1940's was closely linked to the changes in the Palestinian economic structure and subsequent emergence of new groups and classes.

### **The Jewish Resistance against the British in 1940's**

The Jewish political activism and terrorism had been directed both against British authority and Arabs during 1940's. The promotion of illegal immigration, clandestine procurement of arms and terrorist operations formed an integral part of Zionist strategy. The official Zionist leadership was not directly connected to terrorist activities. However, they did not discard terrorism in the early part of the War. The Jewish Agency worked in collusion with the terrorists after the conclusion of hostilities.<sup>113</sup>

The Revisionist Party led by Jobotinsky spearheaded the terrorist activities in Palestine. From 1938 onwards (after the World Zionist Congress held in Prague in February 1938) the Revisionists opposed any plan whatsoever which would deprive the Jewish people of their right to establish a majority on both sides of the Jordan. They denounced the 'Jewish Agency' and the 'old Zionist Organization' as 'traitors' who had abandoned 'the ideals of Zionism as propagated by Herzl.'

The main Palestinian Jewish organizations during 1940's was the Irgun<sup>114</sup> and Stern Gang. The 1939 White Paper led the Irgun to shift its attacks from Arabs to British. When the War broke out, Jobotinsky called for the Revisionists to support the British against the Nazi Germany. Abraham Stern (Yair) opposed Jobotinsky's call for support to British war efforts. He split the Irgun and founded a radical underground organization – Lehi (Lohamei Herut Israel-Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), also known as 'Stern Gang'<sup>115</sup>, based on personal terror, free of all moral considerations. Lehi brought 'Realpolitik' to its ultimate logical, utilitarian and amoral point.

Power came to replace diplomacy.<sup>116</sup> Lehi was founded late in the summer of 1940. It was one of the first terrorist organizations of the 20th century to advocate assassination for political ends.

Abraham Stern viewed that Britain being a foreign occupier of Palestine, any country which was hostile to it, became a possible ally of the Jews. He made contacts with German and Italian representatives and offered his services to defeat Britain. As a result, both Hagana and Irgun condemned 'Stern Gang'. Abraham Stern (Yair, 1907-42) was killed in a British Police raid in his hiding place in a Tel Aviv suburb in February 1942.<sup>117</sup>

The members of Stern Gang perpetrated two infamous political murders, which symbolized Lehi's beginning and end. On 6 November 1944, two members of Lehi, Eliyahu Beit-Tzuri and Eliyahu Hakim, assassinated Lord Moyne, the British Minister-Resident in Cairo, a close friend of Churchill and a former minister of the Colonies.<sup>118</sup> Winston Churchill, a strong supporter of Zionist aims and then Prime Minister stated in the House of Commons:

"If our dreams of Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins' pistols and our labours for its future are to produce 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. If there is to be any hope of a peaceful and successful future for Zionism, these wicked activities must cease and those responsible for them must be destroyed, root and branch."<sup>119</sup>

In effect, this assassination did nothing to further Zionist aims instead it caused widespread disgust among the British pro-Zionists. On the assassination of Lord Moyne, Weizmann shared Churchill's sense of outrage, as did the Jewish Agency Executive, which issued an immediate statement calling upon the Jewish community in Palestine to cast out the members of this destructive band, deprive them of all refugee and shelter and render all necessary assistance to the authorities in the prevention and eradication of the terrorist organization. On 16 September 1948, the Stern Gang assassinated the Swedish diplomat, Count Folk Bernodotte, the UN mediator for Palestine.

By the end of 1943, the members of Irgun reorganized under Menachem Begin, a future Prime Minister of Israel, after a temporary halt due to the death of Jobotinsky. Irgun was responsible for much destruction of government property during 1944.

The outrages perpetrated by the Stern Gang and the Irgun were condemned by the Jewish Agency. The Jewish Agency handed over 700 Irgun names to the British authorities. Most of them were then arrested. On November 11, the Executive of the Histadrut<sup>120</sup> on which Golda Meir served, denounced both the Stern Gang and the Irgun as fascist.<sup>121</sup> Eliahu Golomb, the head of the Haganah argued that the ongoing struggle was between "Zionist democracy and Jewish Nazism."<sup>122</sup>

By January 1944 the Irgun were calling upon the Jews of Palestine to revolt against the British. Their demand was immediate transfer of power in Eretz Israel to a Provisional Hebrew Government. Under Menachem Begin, the Irgun began attacking British police stations in search of arms. British military installations were not attacked until the end of the war with Germany. The Jewish Agency co-operated with the mandatory government, simultaneously the Haganah controlled by Jewish Agency, coordinated a programme of stealing arms and ammunition from the British forces in the Middle East.<sup>123</sup> Two British soldiers were implicated in the affair, and their subsequent trial revealed the possible involvement of Ben-Gurion, the Histadrut, and the

HaPoel Worker's Sports Organization.<sup>124</sup> An official report on Jewish terrorism in Palestine, presented some evidence of involvement of the Jewish Agency in the acts of violence. The report drew the following conclusions;<sup>125</sup>

- (a) That the Haganah and its associated force, the Palmach (Working under the Political control of prominent members of the Jewish Agency) have been engaging in carefully planned movements of sabotage and violence under the guise of 'the Jewish Resistance Movement'.
- (b) That the Irgun Tzeva'i Leumi and the Stern group have worked since last autumn in co-operation with the Haganah High Command on certain of these operations.
- (c) That the broadcasting station 'Kol Israel' which claims to be 'the voice of resistance movement' and which has been working under the general direction of the Jewish Agency has been supporting these organizations.

As the struggle between the British government and the Jews intensified, bitterness and extremism on both sides increased. In May 1945 the Jewish Agency formally presented its demands to the British Government which include: <sup>126</sup>

- (a) That an immediate decision be announced to establish Palestine as a Jewish state.
- (b) That the Jewish Agency be invested with all necessary authority to bring to Palestine as many Jews as it may be found necessary and possible to settle and to develop, fully and speedy, all the resources of the country – especially land and power resources.

The British government did not take these demands seriously. Nothing could move the British Government's intransigence on lifting Jewish immigration and land purchase restrictions. The Jewish response to the continuing immigration restrictions was to accelerate the mass movement of 'illegals' across the borders and mountain passes of Germany, Austria and Italy, and over the seas, from ports in the Adriatic and the Aegean, in the hope of being able to land, secretly and unnoticed, on the coast of Palestine. With Churchill's defeat in the general election of July 1945, it soon became clear that the Jews had lost their ally in the British government. The new Labour government of Clement Atlee was not sympathetic to the Zionists and strictly maintained immigration restrictions. Britain started returning captured immigrants from the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean to DP (Displaced Persons) camps in Germany.

While the British continued with these efforts, the Zionists succeeded in winning American support on three different levels – the American people, the Congress and the administration. In order to assert the Jewish votes and financial support, both the Republicans and the Democrats explicitly supported the demands of the Zionists. As a sign of redeeming the election pledge, President Truman urged Prime Minister Atlee to issue the 100,000 Palestine certificates already demanded by the Jewish Agency. The British refused. In the meantime, Zionists were seeking to evade British restrictions. With Eisenhower's approval, at Ben-Gurion's suggestion, American military commanders set up a 'temporary haven' for Jewish DPs in the American Zone of Occupation, thus providing a lifeline while the British were preventing Jews from crossing into their section from the east.

Due to irresistible pressure of United States, Britain proposed an Anglo-American Committee to estimate the possibilities of further Jewish immigration to Palestine. 'The 12-



member Committee began work in January 1946 with a 120-day time limit and finalized its report in April. As in the case of previous British Commissions, it surveyed the history of Palestine over the years since the Balfour Declaration, but concluded with a set of recommendations that virtually negated those by the British Commission.<sup>127</sup>

The Anglo-American Committee rejected the idea of early independence for Palestine, whether partitioned or unified, until Jewish-Arab hostility had disappeared. The Committee recommended a total reversal of the policy envisaged by the White Paper of 1939 and conversion of the Mandate into a U.N. Trusteeship, which would prepare the Arabs and Jews for a bi-national set-up in Palestine. It recommended a declaration: "That Jews shall not dominate Arab and the Arab shall not dominate Jew in Palestine; that Palestine shall be neither a Jewish State nor an Arab State."<sup>128</sup>

The Committee observed that the Jews in Palestine had established 'a state within the state.' "The Jews have developed under the aegis of the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi, a strong and tightly-woven community. There thus exists a virtual Jewish, non-territorial state with its own executive and legislative organs, paralleled in many respects to the Mandatory Administration, and serving as the concrete symbol of the Jewish National Home."<sup>129</sup>

The Committee recommended an immediate rescinding of the 1940 Land Transfer Regulations to allow free transfers of land, and the immediate issue of 100,000 immigration certificates to the victims of Nazi persecution. The President Truman, immediately after the publication of the Committee's Report, issued a statement in which, he said: "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 Inquiry."<sup>130</sup>

The final recommendations of the Committee pleased neither the Zionists nor the Arabs, as the 'exclusive right' of Arabs and Jews to establish statehood in Palestine was denied. British Government was not ready to accept the Committee's recommendations without further discussions on this matter. As a follow-up action, the British and American officials reached a scheme, which suggested the creation of two autonomous provinces in Palestine to be governed under a British High Commissioner. The British government approved this scheme, but the US rejected it. Thus, the issue remained unresolved.<sup>131</sup>

Despite Foreign Office understanding of Jewish aspirations, born of the suffering of the Holocaust, in the first weeks of 1946, the British Government increased its efforts to prevent Jews leaving Europe for Palestine. The Labour Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin restricted Jewish immigration to 1,500 per month.<sup>132</sup> Dr. Weizmann contacted Bevin and requested him to reconsider the immigration restriction.<sup>133</sup> The Zionists were ready to accept nothing short of their full demands. Bevin challenged this position and said to Weizmann. 'Are you trying to force my hand? If you want a fight you can have it?'<sup>134</sup> There was no change in this position despite intense American and Zionist pressure. To prevent Jewish immigration to Palestine had become a top priority of the Labour government.

In this context there was a coordinated Jewish resistance against British authority in Palestine. Under Ben-Gurion's authority, the Jewish Resistance movement was established under whose umbrella the terrorist organizations, the Irgun and Stern Gang, agreed to work hand in hand with the Haganah in a coordinated strategy. In September 1945, the Zionist leadership in

Palestine and London drew up plans for terrorist campaign against the British. The scheme was outlined, which in the words of a member of the Jewish Agency Executive was as follows:

‘It has also been suggested that we cause one serious incident. We would then publish a declaration to the effect that it is only a warning and indication of much more serious incidents that would threaten the safety of all British interests in the country, should the Government decide against us.... The Stern group has expressed their willingness to join us completely on the basis of our programme of activity.... If there is such a union, we may assume that we can prevent independent action by the IZL (Irgun Zvai Leumi).<sup>135</sup>

On the night of 16-17 June 1946, the Palmach (the ‘shock troops’ of Haganah) destroyed ten roads and rail bridges as well as the Haifa railway workshops. Palestine was isolated from surrounding states. Twelve days later, on June 28, later known as ‘Black Saturday’, the British sealed the Jewish Agency’s buildings and arrested 3,000 Jews throughout Palestine, including most of the senior members of the Zionist Executive.<sup>136</sup> Of the leaders then in Palestine, only Dr. Weizmann was not seized.

In Palestine, meanwhile, the arrest of the Zionist leaders had created a ferment of discontent. The violence reached its climax on 22 July 1946 when the Irgun blew up a wing of the King David hotel, which was used by the British administration. Ninety-one people were killed, many of whom were Arabs and Jews. There was a shock of horror among Jews and Arabs alike in Palestine. The Jewish Agency denounced what it called ‘the dastardly crime’ perpetrated by a ‘gang of desperadoes.’ The attack on the King David hotel broke down the agreement between Haganah and the Irgun and Stern Gang.

The bombing of the King David hotel was an atrocity representing the worst aspect of the Jewish struggle for a national home. It was the most destructive act of Jewish-terrorism against the British Mandate. On the surface of things, the bombing of the King David hotel was the work solely of the Irgun who opposed both tactically and ideologically the mainstream Zionist movement. However, the attack took place during a brief period of co-operation with the Haganah which was intended to co-ordinate strategy. Even so, since the bombing was out of character with Haganah’s attack on military targets, and many of the victims were Jews, it seems highly unlikely that this was anything other than the work of the Irgun, or rogue elements within it, acting independently.

For a very long time, the mainstream Zionist movement, represented by the Jewish Agency under Weizmann, genuinely sought a solution through peaceful means and consistently condemned acts of violence. Interestingly, though, at the defeat of his appeal for restraint, following the World War II the mainstream Zionists turned away from moderation, while on the Revisionist Wing, the Irgun and Stern Gang had always believed that to abide by the rules of the non-Jewish World which had let Jews down over so many centuries was just to play into the hands of the antiSemites. The Zionist circles now completely for political terror, adopted a complete rejection of the rule of law and order of the international community, as the only means to achieve a national homeland. For Zionists, with Hitler’s defeat there remained no impediment to the fullest drive for national self-determination. It was now or never.

Meanwhile, the Arab countries attending the London Conference (September 1946 to February 1947) proposed that ‘Palestine would be a unitary state with a permanent Arab majority, and would attain its independence as such after a short period of transition (two or three years) under

British Mandate.<sup>137</sup> The Zionist Congress meet in Basle in 1947 rejected any form of trusteeship proposed by Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry and put forward the following demands:<sup>138</sup>

- (a) That Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated in the structure of the democratic world;
- (b) That the gates of Palestine be opened to Jewish immigration;
- (c) That the Jewish Agency be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for the up building of the country.'

The Zionists were determined to land as many immigrants as possible in Palestine to attain Jewish majority. They intended to drive out the native Palestinians by force and conquer the country. The Zionists, with their well-armed and well-organized forces; massive financial resources, strength of diplomacy and with wholehearted support of the United States, were able to take over the country. Large number of weapons had been smuggled in or stolen from the British during the War, and small factories were making armored cars, mortars and bombs. The British General D'Arcy after analyzing the situation stated before the Anglo-American Committee that 'the Jews would occupy the whole of Palestine within twenty-four hours, if British troops withdrew.'<sup>139</sup>

In February 1947, the British Government presented its own proposals to solve the ongoing struggle in Palestine. The Palestinian Arab Executive, representatives of Arab states and the Jewish Agency rejected it. Both Jews and the Arabs demanded the end of British Mandate. The United States and Soviet Union, agreeing almost word for word, insisted on a British evacuation in the United Nations. In consequence, Britain decided to relinquish its mandatory role and to hand over the Palestine problem to the United Nations.

The foreign secretary stated in the House of Commons on 18 February 1947:

"His Majesty's Government has... been faced with an irreconcilable conflict of principles. There are in Palestine about 1,200,000 Arabs and 600,000 Jews. For the Jews, the essential point of principle is the creation of a sovereign Jewish State. For the Arabs, the essential point of principle is to resist to the last, the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in any part of Palestine. The discussions of the last month have quite clearly shown that there is no prospect of resolving this conflict by any settlement negotiated between the parties. But if the conflict has to be resolved by an arbitrary decision, that is not a decision which His Majesty's Government are empowered, as "mandatory", to take. His Majesty's Government have of themselves no power, under the terms of the Mandate, to award the country either to the Arabs or to the Jews, or even to partition it between them.

"It is in these circumstances that we have decided that we are unable to accept the scheme put forward either by the Arabs or by the Jews, or to impose ourselves a solution of our own. We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the only course now open to us is to submit the problem to the judgment of the United Nations."<sup>140</sup>

In October 1947 Britain notified that she would surrender the Mandate and withdraw from Palestine on 15th May 1948.

During the 25 years of the Palestine Mandate from 1922 to 1947 large scale Jewish

immigration from abroad, mainly from Eastern Europe, took place, which drastically transformed the demographic profile of Palestine. The population of Palestine increased from the 750,000 of the 1922 census to almost 1,850,000 at the end of 1946 – an increase of nearly 250 per cent.<sup>141</sup> The Jewish population increased from 84,000 in 1922 to 608,000 in 1946, an increase of about 725 percent.<sup>142</sup> The Jewish population concentrated in the cities and suburbs. About 70 percent of the total Jewish population lived in and around the cities of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv and Haifa.<sup>143</sup> In the rural Palestine the Jewish agricultural settlements had displaced a large number of Arab peasants. The Palestinian Arabs were to suffer an experience similar to the Jews – a diaspora as a result of the planned Jewish colonization of Palestine.

## **United Nations and Partition of Palestine**

On the request of Britain, the Mandatory power, United Nations took up the Palestine problem in February 1947. Faced with a situation of continuous terrorist activities and communal violence in Palestine, Britain requested a special session of the General Assembly to consider the appointment of a special committee “to make recommendations... concerning the future government of Palestine.”<sup>144</sup> The U.N. General Assembly’s first special session, called in May 1947, created the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) with representatives of Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. The Special Committee held preliminary meetings in New York, electing Justice Emil Sandstorm of Sweden as chairman.<sup>145</sup> The Jewish organizations, the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine and Arab League states presented their views and demands before the Committee.

The Jewish case was presented by numerous representations. David Ben-Gurion argued that ‘...we stand by the attitude we took last year, that we will be ready to consider the question of a Jewish state in an adequate area of Palestine, and that we are entitled to Palestine as a whole.’<sup>146</sup> However, Dr. Weizmann, appearing in his personal capacity, did not cling on ‘entire Palestine’. “I believe although partition means a sort of Solomon’s judgment, it is under the circumstances perhaps the better”<sup>147</sup> The Arab states presented the Arab case. The main thrust of what they had given was as follows: “The destiny of Palestine cannot be decided by outsiders. It is against the Charter. The destiny of Palestine shall be decided by its own people... Zionism has no rightful claim on Palestine”.<sup>148</sup>

After concluding the sittings in Palestine Lebanon, Syria and Tran Jordan the special committee moved to Geneva and set up a sub-committee to investigate the refugee camps in Germany and Austria. In the Report, the sub-committee pointed out that ‘the overwhelming majority of the persons questioned, affirmed that they would not consider resettlement in any country except Palestine.’<sup>149</sup>

The Committee, after analyzing different arguments and viewpoints were unable to agree on recommendations. The only unanimous agreement reached was that ‘the Mandate for Palestine shall be terminated, and independence shall be granted in Palestine at the earliest practicable date.’<sup>150</sup> The Committee finalized its report on 31st August 1947. It came up with two alternative plans.

### **(a) Plan of partition with economic union:**

A majority of members – Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay – recommended the partition of Palestine into independent Jewish and Arab states with a unified economy. Each state was to occupy a little under half-territory. Holy towns of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and their suburbs were to be internationalized. The population distribution of the settled population in the two proposed states are approximately as follows:

	Jews	Arabs & others	Total
The Jewish state	498,000	407,000	905,000
The Arab State	10,000	725,000	735,000
City of Jerusalem	100,000	105,000	205,000

In addition, about 90,000 Bedouins (Arab) will also be in the proposed Jewish State. Those who proposed the partition plan with economic union, presented their arguments in favour as follows: “The basic premise underlying the partition proposal is that the claims to Palestine of the Arabs and Jews, both possessing validity, are irreconcilable, and that among all of the solutions advanced, partition will provide the most realistic and practicable agreement, and is that most likely to afford a workable basis of meeting in part the claims and national aspirations of both parties.....” “The basic conflict in Palestine is a clash of two intense nationalisms, so ‘full and effective political co-operation among them is difficult’, partition is the only means available....”

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### **(b) Federal State Plan**

This plan, also known as Minority Plan, was proposed by India, Iran and Yugoslavia. It recommended an independent Palestine as a federated state, comprising an Arab state and a Jewish state with Jerusalem as capital. This state would have a federal government and government of Arab and Jewish states with a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship as also equal rights for minorities and free access to the holy places. The minority plan argued that: “It is incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem in general.”

“It is recognized that Palestine is the common country of both indigenous Arabs and Jews, that both these peoples have had an historic association with it, and that both play vital roles in the economic and cultural life of the country.”

“This being so, the objective is a dynamic solution which will ensure equal rights for both Arabs and Jews in their common state, and which will maintain that economic unity which is indispensable to the life and development of the country.”<sup>152</sup>

The remaining member of the Special Committee, Australia, did not support either proposal. She did not propose her own. The Zionist movement welcomed the partition plan. However, Ben-Gurion made it clear to his followers that ‘the arrangement could not be final, not with regard to the regime, not with regard to borders, and not with regard to international agreements.’<sup>153</sup> The Palestinian leaders rejected the Partition Plan. The Arab Higher Committee called it ‘absurd, impractical and unjust’ and incompatible with the principles of self-

determination enshrined in the U.N. Charter.<sup>154</sup>

The second session of the United Nations General Assembly convened in September 1947 set up an adhoc committee on Palestine to hear views on the UNSCOP proposals. Arab Higher Committee leader Jamal al-Husayni conveyed the views of the Palestinian Arabs: 'The case of the Arabs of Palestine was based on the principles of international justice; it was that of a people which desired to live in undisturbed possession of the country where providence and history had placed it.'-

"The Zionists were conducting an aggressive campaign with the object of securing by force a country which was not theirs by birthright."

"The solution lay in the charter of the United Nations with which the Arabs of Palestine who constituted the majority, were entitled to a free and 'independent state....'

"The future constitutional organization of Palestine should be based on the following principles; first, establishment on democratic lines of an Arab State comprising all Palestine; secondly, observance of the said Arab State of Palestine of human rights, fundamental freedom and equality of all persons before the law; thirdly, protection by the Arab state of the legitimate rights and interests of all the minorities, fourthly, guarantee to all of freedom of worship and access to the Holy places."<sup>155</sup>

The response of the Al-Husaini reflect the Palestinian Arab's rejection of the proposals put forward by UNSCOP.

Rabbi Hillel Silver, representing Jewish Agency, argued that 'History was not a story out of the 'Arabian Nights' and the Arab Higher Committee was indulging in wishful thinking.'

"..... Jewish problem in general was none other than the age-old question of Jewish homelessness, for which there was but one solution.... the reconstitution of the Jewish national home in Palestine."<sup>156</sup> His arguments reflect Zionist assumptions of their 'historical' right on Palestine, which was inapplicable to the Arabs. His statement suggested that the Jewish Agency reserved wide areas for the proposed Jewish nation. However, he accepted the idea of economic union.

The United States supported the basic principles of the unanimous recommendations of UNSCOP and the Majority Plan.<sup>157</sup> The Soviet Union addressed the issue of the right of self-determination of Arabs and Jews to live in freedom and peace in a state of their own in Palestine. Pointing the holocaust, the representative of Soviet Union suggested: 'The Jewish people were therefore striving to create a state of their own and it would be unjust to deny them that right. The problem was urgent and could not be avoided by plunging back into the darkness of the ages.'<sup>158</sup> At the end of the general discussion, the chairman, Adhoc committee, proposed the appointment of two sub-committees to report on the Majority Plan and Minority Plan before the Committee. The composition of the two sub committees was decided as follows:<sup>159</sup>

Sub- committee No.1: Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Poland, South Africa, USSR, USA, Hungary, Venezuela.

Sub-committee No.2: Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen.

The report of the two sub-committees was presented to the Adhoc Committee on 24th November 1947. The report of the sub-committee-2 compiled the arguments for a unified Palestine, addressing the legal question of the competence of the UN to partition the country.<sup>160</sup> The Adhoc committee rejected this report. The Report of the sub-committee-1 recommended a slightly modified form of the partition plan, which was voted upon on 25 November 1947. The vote was 25 votes to 13 with 17 abstentions.<sup>161</sup> The proposal to partition was thus approved and recommended to the General Assembly.

Meanwhile the Zionist diplomacy succeeded in ensuring US support for the partition plan. With that they had won half the battle. American prestige and influence was effectively used to gather votes in favour of the partition. Haiti, Liberia, Philippines, China, Ethiopia and Greece became the objects of most intense Zionist pressure.<sup>162</sup> This pressure was applied mainly through American channels. The Zionists importuned the Congressmen and Senators to communicate directly with the governments of the six target countries.<sup>163</sup> The President Truman remained on the side of the Zionists until the eve of the vote. In his Memoirs, Truman revealed: "I do not think I ever had as much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White House as I had in this instance. The Persistence of a few of the extreme Zionist leaders – actuated by political motives and engaging in political threats – disturbed and annoyed me. Some were even suggesting that we pressure sovereign nations into favourable votes in the General Assembly."<sup>164</sup> Extensive Zionist lobbying finally won the race. All of the six target countries, except Greece, had agreed either to vote or to abstain.<sup>165</sup>

On November 29, the second session of the UN General Assembly endorsed the partition plan. The partition plan received 33 votes in favour and 13 against with 10 abstentions.<sup>166</sup>

Those who voted in favour of the partition were; Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Those who voted against the partition were; Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. While those who abstained from voting were; Argentina, Chile, China, Columbia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.

The partition resolution, identified as 181(II)<sup>167</sup>, entitled 'future Government of Palestine', which recommended and made provisions for the establishment of two independent states in lieu of Mandated Palestine an unnamed 'Jewish state' and an unnamed 'Arab state'. 'Great Britain was to withdraw its presence by 1 August 1948, however making available by 1st February 1948 to the Jewish State an area including a seaport to facilitate 'substantial immigration.... Power handed over to the two states on the day of independence, not later than 1 October 1948.'<sup>168</sup>

'The territory of Palestine was divided into 8 parts. Three were allotted to the Jewish state, three to the Arab state. The seventh, Jaffa, was to form an Arab enclave in Jewish territory. The eighth part was to be Jerusalem as a 'corpus separatum' under a special international regime.'<sup>169</sup> The Partition Resolution contained detailed safeguards to ensure the rights of minorities,

including:

“Freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of worship, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, shall be ensured to all”.

“No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants on the ground of race, religion, language or sex”.

“All persons within the jurisdiction of the state shall be entitled to equal protection of the laws.”<sup>170</sup> Freedom of movement and transit was also to be assured by both states.

This resolution has been implemented only as far as the creation of the Jewish State of Israel was concerned. But the rights of the Palestinian people, including its rights of self-determination and statehood, still remain to be implemented.

Almost all the Asian countries accepted the Federal plan. China abstained from voting. Philippines at the beginning opposed the partition plan. Participating in the deliberations at U.N. General Assembly, Mr. Romulo, the leader of the Philippines delegation stated: ‘The Philippine government has come to the conclusion that it cannot give its support to any proposal for the political disunion and the territorial dismemberment of Palestine.’<sup>171</sup> However, when voting was undertaken, Philippines voted in favour of partition plan. It was clear that, the Philippines had completely reversed its previous stand of supporting federal plan under extraneous US persuasion or pressure.<sup>172</sup> All other Asian states voted against partition.

The United States and Soviet Union worked hand-in-hand in the United Nations firstly to criticize Britain, then to support the Zionists. In this unexpected partnership, the White House had its eye on the forthcoming presidential elections (1948). Moreover, the US government could not deny the aspirations of economically sound and politically influential American Jewry. The growing ties between Jewish communists and Moscow might be a reason for the sudden conversion of Soviet Union to the Zionist cause. Moscow might have concluded that the Jewish Communist Party in Palestine could promote its interests in West Asia more effectively than the divided Arab Communists. Moreover, USSR had its eye on the fleet in the Mediterranean with which they hoped to wrest control of the area from the USA. A Jewish State in Palestine with a socialist-communist background was viewed as a reliable strategic partner in the Middle East.

India strongly opposed the partition plan. Nehru explained India’s approach to the issue in the following words: ‘we took up a certain attitude in regard to it, which was roughly of federal state with autonomous parts. After a great deal of thought we decided that this was not only a fair and equitable solution of the problem, but also the only real solution of the problem. Any other solution would have meant fighting and conflict.’<sup>173</sup>

## **The Battle for Palestine and Creation of Israel**

The United Nations resolution 181(II) did not provide a solution to the struggle in Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs immediately after the fateful day of November 29, began to prevent by force the carrying out of partition and the vigorous Jewish counter action, rapidly led to a country-wide communal violence and guerilla struggle. The Arab Higher Committee called for a general strike. When the British forces started withdrawing, the Jewish paramilitary forces got a freehand to launch full-fledged attack on native Palestinians. ‘With events moving towards a major armed



confrontation, Britain announced that it would terminate the Mandate on 15 May 1948, several months before the time envisaged in the United Nations Plan.<sup>174</sup>

In Palestine the Mufti of Jerusalem led the Arab resistance. His forces known as Jaish al-Jihad al-Muqaddas (the forces of sacred struggle) were under the control of Abd al-Qadir Husayni, the former mayor of Jerusalem. A group of Arab volunteers about 5000 to 7000 mostly non-Palestinians, led by Fawzi al-Qawuqji, a veteran of the Arab Revolt of 1936-39, started operating in Palestine. The Mufti demanded that Palestine should be controlled by the Palestinians. He opposed the Arab League's efforts claiming that it would eventually lead to Arab states control over Palestine. 'The Arab League's refusal to provide loans to him to finance resistance or to agree to create a Palestinian government -in-exile (Mufti was still in Egypt) confirmed to him that Arab leaders wished to decide the fate of Palestine.<sup>175</sup> Mufti was suspicious of the intentions of King Abdullah of Jordan. He realized the possibility of absorption of Palestine into Jordan. It has been argued that King Abdullah had reached an agreement with Zionists to divide Palestine in order to block the formation of an independent Palestinian Arab State.<sup>176</sup> Within Palestine, the al-Husseini-al-Nashashibi factions were fighting each other. In these intra-communal feud, King Abdullah supported the al-Nashashibi faction.

With the outbreak of large scale communal clashes, the Arab upper class especially the traditional elite left Palestine to neighboring Arab countries. In 1948, the Palestinian resistance was carried on mainly by the peasants and urban masses. The Palestinian fighters made efforts to blockade the roads leading to the Jewish settlements in order to starve them unto submission. In February and March 1948, the Arab fighters tightened the blockade and as a result the supply of essential goods to the Jewish villages were cut off.

In response, on April 1948 the Jewish terrorists entered Dair Yasin, an Arab village near Jerusalem situated in territory assigned to the Jewish state, and massacred about 254 villagers, half of them women and children. This massacre precipitated a panic flight of Palestine Arabs from the coastal plain. Mr. Jacques de Raynier commented on the massacre in the following words:

'This action had immense repercussions. The whole press, both Jewish and Arab, did strongly condemn this manner of acting, but insisted all the same upon the fact of its possible repetition and upon the need of being watchful. There upon terror seized the Arabs and gave rise to movements of panic which are wholly out of proportion with the real danger. The exodus began and became nearly general.'<sup>177</sup>

The Zionist policy was to expand beyond the territories offered to it by the partition resolution. Terrorizing the civilian population through military and psychological means and to expel them in order to make room for Jewish immigrants was an integral part of Zionist policy. This strategy was conceived by the founding fathers themselves. For example, Herzl wrote: "We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country..... Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly."<sup>178</sup>

This Herzlian strategy was now implemented with the company of terrorism. 'Deir Yassin' massacre was used by Zionists to terrify and persuade Arab villagers to join the mass exodus which was now taking place all over Palestine. Begin wrote:

“Not what happened in Deir Yassin, but what was invented about Deir Yassin, helped to carve the way to our decisive victories on the battlefield. The legend of Deir Yassin helped us in particular, in the conquest of Haifa. All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting ‘Deir Yassin’.<sup>179</sup>

The psychological effect of such a cold-blooded massacre was a mass exodus of native Palestinian Arab population. The tactics of psychological warfare used by the Zionists were very effective. Yigal Allon had provided a detailed description of the tactics he employed:

“I gathered all the Jewish Mukhtars, who have contact with Arabs in different villages, and asked them to whisper in the ears of some Arabs, that a great Jewish reinforcement has arrived in Galilee and that it is going to burn all the villages of the Huleh. They should suggest to these Arabs, as their friends, to escape while there is still time. And the rumour spread in all the areas of the Huleh that it is time to flee. The flight numbered myriads. The tactic reached its goal completely. The building of the police station at Halsa fell into our hands without a shot. The wide areas were cleaned...<sup>180</sup>

Notorious Jewish terrorist attacks and their exaggerated versions terrified the Arabs and as a result there was a mass exodus. The number of Palestinian refugees resulting from these hostilities were estimated to be around 7,26,000.<sup>181</sup>

After the outbreak of violence and terrorism, the British Government was neither able to maintain law and order in Palestine nor willing to commit its forces for that purpose. The withdrawal of British forces began in March 1948. The British forces maintained a ‘masterly inactivity’ and did not do anything to prevent communal clashes and massacres.

The Arab states – Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Lebanon – set up an army of volunteers known as Jaish-al-Inqadh (Rescue Forces) to help the Palestinians and to attack the Zionists with the outbreak of fighting in Palestine. The Rescue Forces was composed of 2,500 men from the Arab League countries and 500 Palestinians. It was placed under the Command of General Ismail Safwat, an Iraqi General. In February 1948, the Arab League set up a committee of Arab chiefs of staff to decide on the military strategy in Palestine.<sup>182</sup> Two months later, the political committee of the League prepared a plan to invade Palestine by the regular armies of Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq. In May 1948, The Arab League countries agreed to appoint Iraqi Brigadier Nur-al-din Mahmood as Commander-in Chief of all Arab forces, including the volunteers in Palestine.

The Arabs were divided amongst themselves. There was no agreement in the strategy and tactics concerned with Palestinian struggle. Egypt supported the Mufti’s aspiration of ‘Palestine for Palestinians’ and provided military aid and diplomatic support to him and to the Arab Higher Committee. The territorial ambitions of King Abdullah together with internal pressures, forced Egypt to interfere militarily in Palestine. King Abdullah’s dream of ‘Greater Syria’, which was to be composed of Transjordan, Syria, Palestine and a part of Lebanon annoyed the Mufti as well as the Arab League States.

Amid ongoing conflict, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel within the borders except Negev, awarded to it by the UNSCOP partition plan. In the Negev area, Israeli control was precarious. On May 15 United States announced defacto recognition of Israel. After three days, Soviet Union recognized the new born state. The United Nations

formally recognized Israel after three weeks. Britain recognized Israel only after 10 months.

The immediate recognition of USA and USSR was due to political and strategic concerns, whereas ‘the traditional British criterion has always been the physical ability of a regime to control its designated territory and to show itself as the master at least of its internal destiny.’<sup>183</sup> West Asia, being a link between the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Red Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, have great strategic importance. The political, commercial and strategic interests of Soviet Union, USA and UK in the region brought about a speedy recognition of Israel and converted West Asia, in particular Palestine, into one of the most explosive trouble spots of the world.<sup>184</sup> After 15 May 1948, the situation in the Middle East was not determined just by Great power politics, but by a local fight for possession of land. Britain’s paramountcy, established between 1917 and 1923 was eroded after 1948.

The declaration of independence of Israel was strange in character. It was not the declaration of a state by the people in the sense commonly understood. The declaration was that a Jewish state was created in Palestine and every Jew, belonging to any part of the world, could claim its citizenship at any time.

“The State of Israel will be open for immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion...<sup>185</sup> The proclamation restated the Zionist claims in the following words:

‘Eretz-Israel was the birth place of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped...’

‘After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.’<sup>186</sup> The founding fathers of Israel unreservedly wanted their state to be coterminous with World Jewry.<sup>187</sup> The State of Israel was created by an exceptionally determined generation of Jews, native born and immigrant.<sup>188</sup> The Labour party leader and first class statesman, David Ben-Gurion became the first Prime Minister of Israel and Chaim Weizmann the Zionist leader and master diplomat became the first President of Israel.

On the same day of the proclamation of the State of Israel, the Arab states invaded Israel and the Arab Palestine. At the midnight hour of 14 May, 1948, King Abdullah appeared at the Allenby Bridge over the Jordan River, drew his revolver and fired in the air to signal the beginning of the war.<sup>189</sup> ‘I will have the pleasure and honour to save Palestine’, he declaimed and went on to predict that the Zionist fortress will fall after the first attack’.<sup>190</sup> Irregular armed units from neighboring Arab states had already entered Palestine, and now the regular forces from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan with a token contingent from Saudi Arabia crossed into Palestine. The Egyptian Army from the south, the armies of Syria and Lebanon from the North and the ‘Arab Legion’ of Jordan from the East, simultaneously invaded Palestine. The war was fought at company level. The Arab armies entered Palestine without a joint command or co-ordinated field action. The invading Arab states were mutually suspicious of one another’s motives and territorial ambitions. The conflicting agendas of the governments concerned, considerably weakened the Arab military might. Except the ‘Arab Legion’, the Arab armies were poorly equipped, ill-trained and ill led.

During the confrontation, ‘the Arab Legion’ to some extent constrained to attack Israel because they were taking the Palestinian Arab territory as per the partition. It did not undertake

any offensive steps, instead, it preferred to establish defensive perimeters around the areas Jordan coveted.<sup>191</sup> In the field, the strategic and military aims of Israel and Jordan generally coincided. But there was direct combat between Israeli forces and Arab Legion to control the city of Jerusalem. Finally, Jordan was able to control the old city (eastern sector) while Israel occupied the new city (western sector).<sup>192</sup>

The Israeli forces, with superior military training and commitment, fought the war with a united front. They were well-equipped and properly led. The Jewish Brigade formed during the Second World War provided the lessons of strategy and tactics of confrontation. Various Jewish armed groups such as the Haganah, the Palmach, the Irgun and Stern Gang were the arms of Israeli attack and defence. During the first cease-fire the Irgun apparently defined the authority of Israeli government and tried to bring in arms openly from the ship, 'the 'SS Altalena.' Ben Gurion ordered troops from IDF (Israel Defence Force) led by Moshe Dayan to open fire. On 21 June, after a short engagement the Irgun withdrew. Following this incident, the different Israeli fighting groups took the oath of allegiance on 28 June.<sup>193</sup> Since then the activities of Jewish terrorist organizations like Irgun and Stern Gang were generally under the control of the Government of Israel.

The Israeli forces defeated the advancing Egyptian and Syrian troops. But the Jordanian forces (Arab Legion) advanced and occupied the West Bank of Jordan and the old city of Jerusalem. Taking advantage of the Arabs disarray, Israel occupied as much territory as possible. The uncoordinated nature of the Arab invasion enabled Israel to defend it successfully and to drive back the Arab forces except 'Arab Legion' which occupied the 'West Bank' and old city of Jerusalem. Gaza Strip was held by Egyptian forces. With these exceptions, Israel virtually controlled the entire territory of Palestine claimed by the Zionist Organizations for the 'Jewish National Home' at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

The General Assembly appointed count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden as United Nations Mediator on the day the Mandate ended. He successfully affected a temporary truce and submitted his suggestions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He proposed a 'union comprising two members, one Arab and one Jewish' with some territorial adjustment in the borders, return of all refugees and some limitations on Jewish immigration.<sup>194</sup> His proposals were not acceptable for both Arabs and Jews.

The Security Council on 15 July 1948 ordered the mediator to bring in another indefinite truce as the first truce expired. He proposed a new plan. 'It envisaged an Arab state encompassing Tran Jordan joined with most of the territory allotted by the partition resolution to the 'Arab State'. But with far-reaching territorial adjustments that would consolidate Arab territory by including the Negev, while Galilee would be taken over by Israel. Jerusalem would be placed under UN administration'.<sup>195</sup> Both sides rejected his new proposal. Meanwhile Bernadotte was assassinated. According to official Israeli view, the Stern Gang was responsible for the assassination. The killers were in Israeli army uniforms. The Security Council requested the Israeli government to investigate the assassination and to submit a report to the Council, but no report was received.<sup>196</sup>

Bernadotte's successor, the acting mediator Ralph Bunche of United States conducted the armistice negotiations. An armistice agreement was reached between Israel and Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. It was signed between February and July 1949. The armistice

lines defined Israel's boundaries until the 1967 war. 'The Agreement gave Israel no legal right to the territories occupied during the 1948 hostilities, beyond the lines specified in the partition resolution.'<sup>197</sup>

Based on Bernadotte recommendations, the General Assembly passed the resolution 194 (III).<sup>198</sup> The importance of this resolution derives principally from its specific establishment of the right of peaceful return of the Palestinians to their homes.

".....the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible..."<sup>199</sup>

These terms were not implemented though the right of the refugees to return to their homes has been reiterated annually by the General Assembly up to the present time.

At the end of September 1948, the Arab League authorized the Security Council to proclaim the establishment of a Palestinian government. A Cabinet, including all the factions within the ruling class in Palestine both inside and outside the Arab Higher Committee, was announced on 22 September 1948. Ahmad Hilmi became the Prime Minister. He informed the Arab League that the new government, which was to be based on Gaza, would be democratic and based on the constitution.<sup>200</sup> The Arab Higher Committee called a Congress of Palestinian Arabs and set up a National Assembly with Hajj Amin Al-Husseini as president. The National Assembly announced the creation of a sovereign Palestine state bordered by Syria and Lebanon in the North, Egypt in the South, Mediterranean Sea in the West and Trans-Jordan in the East.<sup>201</sup> The All Palestine government set up by the National Assembly did exercise authority in Gaza occupied by Egypt.

The defeat of Egypt marked the end of Mufti's dominance in the Palestinian National Movement. The Arab Higher Committee ceased to function. However, the All Palestine Government continued with a precarious existence. Its function was just the issuance of occasional statements from its headquarters in Cairo. Its offices were closed in 1959 by President Nasir. With that, the power to represent the Palestinians passed exclusively to the Arab States and their leaders.

Under the terms of Armistice agreement signed between Israel and Transjordan, King Abdullah agreed to prevent all land, sea or military or paramilitary forces including non-regular forces from committing any warlike or hostile act against the military or para-military forces of Israel.<sup>202</sup> He also agreed to cede the disputed territories in the border areas and in Jerusalem. The Arab Legion withdrew from the Lydda area in the second stage of the war to consolidate its position in the old city of Jerusalem. With the conclusion of the war, the old city and a reduced area of Palestinian lands under the 1947 partition plan known as the West Bank came under the control of Jordan until the 1967 war. King Abdullah rejected the Mufti's efforts to form an All-Palestine government located in Gaza. For him, this move would lead to the denial of his authority over West Bank. In December 1948 he proclaimed the unity of Arab Palestine and Jordan, and appointed the arch rival of Mufti, Raghib al-Nashashibi as his first military governor of Palestine.<sup>203</sup> In April 1949, the official name of Transjordan was changed to the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. In December 1949 the Palestinian residents in West Bank were declared

Jordanian citizens. Finally, on 24 April 1950, King Abdullah announced the formal annexation of Central Palestine and all official communiqué henceforth referred to the area as the West Bank of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. The replacement of 'Palestine' by 'West Bank', was the symbolic death of the political identity of 'Palestine'. The Palestinians were cheated not only by the Zionists and power blocs but also by their own brethren. The words of Palestinian Arab poet Nizar Qabhani (1932) became true in 1948.

“If we hadn’t buried our unity,  
If we hadn’t its young body with Bayonets,  
If it had stayed in our eyes,  
The dogs wouldn’t have savaged our flesh.”<sup>204</sup>

The 1948 Arab-Israeli war had been devastating for the Palestinian Arabs. During the war, Israeli forces embarked on a deliberate policy of ousting Arabs from their territories. By the end of October 1948, about 78 percent of Mandate Palestine came under the control of Israel and as a result around 5,00,000 more Palestinians became refugees.<sup>205</sup> The majority of the refugees had lost their homes by the end of October. Of the original 9,00,000-9,50,000 Palestinian inhabitants of the area that were incorporated into the State of Israel, only 1,50,000 remained.<sup>206</sup> The rest had been expelled by terror and brute force to West Bank and Gaza or to neighbouring Arab States where they became permanent refugees. Around 1,00,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and 60,000 in the Gaza Strip were separated from their fields on the other side of the armistice line and became 'economic refugees'.<sup>207</sup>

The tragic refugee problem is the biggest source of Arab-Israeli tensions after the 1948 war. Israel neglected the UN Resolution 194 (III) and out rightly opposed the return of refugees. Ben Gurion took the position that the Arabs had to bear the consequences of declaring war on Israel. He explained to UN mediator Count Bernadotte on 1 August 1948 that the return of Arabs would be unlikely in the foreseeable future.<sup>208</sup> It was clear that the Jewish State of Israel was established by driving out seven hundred thousand non-Jewish native Palestinians, perhaps a larger number than the Jewish population in 1948.<sup>209</sup>

To the Palestinians the outcome of the 1948 War was known simply as 'al-Nakba' (The Catastrophe). The salvation of Jews had come at the expense of native Palestinians. This formed the core of bitter and unremitting ongoing conflict in Palestine. The tragic experience of Palestinians gave birth to what might be termed 'Arab Zionism'. Like the Zionists, the Palestinian refugees refused to settle anywhere except their homeland – Palestine.<sup>210</sup>

The catastrophic defeat of Arabs in the 1948 war and the resultant total loss of homes and agricultural abodes of Palestinians culminated in the wholesale social uprootedness of personal and traditional ties, concepts of home, family, clan and community and the village social organization. The absolute alienation of the Arabs from their homeland resulted in forming a psychological sense of loss among the refugee Arabs. This in turn resulted into a sociological effect of refusing to mingle or co-operate with the host people. At the same time the Palestinian Arab refugees maintained a close social, commercial and personal ties with compatriots from their towns and cities of origin. The ghettoization reinforced the tendency of Palestinian peasants to conduct as much of their lives as possible within their villages. It was not only physical and

economic dislocation but also the disintegration of the cultural environment of the victim, caused degradation.<sup>211</sup>

The physical and economic dislocation and the disintegration of cultural environment created a new type of identity consciousness among the Palestinian Arabs. Being part of a broader Arab and Islamic culture but losing their place of origin and resettling amidst their Arab brethren evoked deep social (even more than economic) insecurity among the Palestinians. It strengthened attachment to the social structures that had been on the decline under the pressure of modernity and market forces. It also created an obsessive striving for modern education that offered a new source of dignity, identity and material security.

The experience of socio-political peripheralization of the Palestinians in their homeland (Israel, West Bank and Gaza) transformed the popular grass-root patriotism into a protonationalism. For Yezid Sayigh, 'Marginality could not on its own produce nationalism in the absence of the political role played by key social forces and the organizing framework provided by the state, but it emphasized the insecurities and contrasts that made for Palestinianism.'<sup>212</sup> The refusal of Israel to implement the UN resolution 194 (III) and the inability of the UN to enforce compliance with it, left the refugees in a state of total upheaval and uncertainty.<sup>213</sup> The peaceful intrusion of UN has neither mitigated the mutual distrust between Arabs and Jews nor served to alleviate the real sufferings of the Palestinian people.

The traditional nationalistic trend of riding on the euphoria of the past seemed hollow and meaningless when the Arabs lost Palestine in 1948. To the Arab masses, the loss of Palestine and creation of Israel were so traumatic an experience that it fostered a drastic transformation of Arab nationalism. This transformation shifted the emphasis of Arab nationalism from the glories of the past to the failures, particularly the failure in Palestine, of the present.<sup>214</sup> In the new context the Palestinians redefined their political identity within the framework of three circles of political interaction: Palestinian, Arab and international. A 'Palestine' centred nationalist consciousness was developed in response to 'alNakba' (the Catastrophe). It can be observed that the Palestinian Arab peasant refugees, whose collective deprivation of the land, loss of livelihood, identity and self-esteem, were the trend-setters of Palestinianism.

## Endnotes

- 1 British Government, Palestine: Statement of of Policy – Cmd 1700 (1922).
- 2 The Zionist activities were criticized by a number of British News Papers in early 1920s, and in the House of Lords a motion introduced by Lord Islington, calling for the repeal of Balfour Declaration, was passed. See Trial and Error, pp. 289-290.
- 3 Origin and Evolution. *op.cit.*, p. 34
- 4 British Government, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-20.
- 5 See Trial and Error, *op.cit.*, pp. 290-291
- 6 Meyer W. Weisgal (ed.) Chaim Weizmann: Statesman, Scientist and the builder of Jewish Commonwealth (New York, Dial Press, 1944), p. 57.
- 7 Don Peretz, The Arab-Israel Dispute (New York, 1999); p.15. Also see Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 114.
- 8 Benny Morris, Righteous Victims (Beersheba, 2001), p.680. See <http://www.israelipalestinianprocon.org> (12.11.2005).
- 9 Yehoshua Porath, The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929 (Frank Class, London, 1974),

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- 10 Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p.26.
- 11 For details see Philip Matta, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem in the Political Struggle Over the Western Wall, 1928-1929", *Middle Easter Studies* 19 (January 1983), p.113.
- 12 Yehoshua Porath, *op.cit.*, p.276.
- 13 Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p.115.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 116
- 15 British Government, *Report and General Statement of the Census of 1922, Jerusalem, 1922*, p.3
- 16 British Government, *Palestine Royal Commission Report – Cmd. 5479 (1937)*, p.279; Also see, John Bagot Glubb, *op.cit.*, p. 282.
- 17 PICA was the Palestinian section of ICA (Jewish Colonization Association led by Baron Maurice de Hirsch. See origin and Evolution, *op.cit.*, p.37.
- 18 The Government of Palestine, *A Survey of Palestine, Vol. I, (Jerusalem, 1946)*, p.244.
- 19 British Government, *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development – Cmd. 3686*, p.39.
- 20 Marvi Lowenthal, ed., *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl (New York, 1956)*, p.
- 21 British Government, *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development. Cmd. 3686*, pp. 53-55.
- 22 Report of the Commission appointed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, to determine the rights and claims of Muslims and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem, December, 1930, Reproduced in 'The Rights and Claims of Muslims and Jews in connection with the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem (The Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1968), p. 15.
- 23 The Jews go to the Wailing Wall to offer prayer on the 9th day of the month of AV in commemoration of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. The Wailing Wall is a part of the ancient Jewish temple constructed by King Solomon hence the most holy place in Judaism.
- 24 See Philip Mattar, *op.cit.*, p. 106.
- 25 A.W. Kayyali, *Palestine: A Modern History (Croomhelm, London, 1970)*, p. 139.
- 26 Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 130.
- 27 Origin and Evolution, *op.cit.*, p. 44.
- 28 British Government, *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929, Cmd. 3530 (1930)*, p. 150.
- 29 *The Rights and Claims, op.cit.*, p. 34.
- 30 British Government, *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929, op.cit.*, p. 73.
- 31 Quoted in Desmond Stewart, *The Middle East: Temple of Janus (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1972)*, p. 304.
- 32 Quoted in *Ibid*,
- 33 Christopher Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel: Palestine from Balfour to Bevin (London, 1965)*, p. 135.
- 34 Chancellor to Passifield, 17 January 1930, C.O. 733/182, p.
- 35 See A.W. Kayyali, *op.cit.*, p. 115.
- 36 Mehmood Hussain, *The Palestine Liberation Organization – A Study in Ideology, Strategy and Tactics (New Delhi, 1975)*, p. 2.
- 37 See Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 131
- 38 Lord Passfield was the Colonial Secretary.
- 39 Quoted in Charles D. Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 132.



- 40 For the full text see, The London Times, 14 February 1931.
- 41 Trial and Error, *op.cit.*, p. 335.
- 42 Zafarul Islam Khan, *op.cit.*, p. 151
- 43 Ibid.
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- Against : Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Siam, Syria, Turkey, Yemen.
- Abstaining : Argentina, Belgium, China, Columbia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia
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## Epilogue

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The question of Zion and the question of Palestine have major international repercussions in the past and for the future. The Arab-Jewish conflict has been an ongoing phenomenon at least since the emergence of Political Zionism and the planned colonization of Palestine. The contentious issue of the origins of Israeli statehood juxtaposed with the political and economic factors involved in the region illustrates the worldwide significance of Arab-Jewish conflict.

The Arabs and Jews have lived together in peace and harmony for hundreds of years in Palestine. The Muslim Arab conquest of Syria-Palestine in 7th century AD had introduced improved conditions and religious toleration for the Jews. Since the Arab conquest, Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular, became an integral part of the Arabic-Islamic civilization, except for a short interruption during the crusader period. The Jews fleeing from the anti-Semitic Europe found shelter in the Arab and Muslim world. The best example of peaceful co-existence of Arabs and Jews has been seen in Palestine prior to the emergence of political Zionism. During the Ottoman period Palestine was a predominantly Muslim country with a Christian minority and a small number of Jews. The majority of Jews in Palestine in the first half of the 19th century were the descendants of the refugees from Spain commonly known as 'sphardim' and the minority were immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe commonly known as 'Ashkenazim'. The Jews concentrated in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad and Tiberias.

Palestine underwent great transformation in the second half of the 19th century. During this period, due to the great European expansion, trade and commerce came increasingly under European control. Great Britain, France and Russia were the major European players in Middle Eastern affairs. The Ottoman Empire became a focal point of larger imperial rivalries with the European powers eager to use trading rights and control of Christians as tools to wield influence against their competitors as well as against the Turks. The European intrusion into Ottoman affairs produced a number of local conflicts inspired by religious, ethnic and national feeling and finally paved the way for 'Eastern Crisis'.

Between 1839 and 1876, the Ottoman government introduced a sustained program of reform (Tanzimat). The Tanzimat reforms intended to centralize the various instruments of government and promote equality and stability in the Empire. The Ottoman Land Reform Laws passed in 1858 and 1867 brought about far reaching changes in the agrarian relations in Palestine. As a result of the land reforms, land was accumulated in the hands of a few urban notables. The Palestinian peasants lost their right to ownership and became share-croppers or hired labourers.

The process of land accumulation gave considerable power and influence to the urban notables in the central government and in the local administration. The Land Reform Law of 1867 had granted foreigners the right to own land. As a result, foreign merchants and bankers, mainly the European Jews purchased land in Ottoman Palestine and played the 'triple role' of land owners, moneylenders and tax-farmers.

Palestine experienced major agricultural and industrial growth in the second half of the 19th century. The economic changes effected the basic texture of Ottoman Palestine. The landowners who owned large estates and a small class of commercial bourgeoisie who allied with the landed elite transformed the traditional production methods and thus brought about social change. Political coalitions were formed around these classes. The process of modernization, more specifically Europeanization, in Palestine was intensified with the large scale Jewish immigration under the auspices of World Zionist Movement.

The modern Zionist movement was born in the light of the incendiary fires of Russian pogroms of 1882 and in the tumult of the Dreyfus Affair. Zionism addressed the Jewish question of physical security, economic existence and collective identity. It sought to rebuild and reinvent the Jewry as a nation. Like all nationalisms, Zionism viewed the historic past in the light of the present and created a synthetic system in which the Jews could retain their identity while participating in the modern civilization.

The reference to the ancestral land (Palestine) was the potent myth of biological or tribal unity of Jews. The vital core of Jewish survival has been the myth which inextricably linked the spiritual and social dimension of Jewish identity. The religious content of social unity and the social content of faith were expressed in terms of history, geography and law. The Jewish racial and religious identification produced their distinctiveness with others throughout history.

Psychologically the Zionist movement derived inspiration from the little kingdom of Judah. The Diaspora Jews nourished the idea of return to 'Eretz Israel' and rebuild their ancestral Kingdom. The historical notion of exile had become a cosmic symbol in Zionism.

Zionism represented a reinvention of the fundamental elements of Jewish 'nationality' that were present since antiquity. The aspiration for political independence and a deep historical consciousness of peoplehood enabled the Jews to reestablish in Palestine. The rise of nationalism and colonialism have decisive role in shaping Zionism. The colonial and imperialist elements in Zionism are very clear. The total sub-ordination of native Arab economy, economic exploitation, acquisition of land through dubious methods and Zionism's perception of itself as a modernizing force and high culture in a backward environment are clear examples of Zionist-imperialist connection.

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) conceived the doctrine of political Zionism. Herzl was obsessed with the consequences of Jewish 'material' powerlessness. As a solution for the bitter anti-Semitism, the idea of a Jewish homeland was presented. Herzl published a remarkable pamphlet, 'Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State) in 1896 in which he analyzed the contemporary anti-Semitism and argued that the creation of a 'Jewish State' is the only solution for anti-Jewish prejudice and discrimination.

The primary goal of political Zionism according to Herzl was to secure a legal charter for the colonization of Palestine from Turkish Sultan endorsed by the powers of Europe under



international law. Herzl viewed that Palestine could be occupied and built into a Jewish state only by legal right.

To provide the political Zionist movement with a mass base and to gain the support of the leading Jews of the west, Herzl summoned a World Zionist Congress on August 29, 1897 at Basel. This conference established the World Zionist Organization with Herzl as its president. Herzl was a dynamic leader who worked indefatigably to materialize the Zionist aspirations. His diplomatic ventures to secure a charter from Sultan Abdul Hamid II for an autonomous Jewish settlement in Palestine and to get the support of the European powers for Zionist agenda failed. However, it was his charismatic personality and dynamic leadership that laid down the ideological and material bases of the future state of Israel.

Labour Zionism emerged during second half of the 19th century alongside Marxism, revolutionary socialism and Anarchism in Europe. The Labour Zionists very effectively combined the goals of the 'political' and 'cultural' Zionism and Marxism. They sought to liberate the Jewish masses from both capitalist exploitation and anti-Semitic persecution. The labour ideology inspired the second Aliyah (1904-14). The Labour Zionists established socialist settlements (Kibbutzim) and organized military groups which became the 'Haganah'. They also set up a general trade union – the Histadrut. For the Labour Zionists, the national goal of the working class is the transformation from a working class to a working nation. The transformation of Jewish settlements into a State owes much of the ideology and movement of Labour Zionism.

Arab awakening in modern times was first felt about the middle of the 19th century in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of Arab nationalism as a movement to materialize political and cultural independence for the Arabs was a response to Turkish nationalism and the Young Turk's policy of 'Turkification'. The 'Turkification' process adversely affected the relations between Turks and Arabs. Based on the consciousness of a common Arab identity, opposition movements took shape in the Arab speaking territories of Ottoman Empire. The new awareness among the Arabs of their own race, history, language and personality manifested in the form of a collective national consciousness.

In the pre-World War I period, the Arab Nationalism shifted from an implied Islamic to a nationalist vocabulary during the struggle for autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. During this period, Arab nationalist movement was confined to the intellectuals, youths and notables. The conservative and politically unsophisticated Arab traditional elite failed to transform the idea of 'nationalism' into a popular form of political loyalty.

The Arab nationalist consciousness did not express any particular form of anti-Jewishness in the early stage in Syria-Palestine. But the arrival of politically motivated Jews from 1881 onwards produced ill feeling among the Arabs and they began to view Jewish settlers with fear and suspicion. The basic struggle between Jewish settlers and Palestinian Arabs from the very beginning has been the issue of the control or sharing the land of Palestine. The quarrels over land questions or grazing and crop rights led to numerous violent conflicts. The land purchase of Jewish colonists and subsequent peasant dispossession was central to the Arab-Jewish conflict. The influx of Jewish immigrants alarmed the Palestinian urban elite including merchants and craftsman who felt threatened by the competition posed by the Jews.

Palestinian cohesiveness and identity consciousness manifested in the form of an uneasy

feeling about Zionism. The peasants were incited by land dispossession and loss of grazing and crop rights. The land owners were afraid of the rise in the standard of living. The merchants were afraid of Jewish competition. In the context of their opposition of Zionist enterprise, the Palestinian Arabs increasingly became local patriots after 1909. The process of political education connected the crude patriotic feeling to broader Arab nationalism and brought about a powerful sense of internal cohesiveness among Palestinians. The cohesive power of shared suffering of Palestinians developed into full-blown Palestinian nationalism.

The outbreak of World War I brought about basic transformation in the political process in Palestine. During the war years Arab nationalist aspirations moved from 'autonomy' in Ottoman Empire to Arab independence and creation of an Arab state. Arabism rather than Islam became the dominant discourse, displacing the traditional vocabulary of political affiliation and political action.

The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence (July 1915-January 1916) expressed the Arab aspirations for independence to be backed by Britain. Husayn offered Arab support to Britain against Ottomans in the World War. In turn, the correspondence unequivocally promised Arab independence. The correspondence involved a startling piece of double-dealing. The British commitments were put within the aura of diplomatic language. The wordings were ambiguous and sometimes self-negating. However, behind the diplomatic language there appears recognition that the land of Palestine was not unequivocally excluded from the boundaries of Arab independence.

The Arab Revolt broke out in Hijaz in the spring of 1916. The Arab forces fought alongside the Allied forces and contributed to the Allied victory on the Eastern front. The military significance of a few thousand Bedouin irregulars in battles involving vast regular armies might have been minor. But the Arab army led by Sharif Husayn of Mecca, a descendant of the Prophet and keeper of the Holy sanctuaries of Islam- fighting the Turks denouncing Sultan and his 'Jihad' was of immense moral significance. This aspect provided justification to Britain and France in maintaining their authority over their Muslim subjects.

The basic British policy during the War years was to win the War and emerge from it as firmly as possible. To materialize this goal, British were pursuing whatever pragmatic means that seemed necessary at the moment. It was in this context, the British government, anxious for international Jewish support promised to establish 'a national home for the Jews' in Palestine. This promise came in the form of an official letter from Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild and came to be known as Balfour Declaration. Along with imperialistic and pragmatic motives, philosophical and religious motives (Gentile Zionism) also played a significant role in materializing Balfour Declaration. The Declaration was described as a document in which one nation promised to a second nation the country of a third. It became a matter of binding international law when the League of Nations made it part of its Mandate over Palestine.

Following the British conquest of Palestine, two trends in nationalism surfaced. The younger politicians and educated elite in general stood for the union of Palestine with Syria. On the other hand, the older politicians of Palestine notable class called for the establishment of a separate government and political entity for Palestine. British Mandate was established without any regard to the expressed desires of the Palestinians. It was clearly the denial of Justice and fundamental rights of Palestinians.

The Mandate was not directed to the well-being and development of the native Palestinians but to the promotion of British and Zionist interests. The Mandatory government facilitated Zionist activities and Jewish immigration despite the continuous protest of Palestinians.

The Jewish immigration and the fear of compulsory transfer of the Arab population to make way for a Jewish state created a tense situation in Palestine and there was sporadic escalation of violence throughout the Mandatory period. The great Arab Rebellion (1936-39) was the culmination of such 'civil violence'. The Arab Rebellion (1936-39) was led by traditional feudal and religious elite. They lacked modern political and ideological orientation. The Rebellion contained all elements required for a popular revolution, but the Palestinian political elite and the Arab Higher committee failed to co-ordinate and lead the uprising into a full-fledged revolution.

A new leadership based on the broad alliance of peasants, workers and radical elements of the middle class, emerged during the Rebellion. They began to implement radical political and social programmes that challenged the traditional notable leadership. The agrarian tension and the peasant discontent drove them against their landlords during the Rebellion. There were number of peasant attacks on leading Arab landowning families.

The Jewish community adopted a policy of 'Havlaga' means 'self-control' or 'self-restraint' during the Rebellion. Jewish armed groups were permitted to arm itself legally. They co-operated with the British troops in counter resurgence operations. In response to Arab attacks, there was organized and armed Jewish reprisals. The Arab Rebellion was to some extent beneficial for the Jews as it enhanced Jewish self-reliance and self-defence.

The collapse of the 'Arab Rebellion' was overshadowed by the outbreak of World War II. To ensure the Arab support, the British implemented immigration restrictions according to the White Paper (1939) without considering the Nazi Jew-hunt. In this context the Jewish political activism and terrorism had been directed both against British authority and the Arabs during 1940's. The promotion of illegal immigration, clandestine procurement of arms and terrorists' operations formed an integral part of Zionist strategy. The Jewish Agency worked in collusion with the terrorists.

There was a considerable level of moderation in Arab politics during 1940's. The changes in the Palestinian economic structure and the subsequent emergence of new groups and classes are responsible for the change in Arab Politics. The emergence of educated middle class and commercial bourgeoisie qualitatively transformed the Arab politics. As a result, despite intense axis propaganda which included the Mufti's call to stage an anti-British rebellion, Palestine maintained innocuous neutrality in the World War II.

During the war years the Zionists succeeded in winning American support on three different levels: the American people, the Congress and the administration. For the Zionists there remained no impediment to achieve a national homeland with Hitler's defeat. They tried to land as many immigrants as possible to attain Jewish majority in Palestine. The Zionists with their well-armed and well-organized forces, massive financial resources, strength of diplomacy and with whole hearted support of the US, were in a position to take over Palestine.

After the World War II, the British government presented its own proposals to solve the Arab-Jewish struggle in Palestine. But both Jews and Arabs rejected the British proposals and demanded the end of British mandate. Faced with a situation of continuous terrorist activities and

communal violence, Britain referred the Palestine question to the United Nations. The UN General Assembly's first special session, called in May 1947, created the UN special committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). The committee, after analyzing different arguments and viewpoints were unable to agree on recommendations. Finally, the committee came up with two alternative plans – plan of partition with economic union (Majority plan) and federal state plan (Minority plan). On November 29, the second session of the UN General Assembly endorsed the partition plan. The partition Resolution identified as 181 (II) has been implemented only as far as the creation of Israel was concerned. The rights of Palestinian people still remain to be implemented.

Almost all Asian states accepted the federal plan. The USA and USSR worked together in the UN firstly to criticize Britain, then to support the Zionists. India strongly opposed the partition plan.

The UN Resolution 181 (II) did not provide a solution to the struggle in Palestine. Immediately after the endorsement of Partition plan the Arabs began to prevent by force the carrying out of partition and the vigorous Jewish counter action led to a country-wide communal violence and guerilla struggle. The Arab resistance was led by the Mufti of Jerusalem. The Arab League leaders opposed Mufti's efforts. Meanwhile King Abdullah reached an agreement with Zionists to divide Palestine. Within Palestine the al-Husayni and al-Nashashibi factions were fighting each other. In these intra-communal feud, King Abdullah supported the Nashashibi faction.

With the outbreak of large scale communal clashes, the Arab upper class especially the traditional elite left Palestine. In 1948, the Palestinian resistance was carried on mainly by the peasants and urban masses. The Zionist policy at this time was to expand beyond the territories offered to it. Terrorizing the civilian population through military and psychological means and expelling them in order to make room for Jewish immigrants were central to the Zionists strategy.

Amid ongoing conflict, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel. The declaration of independence of Israel was strange in character. It was not the declaration of a state by its people in the sense commonly understood. The declaration was that a Jewish state was created in Palestine and every Jew could claim its citizenship at any time.

On the same day of Proclamation of State of Israel, the Arab states invaded Israel and Arab Palestine. The Israeli forces defeated the advancing Arab troops. The war had been devastating for the Palestinians. Because of the war, about 78 percent of mandate Palestine came under the control of Israel. Around 500,000 more Palestinians became refugees. The tragic refugee problem is the biggest source of Arab-Israeli tensions after the 1948 war.

The catastrophic defeat of Arabs in the 1948 war and the resultant total loss of homes and agricultural abodes of Palestinians culminated in the wholesale social uprootedness of personal and traditional ties, concepts of home, family, clan and community and the village social organization. The absolute alienation of the Arabs from their homeland resulted in forming a psychological sense of loss among the refugee Arabs. This in turn resulted into a sociological effect of refusing to mingle or co-operate with the host people. At the same time the Palestinian Arab refugees maintained a close social, commercial and personal ties with compatriots from their towns and cities of origin.

The physical and economic dislocation and the disintegration of cultural environment created a new type of identity consciousness among the Palestinian Arabs. Being part of a broader Arab and Islamic culture but losing their place of origin and resettling amidst their Arab brethren evoked deep social (even more than economic) insecurity among the Palestinians. It strengthened attachment to the social structures that had been on the decline under the pressure of modernity and market forces. It also created an obsessive striving for modern education that offered a new source of dignity, identity and material security.

The experience of socio-political peripheralization of the Palestinians in their homeland (Israel, West Bank and Gaza) transformed the popular grass-root patriotism into a protonationalism. The traditional nationalistic trend of riding on the euphoria of the past seemed hollow and meaningless when the Arabs lost Palestine in 1948. To the Arab masses, the loss of Palestine and creation of Israel were so traumatic an experience that it fostered a drastic transformation of Arab nationalism. This transformation shifted the emphasis of Arab nationalism from the glories of the past to the failures, particularly the failure in Palestine, of the present. In the new context, the Palestinians redefined their political identity within the framework of three circles of political interaction: Palestinian, Arab and international. A 'Palestine' centered nationalist consciousness was developed in response to 'al-Nakba' (the Catastrophe). It can be seen that the Palestinian Arab peasant refugees, whose collective deprivation of the land, loss of livelihood, identity and self-esteem, were the trend-setters of Palestinianism.

## Appendices

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### **The Basle Protocol**

(Declaration of the First World Zionist Congress)  
29-31 August 1897

The First Zionist Congress, convened at Basle by an Austrian journalist, Dr Theodor Herzl, in August 1897, was attended by 197. Jewish delegates belonging to all schools of thought in Judaism. Herzl said in his speech that ‘we want to lay the foundation stone of the house which is to shelter the Jewish nation...Zionism seeks to obtain for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secure homeland in Palestine.’ The Congress adopted the following programme:

Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

The promotion on suitable lines of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.

The organization and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.

The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.

Preparatory steps towards obtaining Government consent where necessary to the attainment of the aim of Zionism

Source: Zafarul-Islam-Khan, *Palestine Documents* (Pharos, New Delhi, 1998), p.37; and Jacob C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record*, Vol. I, (1535-1914), (Princeton, 1956), p.209.

### **The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence July 1915 – January 1916**

COVERING LETTER TO THE SHARIF HUSAIN'S FIRST NOTE The Amir 'Abdullah to Mr.  
Ronald Storrs

Mecca, Ramadan 2, 1333 [July 14,1915]

Complimentary titles.

I send my affectionate regard and respects to your esteemed self, and trust that you will ensure, as you know how to, the acceptance of the enclosed note which contains our proposals and conditions. In this connection, I wish to give you and your Government my assurance that you need have no anxiety about the intentions of our people, for they realise how closely their interests are bound to those of your Government. Do not trouble to send aeroplanes or warships to distribute news and reports as in the past: our minds are now made up....

THE SHARIF HUSAIN'S FIRST NOTE TO SIR HENRY  
McMAHON Mecca, Ramadan 2, 1333 [July 14, 1915]

Complimentary titles:

Whereas the entire Arab nation without exception is determined to assert its right to live, gain its freedom and administer its own affairs.

And whereas the Arabs believe it to be in Great Britain's interest to lend them assistance and support in the fulfilment of their steadfast and legitimate aims to the exclusion of all other aims;

And whereas it is similarly to the advantage of the Arabs, in view of their geographical position and their economic interests, and in view of the well known attitude of the Government of Great Britain, to prefer British assistance to any other;

For these reasons, the Arab nation has decided to approach the Government of Great Britain with a request for the approval, through one of their representatives if they think fit, of the following basic provisions which, as time presses, have not been made to include matters of relatively smaller importance, since such matters can wait until the time comes for their consideration:

1. Great Britain recognises the independence of the Arab countries which are bounded: on the north, by the line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37° N. and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-jazirat (ibn 'Umar)Amadia to the Persian frontier; on the east, by the Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf; on the south, by the Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden whose status will remain as at present); on the west by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.
2. Great Britain will agree to the proclamation of an Arab Caliphate for Islam.
3. The Sharifian Arab Government undertakes, other things being equal, to grant Great Britain preference in all economic enterprises in the Arab countries ....

Great Britain agrees to the abolition of Capitulations in the Arab countries, and undertakes to assist the Sharifian Government in summoning an international congress to decree their abolition. . . .

SIR HENRY McMAHON'S FIRST NOTE TO THE SHARIF  
HUSAIN Cairo, August 30, 1915

Complimentary titles

We have the honour to tender the gratitude due to you for the sentiments of sincere friendship for England which you display, and it pleases us, moreover, to learn that Your lordship and your people are at one in believing that Arab interests are in harmony with British interests, and vice-versa

In earnest of this, we hereby confirm to you the declaration of lord Kitchener as communicated to you through 'Ali Efendi, in which was manifested our desire for the independence of the Arab countries and their inhabitants, and our readiness to approve an Arab caliphate upon its proclamation. We now declare once more that the Government of Great Britain would welcome the reversion of the caliphate to a true Arab born of the blessed stock of the Prophet.

As for the question of frontiers and boundaries, negotiations would appear to be premature and a waste of time on details at this stage, with the War in progress and the Turks in effective occupation of the greater part of those regions. All the more so as a party of Arabs inhabiting those very regions have, to our amazement and sorrow, overlooked and neglected this valuable and incomparable opportunity; and, instead of coming to our aid, have lent their assistance to the Germans and the Turks; to that new despoiler, the German, and to that tyrannical oppressor, the Turk. . .

THE SHARIF HUSAIN'S SECOND NOTE TO SIR HENRY McMAHON Mecca, Shawwal 29, 1333 [September 9, 1915

Complimentary titles

We received your note of the 19th Shawwal, [August 30,] with gratification, and have given it the fullest consideration, notwithstanding the obscurity and the signs of lukewarmth and hesitancy we described in it in regard to our essential clause. We find it necessary to affirm to Your Excellency our sentiments of amity with Great Britain and our readiness to ensure her a favoured place in all circumstances and in every manner, for in that way can the true interests of our co-religionists best be served.

Your Excellency will suffer me to say, in explanation of what I mean by lukewarmth and hesitancy, that your statements in regard to the question of frontiers and boundaries – namely that to discuss them at this stage were unprofitable and could only result in a waste of time since those regions are still occupied by their sovereign government, and so forth – reflect what I might almost describe as reluctance or something akin to reluctance, on your part.

The fact is that the proposed frontiers and boundaries represent not the suggestions of one individual whose claim might well await the conclusion of the War, but the demands of our people who believe that those frontiers form the minimum necessary to the establishment of the new order for which they are striving. This they are determined to obtain; and they have decided to discuss the matter, in the first resort, with that Power in whom they place their greatest confidence and reliance, and whom they regard as the pivot of justice, namely Great Britain.



## SIR HENRY McMAHON'S SECOND NOTE TO THE SHARIF HUSAIN

Cairo, October 24, 1915

Complimentary titles.

I have, with gratification and pleasure, received your note of the 29th Shawwal 1333, and its tokens of sincere friendship have filled me with satisfaction and contentment. I regret to find that you inferred from my last note that my attitude towards the question of frontiers and boundaries was one of hesitancy and lukewarmth. Such was in no wise the intention of my note. All I meant was that I considered that the time had not yet come in which that question could be discussed in a conclusive manner.

But, having realised from your last note that you considered the question important, vital and urgent, I hastened to communicate to the Government of Great Britain the purport of your note. It gives me the greatest pleasure to convey to you, on their behalf, the following declarations which, I have no doubt, you will receive with satisfaction and acceptance.

The districts of Mersin and Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Horns, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and must on that account be excepted from the proposed delimitation.

Subject to that modification, and without prejudice to the treaties concluded between us and certain Arab Chiefs, we accept that delimitation.

As for the regions lying within the proposed frontiers, in which Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally France, I am authorised to give you the following pledges on behalf of the Government of Great Britain, and to reply as follows to your note:

1. That, subject to the modifications stated above, Great Britain is prepared to recognise and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sharif of Mecca;
2. That Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression, and will recognise the obligation of preserving them from aggression;
3. That, when circumstances permit, Great Britain will help the Arabs with her advice and assist them in the establishment of governments to suit those diverse regions;
4. That it is understood that the Arabs have already decided to seek the counsels and advice of Great Britain exclusively; and that such European advisers and officials as may be needed to establish a sound system of administration shall be British;
5. That, as regards the two vilayets of Baghdad and of Basra, the Arabs recognise that the fact of Great Britain's established position and interests there will call for the setting up of special administrative arrangements to protect those regions from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of their inhabitants, and to safeguard our mutual economic interests.

I am confident that this declaration will convince you, beyond all doubt, of Great Britain's sympathy with the aspirations of her friends the Arabs; and that it will result in a lasting and

solid alliance with them, of which one of the immediate consequences will be the expulsion of the Turks from the Arab countries and the liberation of the Arab peoples from the Turkish yoke which has weighed on them all these long years. . . .

THE SHARIF HUSAIN'S THIRD NOTE TO SIR HENRY  
McMAHON Mecca, Zul-Hejja 27, 1333 [November 5, 1915]

Complimentary titles.

With great gratification have we received your note of the 15th Zul-Hejja [October 24] to which we would reply as follows.

First, in order to facilitate agreement and serve the cause of Islam by the removal of possible sources of hardship and tribulation, and in earnest of the particular esteem in which we hold Great Britain, we no longer insist on the inclusion of the districts of Mersin and Adana in the Arab Kingdom. As for the vilayets of Aleppo and Bairut and their western maritime coasts, these are purely Arab provinces in which the Moslem is indistinguishable from the Christian, for they are both the descendants of one forefather...

Since the provinces of Iraq were part of the former Arab Empire,... we should find it impossible to... renounce that honourable association ... [but] we should be willing, in our desire to facilitate agreement, to allow those parts which are now occupied by British troops to remain so occupied for a period to be determined by negotiation. . . .

Your advocacy of speedy action seems to us to entail risks as well as advantages . . . [but] the moment the Arabs feel confident that, when the time comes for the conclusion of peace in Europe, Great Britain and her allies will not leave them in the lurch face to face with Turkey and Germany, but that they intend to help them and advocate their case effectively in the peace negotiations, from that moment will Arab participation in the War undoubtedly serve the general Arab interest. . . .

SIR HENRY McMAHON'S THIRD NOTE TO THE SHARIF  
HUSAIN

Cairo, December 13, 1915

Complimentary titles.

Your note of the 27th Zul-Hejja, 1333, has reached me, and I was glad to find that you consent to the exclusion of the vilayets of Mersin and Adana from the boundaries of the Arab countries....

As for the two vilayets of Aleppo and Bairut, the Government of Great Britain have fully understood your statement in that respect and noted it with the greatest care. But as the interests of their ally France are involved in those two provinces, the question calls for careful consideration. We shall communicate again with you on this subject, at the appropriate time.

We fully approve your desire to proceed warily [in preparing to revolt], and do not wish to impel you to hasty action which might obstruct the success of your objectives. But, at the same time, we deem it imperative that you should turn your endeavours to uniting the Arab peoples to our joint cause. On the success of your endeavours, and on the efficacy of the measures which, when the time comes, the Arabs will find it possible to take in aid of our cause, will the strength and permanence of our agreement depend.

In these circumstances, the Government of Great Britain have authorised me to declare to your Lordship that you may rest confident that Great Britain does not intend to conclude any peace whatsoever, of which the freedom of the Arab peoples and their liberation from German and Turkish domination do not form an essential condition.

THE SHARIF HUSAIN'S FOURTH NOTE TO SIR HENRY  
McMAHON Mecca, Safar 25, 1334 [January 1, 1916]

Complimentary titles.

I have received your note of the 9th Safar, 1334 [December 13, 1915]. . . .

With regard to the northern parts and their coastal regions, . . . we have felt bound to steer clear of that which might have impaired the alliance between Great Britain and France and their concord during the calamities of the present war. On the other hand – and this Your Excellency must clearly understand – we shall deem it our duty, at the earliest opportunity after the conclusion of the War, to claim from you Bairut and its coastal regions which we will overlook for the moment on account of France. . . .

Any concession designed to give France or any other Power possession of a single square foot of territory in those parts is quite out of the question. In proclaiming this, I place all my reliance on the declarations which concluded your note, and this reliance is such that, at our death, it shall be inherited by those who live after us. . . .

SIR HENRY McMAHON'S FOURTH NOTE TO THE SHARIF  
HUSAIN

Cairo, January 30, 1916

Complimentary titles.

With great pleasure and satisfaction have we received your note of the 25th Safar, 1334, from the hand of your faithful messenger who never fails to give us your oral messages as well. We fully realise and appreciate the motives, which animate you in the momentous issue with which we are concerned, and we do not question the fact that you are working for the good of the Arab nation without any ulterior motive whatsoever.

We have noted what you say with regard to the Vilayet of Baghdad, and we shall examine the matter with the utmost care after the defeat of the enemy, when the time comes for the conclusion of peace.

As for the northern regions, we note with great satisfaction your desire to avoid anything that might impair the alliance between Great Britain and France. It has not escaped you that it is our firm determination not to allow anything, however small, to stand in the way of our ending this war in complete victory. Moreover, when victory is attained, the friendship between Great Britain and France will be stronger and closer than ever, cemented as it will have been by the shedding of British and French blood – the blood of those who have fallen fighting side by side in the cause of right and freedom.

The Arab countries are now associated in that noble aim which can be attained by uniting our forces and acting in unison. We pray God that success may bind us to each other in a lasting friendship which shall bring profit and contentment to us all. ..

### **Sykes-Picot Agreement** April-May 1916

Text of the Agreement:

1. France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States in the areas shown as (A) and (B) on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief. France in area (A) and Great Britain in area (B) shall have a right of priority in enterprises and local loans. France in area (A) and Great Britain in area (B) shall alone supply foreign advisers or officials on the request of the Arab State or the Confederation of Arab States.
2. France in the Blue area and Great Britain in the Red area shall be at liberty to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they may desire or as they may deem fit to establish after agreement with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.
3. In the Brown area there shall be established an international administration of which the form will be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and after subsequent agreement with the other Allies and the representatives of the Sharif of Mecca.
4. There shall be accorded to Great Britain
  - (a) The ports of Haifa and Acre;
  - (b) Guarantee of a specific supply of water from the Tigris and the Euphrates in area (A) for area (B).

His Majesty's Government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time initiate negotiations for the concession of Cyprus to any third Power without the previous consent of the French Government.

5. Alexandretta shall be a free port as regards the trade of the British Empire and there shall be no differentiation in treatment with regard to port dues or the extension of special privileges affecting British shipping and commerce; there shall be freedom of transit for British goods through Alexandretta and over railways through the Blue area, whether such goods are going to or coming from the Red area, area (A) or area (B); and there shall be no

differentiation in treatment, direct or indirect, at the expense of British goods on any railway or of British goods and shipping in any port serving the areas in question.

Haifa shall be a free port as regards the trade of France, her colonies and protectorates and there shall be no differentiation in treatment or privilege with regard, to port dues against French shipping and commerce. There shall be freedom of transit through Haifa and over British railways through the Brown area, whether such goods are coming from or going to the Blue area, area (A) or area (B), and there shall be no differentiation in treatment direct or indirect, at the expense of French goods on any railway or of French goods and shipping in any port serving the areas in question.

6. In area (A), the Baghdad Railway shall not be extended southwards beyond Mosul, and in area (B), it shall not be extended northwards beyond Samarra, until a railway connecting Baghdad with Aleppo along the basin of the Euphrates will have been completed, and then only with the concurrence of the two Governments.
7. Great Britain shall have the right to build, administer and be the sole owner of the railway connecting Haifa with area (B). She shall have, in addition, the right in perpetuity and at all times of carrying troops on that line. It is understood by both Governments that this railway is intended to facilitate communication between Baghdad and Haifa, and it is further understood that, in the event of technical difficulties and expenditure incurred in the maintenance of this line in the Brown area rendering the execution of the project impracticable, the French Government will be prepared to consider plans for enabling the line in question to traverse the polygon formed by Baniyas-Umm Qais-Salkhad- Tall 'OsdaMismich before reaching area (B).
8. For a period of twenty years, the Turkish customs tariff shall remain in force throughout the Blue and Red areas as well as in areas (A) and (B), and no increase in the rates of duties and no alteration of ad valorem duties into specific duties shall be made without the consent of the two Powers.

There shall be no internal customs barriers between any of the areas mentioned above. The customs duties to be levied on goods destined for the interior shall be collected at the ports of entry and remitted to the Administration of the area of destination.

9. It is understood that the French Government will at no time initiate any negotiations for the cession of their rights and will not cede their prospective rights in the Blue area to any third Power other than the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States, without the previous consent of His Majesty's Government who, on their part, give the French Government a similar undertaking in respect Of the Red area.
10. The British and French Governments shall agree to abstain from acquiring and to withhold their consent to a third Power acquiring territorial possessions in the Arabian Peninsula; nor shall they consent to the construction by a third Power of a naval base in the islands on the eastern seaboard of the Red Sea. This, however, will not prevent such rectification of the Aden boundary as might be found necessary in view of the recent Turkish attack.
11. The negotiations with the Arabs concerning the frontiers of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States shall be pursued through the same channel as heretofore in the name of the two powers.

12. It is understood, moreover, that measures for controlling the importation of arms into the Arab territory will be considered by the two Governments.

## **Article 22 of the covenant of the League of Nations, 28 June 1919**

### Article 22.

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 civilization and that securities for the formance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who their resources, their experience or their geographical position can this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

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.

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.

Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.

There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilization, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory; subject to the safeguards above-mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

In every case of Mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

The degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.

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.

## **The Mandate for Palestine July 24, 1922**

The Council of the League of Nations:

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have agreed, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, to entrust to a Mandatory selected by the said Powers the administration of the territory of Palestine, which formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire, within such boundaries as may be fixed by them; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour 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; 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. . .

Whereas His Britannic Majesty has accepted the Mandate in respect of Palestine and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions. . .

**Article 1.** The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this Mandate.

*Article 2.* 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, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

*Article 3.* The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.

The Zionist organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognized as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing

to assist in the establishment of the Jewish National Home.

*Article 5.* The Mandatory shall be responsible for seeing that no Palestine territory shall be ceded or leased to, or in any way placed under the control of, the Government of any foreign Power.

*Article 6.* 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. . . .

*Article 25.* In the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined, the Mandatory shall be entitled, with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of this Mandate as he may consider inapplicable to the existing local conditions, and to make such provision for the administration of the territories as he may consider suitable to those conditions, provided that no action shall be taken which is inconsistent with the provisions of Articles 15, 16 and 18.

## **The MacDonald White Paper**

17 May 1939

(1) Constitution.

It has been urged that the expression ‘a national home for the Jewish people’ offered a prospect that Palestine might in due course become a Jewish state or commonwealth. His Majesty’s Government do not wish to contest the view, which was expressed by the Royal Commission, that the Zionist leaders at the time of the issue of the Balfour Declaration recognized that an ultimate Jewish state was not precluded by the terms of the Declaration... But with the Royal Commission, His Majesty Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish state against the will of the Arab population of the country.

[An excerpt from the Churchill White Paper of 1922 was then quoted:]

Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that “Palestine is to become as Jewish as England is English.” His Majesty’s Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated... the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of The (Balfour) Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be founded in Palestine. But this Statement 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. The nature of the Jewish national home envisaged by the British Government was described in terms of the 1922 White Paper, which had stated that the development of such a 'home' in Palestine ... 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 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... ...Since the statement of 1922 was published, more than 300,000 Jews have immigrated to Palestine, and that the population of the national home has risen to some 450,000 or approaching a third of the entire population of the country. Nor has the Jewish community failed to take full advantage of the opportunities given to it. The growth of the Jewish national home and its achievements in many fields are a remarkable constructive effort which must command the admiration of the world and must be, in particular, a source of pride to the Jewish people. [In this way the: British Government carried out the obligation to Jews which had been proclaimed in 1917 and accepted in the Mandate].

[Regarding the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence and other pledges to the Arabs]

The British Government regretted the misunderstandings, which may have arisen as regards some of the phrases used. For their part they can only adhere, for the reasons given by their representatives in the (Maugham) Report, to the view that the whole of Palestine west of Jordan was excluded from Sir Henry McMahon's pledge, and they therefore nil mot agree that the McMahon Correspondence forms a just basis for the claim that Palestine should be converted into an Arab State.

Since the British Government was charged in the Mandate to secure the development of self-governing institutions in Palestine, and since they would it as contrary to the whole spirit of the Mandate system that the population of Palestine should remain for ever 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.

The establishment of such a State within ten years was a British objective. During the transitional period the people of Palestine would be given an increasing part in the government of their country.

As a first step it was proposed that as soon as peace and order have been sufficiently restored Palestinians would be placed in charge of departments of Government with British advisors to assist them. These Palestinian heads of Departments would be members of the executive council, which might at a later stage be converted into a council of ministers with a consequential change in the status and functions of heads of departments. It was further proposed that at the end of five years a body representative of the people of Palestine and of the British Government should be set up to review the working of the constitutional arrangements in the transitional period, and to make recommendations regarding the constitution of the independent Palestine state. If, at the end of ten years, it appeared that independence should be postponed, the British Government would consult with the people of Palestine, the Council of the League of Nations, and the

neighbouring Arab States, and invite their cooperation in framing plans for the future.

## (2) Immigration

Under Article 6 of the Mandate, the Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of the other sections of the population are not prejudiced, is required 'to facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions.' Beyond this, the extent to which Jewish immigration into Palestine is to be permitted is nowhere defined in the Mandate.

In practice, from 1922 until recent times, the economic absorptive capacity of the country has been treated as the sole limiting factor, and in the letter which Mr Ramsay MacDonald, as Prime Minister, sent to Dr. Weizmann in February 1931, it was laid down as a matter of policy that economic absorptive capacity was the sole criterion. This interpretation has been supported by a resolution of the Permanent Mandates Commission. But His Majesty's Government do not read either the Statement of Policy of 1922 or the letter of 1931 as implying that the Mandate requires them, for all time and in all circumstances to facilitate the immigration of Jews into Palestine subject only to consideration of the country's economic absorptive capacity. Nor do they find anything in the Mandate or in subsequent statements of policy to support the view that the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine cannot be effected unless immigration is allowed to continue indefinitely. If immigration has an adverse effect on the economic position of 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. Although it is not difficult to contend that the large number of Jewish immigrants who have been admitted so far have been absorbed economically, the fear of the Arabs that this influx will continue indefinitely until the Jewish population is in a position to dominate them has produced consequences which are extremely grave for Jews and Arabs alike and for the peace and prosperity of Palestine. The lamentable disturbances of the past three years are only the latest and most sustained manifestation of this intense Arab apprehension. The methods employed by Arab terrorists against fellow-Arabs and Jews alike must receive unqualified condemnation. But it cannot be denied that fear of indefinite Jewish immigration is widespread among the Arab population and that this fear has made possible disturbances which have given a serious setback to economic progress, depleted the Palestine exchequer, rendered life and property insecure, and produced a bitterness between the Arab and Jewish population which is deplorable between citizens of the same country. If in these circumstances 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. His Majesty's Government cannot take the view that either their obligations under the Mandate, or considerations of common sense and justice, require that they should ignore these circumstances in framing immigration policy. In the view of the Royal Commission, the association of the policy of the Balfour Declaration with the mandate system implied the belief that Arab hostility to the former would sooner or later be overcome. It has been the hope of British Governments ever since the Balfour Declaration was issued that in time the Arab population, recognizing the advantages to be derived from Jewish settlement and development in Palestine, would become reconciled to the further growth of the Jewish national home. This hope has not been fulfilled. 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, as well as to their specific obligations to the Arabs in the Palestine Mandate. 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. 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.

It has been urged that all further Jewish immigration into Palestine should be stopped forthwith. His Majesty's Government cannot accept such a proposal. It would damage the whole of the financial and economic system of Palestine and thus affect adversely the interests of the Arabs and Jews alike. Moreover, in the view of His Majesty's Government, abruptly to stop further immigration would be unjust to the Jewish national Home. But, above all, His Majesty's Government are conscious of the present unhappy plight of large numbers of Jews who seek a refuge from certain European countries, and they believe that Palestine can and should make a further contribution to the solution of this pressing world problem. In all these circumstances, they believe that they will be acting consistently with their mandatory obligations to both Arabs and Jews, and in the manner, best calculated to serve the interests of the whole people of Palestine, by adopting the following proposals regarding immigration:

These provided that Jewish immigration, during the five years beginning 1 April 1939, would be at a rate which, if economic capacity allowed, would bring the Jewish population up to approximately one-third of the population of the country. On such a basis it was calculated that 75,000 immigrants could be admitted. For each of the five years a quota of 10,000 would be allowed, the shortage in anyone year to be added to the quotas of subsequent years within the five year period, if economic absorptive capacity permitted. As a contribution towards the solution of the Jewish refugee problem, 25,000 refugees would be admitted as soon as the High Commissioner was satisfied that adequate provision for maintenance was assured.

After the period of five years, no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it. The number of illegal immigrants would be deducted from the annual quotas.

### (3) Land

The Administration of Palestine is required, under Article 6 of the mandate, 'while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced,<sup>1</sup> to encourage' close settlement by Jews on the land,' and no restriction has been imposed hitherto on the transfer of land from Arabs to Jews. The Reports of several expert commissions have indicated that, owing to the natural growth of the Arab population and the steady sale in recent years of Arab land to Jews, there is now in certain areas no room for further transfer of Arab land, whilst in some other areas such transfers of land must be restricted if Arab cultivators are to maintain their existing standard of life and a considerable landless Arab population is not soon to be created. In these circumstances, the High Commissioner will be given general powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land. These powers will date from the publication of this Statement of

Policy and the High Commissioner will retain them through the transitional period.

The policy of the Government will be directed towards the development of the land and the improvement, where possible, of methods of cultivation. In the light of such development it will be open to the High Commissioner, should he be satisfied that the 'rights and position of the Arab population will be duly preserved, to review and modify any orders passed relating to the prohibition or restriction of the transfer of land.

## **UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) on the future Government of Palestine (Partition Resolution)**

29 November 1947

### **Part I**

Future Constitution and Government of Palestine

#### **A. TERMINATION OF MANDATE, PARTITION AND INDEPENDENCE**

1. The Mandate for Palestine shall terminate as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.
2. The armed forces of the mandatory Power shall be progressively withdrawn from Palestine, the withdrawal to be completed as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

The mandatory Power shall advise the Commission, as far in advance as possible, of its intention to terminate the Mandate and to evacuate each area.

The mandatory Power shall use its best endeavours to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial Immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and in any event not later than 1 February 1948.

3. Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in part III of this plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948. The boundaries of the Arab State, the Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem shall be as described in parts II and III below.
4. The period between the adoption by the General Assembly of its recommendation on the question of Palestine and the establishment of the independence of the Arab and Jewish States shall be a transitional period...

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