AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF


Title: British Policies Towards Palestine 1917-1922.

Abstract approved:  

This study traces British government policies with regard to Palestine from the time the British Expeditionary Forces under General Allenby invested Jerusalem in December 1917 to the imposition of the Mandate with Britain as the Mandatory power, which came into effect on July 22, 1922. The first chapter provides an historical introduction and examines the sequence of events leading to the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. The subsequent chapters deal with British policies during the Military Administration, which lasted from 1917-1920, and then with the Civilian Administration up until Britain formally assumed the Mandate of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Perhaps no policies ever pursued by successive British governments have been more fraught with ambivalence and contradiction than those of the Palestine mandate. British interests were defined not only by moral concerns with regard to the position of the Jewish people,
but strategic considerations of Palestine and its geographic location as a buffer zone to the lifeline of the empire--the Suez Canal. In this respect, the government of India, the source of the British military power in the Near East exerted as much, and sometimes more, influence over British Middle East policy as the Foreign Office, and later, the Colonial Office combined.

The inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the Mandate placed the British government in an extraordinary and difficult position. On one hand, they were pledged to establishing a National Home for the Jews under the auspices of British protection; on the other, to placating the rising frustrations of the Arab populations, whose contributions to their liberation from Turkish rule were negligible. This thesis will support the premise that the Arabs were indebted to the British, not vice versa. Many British-Arab agreements during the war years, including the controversial Hussein-McMahon correspondence of 1915, were predicated on the assumption that the Arabs would stage a general uprising against Turkish rule and desert the Ottoman's armies in large numbers. The general revolt never materialized; Arab inaction during the war influenced British policies towards their aspirations in the region once the war ended. British policy towards Palestine was not shaped by Britain alone. The United States, though not a member of the League, had pervasive
influence in the matter, as did France and Russia. Particular attention will be paid to these topics later. Finally, a short profile on Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner for Palestine is provided in the Appendix.
BRITISH POLICIES TOWARDS PALESTINE
1917-1922

by
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DEDICATION

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"Consider whether the whole culture of Europe, the whole religious organization of Europe, has not from time to time proved itself guilty of great crimes against this race. Surely it is in order that we may send a message to every land where the Jewish race has been scattered, a message which will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world... and that we desire, to the best of our ability, to give them the opportunity of developing in peace and quietness, under British rule, those great gifts which hitherto they have been compelled... only to bring to fruition in countries which knows not their language and belong not to their race... That is the aim which lay at the root of the policy I am trying to defend; and though it is defensible on every ground, that is the ground that chiefly moves me."

Early British interests in Palestine as both a Jewish state and later as a strategic bulwark of Egypt, can be traced to remarks made by Colonel H. Churchill, the grandson of the Fifth Duke of Marlborough, and between 1842 and 1852, a staff officer of the British Expeditionary Forces in Syria. Churchill insisted that when Palestine ceased to be Turkish, it must either become English, or else form part of a new independent state.¹ He predicted the Jews would play a conspicuous role in its revival. Lord Henry John Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary and later Prime Minister, was also concerned with the idea of promoting Jewish settlement in Palestine, but for very different reasons. As British interests had been served by the Ottoman State, so for Palmerston, the idea of a Palestine inhabited by productive and loyal settlers would not only help to improve the Sultan's finances, but serve as an antidote to any future designs of Mehemet Ali or his successor.² Palmerston felt that the Jews were uniquely deserving of consideration by virtue of their ancient and religious connections with their homeland.

The origins of modern Zionism began when the Roman
general Pompey sacked Jerusalem in 63 BC, and precipitated the Jewish Diaspora. During the next century, the reign of Caesar to the fall of the Temple in 70 A.D., marked the second exile lasting one thousand eight hundred years and scattering the Jews over every latitude of the earth. Domiciled in every country, they were the only people on earth ever to retain a cultural identity without a national territory. Various groups of Jews banished to foreign lands continued to cherish the idea that their faith and hope would unite them with the ancient land of their ancestors. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the hope was nurtured by religious beliefs despite persecutions, and the codification of anti-Semitic legislation. The eighteenth century and the French Revolution of 1789, marked a turning point for Jews in Europe. The rise of nationalism and the influence of Romanticism were the movements that helped force the process of Jewish emancipation. During 1791, the Revolutionary Assembly met in Paris and passed laws granting full equality to Jews. As in many other European countries; they had been treated as second class citizens, although in some instances they were economically potent, their political power was negligible. The rise of nationalist sentiments and the progressive self-liberation of Italian, German and Balkan peoples, and the revival of the passion for self-determination had, as its antecedents the Romantic
movement, which lasted well into the nineteenth century.

It was Romanticism, a movement whose spiritual home was Germany, then later England and France, which preferred emotion over reason, and the intense appreciation of cultural heritage as a reaction to the inexorable and impersonal forces of industrialization. During the nineteenth-century, the idea of a return to Palestine embedded in Jewish historical consciousness for a hundred generations, was realized through the re-generation of the Zionist Movement and became the hope of their salvation. The new movement began in Russia, and its influence soon extended to Jews in Western Europe and beyond. Shortly after the brutal pogroms of 1880 and 1881, carried out against Jews by the regime of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Leon Pinsker, a Russian Jew from Odessa wrote a pamphlet titled *Self-Emancipation* (1882). Pinsker appealed for spiritual unity of Jews regardless of where domiciled and urged a return to Palestine as the most logical response to the anti-Semitic terror that had swept Russia. The gestation of nationalism in Europe and the persecution of Russian Jews in the Pale added urgency to the concept of Jewish nationalism and the need for self-liberation. Thus began the modern Zionist Movement, whose official recognition culminated in the creation of the First Zionist Congress at Basle during 1897. The seminal work of Pinsker had, in essence, resurrected and stimulated the
ageless longing for a Jewish home in Palestine. The pamphlet also emphasized the inability of Jews to assimilate into European or Gentile society, because of their ancient and unique religion, and the widespread antipathy towards their ancient customs, laws and methods of worship. The nineteenth century also saw a rise in anti-Semitism in Europe, particularly in Germany and France, which the British were anxious not to emulate.

For mainly Protestant England, Palestine and its inhabitants had a special significance. First, it was the Holy Land, the center of Judeo-Christian civilization, the land of the Scriptures, and the land of the Crusades. Second, it formed a geographical junction between East and West, the bridgehead between three continents, and during the nineteenth century, the focal point in the strategy of Britain's empire. After struggling for almost eighteen centuries, the Zionist movement experienced a concerted and widespread revival in the claims for their ancient home in Palestine. During 1897-1914, various options would be considered by successive British governments, and the representatives of the Zionist Movement. Among these, were the possibility of Jewish settlement in countries as diverse as Kenya, Uganda, Angola and Argentina. The war years, 1914-1918, became the watershed for Zionist claims to Palestine and settled the issue both with British assistance, and widespread international support.
The beginnings of Arab nationalism can be determined from the period when Napoleon Bonaparte landed his forces in Egypt in 1798. This was the starting-point of a process which gradually exposed the lands of the Ottoman Empire to military, cultural, economic and political influences of Western Europe. Three centuries of Turkish rule from the Sublime Porte in Constantinople had left the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent culturally dormant, politically stagnant, and economically sterile. The impact of Western influence in the region created the first stirrings of Arab national consciousness and set in motion spiritual, intellectual, social, and political ferment that provided the foundation for contemporary Arab Nationalism.

By 1834 Mehemet Ali, also known as Mohamed Ali was undisputed ruler of Egypt. Ruling Egypt as a vassal of the Sultan of Turkey, he soon became independent of the Sultan in all but name. His power extended southward to the Sudan and eastward toward the Hedjaz, including the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, and reaching north to encompass Syria and the administrative district of Palestine. During 1840, British intervention forced the Pasha to abandon his conquest east of the Suez as a condition for remaining Viceroy of Egypt. His dreams of an Arab empire and ambitions for the Caliphate were at an end, but the seeds of empire had been sown.
British and French imperial competition in the area continued, and toward the end of the century, during 1882, Egypt fell under British Administration. The 'dual administration' proposed and enacted by the British spawned considerable resistance, notably from Egyptian members of the army, which continued well into the twentieth century, and stimulated the nascent Arab national consciousness in other regions comprising the Fertile Crescent.

Another major turning point in Arab nationalism was the Young Turk Revolution, which took place on July 24, 1908. In an attempt to re-vitalize the decaying Ottoman Empire and restore it to its former glory, the 'revolutionaries' forced the Sultan, Abdulhamid to re-implement the Constitution, which he had granted in 1876 and suspended two years later. For the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, including the Arabs, the Revolution held promise of great changes. The 'Young Turks', comprised mainly of Ottoman Turks, drew support from other diverse elements of their Empire, including Arabs, Armenians, Greeks and Albanians. Through the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) the Ottoman Young Turks envisaged, officially at least, a strong unified Empire in which non-Turkish elements would be integrated with the Turks. However, the process of Turkification by the new rulers did not deviate from the established policies of their
predecessors regarding Jews and Zionism. Prohibitions on large scale Jewish immigration (to Palestine) continued under the new regime. Individual settlement, which followed specific criteria set by the Ottoman administration, was allowed in some cases. Conversely, perhaps the concept of re-integrating the Ottoman Empire after centuries of neglect through the process of Turkification only served to inspire Arab national consciousness and identity, a factor which the British quickly exploited, at an opportune moment.

Palmerston's current problem was Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, whose expansionist tendencies were the cause of great concern to British policy makers. In 1834, he had seized Syria from his Turkish overlords. By agreement with the Turks in 1833, his power straddled two routes vital to British interests in a manner that did not recur until the three years Nasser's United Arab Republic included Syria, 1958-1961. The two routes, one overland from Alexandria to Suez via the Red Sea, and the other across the north Syrian desert and down the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf, were of competitive importance to British Imperial links with her Indian Empire. Hence Palmerstonian's well-known axiom, "Turkey was as good as guardian of the routes to India as any Arab would be." This rationale sustained British support of the Ottoman Empire through successive governments until 1914. Yet,
British influence on the Sublime Porte, the administrative headquarters of the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople, declined rapidly, through a combination of Turkish evasiveness, and Turkish resentment at erosion of Turkish Territory. In order to promote British interests in the region, persuasive measures were employed, ranging from diplomacy to gunboats. In the final analysis, it was the latter that often had the greatest effect.

In 1869, the Suez Canal opened and the British government under Disraeli purchased the Khedive's shares in the company in 1875. British interests in the region became paramount, since the Suez Canal was the shortest and fastest route to India. Relationships with the Sublime Porte were further exacerbated by liberal reforms in England. On the diplomatic front, London continued to lecture the Turks and extract promises from the Sultan to be good to his Christian minorities and to reform his administration. This moralizing only increased Turkish resentment from what they considered unwarranted intrusion into their internal affairs. Britain's influential primacy dimmed when a unified Germany entered the competition, resulting in the Turco-German Alliance of 1914. The last two decades of the 19th century saw British foreign policies firmly in the hands of Lord Salisbury. Salisbury's position mirrored his predecessor's regarding the stability of the Ottoman
Empire and the preservation of British influence in the region.

The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 further strained British relations with Turkey. In contrast to earlier years, Egypt required British protection rather than the Turks. As a result, the desire to widen the demilitarized zone in the Suez Canal became an imperative. For the British government, an expansion encompassing the whole of Palestine and Mesopotamia was dictated by the logic of geographical realities and imperial interests. In 1892, Lord Cromer, the British Agent in Cairo ratified an agreement with the Porte, a delineation of the frontier from Rafah to the Gulf of Aquaba. Under this arrangement, the whole of the Sinai Peninsula was to be administered by the Anglo-Egyptian authorities, though, in essence, it still remained under the suzerainty of the Sultan. Britain's concern over the Sinai Peninsula was clearly demonstrated when the Porte attempted to renege on the agreement in 1906. Resistance from both Cairo and London was swift and decisive, forcing the Porte to agree to the original terms set in 1892.

The construction of the Hedjaz railway was another factor which Britain had to take into account. The railway's strategic implications were enormous because of the possibility of a Turkish invasion from the East. On May
11, 1906, the Committee of Imperial Defense led by Lord Kitchener, met in Cairo, and decided that for the security and tranquility of Egyptian and British interests in the region, it was essential to preserve intact the strip of desert country, about 130 miles broad, which separated the frontier from the Canal. Since ancient times, the Sinai desert had proven a formidable obstacle to the passage of large armies; General Sir John French, later Lord French, challenged the decisions of the Imperial Defense Committee and subsequently proved to be correct. French perceived the necessity of stationing up to 150,000 troops in the area to protect the British Empire's 'jugular vein.' With uncanny foresight French remarked to his colleagues "that the hand will be the hand of Turkey but the voice will be the voice of Germany." French accurately predicted the possibility of German-Turkish military intervention in the region.

British military and civilian thinking in the region was clear and comprehensive. Salisbury sensed that the Sultan's alienation from England was permanent. Egypt was firmly under English control, Cyprus had been annexed, and the Balkans were slipping away to the north. In his position as Caliph the Sultan was therefore determined to hold on to Syria and Palestine. In 1887 the Sanjak of Jerusalem was detached from the provincial governorship of Syria and administered directly by the Palace. Two years
before, the Porte had announced that it would not permit the formation of another Jewish colony and would strictly enforce the edict against aliens holding or acquiring real estate in Palestine. Salisbury accurately summed up the Sultan's position by citing four centuries of misgovernment and neglect within the Ottoman domains. Salisbury's reference to the possibilities of a Moslem leader arising from the Arabian population to challenge the Caliph's position as Commander of the Faithful did little to improve British-Turkish relations and, finally, only served to heighten tensions and increase Turkish intransigence. The British later paid heavily for this abrasive diplomacy, a factor which the Germans were able to exploit with stunning success in the years leading up to the Great War and beyond.

Jewish resettlement beginning in 1880, continued in Palestine on a modest scale despite the edicts of the Porte and was mostly concentrated in the Jaffa area. By 1889, a total of twenty-two settlements were scattered over 76,000 acres, with a population of some 5,000 existed. Conditions in the settlements were precarious and primitive. The later settlement consisted mainly of agricultural colonies, preceded by some twenty families, who in 1882, had established Rishon-le-Zion (First in Zion) on the sand dunes south of Jaffa. The formidable difficulties faced by these early pioneers of Zionism led
to the abandonment of some colonies. Starvation, malaria, poor crops, and hostility from the Arabs all took their toll among even the most tenacious and hardy of the settler populations. Baron Edmond de Rothschild of Paris rescued the struggling Rishon-le-Zion community with a gift of 30,000 francs. He continued to send financial support to other struggling Jewish communities in Palestine, and began the effort that was to ensure their survival until the close of the century when the Zionist movement mobilized.

In 1897, at Basle in Switzerland, Theodore Herzl, an Austrian Jew, called together the first Zionist Congress. Two hundred delegates from fifteen countries attended this conference, and Herzl spoke to an enthusiastic audience of 'The Promised Land', thereby launching the concept and formation of the Jewish State. Herzl, author of the book *Judenstaat*, outlining the Zionist program for the reclamation of Palestine as a Jewish homeland, died eight years later, largely from exhaustion caused by his efforts to see his dream realized.

Official British reaction at this stage was non-comittal, but Zionism was to sharply divide the Anglo-Jewish population. In contrast to Jewish populations in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, British Jews were largely assimilated into all levels of British society, and were free to practice their religion. The bloody
pogroms in Russia of 1880 and 1881 against Jews and the gratuitous violence by the Turks, and sporadically by the Arabs, appalled the current British government and offended their humanitarian principles. However, the principal question for the Anglo-Jews was one of religion versus ethnic identity. Many felt themselves to be Jewish in religion and British by nationality. Opponents of Zionism, and there were many, argued their positions with passion and eloquence. Conflicting divisions of loyalty, religion vs. national status in country of birth promoted discord, not only among British Jews, but among those of Germany, America, Russia and elsewhere.

Within the Ottoman Empire, and particularly in the Vilayet of Beruit and the Mutasarriflik (governor of the district) of Jerusalem, anti-Zionism began to appear, not only from Arab notables and Christians, but also from older established Jewish communities, namely the Sephardic (Oriental) Jews who were unsympathetic to the Ashkenazi (European Jews). The Sephardim were Ottoman subjects, fluent in Arabic, integrated within the 'millet' system (the protected classes of non-Moslem society) and saw their sometimes precarious positions threatened by an influx of new immigrants. The basis of their antipathy towards the newcomers was primarily the fear of economic competition.

European Jews residing in Palestine also benefited
from their status as foreigners under the 'Capitulations', a system which extended special privileges to foreigners throughout the Ottoman Empire. Most Europeans' extensive extra-territorial privileges, included the right to trade, travel, and hold property freely throughout the Empire. They were largely exempt from Ottoman taxes and were not subject to Ottoman jurisdiction in courts of law. The status of a foreign subject under the 'Capitulations' was often inconsistent, and depended largely on the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the European Power of which the subject was a citizen.

Despite continuing prohibitions on Jewish immigration and land settlement during the regime of Abdulhamid, and later under that of 'The Young Turks' (the revolutionary movement which took power in Constantinople in 1908), European Jews often appealed to their consulates for assistance to thwart the Porte's legislation. The Consulates, in turn brought diplomatic pressure to bear on the Sublime Porte, to settle legal matters in a satisfactory manner for the parties concerned.

By 1914, the Jewish population in the geographical administrative district of Palestine had increased to some 100,000. Thus, from 1897 and the formal establishment of the Zionist movement at Basle to 1914, the population of Jews in Palestine doubled. The majority of Jews, between 50,000 and 60,000, lived in Jerusalem or its
environ. Another 12,500 were located in Safed, in Galilee, and about 12,000 were in Jaffa and the newly established neighboring colony of Tel Aviv. 17

Estimates of Arab populations in Palestine varied considerably. Figures ranged from a low of 500,000 to a high of 700,000 Palestinian Arabs; the difficulty of an accurate census was compounded by the itinerant status of many of the poorer Arabs. The latter (also known as fellahin) were largely landless peasants forced to migrate in search of work, and these constituted the majority of the population. Illiteracy, poverty, and ignorance were commonplace, both in villages and in many respects the Palestine region, with exception of the holy cities, was a feudal backwater of the Ottoman empire.

Under the Ottoman Empire, Palestine was never a single administrative unit. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was part of the large Vilayet of Sam (Syria), and that area west of the River Jordan was divided into the three sanjaks of Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre. 18 Each sanjak, or district was governed by a mutasarrif, and under him were Kaymakams, or sub-governors in towns such as Jaffa, Gaza, Tiberias, and Safed. During 1880, the Vilayet of Sam was reorganized, and in 1877 the governor of the Sanjak of Jerusalem became an independent mutasarriflik directly responsible to the various ministries and departments of state at the Sublime Porte
in Constantinople. During 1888, the Vilayet of Beruit was formed, and the two Sanjaks of Nablus and Acre in the north of Palestine were transferred to it. Through these administrative changes, the south of Palestine was governed from Jerusalem, and the north from Beruit.

For the purpose of clarity the term 'Palestine' will be used to designate the area under the British Mandate from 1922-1948. This area (outlined in the McMahon-Hussein correspondence of October 24, 1915) was the portions of Syria lying to the west of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo. The Sykes-Picot agreements of 1916 added further administrative divisions which defined national borders denoting French control over Syria and British control (through mandates) over Palestine and Iraq, and independence for the Hedjaz kingdom. For the British, 1917 was a difficult year with the war on the Western Front a continuing ordeal. The sanguinary conflict of Flanders, increased submarine warfare on the high seas, and the collapse of Russia's eastern front combined to take their toll on British and Allied morale. In the Middle East, the situation hardly fared better. There had been serious reverses at Kut in Mesopotamia, and General Murray's Expeditionary Forces had been defeated by the Turks at Gaza, and later Beersheba. The setback was only temporary, and crucial developments were evolving on both the battlefield, and on the home front. Asquith's
government fell at the end of 1916 and he was succeeded in office by the fiery Welshman, Lloyd George.

The new Prime Minister was devoutly religious, a capable organizer, former minister of munitions, and fervently pro-Zionist. Schooled in the tenets of the Old Testament, a British capture of Jerusalem appealed to Lloyd George as a religious man, a romantic, and a citizen of the British Empire. Within days of taking office, he had given new impetus to plans for a British advance toward Palestine from Egypt. The mercurial first minister outlined his plans for the Middle East to a newly constituted War Cabinet. General Murray was relieved of command of the Expeditionary Force after his second failure at Gaza during April 1917. After some hesitation, Lloyd George offered the command to Jan Christian Smuts, the Boer military hero and South Africa's representative to the War Cabinet. As former Commander of British Forces in German East Africa, Smuts' knowledge of guerilla warfare was extensive.

Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, persuaded General Smuts not to accept the appointment on the grounds that it lacked prestige, and in the end, the command was given to General Sir Edmund Allenby. The Prime Minister's instructions to Allenby were unambiguous—the Cabinet expected him to hand them Jerusalem before Christmas. Allenby, an
Figure 1. The Middle East at the outbreak of the World War. Source: Sachar, 1969.
undistinguished General Staff Officer who had served on the Western Front, immediately seized the initiative. Moving swiftly, he reorganized Murray's lethargic and demoralized forces. Inter alia, Sir Mark Sykes, one of Britain's top experts on the Middle East and former negotiator of the Sykes-Picot agreements, was attached to Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Forces as Chief Political Officer. Allenby's request to the War Office for extra troops was supported by Lloyd George. He ordered the detachment of a division in Salonica to Egypt, and an additional four divisions, consisting of Australian, New Zealand and British territorial battalions under training were attached to Allenby's forces. On the logistical front, thirty thousand camels were assembled to carry initial supplies of water for the troops who were to attack Beersheba.22 During the summer of 1917, the whole of the Suez area became a vast military staging ground in preparation for the coming offensive. The disastrous campaign at Gallipoli two years previously was about to be revenged. The senior officer who planned the essential outline of Allenby's offensive was Brigadier General Guy Dawnay, one of the most brilliant, if subsequently underrated, strategists of the war.

Dawnay's plan concentrated thousands of allied troops opposite the heavily defended Gaza fortifications, while actually intending a major thrust against Beersheba--the
natural gateway to Palestine. In one of the most effective military deceptions in modern history, faked documents (the staff agenda for a major attack to be mounted against Gaza, which was to be preceded by a feint against Beersheba) were lost in a minor skirmish that revealed British intentions and recovered by the Turks who thought them genuine. The ruse worked perfectly. With October 31 fixed as Zero day, late October saw the stealthy removal of allied troops under the cover of darkness from the Gaza front to take up offensive positions against the Turkish garrison at Beersheba. During the last forty-eight hours before the attack, all the vacated camps behind Gaza were left standing, and well-lighted at night. In front of them lay the bulk of the Ottoman Seventh and Eighth armies manned, dug in, expecting an attack along the Gaza line. "The battle was decided before it began."

At dawn, on October 31, 1917, Allenby's highly mobile forces attacked Beersheba. By mid-morning an entire Ottoman division, the Twenty-seventh, had surrendered. Mounted columns of Allenby's cavalry units surged forward and caused havoc behind the Ottoman lines by severing communications between Hebron and Beersheba. In less than six weeks the campaign was over. The British offensive, methodical and deliberate, had paralyzed Turkish resistance, and the remnants of the Ottoman Armies
in retreat were continually strafed and bombed from the air by the Royal Flying Corps.

On November 14, Erich von Falkenhayn, the German commander of the Ottoman Seventh Army evacuated his headquarters in Jerusalem and fled to Nablus. The Ottoman Seventh Army defending Jerusalem was reduced to a pitiful sixteen thousand men facing three times that many British. Falkenhayn, by his precipitous departure had destroyed what was left of Turkish morale. On the night of December 8th, they began to withdraw from their positions. The following morning, the Arab mayor of Jerusalem surrendered the keys of the city to nearby British troops. Two days later, a jubilant Allenby made his formal entry into Jerusalem, thereby becoming the first victorious Christian to set foot in the Holy City since the Crusades. This marked the beginning of British power in the Middle East and it remained paramount for forty years.

From the Arab's point of view, the advent of the Balfour Declaration during 1917 signalled another turning point. At this juncture in history, negotiations on British policies towards Palestine were marked by impasse and sporadic outbursts of violence, which later became endemic. Arab nationalist sentiments, particularly within the geographical confines of the Palestine Mandate were largely ignored. For the Arabs, the British and their allies were analogous to a neo-Colonial power who simply
replaced Ottoman rule and brought with them Western culture and influence, inimical to the ethics of Islam. Nascent Arab nationalism existed in the pre-war era. The Islamic religion, rather than ethnic coherence, was the unifying factor for the Ottoman empire. By the nineteenth-century, fragmentization and decentralization were already well in progress. The period of embryonic Arab nationalist sentiments, 1914-1917 was catalyzed by British colonial polities, in 1917, which gave birth to a more virulent form of nationalism that heralded the beginning of conflict in the Middle East today.
Chapter II.

The Military Administration 1917-1919

A month prior to Allenby's formal entry into the Holy City of Jerusalem, a document of immense importance, the Balfour Declaration was released to the press. It represented the culmination of the Zionist Movement's efforts to attain recognition for the rights of Jews to a homeland in Palestine. Since the declaration of war against the Entente by Turkey in November 1914, British policy during the war years became gradually committed to the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. After cabinet level discussions led by Lloyd George, and considerable negotiations with Jewish leaders, the decision was publicized in the form of a letter from Lord Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, to Lord Edmond Rothschild on November 3, 1917. The letter stated:

November 2, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of his Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet.

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

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.¹

Yours Sincerely
Arthur James Balfour

The timing of the declaration could not have been more propitious for both British and Zionist interests. On October 31, 1917 the War Cabinet, which included Sir Alfred Milner, Lord George Curzon, General Smuts, Lord Balfour and Lloyd George, approved the 'Declaration'. Allenby began his major offensive against the Turkish strongholds in Palestine at dawn of the same day. If the venture had failed, German-Turco intentions towards Palestine would have been handed an unexpected propaganda coup. In forming a military alliance with Turkey in 1913, Germany, supported by some German Jews, had already demonstrated its expectations, of a Palestine under the auspices of Germany and post-war Turkey. A few days after the letter was received by Lord Rothschild, its contents were made known to Chaim Weizmann, the President of the English Zionist Federation, and Mr. Nahum Sokolov, Chief London Representative of the Zionist Organization. At a meeting of the Council of the English Zionist Federation held on November 5th in London, a unanimous
resolution was passed congratulating their President, Weizmann for having, in conjunction with Mr. Sokolov, brought about this momentous realization of the national aspirations of the world's Jewish people. By this time, Beersheba had fallen, and Gaza was cut off from the rear and was to fall a few days later. Political, diplomatic, and military strategies in this instance, seemed at least superficially to be extraordinarily well synchronized.

The response to the Declaration and the reaction of Anglo-Jewry was still far from unified. In a letter from Sir Phillip Magnus, M. P. to Weizmann, he wrote:

...Ever since the conquest of Palestine by the Romans we have ceased to be a body politic, that the great bond that unites Israel is not one of race but the bond of 'common religion' and that we have no national aspirations apart from those of the country of our birth. . . I cannot agree that the Jews regard themselves as a nation, and the term 'national' as applied to a community of Jews in Palestine or elsewhere seems to me to beg the question between Zionists and their opponents, and should, I suggest, be withdrawn from the proposed formula.

This line of argument by anti-Zionists had changed little from the inception of the First Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897. Other reactions included Mr. G. C. Montefiore's, the President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, who declared that: "The true well-being of the Jewish emancipation and liberty in the countries of
the world are a thousand times more important than a 'home'. From Mr. L. L. Cohen, Chairman of the Jewish Board of Guardians in London, came another view, expressing the same theme: "The establishment of a 'national home for the Jewish race' in Palestine, presupposes that the Jews are a nation, which I deny." Cohen's attack was particularly vituperative, and claimed that Zionists were harming Jewish positions in all countries where they lived. English reaction was rather muted, and overshadowed by more ominous events. Ironically, on the same day of the announcement to the general public, Ilyich Lenin took power in Russia. Russia was effectively out of the war and German divisions in the east were redeployed to the Western Front. British observers had clearly overestimated the influence of Russian Jewry on Kerensky's government to pursue the war with Germany after the October Revolution. To this end, as Elizabeth Monroe the Oxford historian and Middle Eastern scholar astutely pointed out, the "declaration never served its most immediate purpose" which was less concerned with events in Palestine, but more with those of the war effort against the Central Powers.

During December 1917, Palestine was placed under a military administration—a *modus operandi* that lasted for almost three years. From a British viewpoint, military
occupation coincided with interests that were aligned with Imperial policies. French claims to predominance in the region of the Suez Canal became negligible, and the Turco-German threats to the Imperial lifeline had been effectively removed. In London, a Middle East Committee was set up by the War Cabinet to deal with the affairs of Palestine and coordinate the various government departments concerned. Meeting on January 19, 1918, the committee consisted of Lord Curzon, the Chairman; Balfour; Lord Charles Hardinge; Sir Mark Sykes; Major-General Sir G. M. W. Macdonogh, Director of Military Intelligence; Lord Islington, formerly Sir John Dickson Poynder, who had been Under Secretary of State for India; Mr. Shuckburgh, later Sir John Shuckburgh, who was a Secretary in the political Department of the India Office; and Captain, the Hon. William Ormsby-Gore M.P., the Committee's Secretary, who later became closely involved in the affairs of Palestine. Allenby remained in supreme command in Palestine, but was subject to the direction of the Middle East Committee. General Gilbert Clayton, an experienced senior officer, who had previously been involved in negotiations with Sheriff Hussein, was appointed Chief Political Officer with his headquarters in Cairo. In addition, Sir Ronald Storrs, one of Britain's foremost experts on the Middle East, was selected to serve as Military Governor of the Holy
British authority was exercised de facto, and in accordance with Cabinet approval, de jure. Soon after assuming formal authority for the governing of Palestine, General Allenby, with the consensus of the Middle East Committee, issued the following public proclamation in Jerusalem:

The object of war in the East on the part of Great Britain was the complete and final liberation of all peoples formerly oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administration in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of those peoples themselves.

The preoccupation of the British authorities at this stage, was the restoration of administration in a country dislocated by war. Publicity for the Balfour Declaration was not undertaken by the authorities in Palestine, but the Arabs were aware of Zionist activity and Clayton reported to the Foreign Office that: "The Arabs are still nervous and feel that the Zionist movement is progressing at a pace which threatens their interest." On January 14, 1918, General Clayton in an additional report, was even more explicit, perhaps setting the ominous undertones of things to come. He reported: "The Arabs were showing great uneasiness at Zionist activity and feared a Jewish government of Palestine as eventual result." For the Jews who went to Palestine, and for those who did not, the
Declaration was a catalyst which redefined their historic connections with their ancient homeland. The Declaration became the legal document with international recognition establishing these rights *de facto* and *de jure*. The promises it contained were seen by the Arabs as contradictory, and in retrospect, as Monroe pointed out, "brought the British much ill-will, and complications that sapped their power", and she concludes, "that measured by British interests alone, the Declaration was one of the greatest mistakes in British Imperial History." However, the context in which Monroe's opinions were formed are contemporary and have the added advantage of historical perspective—nor were they influenced by the exigencies of war.

Monroe's erudition notwithstanding, it is essential to note the wartime promises undertaken by the British to the Arabs with reference to the post-war Arab world. The first of these agreements was the controversial McMahon-Hussein correspondence of October 24, 1915. Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Cairo, negotiated in secret during 1915-1916 with Hussein Ibn Ali, the Sherif of Mecca. In principle, the British government promised to support Hussein's bid for the restoration of the Caliphate and leadership in the Arab world if Hussein, in turn, supported the British war effort against Turkey. Palestine was not mentioned by
name in the agreement; instead the two districts, Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo were excluded from the agreement on the grounds that they were not purely Arab. Therefore, conceptually inherent in the promises were an independent Arab state in post-war Middle East to lands East of the Jordan River, and an independent kingdom in the Hedjaz (Saudi Arabia). The secrecy surrounding these agreements, which took place in the form of correspondence and covert meetings, should be understood in consideration of Hussein's bid for the Caliphate with British support which would have inflamed Moslem opinions elsewhere, but particularly in India—a major source of British Military manpower in the Middle East. The British government did not need to be reminded of the consequences of the Indian Army mutiny during 1857.

The official reasons for secrecy were predicated upon those antecedents which were less concerned with events in Palestine than those of India. Publication of the relevant records could have dispelled much of the misunderstanding, but, though this was urged in both Houses of Parliament since 1921, successive British governments objected on the grounds that publication would be detrimental to the public interest. Therein lay the real controversy, in that the Foreign Office believed that it would be impossible to publish part of the
correspondence, omitting the allusions to the Caliphate. The partial publication would almost certainly lead to complete publication, which ipso facto would have precipitated a storm of indignation throughout the Moslem world. It was not until 1937 that a full text of the letter was finally published in the London Times. Again the allusions to Hussein's ambitions and British support regarding the Caliphate of Constantinople were sanitized for some very practical reasons. The British were still in India, facing not only the prospects of rising Indian nationalism, but also a resurgent and powerful Germany. The letter has been synthesized to present only the relevant portions:

(1) Subject to the above modifications, (discussed earlier), Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca.

(2) Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognize their inviolability.

(3) When the situation admits, Great Britain will give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of governments in those various territories.

(4) On the other hand, it is understood that the Arabs have decided to seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only, and that such European advisors and officials as may be
required for the formation of a sound form of administration will be British.

(5) With regard to the vilayets of Bagdad and Basra the Arabs will recognize that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special administrative arrangements in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests (October 24, 1915, McMahon to Hussein.)

Though clearly a matter of intense controversy, no mention of Palestine can be found. The letter continued in couched diplomatic phrases urging Arab support for expulsion of the Turks, and freeing the Arab peoples from the Turkish yoke, which for so many years had pressed heavily upon them. Hussein promised two hundred and fifty thousand Arab troops to support the British war effort, and also predicted large-scale Arab desertions from the Ottoman armies. Neither took place to any significant degree; yet, both bequeathed a legacy of ironic paradoxes, since many Arabs serving with the Ottoman armies could be said, in historical context, to befighting against their own liberation. The problem was not one of semantics, but rather of Arab unity, which at the crucial moment failed to materialize. This, in turn, begs the historical question of the failure of the Arab Revolt and its consequences in the post-war Middle East.
In the structural sense, Ottoman loyalism was deeply ingrained in most of the traditional Arab elite. Local loyalties to the elites were assumed on clan, tribal, and ethnic lines. The concept of pan-Arab nationalism was, in the early years, a nascent phase and largely embryonic. The unifying factor in the Ottoman Empire, integrated over four centuries of rule, was religion rather than separatism or nationalism. Thus, the Sherif of Mecca's bid for uniting Arab against Turk was largely doomed from the outset. From the Arabic point of view, the analogy would be the waging of war against their Islamic brothers, clearly an unthinkable prospect to many. The other important aspect is that of Ottoman and Arab opposition to Zionism as a nationalist 'separatist' movement on religious, political, and economic grounds, and in the geographical region of Palestine in particular.

Historians differ, among them Monroe and Harry Sachar as to the value of the Arab Revolt and the British defeat of the Ottoman Armies in the Middle East. To some it was symbolic rather than real, to others, it was seen as a heroic saga of Arab history. However, soon after Hussein rebelled against the Turks on June 6, 1916, his forces were on the point of imminent collapse. McMahon, who, on the advice of Lord Kitchener, was mainly responsible for inflating the Arab's military importance, claimed the revolt had been undertaken with "inadequate preparations
and in ignorance of modern warfare." At any time the most Arab troops under Hussein's command numbered between four to six thousand. The efforts to create an Arab Legion under British officers in order to support Hussein's meagre forces also failed. In the final analysis, Arab troops in the Ottoman armies remained essentially loyal, and would not aid the destruction of a Moslem Power. Despite the celebrated and much popularized exploits of Colonel T. E. Lawrence and his Bedouins against the Turks, the vast majority of Arabs were either passive, or conversely, actively serving in the Ottoman armies.

The second treaty, and one of crucial importance was the Sykes-Picot agreements, which culminated in the Anglo-French treaty of May 1916. Generally, the Sykes-Picot accords between the British and French abrogated exclusive British control of the Levant in recognition of French historical interests in the area. This matter ipso facto did not impair the agreements made with Hussein as outlined in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which had no standing in international law. After the war had been successfully concluded, the Levant was excluded from areas promised to the Arabs. The French had a locus standi in the East. For centuries they had been regarded as the champions and protectors of Catholics in the Ottoman Empire. The French exercised a prominent role in the
intellectual development of the native population in the Levant, and their financial investments exceeded those of any other European country. For Sir Mark Sykes, the agreement was a masterpiece of diplomatic negotiations with an often intransigent and mercurial ally. The British ceded much and gained little, while the French obtained, at no great cost, de jure recognition of their hold in Syria and northern Palestine. But, Sykes, acting on behalf of the British Foreign Office, and Georges Picot, his French counterpart, not only sought to reconcile British and French interests, but to adjust them to Arab aspirations as well. At the time, this did not seem to pose a formidable problem for either of the contracting parties. For the most part, Arab leaders realized that a coherent Arab state was neither in harmony with the national genius of the Arabs, nor feasible from the point of view of finance and administration. From their viewpoint, they hoped that some kind of confederation of Arabic-speaking states could be formed under British and French tutelage.

These treaties, also known as the 'Secret Treaties' marked out the respective French and British spheres of interest of the Arab state. The French Section was designated the 'Blue Area' and the British was the 'Red Area' (see Figure 2). The other item on the agenda concerned the international religious interests in Palestine of
Moslems, Christians, and Jews. Here, British and French interests overlapped and the only feasible solution proposed was that of a so-called 'Brown Area' or international condominium. With the territorial desiderata of the Ottoman Empire agreed upon, the Sykes-Picot accords culminated on May 16, 1916 with the provision that Palestine was to have:

an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with other allies, and the representatives of the Sherif of Mecca.²⁰

By late 1917, Russia was effectively out of the war. The Balfour Declaration and British policy of the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, clearly and decisively indicated their intentions towards the region. French interests were henceforth confined only to those areas (Blue Areas) stipulated in the agreement. In the final analysis, Britain's position was not only de facto but de jure as a result of military conquest. French contributions in troops during the Palestine invasion were limited due to the priorities of her armies facing a renewed German onslaught on the Western Front. The actual number of French officers and men serving with Allenby's mainly Anglo-Indian and Anzac forces, was less than seven hundred.

In later years, the Sykes-Picot Agreement became the target of much bitter criticism, both in France and
MAP 2. The railway network and the demarcation lines along the Sykes-Picot partition in the south of Syria. (Based on a Foreign Office map delineating the Sykes-Picot partition, CHAMBERLAIN, AC 19/68.)

Figure 2. Sykes-Picot boundaries, brown area proposed for international administration. (Nevakivi, 1969)
England. Lloyd George referred to it as an "egregious and foolish document" Curzon was no less kind, and General Smuts considered it "a hopeless blunder of policy." However, between 1915-1916, French consensus was necessary, and actively sought. British plans for the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire had to take into account the French position in Syria, and particularly French concessions in the Syrian hinterland. No military operations on the Eastern Front could take place without French concurrence. French consent was, therefore, doubly necessary before the (Arab uprising and Allied military) offensive could begin. In the absence of a British offensive there could have been no Arab revolt; and, without the Sykes-Picot Agreement there would have been no British Offensive. More importantly, the Sykes-Picot negotiations and the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence were being conducted simultaneously, and their principal concerns were not only of territorial desiderata, but the staging and fomentation of a successful Arab uprising against their Ottoman masters. These were both intended as wartime measures to strengthen the British (and French) position, while simultaneously undermining the Turks. While representing a masterpiece of diplomatic negotiations and compromise under the exigences of war—they were little more than a marriage of convenience between two Entente powers. Immediately after the war,
they would be manipulated by the British at the expense of the French.

As the war drew nearer to its conclusion, British military authorities found it increasingly difficult to apply pro-Zionist policies in Palestine. As early as February of 1918, General Clayton reported that "educated Moslems are still much disturbed at what they deem preferential treatment of the Jews and at the possibility of Jewish domination." While the Balfour Declaration (by then made public) had not been well received by the Arabs in Palestine, Hashemite reaction in the Hedjaz was different. For the Hashemites, Zionism, particularly with financial incentive, proved an attractive proposition, and Zionist aid would be welcome in order to assist the development of their own kingdom. Hussein's own newspaper in Mecca printed a welcome to the Jews 'as original sons of the country' whose return would benefit their Arab brethren materially and spiritually.

Events in Palestine unfortunately, were far from peaceful. Friction between British authorities in Palestine, and the Middle East Committee and Foreign Office in London began to develop from the outset. The concept of an Arab-Jewish Alliance, of which Sykes was a leading proponent seemed doomed to failure at its inception. The problem stemmed partly from the ambiguous nature of the Balfour Declaration from the Arab's
perspectives, and partly from the manner in which British military authorities were carrying out their policies in the face of Arab resentment and counter-pressure. Increased Jewish immigration, both legal and illegal, served only to heighten tensions among the Arab population. A good deal of anti-semitism also remained among members of the military administration, and particularly among officers drawn from the Sudan, Egypt or India, who leaned toward pro-Arab sentiments.

During 1918, the Zionist Commission consisting of Weizmann and representatives of France and Italy was dispatched to Palestine by the Middle East Committee. They were accompanied by Captain the Honorable Ormsby-Gore, with the rank of Assistant Political Officer. Ormsby-Gore was instructed to report to London directly through the High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Reginald Wingate. The reasons for the mission were:

(1) The important political results had accrued from the declaration of His Majesty's Government to the Zionists and the need for putting the assurance given in this declaration into practice.

(2) The inadequacy of existing Zionist representation in Egypt and Palestine.

(3) The necessity of bringing the British authorities in Egypt and Palestine and the Arabs into contact with the responsible leaders of the organization in Entente countries.27
The urgency of points expressed was symptomatic of the degree to which communications between Arabs, Jews, and the Military Authorities began to break down. The Commission was subject to General Allenby's authority in all matters. Among the most important functions of the Commission, was the establishment of good relations with the Arabs and other non-Jewish communities in Palestine. The visit by the Commission was less of a success than anticipated, and even Weizmann, an eternal optimist, had less reason to be sanguine. In a note to Ormsby-Gore, he conceded that he had expected to find hostility among Arabs and Syrians, but was genuinely surprised at the extent. Weizmann bitterly added, "Among certain sections of them (Arabs and Syrians), a state of mind exists which seems to us to make useful negotiations impossible at the present moment". Specifically, Weizmann cited incidents of anti-Jewish sentiments voiced openly at a meeting at which he, along with a senior British army officer representing the Military Governor, were present. Ormsby-Gore forwarded Weizmann's note to the military Governor of Jerusalem, Colonel Ronald Storrs, who sent it to the Foreign Office on April 22, 1918 with some acerbic comments on Weizmann and the Palestine situation in general. Storrs reported:

"...Speaking myself as a convinced Zionist, I cannot help thinking that the Commission are lacking in a sense of the dramatic actuality."
Palestine, up to now a Moslem country, has fallen into the hands of a Christian power which on the eve of its conquest announced that a considerable portion of its land is to be handed over for colonization purposes to a nowhere very popular people.29

In a stinging rebuke aimed at Weizmann, Storrs compared his actions to those of an 'unimportant amateur'. Storrs' attitude toward Weizman was not at issue, but rather the increasing frustration that Storrs, and many others, felt over the uneven implementation of British Government policy in Palestine. Storrs' viewpoint highlighted the dilemma the British authorities faced. Pragmatically, Storrs saw the Military Government as a transitional stage, and not as one of civil reorganization. Afterwards, he described the Military Administration as notably contravening the status quo in the matter of Zionism. Inter alia, and in 1918 half of Palestine was still a province of the Moslem Ottoman Empire, and the vast majority of its inhabitants were Arabs. Writing to the Foreign Office from Cairo, the Chief Political Officer, General Clayton, reported:

The British officials of the Military Administration have been fully informed of the Zionist programme and the intentions of H.M.G. regarding it. It is inevitable however, that they should experience some difficulties in consequence of the fact that up to date our policy has been directed toward securing Arab sympathy in view of our Arab
commitments. It is not easy, therefore, to switch over to Zionism all at once in the face of a considerable degree of Arab distrust and suspicion. 30

General Clayton urged the Foreign Office to proceed with caution, since fighting continued in northern Palestine against remnants of the Ottoman armies. As a result of Clayton's efforts, the Arab Committee in Cairo sent emissaries to Palestine to persuade the Palestinian Arabs to take a more conciliatory attitude towards Zionism. 31 The British based their hopes on an Arab-Zionist detente to provide stability within the occupied areas of Palestine. By then, Arab agitators were openly proclaiming that the British had sent for the Jews to take over the country. British attempts to resolve the crisis increased Arab intransigence and resentment at both the British and Jews. The Christian population, long servile to the Ottomans now sided with the Arabs to unite against what they construed as Jewish expansionism. Political clubs, and secret societies formed in most towns soon after the British occupied southern Palestine in late 1917. 32 These clubs sought to place political pressure on traditional leaders in Palestine, and were later to form the nucleus of non-cooperation with British Military Authorities.

On May 8, 1918, the Military Governor of Jaffa summoned the political and religious notables of the Arab
port to meet Weizmann. After listening to Weizmann's speech, an Arab spokesman hastened to assure the Zionist leader of Arab and Christian friendship, providing it was reciprocated, and he took the opportunity to make a salient point:

....That Great Britain will allow representation of the Moslems and Christian to attend the sittings of the Convention or the body of men that have to consider and settle the question of this country.

Weizmann wrote to Balfour shortly after the hearing and argued against the application of a democratic system in Palestine. The contents of the note, reflected Weizmann's frustration at the state of impasse between Jews, Arabs, and Christians. Weizmann first attempted to define the relationship of Jews to the Palestine Arabs as economic rather than political. Then, inexplicably, he noted that the democratic system did not take into account the superiority of the Jews to the Arabs and the fundamental qualitative differences between Arab and Jew. These unfortunate, and largely uncharacteristic expressions of Weizmann were symptomatic of the growing feelings, on both sides, that the prospects of peaceful co-existence were receding rapidly. In another letter to Balfour on May 30, 1918 Weizmann wrote: "The fairer the English regime tries to be, the more arrogant the Arab becomes;" he concluded with a stinging criticism of the
British Authorities in Palestine by declaring "the Administration in this form is distinctly hostile to Jews."³⁶

The real problems lay between Palestine, London, and its allies. Palestine's status, other than the provisions of the Balfour Declaration, could not be agreed upon until the termination of hostilities. This liminal stage was further exacerbated by Arab realization that Zionism had helped to legitimize Britain's position in Palestine, which otherwise would have been based solely on military conquest.³⁷ Even more frustrating to the nascent national sentiments, was the formidable presence of British military manpower--a force not to be trifled with. The British feeling of the period was that the true Arab movement really existed outside Palestine. At a meeting of the Zionist Political Committee held in London on August 16th, Ormsby-Gore reiterated the official government policies. He compared the Arab movement led by Prince Feisal (son of Sherif Hussein) to "the Zionist movement, since it contained real Arabs who were real men."³⁸ According to Ormsby-Gore, people west of the Jordan were not Arabs, but only Arabic-speaking. Unfortunately, this widely held view was receiving official sanction, not in Palestine, but in London where leading Zionists had ready access to high government officials.
Pressure also came from other areas, mainly America, which had been consulted extensively during events leading up to the Balfour Declaration. America had entered the war on the side of the Entente Powers during April of 1917, though Washington had never declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, the prestige and enormous influence of the American government proved decisive in resolving the issue for the British Cabinet. At Weizmann's suggestion, contact with the American president, Woodrow Wilson, was undertaken by Louis Brandeis, a distinguished member of the American Supreme Court, and also the most influential Zionist in the United States. The Jewish population in the United States at the time, was thought to number some three million. Their concurrence in the matters of Palestine as a Jewish National Homeland was of vital importance to British Zionists, and Zionists elsewhere. Brandeis met with Colonel House, Wilson's intimate adviser on September 23, 1917. House, formerly opposed to Zionism, was no match for the erudite and persuasive Brandeis. At a meeting with the president held the same day, Brandeis was finally able to confirm Wilson's support for the Declaration. The text of the original Zionist draft had been altered in favour of the more pallid Milner-Amery version. Apparently, President Wilson was quite unaware of the differences. The original text had called for the
establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth of Palestine, a position unacceptable to the British government, and of course, to the Arabs. With unqualified American support, Britain could be assured against diplomatic isolation on the Palestine issue. The American Jewish Congress, which met in Philadelphia on December 17, 1918, adopted a similar resolution, as did congresses in Palestine, Austria-Hungary, Poland, the Ukraine, South Africa, and in other parts of the world representing millions of Jews.40

On September 30, 1918, Allenby's forces broke through at Damascus hurling before them the remnants of the dispirited Ottoman armies. Colonel Thomas Lawrence persuaded Chauvel, the Australian commander of the allied assault forces, to allow Arab guerrilla troops the right of ceremonial entry into the city. General Chauvel acceded to the colonel's request and in Lawrence's own words, "Damascus went mad with joy." On October 22, Aleppo, two hundred miles to the north, fell to Allenby's armies in a campaign unparalleled in the annals of modern warfare. By then the fighting was all but over.

In five and a half weeks the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had advanced the front 340 miles in the most dramatically successful offensive of the war, and had captured 75,000 prisoners against a loss of 5,000 casualties. But even this unprecedented final drive represented only the most spectacular phase of the war effort in the Levant. That effort
had engaged no less than 1,192,000 Allied troops in the Sinai, Palestine, and Syrian campaigns during the entire four years of conflict with a total of 58,000 battle casualties.41

In many respects Allenby's campaign was the most brilliantly executed Allied operation of the entire war, and perhaps a fitting revenge for the humiliations of the Gallipoli offensives. It decisively and permanently broke Constantinople's ancient grip on the Levant, and all but fatally drained away Turkish manpower and morale. The coup de grace, however, was not Allenby's powerful armies in northern Syria within striking distance of the Turkish heartland, but those of General Francet d'Espery in Macedonia. On September 14, with mixed Allied armies totaling 570,000 men, d'Espery attacked from Salonica across the mountainous Serbo-Greek border east of the Crna River. By September 25, Bulgarian troops began deserting en masse, and a week later King Ferdinand abdicated in favor of his son. Bulgaria was effectively out of the war. Lloyd George's strategy of 'knocking the props from under Turkey' proved to be highly successful.

On October 26, 1918, a meeting took place between British officials and Turkish envoys on the battleship Agamemnon in Mudros harbor. After four days of intensive and frequently acrimonious discussions in which the British refused to relinquish a single one of their
demands, the Armistice was eventually signed on October 30. The provisions of the Treaty, also known as the Mudros Treaty, were as uncompromising as they were harsh. The British were not magnanimous and demanded the immediate opening of the Dardanelle Straits to allied ships, and the right to station troops along the waterway. Other demands included the occupation of any vantage point in Ottoman territory, including the six Armenian vilayets and the entire demobilization of the Ottoman Army, except for a small caretaker force sufficient to maintain internal order. Cut off from Germany, and with the road to Constantinople open to the threat of a massive allied invasion, the Turks had little choice but to concede if they wished to preserve the last vestige of their crumbling Empire. The Treaty came into effect the following day, October 31, 1918.

Eleven days later, a separate peace was concluded with Germany, and on November 11 the Armistice was signed. Along the Western Front, stretching from the English Channel to the Swiss border, a strange and eerie quiet prevailed. With the cessation of hostilities, the belligerent powers had to settle their differences through diplomacy and negotiation.
Chapter III.

The Military Administration 1919-1920

The Peace Conference opened at the Versailles on January 1, 1919, almost a year after President Wilson's famous declaration of the Fourteen Points. Balfour and Lord Hardinge, Permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, moved from the Foreign Office to Paris where they remained until the signing of the Versailles Treaty in July. Lord George Curzon deputized for Balfour at the Foreign Office, and was responsible for relations with countries not represented at the Peace Conference. Curzon was directly in charge of affairs in Palestine, and as a former Secretary at the India Office and one of Britain's most experienced and able diplomats, he was not known for pro-Zionist sentiments. On the contrary, Curzon, along with other high ranking government officials introduced formidable obstacles to Zionist aspirations. Curzon, as well as being a staunch anti-Zionist, had developed an intense and acute dislike of Dr. Weizmann, the British Zionist leader. This was clearly evident, particularly in minutes written by Curzon pertaining to correspondence between Weizmann and Foreign Office officials during 1919. These will be closely examined at a later stage.

A few weeks after the conference opened in Paris,
there was unanimous agreement on the text of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which was finally ratified in late January of the following year. The Covenant contained twenty-six articles covering the constitution of the League. These included disarmament, collective security and the peaceful settlement of disputes, treaties, the Mandate system, and worldwide economic and social cooperation under the auspices of the League. Both the Arabs and Zionists sent delegations to the Conference, with Weizmann representing the Zionist cause, and Prince Feisal that of the Arabs. Also in attendance were Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner of Egypt; Sir Mark Sykes, Chief Political Officer; and Colonel T. E. Lawrence who remained with Feisal's delegation. Both delegations were of ex officio status and under the auspices of the British representatives. At the Peace Conference in Paris, Britain was extremely coy about declaring herself for the Mandate for Palestine, but in their own councils the British were clear about their intentions.  

1 The alternatives were (1) an international administration, (2) an American Mandate, (3) a French Mandate, but none of these were acceptable to the British. The idea of the first alternative, (international administration), considered the fourth item of the Sykes-Picot Treaties irrelevant from the time Allenby's forces had invested Jerusalem. Curzon disposed easily of
France, on the grounds that nobody else wanted her there. As for the United States, he suggested "that the Americans in Palestine might be a source, not of assistance, but very much the reverse to ourselves in Egypt."\(^2\) For Curzon, Britain was the only possible tutelar power on the grounds that the Jews and Arabs preferred her.

But Curzon, like Milner, the former High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, was less influenced by the well-being of the inhabitants of Palestine, whether Arabs or Jews, than by its strategic implications to Imperial interests. As recently as December of 1918, he had warned the Cabinet that Palestine was the 'strategical buffer' for Egypt and the Suez Canal. In the light of Allenby's stunning successes, he had little difficulty convincing Lloyd George that the Canal should be defended from the Palestine side, which meant that, to all intents and purposes, Palestine should remain under British control. Curzon, long considered an expert on the Middle East, carried considerable weight in the formulation of British policies in the area.

At Paris there was a sea of words. The French wanted as much of Syria as they could lay claim to, having prudently landed French troops at Beruit while British forces captured Damascus. The Americans, who genuinely attempted to be honest brokers, argued for the
Fourteen-Points and the rights of self-determination, as well as the autonomous development of subject peoples, specifically those of the former Ottoman Empire. Delays and difficulties in reconciling the conflicting interests dragged on for a year. Sir Mark Sykes, one of the few men who might have synthesized a solution, died of influenza early in 1919. King Feisal, along with Colonel Lawrence, left the Conference in disgust. The British stood firm, demanding Mesopotamia to protect the approaches to India, and Palestine to guard the Suez Canal.

Weizmann, who headed the Zionist delegation appeared before the Supreme Council of the League to testify. When asked by the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing what was the definition of a 'national home' as outlined in the Balfour Declaration, Weizmann gave his famous reply: "The opportunity to build up gradually in Palestine, a nationality which would be as Jewish as the French nation was French and the English nation English." Weizmann's remarks caused a furor among the British delegation, especially with Curzon. Weizmann's proposal of a Jewish Commonwealth had been previously deleted from the original draft of the Declaration, and the words 'national home' substituted instead. Curzon wrote to Balfour in Paris, after speaking with Sir Andrew Money, the Administrator in Palestine under General
Allenby, and reported that:

A Jewish Government in any form would mean an Arab rising, and nine-tenths of the population who are not Jews would make short shrift with the Hebrews. As you may know, I share these views, and have long felt the pretensions of Weizmann and Company should be checked.4

Curzon repeated the warnings issued earlier by General Allenby, and he too cautioned Balfour to downplay Zionist aspirations in order not to jeopardize all that had been won. Balfour replied on January 20 and noted:

.... As far as I know Weizmann has never put forward a claim for a Jewish government of Palestine. Such a claim in my opinion certainly is inadmissible and personally I do not think we should go further than the original declaration which I made to Lord Rothschild.5

On January 26, Curzon, not easily mollified, again wrote to Balfour:

....As for Weizmann and Palestine, I entertain no doubt that he is out for a Jewish Government, if not at the moment, then in the near future. . . He is trying to effect this behind the screen and under the shelter of British trusteeship. 6

Curzon's assessment of the situation was based on a series of cables from the Cairo office that warned of imminent unrest in the Occupied Territories. Lloyd George was bent on conducting his own brand of Foreign policy at the Peace Conference and gradually wore down
Georges Clemenceau, the Premier of France in acrimonious and often volatile negotiations. During the Paris Peace Conference, the French Secret Service had Lloyd George's telephone wires to London tapped by intelligence agents. Unfortunately, the intrigue failed as Lloyd George conversed in fluent Welsh with his private Secretaries.

France and Britain differed sharply concerning the disposition of the Arab lands. The French resurrected the now almost defunct Sykes-Picot agreement as the moral and legal basis of their claim to Syria. Alternatively, the British were reluctant to evacuate Syria until their claims to Palestine could be settled. So opposed were the British to any real French control in the Near East, that some members of the British Peace delegation openly advocated United States administration of the coastal areas of Syria. The British were also anxious to consolidate their friendship with the Arabs, led by Feisal, to ensure their pre-eminent position in the region. France still continued to demand Palestine despite Clemenceau's earlier pledge to Lloyd George, for the inclusion of the territory into a greater Syria, or else the creation of an international administration for the area, neither of which were acceptable to the British for reasons outlined earlier.

Probably, the most successful meeting to break the impasse over conflicting claims took place between
Weizmann and Feisal during January of 1919. This resulted in a written agreement known as the Feisal-Weizmann accords. Feisal promised to recognize both the separation of Palestine from Syria and the Zionist program for immigration. In return, Weizmann guaranteed the political, civil, and religious rights and freedom of the Moslem population of Palestine. Weizmann also promised economic aid and planning for the development for the whole Near East area, Jewish and Arab. Both contracting parties agreed that any disputes were to be referred to the British Government. By negotiating with Weizmann, Feisal, understandably alienated the French who then sought to sabotage his plans for an independent Arab state. The negotiations, and the subsequent accord, ipso facto removed the last source of friction between the British and Feisal through the latter's tacit recognition of a Palestinian state. Feisal stipulated that he would not be bound by the terms of the agreement unless all his other claims in the Near East were fully achieved at the Peace Conference. This stance led to a premature departure from the Conference, and two years later his ignominious removal from the Syrian throne by the French army. Paradoxically, by openly supporting British plans, both Feisal and Weizmann had placed the British government under even greater obligation to each of their causes.
In a series of dispatches from Cairo to London it became apparent that tension was rising in all the Occupied Territories. On March 3, 1919, isolated disturbances occurred but were quickly put down by British troops, with some casualties. On February 19, Curzon at the Foreign Office received an urgent dispatch from Colonel Meinertzhagen (Chief Political Officer of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force stationed in Cairo) which said:

Any decision incompatible with Arab aspirations concerning Syria, Palestine, or Mesopotamia taken without Feisal's presence will not be acknowledged by Arabs and will cause great difficulties in the future for which nation declines all responsibilities.

In the same document Meinertzhagen reported and warned:

....Liaison officer reports that Feisal is doing all he can to keep country quiet but is rapidly losing power and control in face of extremist party. Feisal is being pressed for a definite statement of policy before returning to the Paris Peace Conference. 9

Feisal had left the Conference in late January after signing the 'accords' with Weizmann. Churchill, then Secretary of State for War and later Colonial Secretary, reported that: "the unrest in Egypt was due largely to internal causes, and unrest in Palestine and Syria was
mainly due to French designs on the latter's province."10 Churchill, a profound supporter of the Zionist cause was later to become more directly involved in the Palestine issue during his tenure as Colonial Secretary in 1921. However, for the period in question, principal responsibility for Palestine lay with the British Foreign Office. With an increasing sense of urgency, Colonel Meinertzhagen telegraphed another dispatch to Curzon on March 2, 1919 which stated:

Demonstrations organized by the Moslem Christian League at Jerusalem and other centres in Palestine on February 27th. They passed off quietly. Their object was to protest against Zionism and to demand unity of Syria. Mention was made of complete independence.11

Polarization reached crisis levels, after demonstrations by Jews, celebrating the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, had further inflamed Moslem and Christian passions. Though publication of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine did not take place until April of 1920 (under the Civilian Administration), its existence was rumored. Heightened tensions compounded the problems and, from the British point of view, were inter alia, the division of responsibilities in the Occupied Territories of Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and the Hedjaz.

Palestine fell under the Foreign Office, as did Syria, in conjunction with the War Office, which under Churchill, was responsible for maintaining adequate troop
levels for the Military Administration, and meeting any unforeseen contingencies within the Fertile Crescent. Mesopotamia, on the other hand, came under the control of the India Office along with Persia. By the turn of the century, this division of authority had become more permanent and complex through the growth of separate bureaucratic administrative structures, each with its priorities and particular regional perspective. The war had reinforced this distinction by directly involving the War Office in Middle Eastern affairs. Foreign office priorities lay with the concerns and dispositions of their allies: France, Greece, Italy, the United States, and prior to the November Revolution which brought Lenin to power, Russia.

The India Office was primarily concerned with its role in the Asian sphere and the sensitivities of millions of Indian Moslems. The Arab Bureau, situated in Cairo, came to support the Sharifians as the instrument most suitable to serve British interests and placate Arab aspirations. The India Office, by contrast, urged support for the Saudis as the nascent power in Arabia, and felt that the Turks should be dealt with leniently at the Paris Peace Conference. Differences arose between the best methods of retaining British influence, by direct control, or indirect rule favored by the India Office. The so-called Mediterranean and Indian schools
of thought continued along separate paths even after the 1918 Armistice. Foreign Office and India Office rivalry was further complicated by poor communications between departments.

On March 20, 1919, the Arab question was discussed at a meeting of the Council of Four. The case of Syria was foremost on the agenda, but representatives of British and French governments failed to reach a satisfactory accord, and continued to interpret the Sykes-Picot agreement as it related to their own national interests. President Wilson, who later described the scene 'as the whole disgusting scramble for the Middle East', proposed that an Inter-Allied Commission be sent to ascertain the actual wishes of the people in the Fertile Crescent. Neither Lloyd George nor Clemenceau, despite their antagonism for one another raised any serious objections, and more importantly, Feisal concurred with Wilson's proposal. The French steadfastly refused to meet with Feisal or to recognize him as having any legitimate concern in Syrian affairs. Therefore, French policy was diametrically opposed to British Foreign Office policy which, though entertaining no direct ambitions in Syria, was equally firm in supporting the demands of the Arab delegation, and the right of the Arabs to choose the Power whose assistance they desired.¹⁴
Feisal wrote to President Wilson shortly afterwards to thank him for giving the Arabs the chance to express their own purposes and ideals for their national future. Given the circumstances prevailing in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Hedjaz, Feisal's correspondence consisted of rather premature optimism—far removed from the actual realities. British and French negotiations, undermined by subterfuge from both sides, continued in their failure to reach accord. In accepting Wilson's proposals for an Inter-Allied Commission, Clemenceau complained about the British Occupation of Syria and Feisal's pro-British attitudes, "which he indicated would make a fair investigation very difficult." The British delegation, through its spokesman Lord Balfour, continued to object because the investigation would hamper efforts to reach a peace accord with Turkey which had not relinquished formal control of her former Ottoman domains de jure, though not de facto. Britain objected to a 'Commission of Investigation' because of Feisal's increasingly pro-American attitude. Feisal's preference for an American mandate in Syria was well known, and it was clear to the Arab delegation that Wilsonian America was the only major power with no territorial ambitions in the Middle East. For the British, American involvement in the region, apart from the 'Armenian question' was inimical to their interests. The British obviously did
not relish the prospect of yet another major power in the area, and thought that the desire for an American Mandate might well appear in areas such as Mesopotamia.

The British and French met secretly without the knowledge of the American delegation in order to sabotage Wilson's proposals. At a series of highly informal meetings, there was a mutual understanding that sending an International Commission to Syria, which still included Palestine, would be unsettling as if the conference had been unable to reach a decision, and would open the door to intrigues of all kinds. The Franco-British plan called for the installation of Feisal as ruler of all Syria and the creation of a Syrian National Assembly. The French would then exercise mandatory control analogous to that of Britain in Egypt, its colonies in Africa, and over the native states of India. France would simply retain exclusive control in the realm of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and the Treasury, and thus retain its cherished position in the region. The British and French made their combined opposition to the Commission clear to Wilson on April 11, citing the necessity for further negotiations. A week later, the American delegation came into possession of a 'secret' French document through dubious circumstances. This memorandum indicated that the French were not going to participate in the Commission under any circumstances.
provided a British-Franco accord could be reached. The 'document' intimated that British refusal as a participator in the Commission was likely. On April 18, the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary decided to give up the idea of an Inter-Allied Commission, preferring instead to send only an American Delegation. Wilson complained bitterly that Britain and France were settling The League of Nations business between them, to which Lloyd George replied, "For us, the friendship of France is worth ten Syrias," and he declared, "Britain would absolutely not accept a mandate in Syria." Wilson had been clearly outmaneuvered by the intrigues of the Franco-British delegations, and from then on, his influence over the affairs in the Middle East gradually declined.

Reaction in the Middle East to the official announcement of the decision to send a Commission was telegraphed to the Foreign Office by General Clayton from Cairo on April 15, 1919. At this point, it is clear that Clayton was not fully aware of the recent Franco-British rapprochement achieved in Paris. The telegram read:

The announcement of decision of Peace Conference to send a Commission to Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia has had a steadying effect on both outlook of Syria and Palestine. It is desirable however, that Commission should start as soon as possible. Delay will cause unrest, and may even give rise to the suspicion that decision is not being action upon.
George Kidston, the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs under Lord Curzon commented that: "If British, French and American missions were to go separately and make separate reports, the only effects will be to delay still further any decision, and encourage the tendency to separate scrambling to create established rights and interests by each group."19 Two different directions were obviously taking place in the formulation of British policies in the Middle East, and in Palestine in particular. One was crafted and shaped by the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference led by Lloyd George and Lord Balfour, the other at the Foreign office under the auspices of Curzon. A third and very influential factor was, of course, the India Office, led by Sir Edwin Montagu, who continued to make demands in Mesopotamia which fell within the India Office's legitimate sphere of interest. Graham, a senior Political Officer with the Arab Bureau in Cairo, and a leading expert in Middle East affairs felt that a single Commission was bad enough but the idea of separate Commissions was even worse--"It will produce increased friction and no settlement."20 On April 20, 1919, upon hearing the news of the impending Commissions Curzon reported: "Who has been 'steadied' by the appointment of the Commission, I am at a loss to conjecture."21 Curzon's less than sanguine response was a sharp contrast
to the guarded optimism of General Clayton in Cairo.

American policy was outwardly consistent, based partly on the refusal to recognize any of the 'Secret Treaties', and partly on America's lack of territorial ambitions. Wilson continued to insist on the rights of Arab self-determination as enunciated within the Fourteen Points. The British refusal to accept a mandate for Syria left the French a clear field. Wilson admitted that the United States could not take the mandate and there were few alternatives. Thus, the real decision to French domination in Syria had already been made. Although Lloyd George and Wilson had agreed that they would abide by the decision of the Commission of Inquiry, the general allocations of mandates had actually been decided upon before the Commission ever left Paris.22 The French Foreign Minister Picot, had already informed Feisal that the Commission's findings had no influence on the outcome of the Peace Conference, and despite British and American protestations to the contrary, he was basically correct.

Wilson proceeded regardless, and appointed the King-Crane Commission that lasted from June 16, 1919 to early August. During this time the Commission travelled extensively in Syria and Palestine, attended conferences, collected depositions, and conducted extensive interviews with all population groups--Christian, Muslims, and Jews.
The Commission was headed by Dr. Henry C. King, an academic and president of Oberlin College, who was noted for religious work. His colleague was Charles R. Crane, a millionaire from Chicago, a self-confessed friend of Islam, and a partisan of self-determination of peoples, and one who openly resented old style British diplomacy.²³ The decision to select King and Crane to lead the investigation was accomplished without prior consultation with the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary in Paris. Wilson defended his selection on the grounds that "the two men were particularly qualified to go to Syria, because they knew nothing about it."²⁴ By all accounts the American delegation in Paris were not amused and rather chagrined at Wilson's decision.

A synthesis of the King-Crane Commission's report proved clearly unacceptable to either the British, or French government. It recommended that Syria, including Palestine and Lebanon be under a single mandate, and that Feisal should become king of the new Syrian state. The Commission also suggested that the 'extreme' Zionist program should be seriously modified, and that America be asked to accept a mandate for Syria. Failing this, the Commission opted for a mandate under British tutelage. In section five, paragraph one of the King-Crane Commission's report, dealing with Zionism in Palestine, the following is noted:
The Commissioners began their study of Zionism with minds predisposed in its favor, but the actual facts in Palestine, coupled with the force of the general principles proclaimed by the Allies and accepted by the Syrians have driven them to the recommendations here made.25

Referring to the often quoted Balfour Declaration, the Commission argued that a national home for the Jewish people is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State; nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.26 The report concluded with an ominous warning; the existing Zionist program could only be carried out by force of arms; and, consultations with British military authorities led them to believe that a force of some fifty thousand troops would eventually be required for this purpose.

The Commission's recommendation came to nothing because of Wilson's failure to grasp that consultation is a virtue only if the consulting authority has the will and ability to act on what it learns.27 America clearly had neither, and the British and French prevailed in the matter. In the Commission's itinerary there was a spectacular omission: it never went to Mesopotamia much to the relief of the India Office. It was the influence of British advisers like Gertrude Bell (later personal
assistant to Sir Percy Cox, the High Commissioner of Mesopotamia in 1920, and a leading Middle East expert in her own right), which decided the Americans against extending their inquiry into Mesopotamia.\textsuperscript{28} The omission was further predicated on the assumption, mostly by Crane, who was particularly susceptible to British intrigues and misinformation, that the Arabs of Mesopotamia wanted the British to have the mandate in Iraq. Events a year hence, proved that Arab sensibilities had moved in entirely another direction, and necessitated the dispatch of large numbers of British and Indian troops to contain widespread violence.

As the year progressed, those factors by which Feisal had hoped to assure Syrian independence were removed one at a time.\textsuperscript{29} World support (particularly that of America) for the principle of self-determination had dwindled, multi-lateral negotiations had failed, and the report of an impartial Commission had been virtually ignored.

Meanwhile, American Zionist aims, in direct opposition to the King-Crane report were outlined to Balfour in discussions with Mr. Justice Brandeis, leader of the American Zionist movement. Speaking on behalf of the American Zionist movement Mr. Brandeis said:

\textit{....First, that Palestine should be the Jewish homeland and not merely that there be a Jewish homeland in Palestine. That, he assumed, was the}
and will, of course, be confirmed by the Peace Conference. Secondly, there must be economic elbow room for a Jewish Palestine; self-sufficiency for a healthy social life. That means adequate boundaries, not merely a small garden within Palestine. Thirdly, the Justice urged that the future Jewish Palestine must have control of the land and natural resources which are at the heart of a sound economic life.30

Balfour expressed complete agreement with Brandeis on the three conditions, which was surprising for a politician renowned for his prudence and caution. Brandeis' three conditions were in diametric opposition to the terms of the Balfour Declaration, which had conspicuously sought to avoid the use of the words 'Jewish State' in its final draft. The position, as indicated, contradicted the contents of the King-Crane report, and indeed was bound to incur the formidable wrath of Curzon at the Foreign Office. Curzon had formerly bitterly criticized Weizmann for using the definition of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth under British Trusteeship. Curzon's reactions are worth noting as he reported:

Now what is a Commonwealth? I turn to my dictionaries and find it thus defined: "A State", "A body politic", "An independent community", "A Republic". . . What then is the good shutting our eyes to the fact that this is what the Zionists are after, and that the British Trusteeship is a mere screen behind which to work for this end.31
Yet Curzon, despite extensive experience and his 'Imperial character' was for once, curiously out of touch with political realities; and, perhaps his greatest error was to vastly underestimate the strength of Zionism and British resolve to honor the terms of the Declaration. Balfour was even more explicit in a memorandum addressed to Curzon on August 11, 1919. Balfour wrote:

The Four Great Powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.32

Balfour clearly stated that British policy was to treat Palestine as a unique case in which the Wilsonian principles of self-determination, and the expressed wishes of a sizable majority were not applicable.

The failure of the Paris Conference to resolve the contradictions and confusions of Allied promises was not surprising under the circumstances. On June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles between the Allies and Germany was signed. The disposition of the Ottoman Empire dragged on for another year. During July, the General Syrian Congress met in Damascus and demanded immediate and complete independence for Syria without protection or tutelage, under a civil constitutional monarchy.33
Congress formulated a document known as the Damascus Programme in which the final three resolutions dealt with the Palestine issue, and were later presented to the American section of the Inter-Allied Commission. The Palestinian members who came from all the major towns of Palestine, played a conspicuous part; and Iszat Darwaza, a Palestinian, was appointed as secretary to the Syrian Congress. Resolution seven called for a halt to Jewish immigration and expansion, while resolution ten denounced the 'Secret Treaties' aimed at the establishment of Zionism in the Southern part of Syria. Resolution eight read:

We demand that there shall be no separation of the Southern part of Syria known as Palestine... from the Syrian country, and desire the unity to be guaranteed against partition under whatever circumstances.

The appeal carried some influence with the American delegation of the Inter-Allied Commission, but it effected little difference on Franco-British plans for the region; and within a few months, Palestine was partitioned from Syria. A report on the political situation by Colonel French, Chief Political Officer, EEF, sent to Curzon on August 30, 1919 in the wake of the departure of the King-Crane Commission stated:

The whole country is now quiet from a political point of view, but it is the quiet resulting from exhaustion which followed the political orgy during the visit of the Commission,
and partly from the tension caused by the belief that the decision of the Conference will be known shortly.\textsuperscript{36}

In the same letter French replied to an allegation made by Weizmann regarding 'artificial agitation' in Palestine and noted:

\ldots It is the considered opinion of British officers who know Palestine well that the opposition to Zionism, which is based to a certain extent on the national sentiment of the inhabitants, has grown stronger during the past months, and it is believed that it is well known to the (Zionist) Commission, which has an efficient 'Intelligence' Service.\textsuperscript{37}

Colonel French was correct on both counts. The Zionist intelligence records of that period, the Hagana Archives—corroborated what British Intelligence Officers in Palestine were reporting to their superiors in London and Cairo. Concomitantly, leaders of the Zionist Organization, including Weizmann, were hardly ignorant of Allied intentions in the region, nor were they unprepared for future events. On September 10, 1919 Lloyd George held a meeting at the Manoir de Clairfontain-Hennqueville, Trouville, to discuss the question of frontiers in the Middle East. Present were the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, Arthur Bonar Law (Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House), Field Marshal Lord Allenby (High Commissioner in Egypt), Major-General Sir John O'Shea, Colonel W. A. Griborn, Colonel A. M. Henniker
from the War Office, and Sir Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the Cabinet). At this meeting the crucial decision was reached to withdraw British troops from Syria and Cilicia. The British aide-memoire gave November 1, 1919 as the tentative date for the evacuation to commence and enumerated, *inter alia*, the following guidelines:

3. In deciding to whom to hand over responsibility for garrisoning the various districts in the evacuated area, regard will be had to the agreements and declarations of the British and French governments not only as between themselves, but as between them and the Arabs.

4. In pursuance of this policy the garrisons in Syria west of the Sykes-Picot line and the garrisons in Cilicia will be replaced by a French force, and the garrisons at Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo will be replaced by an Arab force.

6. The territories occupied by British troops will then be Palestine, defined in accordance with its ancient boundaries of Dan to Beersheba, and Mesopotamia including Mosul, the occupation thus being in harmony with the arrangements concluded in December 1918.38

Events moved rapidly, and five days later, on September 15, Lloyd George and Clemenceau ratified the agreement. French forces had maintained a nominal presence in the coastal regions since the fall of Damascus to Allenby's troops in October of 1918; but the bulk of the occupation army consisted of British troops and their Colonial allies. Feisal's protestations presented
in a personal letter to Lloyd George delivered on September 9 by Allenby went unheeded. Feisal's letter despaired over the division and mutilation of Syria, claiming that Syria was "the brain of the Arab provinces." He warned of impending anarchy should the partition be implemented. Feisal left for London immediately, and in a series of meetings with Lloyd George held on September 19 and 23, and October 13, he pleaded for postponement of the decision and the cancellation of troop withdrawals. His plea was unsuccessful, and Lloyd George, in a letter dated October 10, advised Feisal that His Majesty's Government saw no recourse but to implement its decision, and abide by its agreements with the French. Feisal left Britain a bitter and disillusioned man. Attempts to negotiate with the French, though cordial on the surface, were equally unsuccessful. The French were adamant and determined to regain their position in the Levant. During Feisal's fruitless sojourn in Paris, tensions in Syria mounted. On November 1, 1919, British Troops began their evacuation by withdrawing from forward areas, and were replaced according to terms of the agreement, by either French or Arab forces. By early December their evacuation from Syria had been completed, and French and Arab troops now faced each other across new zones of occupation.
Events in Palestine became equally precarious. A series of British Naval Intelligence reports indicated the discovery of a plot to assassinate Weizmann, who, though based in London, was a frequent visitor to the area in a consultative capacity as leader of the Zionist movement. The announcement of the separation of Palestine from Southern Syria brought about vehement protests among the Jerusalem Arab population and elsewhere. In an article by Izsat Darwaza (former Palestinian member to the General Syrian Congress) in the July 1919 al-Urdan (The Jordan) he wrote:

It is not for the representatives of English, French and Zionist affairs to do as they please with a country which has been liberated by the blood of its children, who are ready to shed more blood if necessary to attain their ends.42

The ominous article militated against the cherished ideal of a peaceful coexistence between Arab and Jew. The inexorable momentum towards cathartic violence was imminent. Another Naval Intelligence report noted that by November, the whole anti-Zionist movement in Palestine had taken a very anti-British turn.43 Violence had already occurred in Syria when French forces had opened fire on Arab positions resulting in several Arab casualties, including the loss of life. Churchill, as Secretary of War during 1919, had overseen the
demobilization of four million British soldiers, was advised by General Allenby to place two regular battalions on standby, ready for dispatch to Palestine in the event of large scale unrest. On December 22, 1919 Curzon received an urgent message from Amir Feisal who was still sequestered in Paris in the vain expectations of reaching agreement over Syria's future with the French. The note read:

Paris
December 19, 1919

My Lord,

I have been informed by the French government that French troops have attacked Bekka and have proceeded to Balbek on the grounds that a French Sergeant was wounded in the course of a dispute between a French Officer and some Arabs. This proceeding is a direct contradiction with the agreement made with M. Clemenceau about the Bekka district. I have asked the French Government for the immediate withdrawal of their troops in conformity of the above agreement and protested vehemently against the breaking of its terms. I trust that the British Government in this critical situation will not refrain from giving their indispensable assistance to secure peace in the East, which has always been the aim and attitude of your nation.

Awaiting your favourable reply.

Feisal

No written reply was made by Curzon. Instead Kidston on December 24 noted that he had already informed General Haddad Pasha (the Syrian Arab Chief of Staff)
verbally that he did not see how we could help or intervene in any way.45

Kidston intimated in the same document, that the British would strongly resent any French protest of our actions in Mesopotamia or even the Vilayet of Mosul or on its border, and the French position in regard to the Bekka is somewhat analogous. The British position was crystal clear; not only had it abandoned its former ally (Feisal), it would also countenance no further opposition to French designs in Syria. From the Arab nationalist perspective, these actions represented British betrayal of the promises given at the end of the war.46 The year that began with hope of a new 'international order' and justice for all peoples ended in a trail of broken promises, bitterness and disillusionment for the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent. In general, the first year of peace for the Middle East was a search for solutions to the massive problems which followed in the wake of massive victory.47 The results had been worse than unproductive. Tension, not satisfactory order or stability, was the prevailing atmosphere in the entire sweep of territory from Egypt through the Fertile Crescent and Arabia to Iraq and Kurdistan. Turkey's rising nationalist movement under Kemal militated against the conclusion of a formal peace. The new year brought new answers, but only after Arabs fought with Frenchmen
in Syria, Iraqis clashed with Britons in Mesopotamia, and Jews fought Arabs in Palestine. Then more ominously, all groups turned anger upon the British authorities, who in retrospect, seemed the least prepared.
Chapter IV.

The Civilian Administration 1920-1921

Blood understood the native mind, He said: "You must be firm but kind". A mutiny resulted. Standing upon a mound, Blood cast his lethargic eyes around, And said, "Whatever happens we have got The Maxim Gun, and they have not".


As the new year began, an uneasy stalemate prevailed throughout the Fertile Crescent. If 1919 was a year of unproductive floundering for a policy, then the first nine months of 1920 proved beyond any shadow of doubt the cost of confusion. Pan-Arab unity was further fragmented by intermittent internecine conflict. British hopes that their Sharifian strategy would become a catalyst for the creation of a confederation of Arabic speaking states, east and south of the Sykes-Picot line had failed. Ibn Sa'ud, a former British ally against the Turks had risen up in the Hedjaz and dealt a crushing defeat to Hussein's forces at Turaba the previous year. Though Hussein had been spared further defeat only through Britain's diplomatic intervention with Ibn Sa'ud, sporadic fighting continued throughout the remainder of the year. By early 1920, it was evident to all parties that an anti-Zionist
outburst in Palestine was imminent. Only a spark would be needed to ignite the flame and there were many on both sides who relished the prospect. Major-General L.J. Bols had succeeded Major-General Watson as the Chief Administrator of Palestine at the end of 1919. Shortly after his arrival in Palestine, General Bols wrote to General Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial Staff to say:

... my view, after a month as Chief Administrator is that there will be no serious difficulty in introducing a large number of Jews into the country, provided it is done without ostentation. There are a few paid agitators, and of course the cry for an undivided Syria will continue.¹

Bols went on to request what, in his considered judgment were 'four essentials'. These were the return of Weizmann, a visit from Samuel, who had yet to visit Palestine, a loan of ten to twenty million pounds in order to aid reconstruction and development, and a competent official to be responsible for fiscal policies. Then, with extraordinary optimism, Bols added: "If this is done, I can promise a country of milk and honey in ten years and you will not be bothered by Anti-Zionist difficulties."² In less than three months, General Bols would be forced to make a radical reappraisal of his sanguine disposition regarding the problems of Palestine.

In January, British Naval Intelligence reports
indicated frequent movement of suspected agitators from Arab controlled Damascus to Jaffa and Jerusalem. The report concluded that: "These hasty visits are thought to foreshadow an attempt at simultaneous disturbances throughout Syria and Palestine on the lines of those organized in Egypt."\(^3\) Cairo had been the scene of widespread violence the previous year, in which some loss of life occurred when British troops restored order. Further reports from Naval Intelligence asserted that Anti-Zionism was responsible for a decided rapprochement between Christians and Muslims, and that the Fellahin were becoming agitated over Jewish land purchases. By February the process of polarization was almost complete. Jewish authorities had formed self-defense groups (the Hagana) and Arab elements had obtained arms from Damascus and elsewhere. British attempts to form Jewish and Arab battalions in order to bolster internal security had met with little success. Those units which were formed declined responsibility for operations in other areas. The Jewish Administration became virtually an Administration within an Administration, and thus a constant source of friction to both Moslems and Christians.

On February 27, 1919, a large Arab political demonstration took place in Jerusalem with the knowledge of the authorities. In a letter two weeks previously to
Curzon at the Foreign Office Weizmann had warned: "There is no doubt that anti-Zionist and anti-British propaganda among the Arabs run parallel." Whether Curzon replied remains unknown, nevertheless he was informed of the matter. General Bols allowed the demonstrations to proceed on the grounds that organized processions could be controlled, and they acted as a safety valve. The demonstrations passed off with a series of violent speeches denouncing Zionism and accusations of British support, but no serious incidents were reported.

A few days later, on March 1, events took a far more serious turn. Two Jewish settlements situated at Metulla and Tel Hai, near the Syrian border were attacked by armed Palestinian bands. The raids caused the deaths of seven Jews, among them Captain Trumledor, a prominent Zionist soldier who had seen service at Gallipoli, and with the Jewish Legion under Allenby. Bols acted decisively, and placed all forces at his disposal on a state of ready alert to prevent further outbreaks of violence.

On March 8, 1919 the Second General Syrian Congress proclaimed Prince Feisal King of Syria and Palestine, an act which took British and French delegations who were currently involved in preliminary consultations at the San Remo Conference, by complete surprise. On the same day, violent demonstrations occurred in Jerusalem and a
number of Jews were injured. Police, backed by armed troops restored order and arrested several hundred Arab protestors. In Cairo, Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby cabled a dispatch marked 'urgent' to Curzon at the Foreign Office. It said:

Cairo March 13, 1920

I have received a copy of a letter from Feisal, addressed to me and other High Commissioners dated March 8th informing me that on that day the Syrian Congress was declaring the independence of Syria and placing him on the throne. He assures His Majesty's Government that neither the proclamation of independence nor his own advent to the throne of Syria will change the friendly relations between Syria and Great Britain and he assures His Majesty's Government of his friendship. Subsequently my Liaison Officer saw Feisal who stated that there was no intention of hostility to British or French but that the declaration of Congress was merely a statement of the will of the people and a request to the Peace Conference to fulfill its promises.5

British and French reaction was as swift as it was certain. Curzon cabled Allenby the same day with instructions which left no doubt of the British position:

Foreign Office
March 13, 1920 6 PM

You should inform Amir Feisal at once that H.M. Government cannot recognize right of Damascus Congress, of whose composition or authority they know nothing, to settle future of Syria, Palestine, Mosul, or Mesopotamia. These countries were conquered from the Turks by the Allied Armies, and
their future, which is now before the Peace Conference, can only be determined by the Allied Powers acting in concert. H.M. Government, together with the French Government, are compelled to say that they regard these proceedings as null and void.  

Curzon had already been in touch with the French Ambassador in London, M. Paul Gambon and the British Ambassador in Paris, the Earl of Derby. In a diplomatic initiative, they agreed that an invitation should be extended to Amir Feisal to return to Europe to place his case before the Peace Conference. Allenby was accordingly notified, as were General Bols, and General Sir Reader Bullard, the Governor General of Baghdad in Mesopotamia. Had Feisal confined his 'declaration of independence' within the geographic configurations as defined by the Sykes-Picot accords, then the matter would involve only the Damascus government, and its French counterpart in Paris. The inclusion of the annexed areas of Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan in the proclamation, placed Feisal in a head-on collision course with both British and French interests in the region. Allenby pressed for an early decision from the Foreign Office and warned of the risk of war, in which event, the Arabs would inevitably regard both the English and French as their enemies. Allenby went one stage further, and recommended to the Foreign Office that the Powers acknowledge sovereignty of Feisal over an Arab nation or Confederation embracing
Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia under the auspices of French and British Administrations. Allenby added: "This arrangement would I think be accepted by Feisal, and Arabs would be our friends and I cannot see how we could be losers by it."7

On March 19, 1920, the Foreign Office sent the following telegraph to Allenby's headquarters in Cairo:

As the present proposed Palestine and Mesopotamia are being severed from the Turkish Empire by the Peace Treaty now being drawn up and which Turkey will be compelled to sign; and mandates placing their administration in the hands of Great Britain under The League of Nations are being prepared. Syria will be similarly treated with the French as mandator-ies.8

In the same telegram, Curzon also professed curiosity and asked Allenby how would recognition of Feisal as King be reconciliable with Zionist claims? Allenby's reply to Curzon was telegraphed on March 21:

I fully understand you contemplate no military action in Syria on North West Arabia, but I would impress you that if the Peace Conference persists in regarding as null and void the action taken by Feisal and the Syrian Congress it is almost certain that Feisal will be forced by public opinion to commence hostilities.9

Regarding reconciliation with Zionist claims, Allenby advised Curzon of the following:

If you can assure Feisal that Peace Conference (a) recognized him as
representative of Arab peoples of Syria and Palestine and will deal with him as such at Peace Conference.

(b) recognition of the rights of Arab peoples of these countries to unite under one suzerainty provided the special claims of Great Britain in Palestine and Mesopotamia and of France in Syria and Lebanon are recognized, and claims of Zionists to a home for Jews in Palestine are admitted, I believe Feisal will accept such a decision.10

On the Mesopotamian question, Allenby suggested consultation with authentic representatives on their wishes for joining a Confederation of Arab States. Samuel, Chairman of the Board of Economic Development for Palestine and later High Commissioner, was visiting the region for the first time. His reaction to the 'declaration of independence' by the Syrian General Congress was as swift as it was specific. He telegraphed Curzon and claimed:

I can see no sufficient reasons for recognizing Feisal king of Palestine. Would tend to take the life out of the Zionist movement. The demands for Syrian unity depend partly on the Effendi class partly on legitimate desire for security.11

The impasse continued for another month until the decisions made at the San Remo Conference were announced. In Palestine the situation deteriorated, and on April 4 a series of violent incidents occurred in Jerusalem. Symbolically, it was the day of the Christian Easter, Jewish Passover, and the Muslim festival of Nevi Musa.
By the time the violence had subsided, five Jews and four Arabs lay dead and two hundred and eleven Jews and twenty-one Arabs had been wounded—some seriously. Only the rapid deployment of police, augmented by military units, prevented further loss of life, and scores of arrests were made on charges of public violence. General Bols, the Chief Administrator, responsible for law and order, was forced to reconsider his earlier decisions. He promptly banned all demonstrations forthwith, and issued an 'Emergency Proclamation' allowing for detention by military authorities. In a tone of exasperation, shortly after the riots, Bols cabled the Foreign Office and stipulated:

I think the Zionist Commission should be broken. Welcome a Zionist Advisory Council consisting of about three members with a few clerks attached to me and directly under my control. Owing to action of Jewish soldiers on leave in Jerusalem during riots feeling against the Battalion is very strong. I recommend Battalion be sent to Kantara and demobilized.

Bols' message was a far cry from the promises he made three months earlier to create a land of "milk and honey in ten years!" Foreign Office reaction to General Bols' proposals was lukewarm. O. A. Scott of the Diplomatic Service at the Foreign Office reported:

To accede to either of General Bols' requests would be immediately interpreted by all Moslems as a sign of
weakness and they would imagine that they could secure whatever they liked by threatening the Administration.14

J. A. Tilley, a junior official at the Foreign Office was less kind, and on April 14 he noted: "It looks as if General Bols ought to be moved."15 The communal violence of April 4 marked a serious turning point in the relationships between Arabs, Jews and British, and inaugurated an era of conflict and bloodshed that continues to this day. The British Government however, took the 'disturbances' seriously enough to order the dispatch of two regular army battalions from Egypt to supplement thinly stretched British forces in Palestine. This brought the total number of British troops in Palestine to about sixteen thousand men, with a further sixty thousand troops of the Anglo-Indian army stationed in the vast areas of Mesopotamia. Churchill, at the War Office, was particularly incensed at the latter, which he claimed were costing eighteen million pounds per annum, and were under control of the India Office. "This extravagance, he averred, was the fact that the India Office itself did not have to foot the bill."16 In a matter of months, Churchill was forced to reappraise the situation. His shock was even greater when, in July, a full scale rebellion swept across Mesopotamia, taking the scattered Anglo-Indian garrisons, unaware and unprepared.17
Damascus remained temporarily quiet and the French awaited the decision at the San Remo Conference before precipitating action against Feisal. General Bols, complained bitterly to the Foreign Office of the activities of the Jewish Administration, citing them as the cause of friction, and irritants to Moslems and Christians, but managed to maintain a semblance of order. Weizmann, who arrived in Palestine shortly after the 'disturbances' demanded an interview with Allenby to discuss the deteriorating situation. Weizmann, known for his candour, and his convictions, did not mince words with the High Commissioner of Egypt. He accused the Administration of Palestine of being anti-Zionist and described the recent riots in Jerusalem as a pogrom.18

Allenby, deeply disturbed by Weizmann's allegations, cabled the Foreign Office for further instructions. Lord Hardinge, former Viceroy of India, and then Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and deputizing for Curzon, wrote:

...I think we had better wait until after the conference at San Remo where we may hope for developments. In the meantime our policy is based on Mr. Balfour's declaration. It's no use trying to force the pace at San Remo.19

Leading the British delegation at San Remo were Lloyd George, Balfour, and Curzon. While at San Remo, the British delegation made the decision to introduce a
civilian government into Palestine. The legality of such an action was questionable because Ottoman Turkey had not formally relinquished its claim to sovereignty over the area. After much deliberation, the appointment of High Commissioner for Palestine was offered to Herbert Samuel, then Chairman of the Board for Economic Development of Palestine, and former Home Secretary under Asquith's government. Samuel, himself a Zionist and a Jew, consulted other leaders of the Zionist Movement present at the Conference on April 24, 1919. They urged him to accept the appointment, and the next day, Samuel formally notified Lloyd George of his acceptance, explaining "that he was motivated by a sense of duty." Samuel, a prudent and cautious man noted in his letter that:

The fulfillment of the Zionist programme must, from the nature of the case, be gradual, and very considerate for the interests of Arabs and Christians. Jewry in Palestine would be more likely to practice patience, without losing enthusiasm, if the pace were set by an Administrator who was known to be in sympathy with the ultimate aim.

Samuel, knighted prior to taking up his appointment on June 30, 1920, proved as good as his word. No British High Commissioner, before or since, had faced the prospect of such a daunting challenge. Curzon's initial objection that Samuel would prove to be partisan was overruled by Lloyd George and Balfour. The High
Commissioner designate, besides receiving unqualified support from leaders of the Zionist Movement, also had influential backing from British officials in Egypt, among them Sir Gilbert Clayton, the Chief Political Officer. Allenby was considerably less optimistic in view of the recent 'disturbances' in Jerusalem during Easter. On hearing news of Samuel's pending appointment as High Commissioner to Palestine, Allenby wrote to Curzon and declared that:

He feared the appointment of any Jew as the first Governor would be the signal for widespread disturbances, murders, attacks on Jews, on the Jewish colonies, and for Arab raids across the border. But, if a Jew were to be appointed, Samuel would be the right man.  

The San Remo Conference ended on April 26, 1920 after scenes that President Wilson once described "as the whole disgusting scramble for the Middle East." Mandates were awarded to France for Syria and Lebanon, and Britain received the mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia (Iraq). The territorial desiderata of the former Ottoman Empire was divided among the victors in what Monroe, perhaps characteristically, described as "decisions that accorded neither with the wishes of the inhabitants nor with the unqualified end-of-the-war undertakings about freedom of choice. They were masterpieces of unabashed self-interest, suggesting to many
onlookers that all talk of liberating small nations from oppression was so much cant." However, the British position had been made clear, and the French followed suit.

The French Government, which had delayed any action against Feisal until the outcome of the decisions at San Remo moved decisively by instructing. French forces, under the command of General Gouraud to advance on Damascus. Feisal implored the British Government to intervene, and the British urged negotiations between Feisal and the new French Premier, Millerand. The official British views were communicated to the French Ambassador by Curzon on May 18, 1920 in which he noted: "That if the French were experiencing difficulties with him (Feisal) arising out of their mandate they should solve them independently." Two weeks later the French issued an ultimatum to Feisal in which they demanded his unconditional acceptance of the Mandate, and inter alia, their control and occupation of the Rayak-Homs-Hama-Allepo railway, the abolition of conscription, reduction of Arab armed forces, and acceptance of the Syrian franc. Feisal, whose Arab forces were no match for the recently reinforced French Army, was forced to comply. The French Army in the Levant occupied Damascus on July 24, and Feisal was sent into exile in England. For Britain the events of July 1920, and French intervention,
essentially removed Syria from the sphere of direct British concern in the Fertile Crescent. For Feisal, though the Arab state of Syria ceased to exist, there were future compensations dictated by events elsewhere. A few years hence, Feisal would be crowned King of Iraq with the blessings of British power.

On June 30, 1920, Samuel, recently the recipient of the Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire, arrived in Palestine to commence his duties as High Commissioner. Disembarking at Jaffa harbour from H.M.S. Centaur, he was met by Colonel Storrs, the Military Governor of Jerusalem. Together they left the cruiser to a salute of seventeen guns answered by batteries on land. "Ten minutes later, the first Jewish ruler of Palestine since Hyrcanus II, the degenerate Maccabean, stepped ashore." The occasion, much to the relief of the Military authorities passed off without incident, and Samuel was duly installed in the Commissioner's residence in Jerusalem. The British Mandate for Palestine had accorded legitimacy, and international recognition for British interests in the region. Turkey formally signed the Treaty of Sévres on August 10, 1920, and relinquished all rights over her former domains in the Fertile Crescent.

It would, now, be useful to return to the decisions made at the San Remo Conference and briefly explicate the
Mandate system. The Mandate for Palestine was *sui generis* by the inclusion of the 'Balfour Declaration' in the British Mandate for Palestine. The International Mandates System, later ratified by the Covenant of the League of Nations, August, 1922, and which came into force a year later, and were largely the brainchild of General Jan Christian Smuts. The legal conception of the Mandate, had, as its genesis, Roman Law, and formed part of the modern Civil Codes based on that law. The term was probably introduced into the War settlement because its author, General Smuts, was not only a soldier-statesman but also a highly skilled lawyer trained in Roman-Dutch Law. In European Civil Codes, the Mandate was the instrument to transfer the power of doing something for the Mandate in his name. The International Mandate was similarly an instrument by which the League of Nations charged a state (the Mandatory) to exercise powers legally on its behalf and subject to the League's jurisprudence. Three classification systems for mandates were established and distinguished by (A) (B) or (C) mandates. Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine were all designated (A) mandates which implied that they were nearly ready for self-government, and required only a relatively short period of tutelage. In contrast, all German colonies in Africa were accorded (C) mandates, which gave the Mandatory power greater authority
over the mandate's internal and external affairs, the right to impose its own laws, and the period of tutelage was conceived as a long-term proposition with respect to self-government. In essence, the (B) and (C) mandates prepared the foundations for and had the conceptual effect of international cooperation in the administration of backward peoples.30

All Mandatory Powers were subject to the authority of the Permanent Mandates Commission established by the League of Nations as an institution of international law and international politics. Under this institution, Britain was, thereby, charged with a trusteeship for Palestine and Mesopotamia until eventual self-government was realized. Since the Balfour Declaration was an integral part of the trusteeship, the terms of the Articles had to be phrased to embrace the British promise to establish a National Home for the Jews. The language had been the subject of much discussion even before the San Remo Conference took place. In March of 1920, a draft had been circulated among senior officials at the Foreign Office which read:

His Majesty's Government shall be responsible for placing Palestine under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of a Jewish National Home and the development of a self-governing Commonwealth.31
This caused Curzon to comment:

Development of a self-governing Commonwealth. Surely most dangerous. It is the euphemism for a Jewish State, the very thing they accepted and that we disallow.32

Arab reaction to decisions made at the San Remo Conference, though not publicized until May 5, was widespread. General Haddad, leader of the Hedjaz delegation in Paris during Feisal's absence, submitted a formal protest to the Secretary General of the League of Nations. Haddad pointed out "that the wishes of the inhabitants had not been taken into account, and noted 'a certain contradiction' between the principles implied by the decisions, and the promise of liberty and self-determination so solemnly proclaimed."33 From Arab perspectives, the decisions gave credibility to the concept which future Arab historians contemptuously referred as the twice promised lands. Prior to Samuel's arrival in Palestine in June 1920, the announcements of the decisions made at San Remo set off a series of Palestinian protests against those policies, particularly the separation of Palestine from Syria. Several major armed clashes along the Beisan-Samakh frontier between Syria and Arab tribes and British garrisons caused heavy casualties on both sides.34 By June, the situation in Palestine was tense but quiet.

In his first official duty as High Commissioner,
Samuel convened an important meeting for Moslem, Christian and Jewish leaders in Jerusalem on July 2, 1920. Samuel outlined the British program for Palestine under the Mandate and stressed that Palestine had been liberated from the Turks mainly by British arms, and the Mandate would be carried out with absolute impartiality. On the Jewish question, Samuel declared that the gradual establishment of a National Home for the Jews would not in any way "affect the civil or religious rights or diminish the prosperity of the general population." Samuel cited the need for economic and social development in the region, and sketched a large program of public works for his audience: electrification, irrigation, drainage systems, afforestation, and a concerted campaign against malaria. Then, in accordance with Eastern custom, Samuel proclaimed a general amnesty to all prisoners detained in the recent disturbances, the exception being an Arab and a Jew, who were being held on charges of murder connected with the unrest in May. Samuel warned malcontents that should disturbances recur, they would be suppressed with all the resources at his command. Samuel's immediate concern was to bring an end to, or at least ameliorate the political polarization among Arabs, Christians and Jews that had preceded his tenure of office. Calling for councils in which negotiations could take place between leaders of the
various communities, he urged reconciliation at every opportunity. Samuel's natural dignity and reputation for absolute impartiality won respect not only from Jews, for whom he represented an almost Messanic hope, but also from Arabs. To many Arab notables and members of the Effendi class, Samuels was known as 'Nafsu Sherif', which in translation from Arabic means, "He is honorable."37

The structure of government which Samuel controlled was similar to that of a British Crown Colony. The High Commissioner presided over an Executive Council of Officials, and was chairman of an Advisory Council, which included ten government members and ten representatives of the local population. In the case of Palestine, the Advisory Council consisted of four Moslem Arabs, three Christian Arabs, and three Jews. Most of the senior officials in Jerusalem and in the Districts were British or Colonial officers, and many of them had served in the military regime.38 Colonel Ronald Storrs, former Oriental Secretary to Lord Kitchener, and previously the Military Governor of the same district, was appointed Civil Governor of Jerusalem. Brigadier Wyndham Deedes, formerly of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, became the Civil Secretary, and later Chief Secretary. Lieutenant-General Sir Louis Bols, the former Chief Administrator of Palestine was recalled a few months later, and military responsibility for Palestine was transferred to the
British High Command in Egypt. Samuel, as High Commissioner retained the nominal title of Commander-in-Chief of British troops in Palestine, but actual control was retained by Cairo. Curzon, who had sought to prevent Samuel's appointment, had, in the letter of confirmation of May 19 added the caveat, "that the possession of this title (C.I.C. of troops Palestine) will not give you the right to interference in details of operations or movement of troops." Curzon's fears were unjustified, and Civil-Military relations during Samuel's tenure in Palestine, which lasted five years, were remarkably cordial. However, the relationships between Arabs, Christians, and Jews deteriorated as extremists gained prominence on either side. Nevertheless, Samuel wrote optimistically to Curzon on July 12, 1920 and claimed:

I venture to write direct, for I believe that you, Sir, will be gratified to learn that all the forebodings of serious troubles which would attend the inauguration of the new regime have proved wholly without foundation. The raids, the riots, the boycott of the Administration, which were freely prophesied, have none of them occurred... the country at the moment is in a state of complete tranquility.

Samuel's optimism was seemingly justified, and perhaps mollified Curzon. Events elsewhere in Syria and Mesopotamia reached dangerous proportions. Feisal's expulsion from Syria by the French instituted a series of events that ignited widespread revolt in Mesopotamia.
The revolt was later described by Gertrude Bell, assistant to Sir Percy Cox, High Commissioner for Mesopotamia, as a 'Holy Jihad'. The rebellion was quashed by the end of the year, and the Anglo-Indian army was reinforced with large infusions of British troops. In 1920 the decisions made at San Remo had intermittently evoked Arab violence in every part of the Mandate throughout the Fertile Crescent. British might and military power prevailed in the short term. India was still the base of great armies, Egypt was under British control, and from the Levant to the Persian Gulf, British power predominated. Yet, the cost of maintaining that power, ultimately, proved too great, and 1920 marked an irreversible turning point in the relationship between Britain and the Middle East.
Chapter V

The Civilian Administration 1921-1922

The new year began with a significant change in the administrative departments responsible for overseeing British policies in the Middle East. Pressure continued for the creation of a single department to handle the Middle East. As early as May 1920, Hubert Young of the Foreign Office had pointed out the deficiencies of the existing arrangements to the Middle East Committee chaired by Curzon. Young drew a picture of extraordinary complexity: Egypt, Yemen and Asir, Persia, Syria, and the Hedjaz were the responsibility of the Foreign Office; Palestine and Mesopotamia were controlled by the War Office under military administrations; and, the Persian Gulf Coast, Nedj and Hail, Aden, and the Hadhramaut fell under the jurisdiction of the India Office, with a number of intermediary agencies and areas of dual control further complicating matters. Syria was effectively removed from the British sphere of influence by French intervention during July of 1920, which led to the temporary withdrawal of King Feisal. The Military Administrations of Palestine and Mesopotamia were replaced with Civil Administrations and the appointment to the territories of High Commissioners. In the latter's case, the War Office was forced to assume direct responsibility for the widespread
revolt which lasted until the end of the year.

Hubert Young suggested three alternatives to the Committee. These were divided control, control by a new department, or control by an Eastern department of the Foreign Office—and he proposed that the Foreign Office support the third alternative as the least objectionable.2 No decision was agreed upon, and Curzon's strenuous objections to representatives of the India Office under Sir Edwin Montagu, and the Colonial Office under Lord Milner, served only to increase the antipathy between the various departments. Faced with public demand for the reduction of expenditures in Britain's vast overseas territories, and the newly acquired Middle East regions in particular, Parliamentary pressure was inevitable. A Parliamentary delegation led by Lord Winterton pressed for change because if the current arrangement was allowed to continue, it would result in conflicts of policy, misunderstandings, further delays and unavoidable expense.3

On December 13, 1920, discussions resumed at Cabinet level, and Churchill of the War Office urged a definite change of policy. For Churchill, it was sine qua non to reduce public expenditure and military forces in the region to an acceptable level. The meeting was also addressed by Colonel A. T. Wilson who had recently returned from his staff post in Mesopotamia. Again, no
decision was agreed upon and the inertia continued until December 31 when a full cabinet met to consider a number of documents relating to the situation in the Middle East. After an acrimonious session of sharply divided opinion and intense opposition led by Curzon and Milner, the Cabinet finally agreed:

(1) that the responsibility for the whole of the administrations of the mandatory territories of Mesopotamia and Palestine should be concentrated in a single Department, which should bear on its financial votes the whole of the expenses, both Civil and Military;

(2) that, as a counsel of perfection, the best plan would be the establishment of a new Ministry for the purpose, but at the present time this proposal would not be acceptable to Parliament;

(3) (by a majority) that the New Department should be set up as a branch of the Colonial Office, which should be given some new title, such as the "Department for Colonies and Mandated Territories";

(4) that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in consultation with the heads of the other Departments concerned, should appoint an Interdepartmental Committee to work out details, including the date of transfer;

(5) that, in the meantime, the responsibility should remain as at present . . .

The transition period was short. On January 9, 1921 Milner of the Colonial Office tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister, Lloyd George. Milner had bitterly opposed the transfer from the outset, and had intimated to close friends that he was ready to retire. Milner had been ordered by the Cabinet to work out the details of the
transfer at the meeting held on December 31, 1920. On January 3, 1921 Milner responded to the Prime Minister with a note stating: "I will not discuss the merits of the scheme, with which I do not agree. It is a government decision and has to be carried out by members of government. But not by me, who am on the very eve of retirement, and only hanging on from day to day." In the same letter Milner asked to be relieved of all official duties as soon as possible.

After hurried deliberations at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Lloyd George, the appointment was offered to Churchill, who wrote his acceptance the following day. Commenting on the proposed changes, Christopher Sykes of the Foreign Office Middle East section optimistically wrote: "In terms of personalities this meant that the territories left the care of Curzon, an emphatic opponent of Zionism but one who had never allowed his prejudice to influence his official actions, and entered the care of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Winston Churchill, who wished Zion well from his heart." Churchill had consistently supported the Zionist cause throughout his political career; although Churchill's opinion of the merits of the Balfour Declaration were not publically or privately recorded. Curzon telegraphed the Cabinet's decision to Samuel in Palestine on January 7, 1921, advising him of the formation of a new Committee under the aegis of the
Colonial Office, which would soon be directly responsible for affairs in Palestine and Mesopotamia. On January 9, 1921, Samuel received another characteristic letter from Curzon who wrote:

You are about, I fancy, to pass out of my hands despite the strong opposition of Milner, Montagu, Fisher and myself, who all thought it essential to retain the management in the hands of the Foreign Office. Today, we heard the sequel, which leads me to think it was a put up job between Lloyd George and Churchill, viz that the latter is to succeed Milner at the Colonial Office and to assume charge of you, Weizmann and Co. at once! I hope you will like it.8

Although Samuel thought that Churchill was precipitous, he appeared gratified at the prospect of working with Churchill with whom he became well acquainted during the former's tenure as First Sea Lord at the Admiralty. Weizmann wrote to Samuel from his headquarters in London, noting that "the provisional status of Palestine renders an already difficult task more difficult."9

Arab reaction was still predicated on the philosophy that it would be possible to change British government policy towards the Middle East, particularly the provisions of the Balfour Declaration as an integral component of the Palestine Mandate. Jewish immigration into Palestine, long a source of bitter opposition from the Arabs,
rose by several thousand during 1921. Of a total population of 752,048 persons in Palestine, 589,177 were Moslems, 71,464 Christians, and 83,790 Jews, minor religious affiliations accounted for 7,617 others."\textsuperscript{10} Jewish financial resources allowed Jews to purchase land, often from absentee Arab landholders, and Jewish settlements colonies underwent considerable expansion as a result.

The Arabs continued to press for independence and a democratic government in which they would have commanded an overwhelming majority. British political and diplomatic thinking continued to be impervious to Arab nationalism in Palestine, and saw it as an external phenomena. Consequently, the British Government had consistently denied Palestinian Arab representation at the Peace Conference of 1919, and at the San Remo Conference of 1920. Acting under instructions from the British Government, the British military administration had prohibited the departure of any delegation of Palestinian Arabs maintaining that only King Feisal of the Hedjaz kingdom could represent the Arab nations as a whole. The first opportunity for the Arabs to present their views to British officials arose during the Cairo conference of March 1921, when the Arab Executive sent a six-man delegation to Cairo, headed by its president, Musa Kazin al-Husayni.\textsuperscript{11}
A month before, on February 13, Churchill officially assumed his duties as Colonial Secretary. Though not knowledgeable about affairs in the Middle East, other than from a War Office perspective, Churchill set about his task with his customary enthusiasm. One of his first actions was to set up a Committee on the Middle East, comprised of the most formidable array of experts ever assembled by the Colonial Office including: Edward Marsh, Sir James Masterton-Smith, Sir Herbert Creedy and Sir Arthur Hirtzel, formerly of the India Office. Colonel T. E. Lawrence was appointed Churchill's personal adviser, and Colonel Meinertzhagen became his Military Adviser on Affairs in the Middle East. Major Hubert Young, also of the India Office and with extensive experience in the Middle East, became one of Churchill's closest principal assistants. The Committee formed the newly created Middle East Department of the Colonial Office with full authority over the affairs of Palestine and Mesopotamia. Shortly after the first meetings had convened, it was decided that Churchill should visit the Middle East and discuss its future with the High Commissioners, various British Officials, and representatives of Arabs and Jews, to include a delegation of Palestinian Arabs.

Before leaving for the Cairo conference, Churchill met with Weizmann in London on March 1, 1920. Weizmann voiced his concerns about the delay in ratifying the
Palestine Mandate, and the increased potential for agitation among Arabs as a result. The other discussions centered on the economic development of Palestine and future boundaries, particularly those east of the Jordan River. Churchill was non-committal at this stage, but Weizmann left the meeting with the impression that, "Mr. Churchill had a low opinion of the Arab generally". Churchill was in fact preoccupied with the problem of Transjordan and Iraq. Describing the two regions as analogous to "two very expensive babies of whom he was not the father, but nevertheless responsible for", Churchill had already made the decision to separate Transjordan from the Palestine Mandate (Figure 3). Churchill was not influenced by Weizmann's arguments to incorporate Transjordan into Palestine and open it for Jewish settlement. Nor was Churchill impressed with Weizmann's suggestion that this would compensate for Britain's agreement with France which fixed the northern boundary at the Litani. This was the river, which the Zionists had hoped to harness for electrical and industrial purposes. However, Weizmann did not leave the meeting entirely empty-handed. In carefully balancing his options, Churchill foresightedly agreed that the Negev should form part of the Palestine Mandate, and should, therefore, be open to eventual Jewish settlement. The outstanding question was the policy to be adopted with regard to
Figure 3. The division of Palestine.
(Gilbert, 1975)
Transjordan, long an area of anti-French activity against French authorities in Syria.

Churchill left England for Cairo in early March, accompanied by senior officials of the Colonial Office Middle East Department. The Cairo Conference was convened on March 12, 1921 and attended by the High Commissioners of the Mandate territories and other senior military and civilian British Officials. The Conference was divided into two committees, one political and the other, military. Churchill chaired the Political Committee, and General Sir Walter Congreve, General Officer Commanding British Forces in the Middle East, presided over the Military Committee. Churchill was determined to drastically reduce military expenditure in the region and substitute air-power for the large numbers of British ground forces. To this end, he consulted extensively with Sir Hugo Trenchard and Sir John Salmond, the Air Officer Commanding Middle East Area. General Haldane, the senior general commanding troops in Mesopotamia, and Sir Percy Cox, the British High Commissioner of the region had already arrived at an agreement on the preliminary withdrawal of British and Indian troops from the Mesopotamia theatre. Haldane, on instructions from the Colonial Office, had already ordered the withdrawal and redeployment of some outlying detachments.

During discussions held on March 14, 1920, it was
unanimously agreed that King Feisal, (the son of Sherif Hussein, who had been forced to relinquish his sovereignty over Syria by the French), was according to British interests, the best suited candidate for ruling Mesopotamia. Churchill's backing of Feisal's candidature, was supported rather expectedly by Colonel T. E. Lawrence. Lawrence had served as Feisal's Liaison Officer during the war, and acted as his personal adviser during the Paris Peace Conference. Churchill remarked that 'Feisal offered hope of the best and cheapest solution', and it was generally agreed that Feisal's presence as the future ruler in Mesopotamia would have such an inspiring effect upon the majority of the population that there was little fear of any opposition to his nomination.15

Samuel arrived at the Conference from Palestine on March 13 and was amazed at the rapid progress. In two days, Feisal's Mesopotamian Crown was virtually assured, and Britain's military expenditures were substantially reduced with every Committee session. The next item on the agenda was that of Palestine and Transjordan, which still remained essentially under a single Mandate. Churchill had already decided that Transjordan was to be separated from the Palestine Mandate as soon as was practicable. Samuel's first reaction to the idea of an independent Transjordan was one of intense hostility. He pointed out that the area had been included by the League
of Nations in the British Mandate for Palestine, and should not be regarded as an independent Arab State. The area in question, east of the Jordan River, fell nominally under British control, but British authority was not exercised de facto. Churchill was not persuaded by Samuel's arguments and insisted that a "Mesopotamia solution" in accordance with the Sherifian policy should also be adopted in Transjordan. Therefore, Churchill reminded Samuel that it would be inconsistent to give British support for Feisal in Mesopotamia while refusing assistance to his brother, Abdullah, in Transjordan. Seeking to allay Samuel's fears of anti-Zionist activity conducted from Transjordan, Churchill declared that "the decisions of the Cairo Conference would place the whole Sherifian family--Hussein, Feisal, and Abdullah under an obligation to His Majesty's Government in one sphere or another." Colonel T. E. Lawrence, whose influence extended far beyond his military rank, supported Churchill's position. Lawrence felt that Abdullah would be quite capable of exerting pressure on local Arabs in Transjordan to refrain from anti-Zionist activity. Lawrence also advocated British support for Abdullah in financial and military matters. On paper at least, the British plan at the Cairo Conference looked extraordinarily simple. King Hussein remained the titular power in the Hedjaz kingdom. His rival for power, Ibn Sa'ud, had been
bought off by heavy British subsidies mainly through the
instigation of Gertrude Bell who was currently the
assistant to Sir Percy Cox, H.C. for Mesopotamia. The
Conference finally agreed to increase the amount paid Ibn'
Saud to 120,000 pounds sterling per annum. Hussein's two
sons, Feisal and Abdullah, were assured of kingdoms in
their own right, the kingdoms of Mesopotamia and
Transjordan, respectively, making the prospects for peace
in the turbulent Middle East seem initially sanguine.

Next on the agenda came Palestine, where there could
be no kings, and the Sherifian policy—inapplicable. The
Palestinian delegation of the Arab Executive led by Musa
Kazin al-Husayni, had arrived in Cairo a few days
previously, in the hope of obtaining an audience with
Churchill in order to express their views. Churchill,
rather ungenerously refused to see them on the grounds
that he was too busy on Conference agenda; however, he
promised however, that he would meet the delegation when
he visited Jerusalem with Samuel on March 23. While in
Cairo the Arab delegation met with Major Young and other
junior officials who reported the minutes of their
meetings to Churchill. The Colonial Secretary was
particularly incensed at a memorandum he received from the
Arab delegation in advance of their visit to Cairo. The
note contained biting references to Jewish character and
international influences:
...Jews have been amongst the most active advocates of destruction in many lands, especially where their influential positions have enabled them to do more harm. It is well known that the disintegration of Russia was wholly or in great part brought about by Jews, and a large proportion of the defeat of Germany and Austria must be put at their door. When the star of the Central Powers was in ascendant Jews flattered them, but the moment the scale turned in favour of the Allies, Jews withdrew their support from Germany, opened their coffers to the Allies, and received in return that most uncommon promise.\(^{17}\)

The 'uncommon promise' referred to the combined influence of the Balfour Declaration, and the character of the Hussein-McMahon and Sykes-Picot agreements, which had, together, fragmented any hope of Arab unity. The note continued, castigating the Jewish race for every imaginable evil the world over. The anti-Semitic contents of the memorandum failed to influence Churchill or any other senior members of the Conference. What began as an eloquent and moving appeal for justice, had degenerated into unabashed racism on the part of the Arab Executive. As a political move on the part of the Arab nationalists in Palestine, the 'memorandum' was an unmitigated disaster. Meeting with Churchill later in Jerusalem, members of the Arab delegation were duly warned that the Mandate for Palestine would be enforced, and there was no possibility of the repudiation of the Balfour Declaration. Churchill was even more blunt,
reminding the members of the Arab Executive that their own liberation from the Turks was solely a result of British force of arms. A leading Arab, Mohamed Osman, later described Churchill's remarks as "vindictive, contemptuous, and disconcerting."¹⁸ British Military Intelligence even went so far as to blame Churchill's visit for the riots that erupted one month later, after his departure from Palestine.

On March 17, 1920, Bonar Law resigned from Lloyd George's coalition government on the grounds of ill-health. This meant the position of Leader of the House was vacant, and Churchill's ambitions leaned to that high office. At that point, preoccupation with affairs in the Middle East dominated his thinking, and the post was eventually given to Austen Chamberlin with Lloyd George's blessing. The same day, the combined Military and Political Committees met in Cairo to discuss Palestine. General Congreve chaired the meeting, and it was decided that troops required for the new state of Transjordan should be taken from those allocated to Palestine, thus reducing the Palestine garrison to 7,000 men. The next day, Samuel argued for the creation of a Jewish Defense Force in order to fill the vacuum left by departing British troops. The consensus of the Committee led by General Congreve opposed Samuel's concept of a Jewish 'army' in Palestine, but would agree to the provision of
a Jewish 'gendarmerie' for internal defense, specifically that of Jewish settlements. Churchill supported Samuel's concept of a Jewish Defense Force, citing "the world-wide character of the Zionist movement, and the desire expressed by the Jews to help in their own defense, it would be better for them to decide upon troops." But Churchill astutely and conspicuously avoided using the term 'army', fully understanding Arab opposition would ignite over the creation of such a military organization. Congreve and Samuel engaged in a lengthy and acrimonious altercation over the issue, but Congreve remained adamant in his refusal over the raising of a Jewish Defense Force— at least under the auspices of the British. No such force was created. A few days later the Cairo Conference discussions on Palestine and Transjordan ended. In the short space of three days, two new Arab states had been created, their sovereigns chosen, and part of the Zionist case lost by default. 

Churchill left for Jerusalem with Samuel to meet with Jewish, Arab and Christian delegations. However, his main purpose was to hold a series of meetings with Emir Abdullah, the ruler designate of Transjordan, and to assure him of British assistance and cooperation during the transitional period. Between March 27 and March 30, Churchill and Abdullah met four times in the privacy of the High Commissioner's residence in Jerusalem. After
initial resistance to Churchill's terms, Abdullah agreed to become the governor of Transjordan, after which he would appoint an Arab official when he assumed the position of titular head of state. The Colonial Secretary promised him generous assistance in military and financial matters. In return, Abdullah was to guarantee to the British that there should be no anti-French or anti-Zionist agitation in the country. Meeting with Weizmann, Churchill repeated the official British position on the Palestine Mandate and sought to allay Weizmann's fears that Arab pressure would inevitably force the British to change their minds.

For the remainder of his stay, Churchill toured various areas of Palestine, accompanied by the High Commissioner and a retinue of government officials. They visited Tel Aviv and the Jewish colony of Rishon LeZion, and were suitably impressed by agricultural development undertaken by Jewish settlers. However, upon touring Arab areas of Jerusalem, they were greeted with Arab cries of down with Jews, cut their throats. But Churchill and his host were not unduly dismayed since, conveniently no one saw fit to translate for them.21 After meeting with the Haifa delegation of Moslems and Christians during his visit, Churchill could have been under no illusions as to the depth and anger of the Arabs and their resentment of the Zionists. The Haifa
delegation presented Churchill with a memorandum markedly similar to the one he had received from the Arab Executive prior to the convening of the Cairo Conference. As a document it was entirely anti-Semitic with a curious and by now unacceptable twist. The 'memorandum' called for the Jews to be returned to the pre-war status: that of the 'millet system' which had previously existed under Ottoman suzerainty. The document claimed, disingenuously, that peaceful co-existence between Arabs, Jews, and Christians under Islam, would then be possible. The 'millet system' conferred 'dhimmi' status on the protected classes of non-Muslims, while leaving them relatively free to practice their own religions. The fact that this conferred the status of second class citizenship or Jews and other non-Muslims, did not seem noteworthy to the authors of the memorandum, a section of which read:

....It is the idea of transforming Palestine into a home for the Jews that Arabs resent and fight against. The fact that a Jew is a Jew has never prejudiced the Arabs against him. Before the war Jews enjoyed all the privileges and rights of citizenship. The question is not a religious one. For we see that Christian and Arab alike, whose religions are not similar, united in their hatred of Zionism.22

Using anti-Zionism as a thinly veiled screen for anti-Semitism, did not deceive Churchill. So, in his
reply to the Haifa delegation, Churchill reiterated the promises made in the Balfour Declaration, that the civil and religious freedoms of the Moslem and Christian populations would not be prejudiced by the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. He pointed out their 3,000 years of intimate and profound association in the land of their forbearers, and argued that their rights were not inimical to Arab interests or aspirations, but rather, complemented them. Then, in a vein of 'Imperial ethos' for which he, like Curzon and Milner were widely noted, he declared, "We think it will be good for the world, good for the Jews, and good for the British Empire. But we also think it will be good for the Arabs who dwell in Palestine, and we intend that it should be good for them."23 Churchill concluded his address and remarked, "If our promise stands, so does the other; and we shall be judges as we faithfully fulfill them both."23

Churchill's optimism was short-lived. During his brief stay in Haifa, rioting caused two Arab deaths, and an additional ten Jews and five British police were injured. At a meeting with Weizmann, Churchill warned of the 'Bolshevist doctrines' of some Zionist immigrants newly arrived in the country. Also discussed, was the state of Jewish-Arab relations, and Churchill made it quite clear to Weizmann that the success of the Zionist
enterprise would depend upon their ability to dispel Arab alarm about being dispossessed of their property and rights. Harry Sacher, one of Weizmann's closest aides was present at the meeting. Like Weizmann, Sacher was deeply troubled as to how the British would react to concerted and violent opposition by the Arabs. After the meeting, Sacher, a lawyer with a practice in Palestine wrote:

I am still more troubled by doubts as to whether the British Government may not finish by dropping the whole thing and clearing out—for financial reasons. I really don't know whether England today can afford such luxury as a foreign policy, with or without mandates. Perhaps we ought to discover oil here quickly, and so rope in the Admiralty.²⁴

Sacher's profound cynicism was not without some firm foundation. Churchill had, in accordance with policies decided in London, halved fiscal expenditure in the Middle East, and drastically reduced the size of British forces in the region. The Colonial Secretary returned to London during the first week of April, satisfied that he had done his best with a difficult situation. However, the Arab leadership was far from impressed. Shocked at the total dichotomy between their views, and Churchill's, the Executive leaders decided to send a delegation directly to London as Egyptian politicians had previously urged in March.²⁵
On May 1, 1921 (Labour Day), serious rioting broke out in Jaffa. By the time police, backed by military contingents, had finally restored order, over one hundred people had died, and hundreds of others were injured. The disturbances began between immigrant and resident Jews and spilled over into the mixed Moslem-Jewish quarters. The city of Jaffa was immediately placed under military control, and the High Commissioner, fearing the spread of riots to Tel Aviv, ordered that recently demobilized Jewish soldiers, under Jewish officers, assume direct responsibility for the security of the town. Two days later, the Zionist Commission based in Jerusalem forwarded a report to the Zionist Organization in London. The substance of the report accepted some initial blame for the violence, citing incidents of provocation by Jewish Bolshevik agitators, and this was supported by an official British inquiry into the 'disturbances' ordered by the High Commissioner. The relevant sections of the report indicated that:

There is general testimony to the participation of the Arab Police in riots and the fanaticism of the invaders. The Arab crowd was stirred up by parties opposing the British Mandate and the Jewish National Home. These rioters used knives, pistols and rifles. Twenty-seven Jews were murdered and about 150 wounded.26

Many of the Arab casualties were caused by British contingents of troops and police who were forced to open
fire to prevent further mayhem. The town of Jaffa was the official port of entry for Jewish immigrants (mostly from Eastern Europe) and, thus, particularly volatile. In a memorandum in response to the inquiry ordered by Samuel, Captain C. D. Brunton, a staff officer of General Staff Intelligence, who was stationed in Jaffa, summed up the causes of discontent that had led to the riots, which read:

....Ever since our occupation of the country the inhabitants have disliked the policy of founding a national home for the Jews of Palestine. This feeling has gradually developed into nothing short of bitter and widespread hostility, and the Arab population has come to regard the Zionists with hatred and the British with resentment. Mr. Churchill's visit put the final touch to the picture. He upheld the Zionist cause and treated the Arab demands like those of a negligible opposition to be put off by a few political phrases and treated like bad children.27

Referring to the delegation of the Arab Executive that was due to travel to London to hold discussions with Churchill, Brunton noted that substantial funds had been collected throughout Palestine and subscribed with extraordinary enthusiasm by all classes. Outlining the causes of Christian and Moslem opposition, Brunton wrote:

(1) The special privileges accorded to Jews
(2) The influence of the Zionist Commission and openly declared aims of the Zionists
(3) The use of Hebrew as an official language
(4) The immigration of a large number of low-class Jews
The behavior and morality of the immigrants

The fall in the price of land, trade depression, and the prohibition of export of cereals affecting the peasantry

Arrogance of Jews towards Christians and Moslems

No representation in the Government of or control of expenditure

Loss of confidence in the Palestine Administration and in the British Government

The injustice of self-government being given to nomadic savages in Transjordan and refused in Palestine

Moslem and Christian religious feeling aroused by conduct and aims of Jews

The Government attitude towards Moslem and Christian petitions, protests and complaints which are frequently not answered or disregarded while Jews appear at all times to have the ear of the administration

The use of the Zionist flag.

Churchill, who saw the report sometime later, dismissed it as anti-Zionist propaganda, then forwarded it to the Cabinet saying he did not agree with all the statements. But the Colonial Secretary was acutely aware of the seriousness of the situation. Appending a note to the report, Churchill wrote: "We are in a situation of increasing danger which may at any time involve us in serious military embarrassments with consequent heavy expenditure." Meanwhile, the Fourth Arab Congress had finally decided upon the membership of the delegation to send to London. In principle, it was similar to the one previously sent to Cairo. Led by al-Husayni, the delegation left Palestine for London on July 19, 1921. Their primary aim was the total abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and a firm British commitment to an indepen-
dent Arab state in Palestine. The members of the party were under instructions from their leadership in Palestine to remain in London as long as necessary, until agreement over the future of the country was reached. As well as the demand for the abrogation of the Balfour pledge, the delegation pressed for an immediate end to Jewish immigration into Palestine. Sharing fully in the need to resent and oppose the idea of transforming Palestine into a home for the Jews, the delegation saw its primary role as striving through diplomacy, political pressure, and propaganda, rather than by force and bloodshed. On the subject of Jewish immigration, the Arab delegation had been pre-empted by actions taken by Samuel shortly after the May riots. After learning that Jewish communists were irrefutably implicated in the disturbances, Samuel promptly suspended further Jewish immigration indefinitely. His actions were supported by the Colonial Office who felt that, as an administrative measure, the suspensions fell entirely within the competence of the High Commissioner. Samuel also informed London of his intention to deport all the Jewish immigrants with clearly established connections to revolutionary parties. Churchill, known for his anti-Bolshevik sentiments, clearly approved and endorsed Samuel's proposals with enthusiasm. In a report from the British Palestine police, later made available to the
High Commissioner, it was estimated that two percent of new immigrants had in fact proven to be Bolshevists.

During a series of meetings, which continued until the end of the year, Churchill suggested to the Arab leaders that they hold discussions with Weizmann. The purpose, Churchill assured them, was to reach an accommodation and to hold high level discussions on plans being made to develop Palestine's economy.\(^ {30} \) Shibli al-Janal, the secretary to the delegation, was insulted by this suggestion and reminded Churchill that the delegation had come to talk to the government, not the Zionists. The impasse continued when further negotiations resumed on the formation of a Legislative Council for Palestine. The Colonial Secretary reiterated the official British position and informed the Arab delegation that there was no question of repudiating the Balfour pledges, and furthermore, that all laws that were enacted in Palestine should fall within the framework of the Mandate.

During July, The Colonial Office came under severe pressure from Lloyd George, Balfour, and the Cabinet, particularly as a result of the May riots. Churchill was instructed to seek a compromise that fully reflected British policy. Having been put on notice that the Cabinet remained committed to the Balfour Declaration policy, various senior officials from the Colonial Office
began to court Weizmann in an attempt to find a solution. Major Hubert Young, Churchill's personal assistant had been given the task of drawing up proposals that would meet the new situation. His general premise was:

It is assumed that His Majesty's Government have no intention of departing from the Zionist policy. The problem we have to work out now is one of tactics, not strategy. The general strategic idea being the gradual immigration of Jews into Palestine until that country becomes a predominately Jewish State.31

Lloyd George's intervention, with Cabinet approval, left Churchill little room to maneuver. The Arab delegation, unaware of the Cabinet decision and Young's memorandum, continued the negotiations still convinced they could influence British policy by diplomacy. The discussions continued into September, and after a short interval resumed on October 1. Churchill's attempts at conciliation met with little success. The Arab delegation continued to press its original demand, which was that the two parts of the Balfour Declaration were irreconcilable as Zionism was incompatible with Arab rights.32 On October 24, 1921, the delegation addressed a letter to Churchill and requested that it be submitted to the Cabinet. The letter stressed the fears of 93 percent of the people of Palestine regarding Zionist policies and maintained that:
The very serious and growing unrest among the Palestinians arises from their absolute conviction that the present policy of the British Government is directed towards evicting them from their country in order to make it a national state for immigrant Jews. . . The Balfour Declaration was made without (us) being consulted and we cannot accept it as deciding our destinies. 33

The letter also demanded that the British Government begin negotiations with the Palestine people as a whole, and concurrently reaffirmed the provision for reasonable Jewish religious aspirations, but precluded any exclusive political advantages to them which interfered with Arab rights. On Cabinet recommendation, Churchill attempted to mediate the impasse. He invited both the Zionist and Arab delegations to the Colonial Office in the hope of reaching a resolution. Predictably, discussions broke down after an acrimonious debate in which both sides seemed more deeply entrenched in their respective positions than ever. Weizmann complained that the Arabs had come, not to discuss practical details, but to hear a statement of policy from the British Government. Husayni charged that Weizmann was an agent of British Imperialism who did not have the interests of Palestine at heart. The meeting was a dismal failure. Churchill's final appeal to the parties at the meeting lacked the arrogance he had displayed in March at Cairo, and later in Jerusalem, when he informed those present that:
He had no power or authority to alter the fundamental basis of the policy that had been proclaimed therefore he could not re-open in discussion the question of whether the Balfour Declaration should not stand. The matter was binding on him as well as them.

For the Arab delegation, there was nothing left to discuss and their gains had been minimal. The Colonial Office had rejected their proposals with the exception of an elected Advisory Council, and the strict curtailment of Jewish immigration to those who could be readily absorbed economically. Disillusioned, some members left London for Palestine, and others traveled to Geneva to place their case before the Council of the League of Nations. Low level discussions continued until the end of the year under the chairmanship of Sir John Shuckburgh, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, head of the Middle East Department. Twice during the month of November, Churchill, heavily preoccupied with the Irish problem, scheduled meetings with the Zionists and Arabs in order to make a clear statement of government policy. On both occasions, at the last moment, he failed to appear. Colonel Meinertzhagen summed up Churchill's attitude when he remarked: "Winston does not care two pins, and does not want to be bothered about it. He is reconciled to a policy of drift. He is too wrapped up in home politics." The problem as the pro-Zionist
Meinertzhagen saw it, was Churchill's realization that only the Arabs and the Zionists could effect a compromise, and this, they both emphatically refused to do. Throughout the winter, Churchill abdicated his ministerial responsibility for Palestine, and confined himself mostly to his fundamental goal of reducing the British garrison and military expenditures in Palestine and Mesopotamia.

The New Year brought no new answers. The 'provisional' status of Palestine continued in limbo, militating against a legally sanctioned and equitable solution to the country's problems. Senior members of the Arab delegation, some of whom had since returned from Geneva, remained in London, mainly because the Colonial Office feared the consequences in Palestine if they returned entirely empty handed. Efforts to undermine the delegation's status in Palestine the previous year were largely unsuccessful. The problem of legislating a constitution for the Mandate which then had to be ratified by the Permanent Council of the League of Nations still remained.

Sir John Shuckburgh, who had been working on a draft of the constitution since December presented his proposals to Churchill early in February. Shuckburgh's draft contained four basic principles: (1) British policy would continue to be based upon the Balfour
Declaration; (2) the rights of the present inhabitants would be protected; (3) Jewish immigration would be permitted up to the economic absorptive capacity of the country; and (4) Legislative Council would be established.36 The copies of the draft proposition of a Palestine Order-in Council were distributed to the Zionists and Arabs. The Arab delegation immediately rejected the provisions of the Order-in Council on the grounds it would reduce Palestine to virtually Crown Colony status, and was therefore in direct contravention to the League of Nations A Class mandate for the territory. They further objected to the 'excessive powers' delegated to the High Commissioner.

For once, the British press was entirely sympathetic to the Arab delegation's complaints. The Times warned of a 'Second Ireland' and lashed out at the 'arrogance of extremists'. Lord Northcliffe, the press baron who recently returned from a visit to Palestine, led the campaign and blasted British Government policy in the territory. In a heated debate on March 9, Churchill was forced to defend his policy, declaring that, "I am bound to retain in the hands of the Imperial Government the power to carry out those pledges."37 Concomitantly, Shuckburgh warned the Zionists not to protest the new policy statement, especially when it was implied that their rejection might sabotage the League ratification of
the Mandate. Samuel, who had been recalled to London for discussions, urged the Colonial Office to publish the constitutional plan as a White Paper. Churchill finally assented, and the proposals formed the basis of the White Paper on Palestine during October 1922. By the end of May, two major obstacles had been overcome. The publication of the Palestine Orders-in-Council had left Palestine quiet but tense, with no major incidents of violence reported. Secondly, the Americans had withdrawn their objections to the ratification of the Mandate. Under strong pressure from the American Zionists, the government yielded on the principle of self-determination based on the wishes of the majority in the case of Palestine.

During July 1922, the Permanent Council of the League of Nations met in Geneva to discuss the situation in Palestine. The British representative placed the Government proposals for the administration of Palestine before the Council, along with the Constitution which was embodied in an Order-in Council. On July 22, 1922 the League of Nations approved the Palestine Mandate. Henceforth, the anti-Zionists, no matter how strongly they expressed their opinions or advocated action, the concept of a Jewish national home was sanctioned and bore the imprimatur of International Law of the League of Nations. For the Arab nationalists of Palestine, the
decision signalled the death knell of their hopes of a free and independent Arab State. Churchill took no part in presenting Britain's case to the League; that task fittingly, had been carried out by the architect of the Declaration, Lord Balfour.

The logic of the 'Imperial' ethos had for over one hundred years led Britain into the Middle East. For longer than that, the influence of the Bible had been at work, and it had established a pattern in which it became impossible to acquire the Holy Land simply as a 'strategical buffer'. There existed in men like Lloyd George, schooled in the Old Testament, a deep sense of atonement for Christian persecution against Jews over the centuries. Thus, when Palestine came within reach, Britain was trapped by her own history. A larger purpose and higher aim had to be served. Despite uncomplicated imperialist intentions of the old school, conscience dictated the final outcome, and outweighed strategic considerations. It allowed Britain to annex Palestine only by making room for the original owners, and placed her as the midwife for the parturition of a new state which would inevitably become as Jewish as England was English.
Summary

The period of 1917-1922 represented crucial historical significance for the embryonic state. The rest of the story is well-documented, and the final sequel has yet to be written. The first riots that occurred in 1920 were followed by disturbances in 1921, 1929, 1936 and finally by a sustained 'Arab Revolt' in 1937-1939. Nine years later, the birth of modern Israel was accomplished by force of arms, and the sectarian conflict continues to this day. Britain's era as a major Middle Eastern power lasted only forty years, and British withdrawal after the Suez debacle in 1956 signaled their final demise in the region.

From the outset, British promises made to the Arabs under the exigencies of war were largely unfulfilled, and were predicated on the assumption that Arab cooperation in the war against Turkish domination would take place on a large scale. This, as argued in the thesis, did not manifest itself strongly enough to influence British policy towards Arab aspirations in the post-war Middle East. The character of the McMahon-Hussein agreement, and the Sykes-Picot accords indicated that British and French governments had already decided on the partition of the Ottoman territorial desiderata. From that point on, the British position was to treat Arab nationalism as an external phenomena, applicable only to regions excluded
from the British sphere in Palestine. From 1917 and the advent of the Balfour Declaration, the British aligned themselves with the creation of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Though Lord Balfour was the architect, Lloyd George built the foundation upon which the policy would eventually stand. From this moment, the 'seeds of conflict' between Arab and Jew in modern history were sown. For the British, the Arab claims to Palestine and an independent state were specious. For the Arabs, Jewish claims were equally unfounded. The birth of this 'fated triangle' in 1917 ended only when the United Nations assumed responsibility for Palestine in 1947, and an exhausted and exasperated Britain withdrew her forces from the territory. Shortly thereafter, the new state Israel was born.

Wisdom in hindsight is a luxury which perhaps only historians may possess in any great measure. In retrospect, there is ample evidence to support the theme that the British consistently remained oblivious to Arab national sentiments and adopted as a policy, the paternalism which they employed in their vast Colonies of Africa and India. The principal formulators of policy were all Victorians, including Milner, Curzon, Balfour, Churchill, Lloyd George and Bonar Law; and their thinking was inherently shaped by the cultural mores of their century. Therefore, the tendency to treat the Arab nations as a
'subject' peoples was congruent with the 'imperial ethos', particularly since they were liberated by British force of arms. In this respect, the Arabs were indebted to the British, who in turn did not balk at manipulating the Arabs in order to serve their own interests, and those of the Zionists.

History has rarely shown the victor to be without some degree of self-interest, and the British of course, were certainly no exception. Palestine was never more than a small area in the vast expanse of Arab lands freed by British arms during the Great War. To the Arabs, it represented slightly over one percent (after the creation of Transjordan in 1920) of the area over which they were given eventual self-government by the British. For the Jews, it represented the only hope of re-establishing the ancient connection with their homeland ending centuries of the Diaspora.

The British recognized the inequity of their policy, as did the League of Nations when it ratified the Mandate for Palestine in July 1922. By its very nature, the Balfour Declaration assumed a primary obligation to the Jews, which the Mandate accorded international recognition. The dual responsibility of the British for Jews and Arabs was, in historical retrospect, unworkable from the moment British intentions were publicized. The Arabs were able to interpret the 'contradictions' which
fueled the fires of Arab nationalist sentiments, and spawned historical consciousness, in a land not renowned for national unity. The independent Arab states of the Middle East were a legacy of British (and to a lesser extent French) power, marked by that fateful day when Turkey declared war against the Entente powers in 1914. History can rarely be suited to match ideology if the truth is to prevail. Britain laid the foundations of a new state and it is only through British resolve, marked by great ambiguity, and the crisis of conscience of successive British governments that the new Jewish state came into being. When all is said and done, only a time-conferred objectivity could provide the final judgment.
ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX

A Short Profile on Sir Herbert Samuel
High Commissioner of Palestine 1920-1925

Herbert Louis Samuel, first Viscount of Mount Carmel and Toxteth in Liverpool, his birthplace, was born on November 6, 1870. Of Polish descent, his ancestors belonged to the Ashkenazi Diaspora and migrated to England from the Polish Pale, following the persecutions during the reign of Empress Maria-Theresa. The youngest of four children, Samuel's early years were surrounded by the comfortable Victorian world of haute bourgeoisie. During 1877, the family moved from Liverpool to London and settled in a spacious house in Kensington Palace Gardens. A year later Samuel's father, Edwin Louis, died and left a family estate in excess of 250,000 pounds sterling. His father's brother, Montagu, became the young boy's legal guardian. Samuel attended local schools in the district and learned Hebrew at home under his uncle's supervision.

In 1889 Samuel went to Oxford to read for his degree in Classics and Law. While at Balliol College, Samuel became profoundly influenced by T. H. Green's Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation (1882), that formed, and still forms one of the greatest statements of nineteenth-century liberal political ideas. Other influences were drawn from the works of Ruskin and the
great Victorian biographer and religious historian, Thomas Carlyle.

During his second year at Balliol, Samuel changed his major course of studies from Classics to History, and during his final years, obtained a First Class Pass in the subject. His final year at Oxford was divided equally between bouts of intense study and his position as Honorary Secretary of the South Oxfordshire Liberal Association. This position gave the young undergraduate an introduction to a political apprenticeship which lasted nine years. Samuel lost his first bye-election as a Liberal candidate in South Oxfordshire in 1893. Undaunted, he ran again during the Campbell-Bannerman Government of December 1905, and went to the Home Office as an Under-Secretary of State. During his tenure at the Home Office, Samuel gained the reputation, not just as a reformer, but as a humane and compassionate man. Attributed to him particularly, were the Children and Young Persons Act (1906) which sponsored the treatment and rehabilitation of young offenders. He introduced progressive legislation into all aspects of the Penal Reform Codes, and drastically reduced the number of capital offenses in a legal system renowned for its harshness and brutality.

Samuel's next ministerial office was that of Minister of Posts and Telegraphs which he held under Lord Asquith's
Liberal Government until 1916. Samuel's flair for administration, reform and reorganization won him a reputation across the political spectrum as a man of the utmost capability and integrity. His introduction to Zionism, whose antecedents lay in the influence of his uncle, Montagu, were further enhanced by his friendship with Dr. Weizmann, then a Reader in the Department of Physics at Manchester University. During the war, Weizmann worked as a senior adviser in the Ministry of Munitions, headed by the future prime minister Lloyd George. Weizmann's major contribution to the war effort was the development of acetone, a component of high explosives used in military ordnance. Lloyd George was so gratified by Weizmann's innovations that he was often heard to remark that 'acetone converted me to Zionism'. The Samuel-Weizmann friendship continued throughout Samuel's political career, even though Weizmann's role as the leader of the Zionist Organization often put him in direct confrontation with Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner for Palestine. In 1919, Samuel was appointed Chairman of the Board of Economic Development in Palestine and he visited the region for the first time in 1920. The same year he was appointed the High Commissioner for the territory and was knighted prior to beginning his tenure of office.

During his five years in the office of High
Commissioner in Palestine, Samuel oversaw the difficult transition from a Military Administration to a Civil Government in terms of the Mandate, and laid the foundations for the development of a modern state. After his official duties ended, he was appointed the Chairman of the Rutenburg Project which was concerned with huge irrigation schemes on the Litani River. He returned to England during the 1930's and remained active in Liberal politics, becoming the party's senior spokesman. In 1953, he was elevated to a peerage in recognition of his contributions to Palestine, and his death in 1957 left a legacy to which the modern state of Israel owes a large debt of gratitude.