A STEP-BY-STEP REAPPRAISAL OF THE IRREVERSIBLE JOURNEY FROM THE

BALFOUR DECLARATION OF 1917 TO THE PARTITION OF PALESTINE IN 1947

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KEY TO ACRONYMS

AHC	Arab High Commission
AJJDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
AL	Arab League
ICC	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
SADS	Society of the Arab Development Scheme
UK	United Kingdom
UKCFO	United Kingdom Commonwealth and Foreign Office
UKFO/FO	United Kingdom Foreign Office (later the UKCFO)
UNGA/GA	United Nations General Assembly
UN	United Nations
UNCCP	United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRPR	United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees
US	United States
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
UNSC/SC	United Nations Security Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UNSG/SG	United Nations Secretary General

ABSTRACT

The central argument of this thesis is that the issuance of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate started an irreversible train of events leading *inevitably* to Partition.

Starting first with a critical analysis of the Balfour Declaration and its incorporation into the British Mandate, the thesis explores the reasoning behind Britain's readiness to issue the Declaration at the height of WWI. It throws fresh light on arguments for and against Partition offered by a range of Commissions, Committees and Governments. The thesis examines the years during which the conflicted parties were increasingly at odds until, on the eve of WWII, Britain reversed its former pro-Zionist policy in favour of Palestinian Arabs. Now the work concentrates on the post-war years when a war-weary Britain acknowledged that the UN should decide. In turn, the UN established the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) hence later chapters consist of a close examination of UNSCOP's role, its extensive investigations in the Middle East and Europe and interviews with key players from both sides of the divide. The final chapter centres around UNGA members' political manoeuvrings, temporary realignment, disparate views and the last unavoidable step to Partition.

There are two main versions of Arab-Jewish history. First, there is a version claiming that Jews were the primary victims of Arab violence. This traditional version is supported by a number of Zionist historians. The second version claims that Arabs were the hapless victims of a deliberately orchestrated Jewish takeover of Palestine. This version is supported by pro-Palestinian and revisionist Zionist historians. Although previous researchers have explored some of the above events either tangentially in a related area or as part of a broader study, this thesis draws many of its conclusions from a large body of verbatim evidence that had informed Commission and Committee Reports.

It should be emphasised that this thesis is a critical, but non-judgmental, analysis of Partition. It concludes that when, in 1947, the UNGA formally approved Partition, it was a legal acknowledgement that Partition was already a near-accomplished fact.

INTRODUCTION

In the late-1800s, after centuries of pogroms and persecution, many Jews came to believe that they, their faith and traditions could only flourish in a Jewish homeland. It was this understanding that galvanised a proportion of Jews from across the world to unite into one of a number of organisations that had formed specifically to secure a permanent Jewish homeland in Palestine. Ultimately, Zionism emerged to become the most important movement of the time.[1] The first major step towards satisfying Zionist objectives came about when, on the 2nd of November 1917, Britain's WWI Cabinet pledged to support Zionist ambitions and issued the Balfour Declaration. This was a guarantee that Britain would assist in the establishment of a permanent Jewish homeland in Palestine on condition that the existing rights of the indigenous non-Jewish population were guaranteed.

This thesis argues that from the Declaration in 1917 onwards, and with its formal ratification by the League of Nations, the journey to partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states was unstoppable. It takes into account that the pledge was made without consultation with the non-Jewish population of Palestine, unquestionably putting them at an immediate disadvantage.

Others, too, contend that Partition was inevitable, however this contention is frequently based on research that is either tangential to or forms part of a related study. Schneer, for example, maintains Partition was inevitable *because* Balfour issued his Declaration.[2] However, as Schneer's seminal work concentrates exclusively on the period before and during the WWI period and the issuance of the Declaration, his research did not extend into the unpredictable path of the next thirty years. A century after Balfour, Corbin records that, years later, her ancestor Leo Amery (joint author of the Declaration) maintained that issuance of the Declaration made Partition inevitable[3] but again, Amery did not have the benefit of research conducted after the event. In 1937, a Royal Commission (Peel)

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[1] Zion was an early biblical name for Jerusalem
[2] Schneer, J. (2010, 365): The Balfour Declaration – the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict
[3] Corbin, J. (2017) 'The Balfour Declaration: My ancestor's hand in history. BBC News, 31st October 2017.

reported that Partition offered the one chance of peace. It went further by implying that a *de facto* Jewish state had become a reality. [4] In 1947, a UN Special Committee (UNSCOP) returned from Palestine to report that Partition was the only viable option[5] whereas Garcia-Granados argues that Palestine was already effectively partitioned before UN involvement.[6]

Almost from the first, the Balfour Declaration has come under concentrated academic scrutiny. Schneer,[7] Said,[8] Louis,[9] Monroe[10] and many others have puzzled over its precise 'meaning' and most, if not all, accept that, however it is interpreted, it changed the course of Palestine's history. Putting that aside, this thesis adopts a somewhat different approach from others. Specifically, by way of minutes of WWI Cabinet meetings, the thesis focuses on Ministers' controversial viewpoints and concerns over the likely ramifications of staking a claim to Zionist ambitions and whether or not a Declaration issued at the height of war served Britain's interests. Nevertheless, once publication was announced, there was no turning back. In the first of five drafts of the Declaration, Britain envisioned that Palestine would be "*reconstituted*" as a Jewish National Home.[11] Before concluding with the emergence of the Declaration, Schneer's book concentrates extensively on the pre-WWI political background that persuaded the wartime cabinet to issue the Declaration in the first instance. This present thesis continues Schneer's theme by close study of the British Mandate which, in 1922, enshrined the Balfour Declaration into international law. Schneer maintains that in drafting the Declaration the British Cabinet, while confirming the Jewish historic connection to Palestine,[12] had knowingly intended its ambiguity.[13] Similarly, Bickerton and Klausner also contend that the wording of the Document is imprecise.[14] Moreover, Edward Said argues that Britain's intention to establish a

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[4] Palestine Royal Committee Report July 1937, Page 376
[5] A/364 Add 1, 3ᵈ September 1947
[6] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, Pages 272-273): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[7] Schneer, J. (2010): The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict
[8] Said, Edward, W. (1992) 'The Question of Palestine
[9] William Roger Louis (2005) 'Yet More Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain
[10] Monroe, E (1981), Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914–71
[11] The importance of the Balfour Declaration is evidenced by the fact that this first hand-written jotting on a scrap of paper was sold at auction in 2015 for an astonishing $884,000 (Schneer, 2010, 335)
[12] Schneer, J. (2010, 335): The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict
[13] (Ibid, 11)
[14] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7ᵗʰ Edition)

Jewish state was clouded by its own sense of superiority.[15] Ze'ev Jabotinsky went further.[16] He recalled that in 1917, Chaim Weizmann[17] and Harry Sacher[18] had spoken openly about the creation of a Jewish *state* in Palestine. They reasoned that, from the beginning, according to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Lord Balfour, the Balfour Declaration implied the establishment of a Jewish *state,* not, in Jabotinsky's words, "*the creation of a new ghetto".*[19] In 1929, Sir Walter Shaw[20] confirmed that the then dispute between Arabs and Jews was part created by Britain's failure to spell out its intentions more clearly.[21] For his part, Louis claims that the Declaration was a betrayal of similar promises made to Arabs.[22] Monroe argues that issuance of the Declaration was a grave mistake and failed to serve Britain's long-term interests.[23]

While undoubtably the drafters of the Declaration either intentionally or unwittingly produced a document that is inherently ambiguous, this thesis argues that from the clear intentions expressed in the first draft to the ambiguous language of the final Declaration, Britain's pledge to Zionists was destined to end with Partition. This thesis argues, like Schneer, that the Declaration itself *started* the irreversible process of Partition.[24] The die was finally cast when the League of Nations awarded the Mandate to Britain in July 1922.

Palestine in its broadest sense and later written into the British Mandate, included a region East of the River Jordan. The dynamics changed when the League of Nations ratified Britain's intention to partition off the East Bank region. Thus, in 1923, around 70% of former Palestine was awarded to the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan (later Jordan). After a promising start, previously optimistic Zionists censured their leaders for allowing this situation to develop.[25] From then on Jews

[15] Said, Edward, W. (1992, 15, 20) 'The Question of Palestine
[16] Ze'ev *Jabotinsky* was an important right-wing Zionist nationalist, but with some libertarian views, He was a soldier (having founded the Jewish Legion during WWI) and an influential writer and orator.
[17] Before becoming the first president of the State of Israel in 1949, Chaim Weizmann served as president of the World Zionist Organisation
[18] Harry Sacher was a barrister and prominent Zionist. He is credited with having been one of the authors of an early version of the Balfour Declaration (Palestine: Information with Provenance (PIWP database)).
[19] Schindler, Colin (2006, 111): 'The Triumph of Military Zionism – Nationalism and the Origins of the Israeli Right'
[20] Sir Walter Shaw chaired the Shaw Commission in 1929 and delivered his report on the Palestine problem in 1930
[21] Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929 Page 112
[22] William Roger Louis (2005, 252): 'Yet More Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain
[23] Monroe, E (1981, 43), Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914–71
[24] Schneer, J. (2010, 365): The Balfour Declaration – the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict
[25] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 44) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

and Arabs were left contending over a much-reduced Palestine but where neither the Balfour Declaration nor the British Mandate had imposed limits to Jewish immigration. Interestingly, Mark Tessler questions whether there were earlier alternatives; whether, the Jewish-Arab conflict might have been avoided. He accepts that while there are no definitive answers, the question is deserving of academic interest. In an intriguing sub-chapter (Alternatives to Conflict), Tessler speculates that had Britain honoured its WWI pledges to Arabs and given equal weight to the economic and political rights of the indigenous population, then a specifically Jewish region might have been attainable without the ensuing bloodshed. "… *had Palestine been incorporated into an Arab Kingdom roughly coterminous with Greater Syria [then] both the political rights and the cultural aspirations of the state's Arab inhabitants would have been secure*".[26]

Between WWI and WWII Arab-Jewish tensions grew although both Klein and Karsh contend that Jews and Arabs commonly cooperated on everyday issues.[27] [28] Before long, these early periods of comfortable coexistence became increasingly marred by spells of violence. Beset with security preoccupations, Hahn maintains, Britain felt it was politically expedient to suspend expressions of Jewish 'statehood'.[29] In 1936 Weizmann sensed the mood and agreed with Nuri Said (Iraq's Foreign Minister) that in the long term there was much to be gained by a temporary suspension of immigration.[30] Ben-Gurion (major Zionist leader), Karsh explains, would have none of it. For him, Jewish immigration was the "*elixir of life*" and the lifeblood of the Jewish national revival.[31] Weizmann's (another influential Zionist leader) unguarded acceptance of Said's proposal created a degree of confusion within British Government circles and discomfiture to Weizmann.[32]

Despite Arab resistance, Zionists were determined to press ahead either by way of a Jewish state encompassing all of Palestine west of the River Jordan, or a partitioned Palestine. In 1936,

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[26] Tessler, M (1994, 165-170): <u>The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict</u>.
[27] Klein, Menachem (2014, 19) <u>Lives in Common, Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron</u>
[28] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 14-15): <u>Palestine Betrayed</u>
[29] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 13): <u>'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961'</u>
[30] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 44): <u>Palestine Betrayed</u>
[31] (Ibid, 50)
[32] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 50-51): <u>Palestine Betrayed</u>

simmering discontent erupted into a full-scale revolt when Arabs vented their frustration on the new arrivals and on beleaguered British forces.

With neither side prepared to give way and British forces powerless to contain the violence, in 1937 Britain despatched a Royal Commission (Peel) into the region to determine the underlying causes of the conflict and to recommend preventative measures.[33] After reviewing the limited number of options available, Peel discarded the notion of separate Arab and Jewish Cantons (provinces)[34] deciding that nothing less than a two-state solution had any chance of success. Peel's Commission recommended limiting levels of immigration but maintained that that Partition was the only way forward. "*Partition [wrote the Royal Commissioners] seems to offer at least a chance of ultimate peace. We can see none in any other plan*".[35]

Peel's acceptance of the need for Partition gained some traction within British official circles. However, his recommendation for a total exchange of Jewish and Arab populations to their respective regions condemned the report in its entirely. Nevertheless, Peel's plan had signposted Partition.[36] Galnoor argues that Arab failure to accept this as a practical compromise ignored the political reality and ultimately cost them Palestine.[37]

After Peel's verdict, Zionists began to reconsider their all or nothing approach. Either they accept proportional representation in a majority Arab state or adapt their strategy towards garnering additional support for Partition.[38] When, in 1937 Prime Minister Chamberlain convened a conference in London, Zionist leaders moved to persuade unconvinced British delegates that Jews, unlike Arabs, were prepared to join Britain in any likely military venture. Their veiled threats of retaliation if Britain

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[33] Palestine Royal Committee Report July 1937
[34] Palestine Royal Committee Report July 1937, Pages, 377-379
[35] (Ibid, 376)
[36] Ben-Dror, E. (2014, 21): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP
[37] Galnoor, Itzhak (essay, Page 7), included in Gavison, R (Editor). (2013: 'The Two-State Solution
[38] Zionist Congress: Congresses During the British Mandate (1923-1946)

restricted immigration were dismissed with a warning that, without British protection, Jews would be left to the mercy of the Arab majority.[39]

Zionists met again in August of that year. Galnoor maintains that Ben-Gurion and Weizmann convinced a majority that, above all, Jewish immigrants must have free access to Palestine.[40] Gavison argues that although Peel's proposed partitioned state was too small for large-scale immigration at least the door was open for future negotiations.[41] Karsh describes an instance when Weizmann went beyond his brief by telling British politicians that Partition was acceptable provided the allocated state was sufficiently large. Churchill retorted that, whatever Weizmann believed, Zionists must wait until fascism was defeated.[42]

In a further attempt to solve the crisis, Britain established a second Commission with instructions to review the work of the Royal Commission. In 1938, the Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead Commission) rejected Peel's population and land transfer elements. The Commission surmised that as neither Arabs nor Jews could be separated fully, unrestricted immigration would lead to permanent Jewish political control and inflame the situation.[43]

In 1938, US President Roosevelt wished he *"could do more [to help Jews escape fascist Germany]"*,[44] but was loath to upset his British ally.[45] He persuaded reluctant world representatives to convene in Evian-les-Bain with a view to solving the plight of millions of persecuted European Jews. It came to nothing. At the worst imaginable time, country after country voiced platitudes, but almost universally declined to accept Jewish escapees.[46] [47]

With other avenues barred, tens of thousands flooded into the supposed safely of Palestine. Martin Kolinsky explains that Nazi persecution and worsening economic conditions (particularly in

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[39] Laqueur, W (2003, 525) A History of Zionism
[40] Galnoor, Itzhak (essay) (2013, 8): See Gavison, R (Editor): The Two-State Solution (translated from Hebrew)
[41] Gavison, R (Editor) (2013, 87-92): 'The Two-State Solution' (translated from Hebrew)
[42] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 56): Palestine Betrayed,
[43] Palestine Partition Commission, 1938, 53, 235
[44] Berenbaum, M. (2000, 49) The World Must Know
[45] (Ibid, 49)
[46] (Ibid, 50)
[47] Wells, A (2009, 2) Tropical Zion

Poland and Romania) accelerated levels of Jewish immigration, threatening, as Arabs saw it, their majority status. Although, the Arab revolt ended in 1939, its "*backlash*", Kolinsky continues, "*attracted attention far beyond the narrow borders of Palestine ... [and] became an important element in Pan-Arab and pan-Islamic fervour*".[48] Sachar argues that ordinary Palestinian-Arabs suffered long-term economic, political and military consequences. While the Arab economy imploded, the Yishuv[49] filled the vacuum and developed their own trading position. When the revolt was finally crushed by the British (with the support of the Hagenah which, from the lessons learned during the revolt, was now an effective fighting force), the Palestinian-Arab military capability was in tatters.[50] Christopher Sykes argues that after the majority of Arab leaders were exiled or having escaped their British pursuers, Arab nationalists were left without strong leadership.[51] Like Sachar and Sykes, Lockman too confirms that the Arab community was left "*demoralised, disorganised and without effective leadership*". For their part, Jewish settlers had strengthened their ability to protect themselves without necessarily having to rely on British support.[52] However, they were about to suffer a temporary setback.

Before WWII, Britain was still the principal power in the Middle East and Zionists could take some comfort in expecting Britain to honour Balfour's pledge – a view, writes Yaacov Shavit, largely shared by Jabotinsky and other Zionist revisionists.[53] Nonetheless, on the build-up to an apparently unavoidable war, Britain changed its policy in favour of Arabs. Ovendale argues that, whereas in the early years before WWII oil took second place to the Middle East's "*strategic importance as a link between securing the communications of the British Empire*", by 1939 the situation had markedly changed. Now, a reliable supply of Middle East oil, safe passage through Suez and access to British

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[48] Kolinsky, M. (1999, 2): Britain's War in the Middle East, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1936-42
[49] *Yishuv* refers to the Jewish community in Palestine before the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948.
[50] Sachar, Howard M. (2007, 211-213) A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time
[51] Sykes, Christopher (1973, 264-266): Crossroads to Israel
[52] Lockman, Zachary (1996, 261) Comrades and Enemies, Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948
[53] See, Shavit, Yaacov (2005) Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement 1925-1948

naval bases in the Eastern Mediterranean assumed priority over Zionist ambitions. Arab support became paramount.[54]

In May 1939, both houses of the UK Parliament debated Britain's position. Chamberlain regretted previous misunderstandings and asserted that rather than agree to the establishment of a separate Jewish state, Britain had agreed only to "*found [a Jewish] home in Palestine*" (own emphasis).[55] After vigorous debate and strong opposition in both Houses, Chamberlain's Government finally won the day ruling that Jewish immigration should be severely restricted with land sales virtually prohibited.[56] The UK Government had "*washed [its] hands of [Jewish immigration and] clos[ed] the door*".[57] Laqueur and Rubin argue that Britain's policy shift was a breach of faith and tantamount to providing for a European Ghetto.[58] Nevertheless, means of escape were barred when war was declared in September 1939. For the next five years Jewish legal immigration rates plummeted as, Laqueur argues, the world turned its back on Zionism.[59]

During the war immigration had ground to a near standstill and Partition was on hold. Now, Zionism needed a kick-start to get the project back on track. This came about in May 1942 when the weakened Zionist movement met at the Biltmore Hotel in New York to decide on the next step.[60] Brady, Goldmann, Stein, Bickerton and Klausner argue that this landmark meeting exposed the different approaches adopted by the participants. Brady describes the rift that was opening in Zionism.[61] Goldmann writes that Rabbi Stephan Wise and others argued that pressing for a Jewish state was futile until the war was won. He explains that, while some supported Weizmann's readiness to accept that Britain would honour its pledge, the majority were drawn to Ben-Gurion's certainly that only the US could deliver.[62] Stein delivers a positive note. Conference, he writes, resolved that it

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[54] Ovendale, Ritchie (2004, 69-71): The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars
[55] UK Parliament White Paper, 1939)
[56] (Ibid, Hansard, Vol. 248)
[57] Winston Churchill's response in (HC Deb 23 May 1939 Volume 347, 2174)
[58] Laqueur, W. & Rubin, B. (2001, 50) 'The Israel-Arab Reader'
[59] Laqueur, W (2003, 509-511) A History of Zionism
[60] Stein, K (2011): The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion
[61] Brady, Colleen (2010, 17) American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Professor R. Hudson.
[62] Goldmann, Nahum (1969, 291) The autobiography of Nahum Goldmann, translated by Helen Sebba.

was in Jewish interests to emphasise that Arabs too would reap the benefits of a Jewish-majority Palestine. While the more elderly Weizmann dismissed the conference as inconsequential,[63] Bickerton and Klausner stress that it was the younger Ben-Gurion who finally stamped his authority on the Zionist movement and took the helm. Still, for both leaders, it was not a question of *if* a Jewish state should exist, rather one of *how and when* it could be achieved.[64]

During his 1944 political campaign, US President Roosevelt hinted that although he had not yet given his official blessing to a future Jewish state, this omission must not imply that he was unsupportive [65] although now, in light of the Holocaust, Zionists, under Ben-Gurion's pro-American leadership, were in no mood for conciliation. The Jewish Agency which had already rejected the 1939 White Paper now demanded German reparations and insisted that any number of survivors should be given free passage to Palestine.[66] By formalising its demands,[67] the Jewish Agency had set in train a series of events that would lead to Partition.

The end of WWII signalled a sea-change in the political landscape. The US, under FDR's successor President Harry S. Truman,[68] had by that time replaced Britain, now under Labour's new Prime Minister Clement Attlee, as the undisputed world superpower. For Zionists, it represented, as Brady confirms, a "*drift away from Great Britain*".[69] In Palestine, the British Administration came under sustained attack from Jewish militants. Accordingly, in January 1946, an Anglo-American Committee arrived in "*the cemetery of European Jewry*".[70] The Committee rejected the concept that Palestine should be classed as a Jewish state, or, for that matter an Arab state, and, given that the majority of countries had refused entry to all but a few, the Committee saw no alternative other than to recommend that 100,000 survivors should be allowed immediate access to Palestine. Morris argues

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[63] Stein, K (2011, 5): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion
[64] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 72) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[65] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 19): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[66] Royal Institute for International Affairs: Great Britain and Palestine, 1946 (139-140)
[67] Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, (1917-1988, 47)
[68] Former US Vice President Harry S. Truman was sworn in as President immediately following the death of FDR on 12th April 1945.
[69] Brady, Colleen (2010, 16): American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Professor R. Hudson.
[70] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom, (Preface, Paras 4, 11)

that Attlee refused to agree until the Yishuv disarmed, knowing very well that this was highly unlikely.[71] Hoffman too maintains that Attlee's was a cynical ploy knowing that Jews would refuse.[72] Nonetheless, Truman supported the Committee's recommendation and favoured rescinding Britain's White Paper.[73] This discord between the two leaders led to a somewhat frosty relationship although they agreed that Britain's Herbert Morrison should collaborate with US Ambassador, Henry Grady, to look again. In due course, the statesmen recommended issuing 100,000 immigration certificates and rescinding Britain's land sale restrictions. Accepting that neither would result in a secure peace, Morrison and Grady proposed a form of fragmented partition. They recommended partitioning Palestine into four provinces - one Jewish and one Arab and two under the authority of the British.[74] The thesis argues that this four-province Plan reinforced the need for Partition on a grander scale.

Meanwhile, Jewish attacks against the British Administration increased. Hoffman describes the chaos following from the bombing of the King David Hotel in July 1946 leaving ninety-one dead.[75] It was a turning point. Although Britain's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, contemplated a future role for the United Nations,[76] he had not made his final decision. Bercuson sets the scene:[77] against a background in Britain of bombed-out cities, coal shortages and food rationing, Bevin reconsidered the Palestine question. He proposed partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab Cantons (provinces) each with the trappings of independence and evolving over five years into an elected Constitutional Assembly. Distancing himself from the White Paper, Bevin proposed an immigration quota of 96,000 spread over two years.[78] Bevin's plan came to nothing and given that Jewish immigration was "*the [unresolvable] core of the problem*"[79] he was left with little choice but

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[71] Morris, Benny (2008, 34) <u>1948: a history of the first Arab-Israeli war</u>
[72] Hoffman, Bruce (2015, 261) <u>Anonymous Soldiers. The struggle for Israel</u>
[73] Gurock, J. S. (1998) <u>American Jewish History: An Eight-volume Series</u>
[74] <u>Economic Cooperation Foundation Database: 'The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict</u>
[75] *Hoffman, Bruce (1999, 48-52) 'Inside Terrorism*
[76] <u>Mornington Bulletin</u>, 18th September 1946, National Library of Australia
[77] Bercuson, David, J., 1985: '<u>Canada and the birth of Israel – a study in Canadian foreign policy</u>
[78] <u>UN Special Committee Report: Official Records of the General Assembly</u>, (Chapter IV, Para 7) United Nations Special Committee on Palestine; Report to the General Assembly: 3rd Sept. 1947.
[79] UN General Assembly (UNGA, A/2/PV.79, p7), Seventy-Ninth Plenary Meeting, 15 May 1947

to refer the matter to the United Nations.[80] Thus, in April 1947 the UK Government admitted to "*having failed*"[81] and proposed that the General Assembly approve the establishment of a special committee to consider the Palestine question and report back.[82] After unsuccessful efforts to delay, amend or scupper the proposal, on the grounds that Palestine was a non-negotiable Arab-indivisible entity, Britain's proposal passed through its procedural stages.[83] Thus, on the 15th May 1947 the GA approved a resolution for the establishment of an eleven-member Special Committee (UNSCOP) with a remit to investigate the situation in Palestine, neighbouring Middle-East countries and European displacement camps. Arab states and the Permanent-Five members were barred from membership freeing the Special Committee "*from the pressure [of] the Great Powers*".[84]

Immediately after their arrival in Palestine on the 15th June 1947, UNSCOP members learned that the Arab Higher Committee had boycotted proceedings.[85] As they travelled the region, members were struck by the high levels of military security with hundreds of Jews imprisoned. The Administration explained this was a necessary part of police strategy against unlawful Jewish violence.[86] UNSCOP was inundated with pleas for intervention including one involving three young Jewish men facing the death penalty.[87] When, despite pleas, the men were executed, Jewish dissenters immediately retaliated by hanging two British soldiers. The resulting outcry in Britain, Paul Bagon argues, offers "*irrefutable evidence*" that the Jewish underground had a profound impact on Jewish/British relations.[88]

Other than land that had been tentatively earmarked, Zionists also had designs on the under-populated region of the Negev Desert.[89] Britain had repeatedly argued that Jewish immigration must

[80] Hansard, 18th February 1947: Ernest Bevin, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Vol. 433 cc985-94
[81] UN Special Committee Report, Chapter I, Para 12
[82] A/PV.28 29 April 1947, 1
[83] A/PV.28 29 April 1947, 2
[84] Elad Ben-Dror, (2016, 23): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a-vis UNSCOP
[85] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.7, p3) 17 June 1947
[86] UN Special Committee Report, Chapter I, Para 117
[87] Ben-Dror, E. (2016, 14) Ralph Bunche and the Arab–Israeli Conflict Mediation and the UN, 1947–1949
[88] Bagon, P. (2003 14): 'The Impact of the Jewish underground upon Anglo Jewry: 1945-1947, M Phil Thesis
[89] UNGA (A/364/Add.2, PV.16, p2-4) 17 June 1947

be limited by a state's size and its potential to absorb an increasing population – its 'absorptive capacity'. Although the Negev looked unpromising, with irrigation and modern agricultural techniques it was a useful addition.[90] In his evidence to UNSCOP, Jewish Agency representative, David Horowitz, refuted Britain's statement that immigration levels should not exceed Palestine's *absorptive capacity*. Horowitz argued that there were natural and human factors involved in building a successful economy, all of which were increasingly abundant.[91] The thesis argues that the term, 'absorptive capacity', is essentially an elastic concept but used by Britain merely to mollify Arab resistance.[92] For his part, Ben-Gurion envisaged a Jewish majority living on equal terms with a non-Jewish minority and, providing that the Jewish was of an "*adequate area*", the immediate immigration of some 1,000,000 additional Jewish settlers.[93]

Although the Arab Higher Committee had boycotted the proceedings, this was partially offset by meetings held in Beirut between UNSCOP and neighbouring Arab state leaders. One Arab statesman after another argued that immigration rates had reached beyond saturation levels and that while 'legal' immigrants could remain in an all-Arab Palestinian state, 'illegal' immigrants faced the prospect of expulsion. Arab states accused Zionists of exploiting the post-Holocaust refugee crisis which, they maintained, was an international responsibility. In any event, Arab governments remained opposed to the Zionist programme, fearing that it was part of a Zionist conspiracy with wider territorial ambitions. They objected to any "*so-called solution*" other than one involving a proportionally representative independent state guaranteeing equality for all.[94] Avi Shlaim argues that portraying the "*conflict as a symmetrical one between two monolithic political groups*" is a distortion of facts and fails to take account of the divisions that existed within the Arab world.[95] Nevertheless,

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[90] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.16, p36) 4 July 1947. Although the Negev is not specifically referred to here, Horowitz's argument applies.
[91] (Ibid, 36)
[92] 'Absorptive Capacity' (demographic, social, religious and economic) demands further research.
[93] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.19, 5) 7 July 1047
[94] UNGA (AC.13/PV.38) and UNGA (AC.13/PV.39)
[95] Shlaim, Avi (1990, 2) The politics of Partition: King Abdullah, The Zionists, and Palestine 1921-1951

research shows that at least on the substantive issue of Jewish immigration, all Arab countries spoke as one and were equally determined to prevent it.[96]

While aspects of UNSCOP's report have been studied, notably by Bagon,[97] Pappé,[98] Karsh,[99] Ben-Dror[100] and Bickerton and Klausner,[101] this thesis adopts a markedly different approach: it delves deeper into under-researched background work that informed the reports themselves. UNSCOP's substantial report, for example, is just a distillation of dozens of publicly and privately conducted verbatim interviews involving British, Arab and Zionist officials. After completing their investigations in August 1947, the Special Committee presented the United Nations with its recommendations. While the majority agreed on Palestine's right to self-determination and termination of the British Mandate, they failed to agree on the nature of independence. An UNSCOP minority had proposed the establishment of a federation of independent Arab and Jewish regions with a federal government having supreme authority over mutually beneficial matters and retaining authority over immigration. By contrast, UNSCOP's majority recommended partitioning Palestine into two economically united but otherwise wholly independent Arab and Jewish States.[102]

Undeniably, UNSCOP played a significant role in the General Assembly's decision to Partition. Committee members were impressed by the Zionists' diplomatic skills; their willingness to co-operate and their preparedness to compromise. Ben-Dror recounts a clandestine meeting held on the 14th July 1947 between a handful of UNSCOP members and leaders of the Jewish Agency. This was a meeting of such cardinal importance – one "*so sensitive [and] ignored by historical scholarship*" – that it helped put the seal on UNSCOP's majority decision,[103] but was a "*far cry from British hopes and expectations*".[104] Although Britain had failed to implement its Mandate and passed

[96] See: UNGA (AC.13/PV.39) 23 July 1947
[97] Bagon, P. (2003): 'The Impact of the Jewish underground upon Anglo Jewry: 1945-1947
[98] Noam Chomsky & Ilan Pappé (2015): On Palestine
[99] Karsh, Efraim (2011): Palestine Betrayed
[100] Ben-Dror, E. (2014): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP
[101] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007): 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[102] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 84): Palestine Betrayed, Yale University Press, USA.
[103] Ben-Dror, E (2016, 20-21): The success of the Zionist strategy viv-a-vis UNSCOP
[104] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 84): Palestine Betrayed

the problem on to the UN, it refused to acknowledge the inevitability of Partition. Later, an exasperated UN Secretary General, Trygve Lie, criticised Britain's cynical use of the GA.[105]

The debate at the General Assembly opened in November 1947. In the early years of WWII, Roosevelt had resisted Zionist demands for an independent state and when House Representatives threatened to cosponsor a bipartisan Bill for a Jewish state, Roosevelt, fearing a backlash from Arab states, persuaded the House Speaker to kill it. Nevertheless, he refused to rule out the prospect of a future Jewish state. After Roosevelt's death on 12th April 1945, his successor took the reins from his "*crafty predecessor, who walked so skilfully on the Palestinian tightrope*".[106] Cohen maintains that Truman, although sympathetic to Zionist ambitions was slow to show his hand but eventually yielded under Zionist pressure.[107] Hahn writes that this seeming betrayal "*cast a pall over Arab-US relations*".[108] Weir goes further arguing that the State of Israel owes its very existence to a powerful and pervasive Jewish lobby and the near-irresistible force it exerted on Truman.[109] She argues that Zionist leaders were engaged in secret manoeuvrings with influential US power brokers. Quoting Robert Nathan,[110] she writes, Zionists "*used every tool at hand*" and left nothing to chance;[111] that Zionist lobbying, according to US Ambassador Henry F. Grady, "*started where those of my experience had ended*".[112] Hahn delves into an absorbing account of Truman's leaning towards a Jewish state. While resolution of the Palestine 'problem' was a US policy aim, its overriding strategic focus was on Soviet containment. Fearing that Partition could provoke a backlash in the Middle East, especially at time when Western/Soviet relations were breaking down, Hahn explains that Truman supported Partition despite considerable pressure to reject it emanating from his State Department.[113]

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[105] (Ibid, 85) Karsh quoting from the first UN Secretary General, Trygve Lie's memoirs.
[106] Ganin, Zvi. (1979, 19): Truman, American Jewry and Israel, 1945-1948
[107] Cohen, Naomi (2003, 162): Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948
[108] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 41): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[109] Weir, Alison (2014, 1): Against our better judgement
[110] Zionist, Robert Nathan was an active member of the Jewish Agency and had worked for the US Government (Weir, A. (2017) If American knew: The Real Story of How Israel was Created
[111] Weir, Alison (2014, 54): Against our better judgement
[112] (Ibid, 46)
[113] Hahn, P. L. (2004): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961

As the debate entered its final stages, UN representatives became increasingly agitated with some accused of cynical manoeuvring.[114] Soviet representative Andrei Gromyko retorted that Britain had no intention of co-operating with the UN.[115] While his country would have preferred a unitary state, now this was proven to be unworkable, Gromyko would cast the Soviet vote in favour of Partition.[116] Cohen confirms that the General Assembly was rife with rumours that wavering states had been cajoled, bribed or threatened to cast their votes one way or the other.[117] Given that two major Powers which carried considerable political and military sway had pledged their support, and given also that Britain (and China) intended to abstain, Partition became increasingly inevitable. Edward Said maintains that just eight days before the vote, Reinhold Niebuhr[118] and other supporters of Partition wrote to the New York Times implying that somehow they assumed they had the right to speak on behalf of millions of dissenting people.[119] Chomsky argues that settler-colonialism was innately present in the Imperial Power mentality; "*Look, we did it, [therefore] it must be right*".[120] Ben-Dror contends that UNSCOP's description of despairing Holocaust survivors had a profound effect on UN Members and that it was not incidental that sanctioning a Jewish state helped solve the Jewish refugee crisis.[121] This, and that most countries operated a closed-door policy, put the final seal on Partition. Edward Said argues that Arabs were always in an uphill struggle against a colonial power that legitimised the building of "*a [Jewish state] in the ruins of Arab Palestine*".[122] Arabs were engaged in a losing battle with Zionists. It is rare, Shalom Wald contends, that in just two generations, "*so many outstanding individuals*" like Theodore Herzl, David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, Ze'ev Jabotinsky and other noteworthy individuals appeared during "*a unique chapter in history*".[123]

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[114] A/PV.125, 8) 26 November 1947
[115] (Ibid, 25-27)
[116] (Ibid, 23-24)
[117] Cohen, Naomi (2003, 162): Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948
[118] American protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) was an influential political thinker
[119] Said, Edward, W. (1992, 29-30): 'The Question of Palestine'
[120] Noam Chomsky & Ilan Pappé (2015, 56): *On Palestine*
[121] Elad Ben-Dror, (2016, 34): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a-vis UNSCOP
[122] Said, Edward, W. (1992, 13): The Question of Palestine
[123] Wald, Shalom, S. (2014, 271) Rise and Decline of Civilisations: lessons for Jewish People

From the late 1920's British forces were under siege and no longer prepared to bear the financial burden and loss of British lives. Although the UN acknowledged the strength of the Arab case,[124] Morris confirms that Arab states made no secret of their opposition, openly threatening war in the event of Partition.[125] Despite this, in November 1947, Resolution 181 (III)[126] was approved. It was, in Buehrig's words "*the most ambitious attempt in the history of international organisation to change the status quo by formal enactment*".[127] Although Yoav Alon's 2005 book focuses on Transjordan, his observation that "*a state should be understood as a framework in which a political struggle for influence and resources takes place*"[128] is equally true in the case of Palestine. Given that virtually all modern states are "*manmade creations*" and are "*in fact, historically formed*", Halliday proposes that Partition offers a "*standard solution*" in the face of opposing nationalistic forces. "*There did not exist a distinct Palestinian nation one hundred years ago, or [for that matter] a distinct Iraqi or Libyan one*".[129] Former UNSCOP, member, Garcia-Granados, maintains that even before the UN Partition debate, "*Partition already existed*"; that Partition had an irresistible "*force and direction of its own*".[130]

Methodology

By way of interpretative qualitative research this thesis seeks to explain how and why the partition of Palestine was the one viable option. Accepting that both Jews and Arabs have legitimate historical, religious and cultural entitlements to the Holy Land, this researcher neither demonises nor delegitimises either party as to the justice of their individual claims. The goal, as Tessler writes, is to argue in a manner "*that may be described as objectivity without detachment*"[131] or, as Shavit proposes, "*to portray things exactly as they are*".[132] The thesis centres on a specific period of history starting

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[124] A/PV.125, 20-21) 26 November 1947
[125] Morris, Benny. (2008, p61, 412) 1948: a history of the first Arab-Israeli war
[126] Resolution 181 (III) was the resolution for the Partition of Palestine.
[127] Buehrig, E. H. (1971, 3): 'The UN and the Palestinian Refugees, a study in non-territorial administration
[128] Alon, Yoav (2005, 236) The Tribal System in the Face of the State Formation Process, Mandatory Transjordan 1921-1946.
[129] Fred Halliday's words taken from: Linfield, Susie (2019, 210) The Lion's Den – Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky
[130] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 272): 'The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[131] Tessler, M (1994, XI): The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict.
[132] Shavit, Yaacov (2005, XVIII) Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement 1925-1948

with the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and ends with Partition thirty years later. It argues that during the period, neither Zionists nor Arabs would concede their positions on Jewish immigration such that partition was unavoidable; that Partition and immigration are two sides of the same coin. Analysis of the latter dual relationship is the theme that runs throughout this thesis. Although the seeds of a Jewish state were planted before WWI, this thesis argues that the Balfour Declaration was Britain's first official statement of intent - later endorsed in Britain's Mandate for Palestine. Both the Declaration and the Mandate have been subject to intensive scrutiny – in most cases, specifically, or, more generally, part of a wider study. Again, this thesis examines both the Declaration and the British Mandate and concludes that from Balfour onwards there was no turning back; arguing the latter, through a series of steps, each exploring key events over the thirty-year journey to Partition.

Unquestionably, the Zionist/Arab case for and against Partition divides scholars. Commonly, the latter argue from either the traditional pro-Zionist or pro-Palestinian revisionist perspectives. However, it is emphasised that the methodology adopted here is not whether Partition was illegal, immoral or that it laid the ground for the Arab/Israeli conflict, but rather that the General Assembly reached the view that the Arab/Jewish divide was unbridgeable such that Partition was the GA's least-worst option. Research will show that between Balfour and Partition, a *de facto* Jewish state was emerging. Jewish settlers were fast building an infrastructure; homes, schools, synagogues and medical centres were established to cater for the growing population. Land was cultivated. Banking, commerce, manufacturing enterprises and the service sector were all expanding. Internal and export markets were exploited. Hebrew was widely becoming the official language. As the thesis develops it emerges that, to all intents and purposes, the dividing line between Jewish and Arabs communities became an incontrovertible fact on the ground. UNSCOP member, Garcia Granados writes that "*Partition ... already existed*" before the General Assembly made its decision.[133]

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[133] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, Pages 272-273): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it

As will be evident throughout, during preparation of this thesis, a wealth of relevant primary and secondary sources was selected. Where applicable, numerical data is scrutinised so as to substantiate or refute an argument. The research required a meticulous trawl through an array of Committee reports, face-to-face interviews, minutes of UK and UN debates and more. At important points, evidence is gathered via primary source documents devoted to (for example) minutes of cabinet meetings, British Parliamentary debates in both Houses of Parliament, question and answer sessions directed at key players conducted by various committees and commissions and the crucial debate at the UN General Assembly in 1947. It should be noted that, due to the sheer volume of available primary source documentation, every effort was made to select material so as to convey a balanced appraisal. On the latter point, future researchers should be aware that the enormous volume of primary source material presents a logistical challenge. A case in point is the mass of material collected during UNSCOP's months of investigation in Palestine and beyond. At each stage, having scrutinised primary sources, a wide range of secondary sources was carefully selected. Sources were selected so as to reflect a range of opinion reaching from across the traditional and revisionist divide. While the Zionist case 'for' and the Arab case 'against' Partition are thoroughly analysed, at one-point Palestinian-Arabs boycotted an important investigative committee. This presented Zionists with an unexpected opportunity to present their case without conflicting Palestinian Arab evidence. While potentially limiting the research, the absence of the latter was partly mitigated by neighbouring Arab statesmen stepping into the breach.

Throughout, the thesis examines Instrumental values, vis-à-vis Jewish immigration, state borders and defence arrangements, alongside the Intrinsic value of peaceful Arab/Jewish coexistence while addressing the demographic and political challenges.

Chapter 1 begins with the genesis of the Balfour Declaration. By close examination of Wartime Cabinet debates in 1917, the chapter charts the evolution of the Balfour Declaration from

one where "*Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home for Jews*"[134] until the 5th and final version where the Cabinet conceded that the overwhelming majority Arab population had a voice too. Research will show that Britain's early commitment to Zionists was made at the expense of the Arab majority and that it was this failure to enter into proper negotiations that pointed the way to Partition in 1947. Questions arise as to why, at the height of WW1, Britain's leaders thought it strategically advantageous to support Zionists. The chapter considers Britain's Mandate and argues that the Declaration's inclusion implied that the League of Nations foresaw Palestine as a permanent Jewish homeland. Later, when it dawned that the latter had sown the seeds of the Arab/Zionist conflict, Britain attempted to retrieve the situation by contentiously restricting levels of Jewish immigration.

Chapter 2 examines the growing rift between Arabs and the swelling numbers of Jewish immigrants. Sporadic attacks during the 1920s and early to mid-30s quickly erupted into extreme violence in 1936. In response, Britain dispatched a Royal Commission (Peel) to recommend a solution. Research continues with a close examination of Peel's 1937 Commission Report. Peel recommended not only Partition but also a complete population exchange into separate Jewish and Arab-only states. By close dissection of Peel's milestone recommendations, this thesis argues that, although Partition was a foregone conclusion, Peel's validation was a major breakthrough despite some Zionists being unconvinced, others hostile and others still insisting on an all-Jewish-Palestine approach. It examines the processes whereby farsighted Zionists conceded that there was nothing to be gained and perhaps all to be lost if they rejected Partition. So, although the writing was on the wall since Balfour, the Royal Commissioners were the first to officially acknowledge the inevitability of Partition and that a

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[134] See Annex 1. Draft 1: Lord Rothschild Draft of the Declaration - 18th July 1917

de facto Jewish state already existed.[135] Nevertheless, after a promising start, Peel's recommendations were finally rejected.

Considering Gurock's speculative exploration of *what-ifs* - "*Alternative scenarios of events*",[136] this thesis too speculates that had it *not* been for the prospect of a second world war, Britain's 1917 pledge to Zionists may (from Britain's perspective) have possessed a moral imperative over and above Arab claims. Moreover, in the context of the near uncontainable 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, it is probable that Britain would have accepted Peel's Partition recommendation; that the Mandate was unworkable and that it was now time for Britain to bow out. However, in the real world, with war just months away, Britain abandoned the Jews deciding instead to placate the Arab world. The chapter closes with research into days of debate during sittings of both Houses of Parliament culminating, in May 1939, with majority approval of a Government White Paper effectively putting Partition on hold. Scholars have studied the 1939 White Paper, but this thesis goes beyond previous academic examination. It focusses specifically on the arguments that raged across both Houses of Parliament. Here ministers and members from all sides - from the supportive to the deeply opposed – debated a law that, in the months and years to come, would contribute to the cost of millions of Jewish lives. The thesis argues that although the Bill was passed into law, rather than scuttling the Zionist project, Britain's rebuttal stimulated the Zionist leadership to turn to the US and reinforce American support. The thesis addresses the mismatches between US and UK policies for Palestine and considers US President Truman's determination to progress the Zionist project despite US State Department opposition.

Chapter 3 begins and ends with WWII; at a time when Zionists were setting out their post-war strategy. In the Palestine arena, both Zionists and Arabs were entrenched in their uncompromising positions. Amongst a number of related issues, the research next concentrates on primary source

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[135] Palestine Royal Committee Report July 1937, Page 305
[136] Gurock, J. S. (2015) The Holocaust Averted, An Alternative History of American Jewry 1938 – 1967

evidence showing that, whatever the obstacles, Holocaust survivors determinedly struggled to reach Palestine[137] despite Arab protests that Palestine was not a sanctuary, and that Jewish immigrants posed a "*danger*" to the Arab Middle East.[138] The thesis argues that, after failed last-ditch efforts, a war-weary Britain felt compelled to surrender its Mandate. With options blocked and the US now the supreme power, the newly created UN was left to pick up the pieces. The thesis examines the UN's role and its establishment of the Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).

Chapter 4 explores UNSCOP's role in Palestine. The thesis enters into a scrutiny of UNSCOP's membership, its private deliberations and its many verbatim question and answer meetings with involved parties. The thesis offers a critique of a large raft of prima facie evidence presented to UNSCOP by interested parties during its months of public and private sessions. It addresses Arab fears and analyses the demographic impact of Jewish immigration. It challenges the concept that immigration levels necessarily correlate with a state's economic 'absorptive capacity'. While previous historians have generally based their work on final reports, this thesis draws extensively on the background work that informed these reports. There is little evidence that these informative documents have been adequately scrutinised. It is also argued that Palestinian-Arabs' refusal to meet UNSCOP was a serious mistake and adversely affected UNSCOP's investigation. This missed opportunity was only partially offset by question and answer sessions with Arab statemen from neighbouring Arab states. Again, the thesis confirms that Arab leaders, like Zionists, were uncompromising on the issue of immigration. The chapter addresses Arab fears.

Chapter 5 is an appraisal of UNSCOP's report to the GA. The thesis argues that the years 1922 to 1946 highlight the vital interconnection between a prospective Jewish state and levels of immigration. It argues that, from the Zionist perspective, only increased immigration could correct a growing imbalance between the Jewish and Arab populations of Palestine. Conversely, unregulated Jewish

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[137] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom, Chapter II, Para 19

[138] (Ibid, 101). The warning came during evidence given to the Anglo-American Committee by Emil Ghoury, Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee and general secretary of the Palestine Arab Party (for more information. see Tal, David (2004) War in Palestine, 1948: Strategy and Diplomacy)

immigration could lead to a predominance of Jews in a unitary state and confirm Arab fears. Predictably, UNSCOP recommended a two-state solution with a combined system of economic unity.

Chapter 6 examines the Partition debate at the General Assembly. Representatives came under pressure to vote for or against the resolution to Partition. Again, by way of in-depth engagement with UN primary source documentation the thesis considers the pros and cons expressed within the General Assembly Chamber. It argues that, because US President, Truman and the Soviet leader, Stalin, undoubtably instructed their representatives to support Partition, others followed suit such that the outcome was predictable.

Conclusion This gathers together the threads of the preceding six chapters. One by one, the thesis explores the feasibility of the other possible options before concluding that the two-state solution was quite unavoidable.

Again, the thesis adopts a notably different approach to others in the field by offering a rigorous scrutiny of British Cabinet, Parliamentary and UN debates together with a close analysis of UK Commission, UN Committee reports and more besides. It delves into the background work that informed the latter frequently by way of verbatim minutes of meetings and debates that took place during the crucial thirty years between the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and Partition in 1947. While historians accept that Balfour started the ball rolling, this thesis argues that Partition was the predictable outcome of thirty years of a blank refusal by both parties to give way over the immigration issue. It argues that Partition was not the result of one giant leap but rather by a series of smaller irreversible steps that followed on from the Balfour Declaration. A two-state solution, Halliday asserts, was "*undoubtedly the best way out*".[139] This thesis contends that ultimately, the UN had no choice other than to transform a decades-old *de facto* Jewish homeland into an internationally recognised state. Uniquely, it asks and ultimately answers the key question of *why* Partition was the only workable solution to the Palestine question.

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[139] Halliday, Fred (2011, 92): Political Journeys: The OpenDemocracy Essays

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the second half of the 19th century, particularly in Eastern Europe, anti-Semitism became increasingly virulent. Any attempt at Jewish emancipation in Europe was futile. In 1896, Theodore Herzl wrote: "*We have honestly endeavoured everywhere to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities, and to preserve only the faith of our fathers. It has not been permitted to us*".[140] Particularly in Russia and Eastern Europe, discriminatory laws and violent pogroms threatened Jewish people until their lives became intolerable. Many made their way to Western Europe and the New World. Others, for whom an orthodox Jewish faith and cultural identity were paramount, set their sights on the 'Promised Land'. In 1882, in that one year alone, 7,000 Jews eager to live and work without fear of persecution arrived in Palestine to join growing Jewish communities.

The beginnings of Zionism grew out of a widely held belief that true assimilation into the fabric non-Jewish society was unattainable. Zionism itself developed into a full-scale Zionist movement during the Basle Congress of 1897. Here it was accepted that it had gone beyond the time for a Jewish national revival of Judaism with its unique culture, religion and Hebrew language. Schneer contends that while the Zionists at Basle may have intended that Palestine would be the focus for a Jewish 'state', they left the term "*ambiguous, perhaps to avoid exciting antagonism or perhaps because that goal seemed too ambitious even to them*".[141] Now Zionist leaders focused on two inter-related issues. The first was the establishment of a permanent and independent Jewish homeland in Palestine. The second was that the Jewish diaspora should be free to immigrate into what they considered to be their ancestral home and to purchase land from willing Palestinian land owners.

Towards the end of the 19th Century and into the 20th, the rate of Jewish immigration gradually increased. Meanwhile, Palestinian Arabs refused to concede their own demands for a freeze on Jewish

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[140] Theodor Herzl is usually considered to have been one of the chief founding fathers of Zionism. The quotation is contained in: Theodore Herzl (1896, 3), Der Judenstaat
[141] Schneer, J. (2010, 11): The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

immigration and for full independence in a sovereign Palestinian Arab state in the belief that relinquishing these threatened to expunge their Arab national identity. They rejected expanding Jewish settlements, claiming that these laid the foundations for a Jewish state encroaching further into the Arab Middle East.[142]

Nevertheless, Jewish immigration continued. In 1904, for example, thousands of immigrants arrived in Palestine most of whom gravitated towards existing Jewish communities. By the beginning of WWI, the Jewish population of Palestine was around 85,000 – approximately one-ninth of the total population. Meanwhile, Arabs became increasing frustrated at their own lack of progress when measured against philanthropically funded Jewish development. Palestinian Arabs gradually became part of a wider and progressively erudite Arab nationalist movement. Generally, they were accepting of the small minority of Jews in their midst but were determined to prevent a further and unwelcome incursion into Arab lands. A few months before WWI, one young Arab diarist expressed the core of the Palestine predicament: "*If this country is 'cradle of the Jews' spirituality and the birthplace of their history, then the Arabs have an undeniable right which is that they propagated their language and culture in it [while Jewish] rights had died with the passage of time; our right is alive and unshakable*".[143]

In August 1914 the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers. On the opposing side, the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia were soon embroiled in full-scale war. At first, the two sides were fairly evenly matched until, in 1917, US involvement shifted the balance in the Allies favour.[144] By the end of hostilities, the US had asserted its position as an unchallengeable hegemon. The conditions of war provided opportunities for Weizmann and other Zionist leaders to persuade sympathetic members of the UK Government to support their cause and convert elite members of the Jewish establishment to Zionism.[145]

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[142] Mustafa-Kabha, <u>Palestinians and the Partition Plan:</u> quoted in Gavison R. Editor (2013, 33) <u>The Two-State Solution</u>.
[143] Schneer, J. (2010, 9-14): <u>The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict</u>
[144] (Ibid, 15)
[145] (Ibid, 365-366)

1917 was a critical point in the war. With millions dead, wounded or caught up in the Western Front, Britain considered that it was strategically important to engage closely with Zionism. During a series of closed meetings, Lloyd George's War Cabinet met to plan Britain's response. Given that Jews and Arabs laid claim to the same land, the Cabinet decided that it was in Britain's wartime interests to favour Jews over the Arab majority. After several revisions, a one-page typewritten letter of sixty-seven deeply contentious words, signed by Lord Balfour on the 2nd of November 1917, was delivered to Lord Rothschild; "*the result of a process that some consider practically inevitable*".[146]

By way of an exploration of British Wartime Cabinet papers, the thesis proper starts with the genesis of the Balfour Declaration's dual obligation: a commitment to Zionists, with minimal cost to the civil and religious rights enjoyed by non-Jews. This pledge was reaffirmed in a convivial exchange of letters in January 1919 between King Hussein of Hejaz's third son, Emir Faisal, and Chaim Weizmann the outcome of which was the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement. The Agreement was a pledge to put into effect the Balfour Declaration. Tessler questions Faisal's and Weizmann's motives: Faisal, who presupposed that he was speaking on behalf of the Arab world, agreed to support Zionist ambitions, partly because, as a pan-Arab statesman, he had his eye fixed on a Greater Syria and partly because Zionist influence might help secure international support for the latter.[147] For Weizmann, the Agreement was a way of "*exchanging support of Arab aspirations outside Palestine for an endorsement of Zionist goals inside the country*".[148] However, when finding himself under pressure to restrain his over-enthusiasm, Faisal added an important addendum: that under the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement, while Jews were to be encouraged to immigrate into Palestine, the Agreement was not valid until Arabs gained their independence. Later, the Arab world repudiated Faisal's agreement and condemned the Balfour Declaration. This was on the grounds that firstly, Arabs had not been consulted and secondly, that Jewish immigration would change the demographic and

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[146] Schneer, J. (2010, 365): <u>The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict</u>
[147] Tessler, M (1994, 150-154) <u>The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict</u>
[148] (Ibid, 153)

political balance of Arab Palestine. In any event, the agreement became irrelevant after former King Faisal was expelled by the French from Greater Syria, before becoming constitutional monarch of Iraq on the 23rd August 1921. Britain's attitude to Faisal is summed up by Christopher Sykes, "*If Faisal had been a Palestinian Arab of Jerusalem his treaty with Zionists might have had some feeble hope of acceptance, but since he was who he was, it had none at all*".[149]

Two months after the end of WWI, the victors gathered in Versailles to negotiate peace terms. Britain and France occupied large regions of the Middle East, but now that Arabs were claiming their right to independence, it remained for the Allies to decide how best to proceed.

The chapter continues the theme with an exploration of the King-Crane Commission's report on the Middle East question, which was appointed by US President Woodrow Wilson. King-Crane's Commission questioned the 'dual obligation' quandary which was intrinsic to Britain's commitment to the "*establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people* [*given that nothing*] *must be done that may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine*"[150] (own emphasis). The American Commissioners concluded that Arab opinion was so deeply opposed to Zionist plans that a severe cut-back of immigration was necessary. They reasoned that Palestine should be included in a wider, united Syrian state under the temporary guardianship of a mandated authority. Ultimately, the League of Nations awarded the Palestine Mandate to Britain.

The Balfour Declaration was largely written into the Palestine Mandate, and included an obligation to establish a Jewish National 'home'. However, given Zionist and Arab intransigence, particularly over the question of Jewish immigration, it slowly emerges that the newly formed Palestine Administration faced a near impossible task. The thesis raises questions over the legitimacy of the 'dual obligation', centring (in part) on the vexed problem of Jewish immigration into an overwhelmingly Arab domain.

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[149] Sykes, Christopher (1973, 35) Crossroads to Israel
[150] Annex 5. Draft 5: (Final Draft) - Balfour Declaration – 2nd November 1917

The chapter concludes with a brief exploration of the inter-war years. Between periods of relative calm, dissident Arab groups mounted sporadic attacks on the Mandatory Authority accused of reneging on its earlier promise of an independent Arab state.

<u>Genesis: The Balfour Declaration</u>

In the summer of 1917 Lord Balfour requested that the Zionist Organisation offer "*suggestions which* [the latter] *may desire to lay before [the British Cabinet]*". Zionists collaborated and drafted a reply; passed on to Lord Rothschild who in turn forwarded it to Balfour, noting that he was now "*able to send you a formula you asked me for...*".[151]

The first sentence of the first Draft reads (Annex 1): "[HM] *Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home for Jewish people*". Schneer argues that the word "*reconstituted*", implies "*an unbroken link between Jews and Palestine*".[152] The phrasing "*the national home*" suggests that, certainly in the early days, a number of Zionists claimed the right to *all* of Palestine. Notice the use of '*home*' rather than the more contentious '*state*'. The Balfour reply (Annex 2) reflected this terminology "*reconstituted as the national home for Jewish people*" and committed that the UK Government would use "*their best endeavours*" to see it through to fruition. The Milner Draft (Annex 3) shifts the Cabinet into more guarded territory. A "*Jewish national home*" has been replaced by the wording, "*a home for Jewish people*"; on this occasion *not* covering all Palestine, but rather "*a home for Jewish people <u>in</u> Palestine*" (own emphasis).

Having rejected the previous versions, the UK War Cabinet gathered for another of its regular meetings on the 3rd September 1917. Ministers were reminded of a previous exchange of correspondence between Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour and Lord Rothschild.[153] British wartime interests were at stake, not least because British troops were heavily engaged against the Axis Powers

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[151] Schneer, J. (2010, 335): <u>The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict</u>

[152] (Ibid, 335)

[153] Rothschild was a member of well-known family of Jewish bankers while Balfour was, at least in private, a pro-Zionist sympathiser. Balfour met with Chaim Weizmann in 1906 and been impressed by him. It was probably as a result of his meeting with Weizmann and other Zionist leaders that he was prompted to make his declaration to Rothschild: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arthur-James-Balfour-1st-earl-of-Balfour)

in the Middle East. Edwin Montagu (soon to be Secretary of State for India) had tabled a memorandum entitled 'The Anti-Semitism of the present [British] Government'. He cautiously avoided accusing his Cabinet colleagues of anti-Semitism rather, he argued, it was their Policy on Zionism that was anti-Semitic; acting as a "*rallying ground for anti-Semites in every corner of the world*". Montagu, the one Jewish Member of Lloyd George's war-time Cabinet was vehemently anti-Zionist. "*Zionism*", he wrote is "*a mischievous political creed, untenable to any patriotic citizen of the United Kingdom*".[154] Montagu objected to the inference contained in the draft declaration that Palestine, not Britain for example, was the "*national home*" for *all* Jews. He regarded Jews as a religious community and himself as a "*Jewish Englishman*" and argued that the phrase "*the home of Jewish people*" presupposed that Jews belonged elsewhere. Other colleagues contested his line of argument. They reminded Montagu that, unlike Britain, there were countries in the world where Jews were oppressed, not least in Germany. It followed that the establishment of a "*Jewish State or autonomous community*" was in Jewish peoples' best interests. On the other hand, Jews in countries where equality was guaranteed need not be affected by the existence of a permanent Jewish Home elsewhere. The Cabinet conceded that though some influential Jewish leaders were opposed to Zionism, conversely, "*large numbers were sympathetic*".[155] Several Cabinet Members proposed that the matter should be postponed to a later date. However, Lord Robert Cecil (under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) responded that his Office was being pressurised to reach a decision as quickly as possible. The Zionist movement was a potent force particularly in the United States. Therefore, it was clearly in Allied interests to harness Zionists' "*earnestness and enthusiasm*". Unless Zionist demands were properly resolved, Cecil warned, to do otherwise could jeopardise some important international relationships.[156]

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[154] G.T. 1868, Cab 21/58, Memorandum of Edwin Montagu on the Anti-Semitism of the present British Government – Submitted to the British Cabinet, 23 August 1917.
[155] War Cabinet 227, CAB 23/24, 2
[156] (Ibid, 2)

Close political relations with Allies were critical. Just five months before, a formally reluctant America had entered the war. US troops had already arrived in France with many more military divisions to follow.[157] Britain was treading a delicate line. Before closing the meeting, the majority agreed that Cecil should inform President Wilson that Britain was prepared to issue a sympathetic declaration to Zionists, acceptable, minsters anticipated, to the President. Meanwhile, the matter would be held in abeyance pending US approval.[158]

When, on the 4th of October 1917, the Cabinet reconvened, Edwin Montagu expanded on his previous concerns. Pre-empting Montagu's speech, Foreign Secretary Balfour forewarned that Britain's interests were at stake unless the Palestine issue was satisfactorily resolved. He cautioned that the German Government had designs on capturing Zionist sympathy and claimed that the French authorities were preparing to forestall Britain's by issuing their own Declaration. Balfour accepted that Zionism was opposed by several prominent Jews, but also reasoned that it enjoyed broad support, particularly in the United States. He argued that a sympathetic declaration would be welcomed by Zionists and "*knew [that President Woodrow Wilson was] extremely favourable*". Balfour then turned his attention to Montagu's earlier argument. Unlike Montagu, Balfour saw no inconsistency between the establishment of a Jewish national "*focus*" and full assimilation into the lifeblood of other countries. It was clear to Balfour that many Jews regarded themselves as part of an historic race of people with roots in Palestine, who harboured a desire to return. Conversely, he acknowledged that others were fully integrated and were comfortable in their present surroundings.[159] At this point Montagu reiterated his previous objections to the proposed declaration. He maintained that most English-born Jews were opposed to Zionism and that in the main, Zionists were foreign-born (Russian-born Chaim Weizmann typified the latter). Montagu protested that President Wilson was "*opposed to a declaration now*". Whether Montagu meant that Wilson was opposed to the Declaration

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[157] (Ibid, 4)
[158] (Ibid, 3)
[159] War Cabinet 245, CAB 23/24, 5

per se or opposed to making a declaration at that time is unclear. Earl George Curzon (Lord President of the Council) argued against making a commitment to Zionists. His objections were based on what he considered to be practical matters. Palestine, he recollected from his own experience, was "*barren and desolate*". He could not imagine a less inviting place for a Jewish homeland. How, he asked, was it proposed to replace the indigenous inhabitants with Jews? Curzon argued that rather than repatriate Jews on a large scale ("*sentimental idealism*") a guarantee of equal civil and religious rights should be extended to the existing Jewish population.

Subsequently, to appease Montagu, pro-Zionist Viscount Alfred Milner who, in April of the following year, became Secretary of State for War, tabled an amendment to the Declaration. The wording that nothing must prejudice the rights of non-Jews in Palestine or those "*enjoyed [by Jews] in any other country*" should, he proposed, be extended to read "*enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality and citizenship*". Again, the War Cabinet decided to elicit the opinions of President Wilson and Zionist Leaders.[160]

The dispute over the proposed Declaration was raised again during a Cabinet meeting held on 31st October 1917. Edwin Montagu had taken up a new post as Secretary of State for India and was absent. Balfour stated that it was generally agreed that a formal declaration would serve as a useful wartime propaganda tool. Again, Earl Curzon recalled that Palestine was desolate and therefore unsuitable as a homeland. Balfour accepted that colleagues held differing opinions, but in his view, if Palestine was scientifically developed it could sustain a much larger population, certainly larger than while under "*Turkish misrule*".

Overall, the Cabinet was prepared to accept that Palestine should be considered as a suitable place for a "*Jewish national home*", but what exactly did "national home" mean to the British Cabinet? Balfour and supporters saw it as a "*home*" where Jews could "*work out their own salvation*" by their own education and industry, as well as a centre of national culture and a focus of national

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[160] War Cabinet 245 CAB 23/24, 6

life. Balfour maintained that while development should be gradual, an "*independent Jewish State*" lay somewhere in the future.[161] Montagu had argued that a separate Jewish national homeland would prejudice the rights of Jews living elsewhere – England in his case. Balfour disagreed. He drew a parallel between an English national moving to the US (for example) and an English Jew doing likewise. The former would experience little difficulty in settling and becoming a full national, whereas in the present uncertain climate the latter might find full assimilation "*incomplete*". It followed, he argued, that a "national home" outside of one's present domicile to which a Jew may or may not choose to claim allegiance, countered accusations of non-nationality. Curzon agreed, though he remained unconvinced by Balfour's claim that Palestine was ripe for development. After noting the arguments from both sides, Curzon finally accepted the diplomatic argument. He was in favour of Britain issuing an expression of sympathy to the Zionist cause since it seemed that most Jews favoured Zionism. He cautioned against using unguarded language but agreed that a written undertaking would serve as a valuable addition to Britain's propaganda arsenal.[162]

Finally, having formally rejected Viscount Milner's amendment, the War Cabinet moved that the Foreign Secretary should declare Britain's sympathy with "*Zionist aspirations*". All that remained was for US President Wilson to give his blessing. However, President Wilson was preoccupied with other wartime concerns. Already involved in the European arena, he was anxious to avoid his country being drawn into war elsewhere. He needed reassurance that US support for the Declaration would not involve the US in war in the Middle East. When, ultimately, he accepted that the Declaration was less a statement of policy and more an expression of broad principle, he replied to HM Government that he "*concurred with the formula suggested from the other side*".[163]

On the 2nd November 1917, two days after the War cabinet's decision, UK Foreign Secretary and former Prime Minister A J Balfour wrote a short letter to Lord Rothschild. He expressed his

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[161] War Cabinet, 261, CAB 23/24, 5
[162] (Ibid, 6)
[163] Little, D. (2002, 16) <u>American Orientalism</u>

Government's "*sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations*" and requested that the contents of the letter should be conveyed to the Zionist Federation. The final version reads: "*His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country*".

A Milner-Amery Draft[164] (Annex 4) had formed a basis for this final version.[165] HM Government "*views with favour the establishment...*". Recognising the anti-Zionist position, the language tends away from enshrining a unilateral commitment towards the more passive form; again, the UK "*favours the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race*". Interestingly, in this version Jews are viewed as members of a defined racial group. The Milner-Amery version continues: "*nothing shall be done* [to prejudice the] *rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully content with their existing nationality (and citizenship)*". The addition was intended to assuage Lord Montagu's apprehension that because he was an Englishman who also happened to be Jewish by religion, it should not be presupposed that Jewish people somehow belonged somewhere other than their birthplace.

Appearing almost as an afterthought, the fourth version acknowledged that Palestine was overwhelmingly peopled by Arabs – "*that nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities ...*" (see Annexes 4 and 5). The final version contains several textual changes. Here, Jews are more appropriately regarded as a "people" rather than a "race". Indeed, Lord Montagu had raised an important and unresolved question on the matter of racial origin; the term 'race' embraces several contentious religious and ethical issues.

Leopold Amery became political secretary to the War cabinet in 1916 under Viscount Milner and exerted a profound influence on the text of the Declaration. While openly sympathetic to Zionism,

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[164] Annex 4. Draft 4: Milner-Amery draft of the Declaration – 4th October 1917
[165] Annex 5. Draft 5: (Final Draft) - Balfour Declaration – 2nd November 1917

to the end of his life, this future "*immensely influential*" politician declined to acknowledge his Jewish ancestry. Rubinstein writes that Amery's "*secret*" is "*probably the most remarkable example of concealment of identity in twentieth-century British political history*".[166] The fact that the Milner-Amery draft acts as a precursor to the Declaration itself underlines the significance of Amery's role.[167] His descendent, Jane Corbin, contends that "*Leo, [later accepted] the inevitability of partition*".[168]

Consequently, Britain had constructed an associative connection between the Jewish Diaspora and a Jewish 'national home'; a British commitment to "*use [its] best endeavours to facilitate this object*" and an implied requirement that Jews should be free to immigrate into Palestine, since without immigration the object itself was baseless.

Thus, on the 1st of November 1917, somewhat creatively, the British Government "*favour[ed]*" a Jewish national home in Palestine though not at the expense of non-Jews. Although its language is imprecise, the Declaration was a major milestone towards Partition. Unlike Zionists, Arab Nationalists had not been consulted at any point in the process,[169] moreover, there is no evidence that the Britain's Cabinet had any intention of doing so. If Arab Nationalists had been included in the discussions, it is arguable whether the Declaration in its present form would have come to fruition. Nonetheless, the journey to Partition took a major step forward when President Woodrow Wilson gave his seal of approval.

The final version had evolved through several revisions, primarily due to Sir Edwin Montagu's intervention. Also, while the non-Jewish population were granted civil and religious rights, the Declaration did not grant 'political' rights. When on the 24th April 1920 during the San Remo conference, Monsieur Berthelot one of the French representatives raised the issue, Lord Curzon replied that the question raised "*an infinite field of discussion [but it was] most unwise, and … quite*

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[166] Rubinstein, William D. (1999) The Secret life of Leopold Amery, History Today, 1st February 1999
[167] Although Amery's mother became an Anglican, she was of Jewish decent and therefore, according to orthodox Jewish law, Leopold was also a Jew. Rubinstein argues that "this was no minor genealogical curiosity but one of the central obsessions of his life" (Rubinstein, 1999)
[168] Corbin, J. (2017) 'The Balfour Declaration: My ancestor's hand in history. BBC News, 31st October 2017.
[169] The organisation, Al-Muntada al-Adabi, was not consulted. The latter came to prominence during the last years of Ottoman rule and became the focus for growing Arab Nationalism.

unnecessary, to raise the question now". Berthelot seemed satisfied with Curzon's response and the opportunity was lost.[170]

Bickerton and Klausner propose that Montagu's involvement resulted in an "*attenuated and ambiguous*" document. Phrased in terms of "national *home*" and "*in Palestine*" it left the proposed entity vague.[171]

Reaction to the Declaration

Why then, at the height of a war that had already cost millions of lives, did the British Cabinet spend precious time on an issue of *relatively* minor importance?

Prominent Jewish leaders had previously gained some degree of influence within Russian political circles. The British wartime Cabinet reasoned that if Britain pledged to assist Zionists in establishing a homeland in Palestine, then this might incentivise Zionists to encourage an increasingly despairing Russia to stay on the Allies side until Germany was defeated.[172] [173] [174] Schneer argues that Cabinet members viewed a written Declaration as a signal of support for the Zionist cause. Without this support, there was a possibility that Russian Jews would withdraw their backing for the moderate Kerensky Government,[175] fearing that Bolsheviks were poised to seize control and make a separate peace deal with the enemy. Then there was the risk that Germany would force Turkey to lend support to Jewish autonomy, turning Jewish public opinion towards the Central Powers. Robert Cecil[176] noted

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[170] Office for Israeli Constitutional Law, Minutes of Palestine Meeting of the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers held in San Remo, Appendix April 24, 1920

[171] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

[172] By November 1917, the Russian Army had had enough, and thousands had lain down their arms. The new Soviet Union's involvement in WWI came to an official end on 3rd March 1918 after the signing of the Brest- Litovsk Treaty between Russia and Germany. WWI ended on 11th of November that same year.

[173] On the 6th of April 1917, the United States joined the Allies so that by the time of the Balfour Declaration in November 1917, US involvement was relatively recent. As before, the Balfour Declaration might have encouraged American Zionists to remain firm and thus persuade the American Administration to do likewise.

[174] The United Kingdom was an Imperial Power. While Palestine acted as a land bridge to its Eastern Empire, its proximity to the Suez Canal enabled Britain to protect its shipping routes without necessarily having to rely on Egypt. Abdur Rahman's (Indian Representative on UNSCOP) 1947 note to the General Assembly (quoted from Sir Martin Conway MP writings in 1922) contends that "The real danger [to the Canal] comes not from the West but from the East [from] any European Power that may be hostile to Great Britain - Germany in the past, Russia perhaps in the future?" (A/364 Add 1. 3 September 1947, 43)

[175] Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government was created after Tsar Nicholas II abdicated in March 1917. Kerensky's Government continued and his unpopular support for the Allies became increasingly untenable, helping to bring about his government's overthrow by the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution.

[176] Robert Cecil was PM Lord Salisbury's son. Balfour's cousin and parliamentary under-secretary of state (1915-1919).

"*I do not think it is possible to exaggerate the international power of the Jews*". Schneer however, argues that implicit here is the "*wildly unrealistic estimate of the power and unity of world Jewry*"[177] He argues that Zionists exploited this stereotypical thinking and used it to their advantage".[178] Twenty years later, in June 1937, the former British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, reported to Parliament that the Balfour Declaration was issued during "*one of the darkest periods of the war*". He recalled that during this period, French forces had mutinied; the Italian Army was crumbling, and the United States was still in a state of preparedness. It followed that as Britain confronted potentially overwhelming forces it was essential to shore up supportive allies. Lloyd George insisted that while its deployment of massive forces against the Ottoman Empire demonstrated Britain's commitment to Arab emancipation, it was also strategically vital "*to secure the sympathy and co-operation of this most remarkable community, the Jews throughout the world ... *".[179] W. R. Louis questions the issuance of the Declaration and Britain's motives. He writes that the Declaration "*was an extraordinary tale of double-dealing and betrayal*" and one that was to haunt Britain for the next thirty years. Quoting Arthur Koestler, he suggests that it was "*one nation promising another nation the land of a third nation*". He proposes that the influential C. P Scott, pro-Zionist editor of the Manchester Guardian, was instrumental in swaying Lloyd George's Government. After the announcement of the Declaration on 9th November, Scott greeted it as "*the fulfilment of aspiration, the signpost of destiny*".[180] Conversely, Elizabeth Monroe argues that *"[m]easured by British interests alone it is one of the greatest mistakes in our imperial history*".[181] More directly, Edward Said writes that the Balfour Declaration was simply one among *"many examples of [Britain's] expressed and demonstrated superiority*". The task was to "*convert Palestine into a Jewish state" (own emphasis)*.[182] Arab protests would have meant little to British imperialists at the time. As Doerr

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[177] Schneer, J. (2010, 343): The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict
[178] (Ibid, 343-344)
[179] A/364 Add 1, 3d September 1947, 46
[180] William Roger Louis (2005, 252): 'Yet More Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain
[181] Monroe, E (1981, 43), Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914–71
[182] Said, Edward, W. (1992, 15, 20) 'The Question of Palestine

explains: British Imperialism was based on the claim (and the self-belief) that colonies under British rule benefited not only economically but had the added advantage of "*being educated and 'civilised'*".[183] Noam Chomsky argues that Zionism was a settler-colonial movement that was in tune with Britain's Imperial-Power mentality; "*Look, we did it, [therefore Zionism] must be right*".[184] Directing a question to Ilan Pappé, questioner, Frank Barat,[185] suggested that Lord Balfour and other decision-makers at the time were anti-Semitic: "*they wanted the Jews to live in Palestine because they did not want the Jews in England or anywhere else in Europe*".[186] Bickerton et al also question Britain's' motives. Given that several powerful Cabinet Ministers were opposed to Zionism, the authors propose cogent reasons which may have persuaded a majority to support the Declaration. First, the Declaration might encourage pro-Zionists in Lenin's Revolutionary Guard to convince Russia to remain militarily engaged. Second, the Declaration could help persuade previously unconvinced American-Jews to put additional pressure on President Wilson to intensify America's war effort. Lastly, there was the possibility that if Britain hesitated over Balfour, it could open the way for Germany or the Ottoman Empire to exploit a rift in British-Zionist relations and announce a Balfour-like declaration of their own.[187] Therefore, Britain's motives for issuing the Balfour Declaration at the height of war appears to be nothing less than a war-time propaganda tool.

It was several years after 1917 before many Arabs grasped the full significance of what had transpired. Before long, the name 'Balfour' became synonymous with British power, Jewish money and, for some enterprising Arabs, financial opportunity. Karsh records the story of a Sheik from near Gaza asking Balfour to tell Jews that "*we in the South would sell land much cheaper than found in the North*".[188]

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[183] Doerr, Paul, W. (1998, 45); British Foreign Policy 1919-1939
[184] Chomsky, Noam & Pappé, Ilan, (2015, 56) 'On Palestine
[185] In Chomsky and Pappé's 'On Palestine' (2015), Frank Barat is described as a human rights activist and coordinator of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine
[186] Chomsky, Noam & Pappé, Ilan, (2015, 126) 'On Palestine
[187] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[188] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 12): Palestine Betrayed

In the short term, Britain's wartime strategic interests in the Middle East took priority over Zionist goals. Bickerton and Klausner propose that, looking into the future, it was also vital that Britain should maintain a reliable flow of Middle East oil. In addition, air, sea and land routes within and through the Middle East provided channels to valuable commercial markets, including India. There was also the probability that after the war, a strong Western-style democracy would best serve British interests within the Arab remnants of a defeated Ottoman Empire. To augment the latter, Bickerton and Klausner argue that many Jews were used strategically, as part of a combined Allied war effort.[189] Chaim Weizmann was counting on British support. Weizmann was Russian-born and a committed Zionist. He was president of the World Zionist Organisation which at the time, served as an emissary between staunch Zionists and would-be pro-Zionist sympathisers. Soon after the Balfour Declaration was published, Weizmann claimed that *"[the British understood that] Jews alone were capable of rebuilding Palestine and of giving it a place in the modern family of nations"*.[190] Said argues that "*rebuilding*" explicitly implies a replacement of the existing order with "*[what was intended] to appear [as] a new Jewish State*".[191] By his persuasive personal charm, "*brilliant mind, dignified bearing [and] charisma"*,[192] Weismann had convinced key British politicians to back his cause. Prime Minister Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Lord Balfour and other prominent figures, including influential newspaper editors, all gave their approval. Others viewed a home in Palestine as a way of discouraging Jewish immigrants from entering less-welcoming Britain.[193]

Britain was faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, through Balfour, Britain was committed to the Zionist ideal. On the other, (undoubtedly to secure strategic wartime advantage) it had made similar commitments to Arabs. For example, between 24th October and 13th December 1915, notes were exchanged between Sir Henry McMahon (British High Commissioner in Egypt) and Sharif

[189] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[190] Said, Edward, W. (1992, 13) 'The Question of Palestine
[191] (Ibid, 13)
[192] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[193] (Ibid, 39-40)

Hussein of Mecca (seen as the most prestigious Arab Leader). McMahon wrote that he was authorised by his Government to announce that it "*was prepared to recognise and uphold the independence of Arabs in all regions lying within specific frontiers*". Hussein replied with "*great gratification*" and pledged that Arabs would join in the battle against the Turks[194] although, Bickerton and Klausner contend, that while Arabs played a significant role in the Arab Revolt, the majority remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire. However, the central question is whether Palestine was included as part of the arrangement? Britain claimed that Palestine was rightly excluded but, the authors maintain, most observers support the Arab assertion that Palestine was indeed included.[195] Nevertheless, by separating out Palestine from the majority Mandated region and later assisting that region towards autonomy, Britain could later reallocate all (or at least part of) Palestine to Jews while claiming to having fulfilled its obligation to both parties. Therefore, in British terms, after issuance of the Balfour Declaration (with its written 'dual obligation') and an internationally recognised British Mandate, the way was clear for a future Jewish State in Palestine.

Faisal-Weizmann Agreement – Possible Compromise

Britain's next move was to arrange for the highly regarded Weizmann to meet with Hussein's son, Faisal. Before their first meeting in June 1918, Weizmann assured Faisal that Jews did not intend to establish a Jewish government, but instead wished to "*work under British protection, to colonise and develop Palestine without encroaching of any legitimate interests*".[196] The two men met in London and signed a mutual pact on the 3rd January 1919. It was a convivial exchange emphasising "*the most cordial goodwill and understanding*".[197] [198] The Agreement was a firm commitment to implement the Balfour Declaration. This meant taking all necessary measures to stimulate and encourage Jewish

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[194] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 55-57) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[195] (Ibid, 36-37)
[196] History of Zionism (2011, 14) (http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/History-of-Zionism.pdf
[197] Pre-State Israel: The Weizmann-Faisal Agreement: January 1919, Article 1.
[198] On the Weizmann-Faisal Agreement, Weizmann claimed to be acting on behalf of the Zionist Organisation while Amir Faisal portrayed himself as representing the views and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hejaz. This was a short-lived entity comprising a strip of land ruled by the Hashemite dynasty bordering on to the Red Sea including Tabuk, Medina and Mecca and the coastal city of Jeddah. It is now entirely absorbed into present-day Saudi Arabia.

immigrants to settle and cultivate the land on a "*large scale*" and assisting and protecting Arab rights on their way to economic fulfilment.[199] There was no specific reference to a separate 'Jewish state', but separation of Arabs and Jews into "*respective territories*" was presumed.[200] Zionists were also expected to assist in the creation of an independent "*Arab State*".[201] In his opening statement Faisal claimed to be acting on behalf of his own short-lived Kingdom of Hejaz though, by inference, he had his sights sets on a larger picture. Tessler argues that Faisal's orientation was truly pan-Arab and was "*capable of flexibility with respect to Palestine precisely because his interest was in the larger arena of the eastern Arab world – namely, Greater Syria, Iraq and the Hejaz*". In a letter to his wife in 1918, Weizmann wrote that "*[Faisal] is not interested in Palestine but on the other hand he wants Damascus and the whole of northern Syria*".[202] Faisal supported an alliance with Zionists believing that Jewish finance and political influence would help secure international support for Arab self-determination. For his part, Weizmann reasoned that if Zionists supported Faisal's wider ambitions then the *quid pro quo* was Arab endorsement for Zionist goals. Bickerton et al contend that Faisal viewed himself as the principal voice of authority - well able to deliver for others. However, he had misjudged the mood, as opposition to the Balfour Declaration was gaining momentum, underpinned by the "*fear of unlimited Jewish immigration with its probable economic, cultural and political consequences*".[203] Faisal described himself as representative of "*educated*" Arabs who "*wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home*".[204] Despite this, his welcoming embraces were not shared by the Arab majority. Later, Faisal had second thoughts and appended an important proviso to the Agreement: He (Faisal) would stand by the wording of the Agreement only on the understanding that there should "*[not be the] slightest modification or departure*" from its contents and that the Agreement would be null and void if Arabs did not "*obtain their independence*".[205] Faisal's dealings

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[199] Pre-State Israel: The Weizmann-Faisal Agreement: January 1919, Article III, IV
[200] (Ibid, Article I)
[201] (Ibid, Article VII)
[202] Tessler, M (1994, 150-154) The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict
[203] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 40) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[204] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 12): Palestine Betrayed
[205] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 40) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

with Weizmann were later repudiated by an Arab Congress in Damascus, reflecting a groundswell of Arab opposition to the Balfour Declaration and associated qualms over Jewish immigration. Bickerton and Klausner contend that the latter reflected growing local opposition to the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration.[206] Karsh provides an opposing interpretation. He claims that Arab Leaders refused to accept the reality of the situation and neglected the view of the majority. Indeed, it was some years before ordinary Arabs became aware of the Balfour Declaration and when they did, Balfour and consequently, Britain, became associated with "*an idea – power, money to promote Jewish settlement [perhaps even] an opportunity for self-enrichment*". It is arguable whether the influx of Jews and money had coincided with raised Palestinian-Arab living standards beyond that of neighbouring Arab countries. Karsh produces evidence to substantiate his argument that it was not just the upper classes and landowners who benefitted from inflated pre to post-war land sales when selling to the incomers, but that the gains also extended to the rural population. Arab lives had improved on several levels: Industry, agriculture, crop yields, health provision and mortality rates – all improved beyond that in other British-ruled countries, "*not to mention [British-ruled] India*". Karsh reinforces the above assertion by referring to Sir Herbert Samuel's valedictory report at the end of his 1920-1925 term as High Commissioner for Palestine. Samuel reported that the predicted attacks by "*well armed Jewish colonist [did not occur. Nor, as agitators predicted, had] a hundred thousand Jews [invaded Palestine] to occupy [Arab] lands ... no man had his land taken from him ... far from the mosques ... turned into synagogues, a new, purely Moslem elected body was created [to control] all Moslem religious buildings .... It is difficult, under such conditions, to maintain indefinitely an attitude of alarm; people cannot be induced to remain constantly mobilised against a danger which never eventuates*".[207] [208]

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[206] (ibid, 40)
[207] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 12-15): Palestine Betrayed
[208] HMSO (1925, 40-41) Report of the High Commissioner on the Administration of Palestine

No Sign of Compromise

By mid-1920, Lord Balfour was becoming increasingly impatient. After diplomatic niceties in his memorandum of the 12th July in which he described Arabs as "*a great, an interesting and an attractive race*", Balfour reminded Arab states that Britain had freed them from the "*tyranny of their brutal conqueror*" and that thanks to Britain's wartime efforts, Arab states were rapidly gaining self-government. In return, Balfour continued, Arabs might not begrudge "*one small notch ... for it is no more geographically, whatever it may be historically ... that small notch ... now in Arab territories being given to the people who for all these hundreds of years have been separated from it*".[209] Balfour's personal pro-Zionist, anti-Arab sentiments permeate the Memorandum: "*Right or wrong*" he maintained, Zionist hopes pre-empt "*the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Palestinian Arabs*". While Palestinian independence was nowhere in sight, he insisted, Palestine's doors should be opened wide to Jewish immigrants.[210] In the event, Lord Balfour's "*small notch*" became temporarily unavailable when, in the following month, Emir Faisal, although widely backed by the Syrian majority, was expelled from Syria-Palestine by French occupying forces.[211] [212] Anglo-French relations were strained when French Authorities accused British officers of undermining the French Mandate. Balfour refuted the accusation and predicted that "*Each confusedly adumbrate [Mandate] can be quoted by Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, and Arabs when it happens to suit their purpose. Doubtless each will be so quoted before we come to a final arrangement about the Middle East*".[213]

Again, the Balfour Declaration was a commitment (though with a significant caveat) that Britain supported the Zionist call for a Jewish 'homeland' in Palestine. Britain was a principal

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[209] Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (July 1937, Chapter II, 27)

[210] (Ibid, (July 1937, Chapter II, 3-4)

[211] (Ibid, 27-28)

[212] Faisal was proclaimed King of Syria and Palestine in March 1920 then expelled by the French army (the occupying force) in August of the same year. In the following year he became King of Iraq allowing his brother, Abdullah, to become Emir of a significant part of Palestine to the east of the River Jordan - allotted the name Transjordan.

[213] Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (July 1937, Chapter II, 2)

international player in the Middle East and having captured Baghdad in March 1917 and Jerusalem in December of the same year, Britain was "*in a position to demand post-war control of Iraq and Palestine*".[214]

Having issued irreconcilable statements to both sides, Britain had boxed itself into a corner. Nevertheless, immediately post-Balfour, the sun was in the ascendency for Zionists. British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, had met with Chaim Weizmann and expressed his sympathy with Zionist aims while Zionists gained another powerful ally. In August 1918, US President Wilson had offered his support for a Jewish homeland by way of an open letter to Rabbi Steven Wise who himself had allies in the White House. By the time Wilson and Lloyd George met at Versailles to negotiate "*a peace to end all peace*", peacemakers were under pressure to "*proceed with extreme caution*".[215] Before finalising his support, Wilson needed reassurance. Thus, in June 1919, he dispatched Dr Henry King[216] and Charles Crane[217] into the region to advise him on how best to proceed.

King-Crane Commission

The American Commissioners arrived in Jaffa on the 10th of June 1919. Whenever they arrived at a new location, they issued a reassuring press statement: "*The American people have no political ambitions in Europe or the Near East ... [however, the United States recognises] ... that [it] cannot altogether avoid responsibility for just settlements among the nations following the war*". They made it known that former communities, which had previously been under the control of the Ottoman Empire, had reached a stage of development where their independence could be "*provisionally recognised*", provided they were assisted by a Mandatory Power. In a press statement, the Commission affirmed that respecting the wishes of the communities regarding the nomination of the Mandatory Power was a "*principal consideration*". The Commissioners reported that some

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[214] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 12-13) 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[215] Little, D. (2002, 16) American Orientalism
[216] As president of Oberlin College, Dr King was a renowned educator and author. In September 1919 he was appointed to the US section of the Peace Conference specifically on Mandates of the former Ottoman Empire.
[217] Charles Crane was a former industrialist. In 1917 he served on President Wilson's special diplomatic mission to Russia and later, like King, was a member of the US section of the Peace Conference on Mandates of the former Ottoman Empire. He later became US Ambassador to China.

interviewees were suspected of having been subjected to "*considerable propaganda*" and that their evidence was either unreliable or absent. Nevertheless, the Commissioners wrote somewhat self-importantly that the process involved was a "*kind of political education for the people*".[218]

To gauge whether a Jewish state in Palestine was viable, a representative sample of people was selected from across the social, religious and political spectrums. Opinion among Jews in Palestine was unequivocal. Jews, the report reads, sought a "*fairly large ... national home*" to be organised sooner or later into a "*Jewish Commonwealth*".[219] A Commonwealth open to Jews from any quarter, with individuals given the right to buy land from willing Arab sellers. Jewish opinion generally favoured a British Mandatory Authority because Britain had declared its support for the establishment of a Jewish national home.[220] However, King and Crane viewed the latter as an "*extreme Zionist program*" that required "*serious modification*".

Having gathered sufficient evidence to make an informed judgement, King and Crane felt that previous support for Zionist plans was misplaced. The American Commissioners claimed that the Balfour Declaration had given Zionists "*definite encouragement*". Moreover, they argued, the pledge to "*promote the establishment of a Jewish national home*" and Balfour's codicil that "*nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights [of non-Jews]*" were incompatible. Jewish representatives, the Commissioners noted, were anticipating the time when the dispossession of non-Jews from their land became a practical reality. It was enough to persuade the Commissioners to rebuff the Zionists' "*extreme*" ambitions.[221]

In his presidential address of 4th July 1918, President Wilson had advised that decisions on questions of territory, sovereignty and political arrangements should not be self-seeking in order to gain material advantage or to impose "*exterior influence or mastery*". He argued that countries were

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[218] King-Crane Report (28/8/1919, 2)
[219] King-Crane was an American Commission, so when using the definition of "Commonwealth" in American terms, the US State Department defines the term as one that "does not describe or provide for any specific political status or relationship" (US Department of State Foreign Affairs manual, Volume 7)
[220] King-Crane Report (28/8/1919, 18)
[221] (Ibid, 33-34)

obliged to take account of the wishes of the people most affected. This could be interpreted as a cautionary note to Mandatory Powers. Reflecting on the latter, King-Crane argued that Wilson's Principle would be violated if Jews inflicted "*unlimited*" Jewish immigration and excessive land purchase on unwilling Arabs. It was acknowledged that both Jews and Arabs had an ancient historic connection to Palestine. However, considering the 72% strong Arab opposition, an estimated 50,000 military personnel would be required to impose the Zionist claim. Anti-Zionist feelings over the perceived threat to the Holy Land were particularly strong, as it was sacred to Jews, Christians and Moslems alike. It was doubtful, even allowing for the Zionists best intentions, that non-Jews would accept Jews as the Holy Land's primary guardians.[222] With "*deep sympathy for the Jewish cause*" the Commissioners recommended that the Paris Peace Conference (which was on-going at the time) should reject Zionist calls for a Jewish Commonwealth and proposed instead that Jewish immigration should be severely curtailed. Furthermore, they recommended that Palestine should be included as part of a wide united Syrian state with the proviso that the Holy Places should be maintained under international guardianship.

Now that King-Crane had ruled out Palestine as a separate entity, the question arose as to which country should be awarded the Mandate. At the time, the region under consideration was referred to as Greater Syria, United Syria, or simply Syria. The territorial limits of 'United Syria' (in King-Crane terms) were defined as broadly in line with what today is considered to include the separate countries of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Iraq.[223] Available data suggested that the Arab majority favoured a Mandate exercised under the authority of the United States, while the first preference of the Jews was that Britain should remain in temporary control. Arab respondents sensed that, unlike Britain or France, both of which were suspected of having colonial ambitions, the United States would remain in the Middle East only until Syria achieved independence. What

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[222] (Ibid, 33-34)

[223] Two days before the Armistice on the 9th November 1918, the Anglo-French Declaration classed Syria and Mesopotamia together so that the two entities should be treated in the same way. Again, on the 30th January 1919, the latter arrangement was similarly accepted at the Paris Peace Conference.

America lacked in experience was mitigated by an understanding that its involvement would create less friction than if either Britain or France (France was particularly unpopular) took on the role. Unlike Britain and France, America had no imperialistic interests and the former two countries were less likely to yield their claims to each other and more likely to accede to America's. The Commissioners reasoned that British and French interests would be best served by America's presence as a "*welcome neighbour*". King and Crane were effectively pressing a reluctant Wilson, although even if the United States accepted the role, it was by no means certain that Britain and France would willingly step aside. Even if they would, Wilson still had to convince a war-weary American public that it was the right approach. In any event, accepting the Mandate on what could be perceived as King-Crane's anti-Zionist terms, heightened the risk of upsetting America's large and influential Jewish constituency. It could also prove embarrassing to Wilson, particularly as Washington had made vague but encouraging noises to American Zionists.[224] After Britain had pledged its support and especially since the US appeared ready to do likewise, Zionists could feel reasonably confident that, whatever the obstacles, a Jewish state was just a matter of time.

Again, popular opinion suggested that Britain had come in a poor second choice after America. France had had a long and often close relationship with Syria. Moreover, with loss of life on an unprecedented scale among the French forces during WWI, France was poised to demand its reward. Though the Commissioners were not prepared to back down from proposing that the US should take on the role, they reasoned that France was a somewhat plausible option. However, Arabs had reacted fiercely against any French involvement and the imposition of France risked a French-Arab impasse. Therefore, it was evident that France as a Mandatory Authority should be discounted. With France out and the United States likely to rule itself out, Britain was the one remaining contender. Public opinion taken from across Greater Syria indicated that most had an "*honest fear that in British hands the mandatary power would become simply a colonizing power of the old kind;*

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[224] King-Crane Report (28/8/1919, 35)

that Great Britain would find it difficult to give up the colonial theory, especially in the case of a people thought inferior … that there would be, after all, too much exploitation of the country for Britain's benefit; that she would never be ready to withdraw and give the country real independence".[225]

Grossi et al reveal that, alarmed by growing hostility in the region, Crane telegraphed President Wilson advising him that the "*situation in Turkey is so serious [that he have] decided to return to report as soon as [we have] covered essentials*" and impelling them to leave Constantinople on the 21st July 1919. Had King-Crane's recommendations been publicly aired and accepted at the Paris Peace Conference, the results for Zionists would have been catastrophic. Events though, favoured Zionists. King-Crane's report was intended to inform US policy, but by the time the report was delivered privately to the President on the 28th August 1919, many of the major decisions had already been taken. Grossi et al confirm that the Commissioners were too late; that King and Crane had wanted the report to be made public but were reluctant to publish it without the authority of the President or the State Department. They were wise to hesitate because, almost immediately, the State Department imposed a blanket ban on publication on the grounds "*that [publication] would not be compatible with the public interest*". The contents were so sensitive that other US Government officials were denied access.[226] Little suggests another reason behind the documents suppression: US foreign policy, he writes, was thrown into a state of suspension because of Wilson's near-fatal stroke.[227] Saul argues that the report was buried because it was a repudiation of a secret pact between Britain and France that the region should be divided up between them.[228] Saul explains that the US had entered a period of isolationism. The Administration was distancing itself from aspects of the post-war peace process and was unwilling to assume authority over the Mandate. Also, although he

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[225] King-Crane Report (28/8/1919, 36)
[226] Grossi, K., Milligan, M., Waddelow, T. (2011) 'Restoring Lost Voices of Self-Determination
[227] Little, D. (2002, 160) American Orientalism
[228] In 1916, Britain's Mark Sykes MP collaborated with French diplomat, François Georges-Picot to plan the division of post-war Turkey.

was probably aware of the Report, Wilson's steadily deteriorating health meant that it was unlikely that he read the full contents or was aware of its full significance. Saul maintains that a Jewish delegation, including Chaim Weizmann, Justice Louis D. Brandeis[229], Professor Felix Frankfurter[230] and other prominent Jewish leaders, followed closely behind the King-Crane Commissioners. Ultimately, this American Jewish delegation overshadowed the King Crane Commissioners and received wide publicity along the way.[231] Weir contends that Zionists were in the driving seat and "*dominated the situation*" such that publication was supressed and the potential obstacle to Zionist ambitions cleared. [232]

During the final years of President Wilson's term in office the King-Crane report was hidden and remained so until well after the signing of the Treaty of Sevres on the 10th August 1920.[233] It was not until the magazine 'Editor and Publisher' printed the report on the 2nd November 1922, that its contents were open to public scrutiny. Almost immediately, the former Secretary to the Commission purchased multiple copies and sent them to scholars across Europe and the US. Now, with King-Crane a distant threat and United States policy moving steadily in their direction, Zionists could afford to breathe a sigh of relief. Saul emphasises the importance of the academic controversy that was unleashed by the King-Crane Report. Historians contest an apparent anti-French bias in the report and, importantly, they also dispute the reasoning behind King-Crane's blank refusal to accept the right for Jews to determine their own destiny. It is questionable whether there was a danger of indigenous Arabs being displaced from their homes because of large scale Jewish immigration, thus upsetting the "*existing equilibrium in the area*". The controversy centres on whether it was the latter that heralded "*the birth of the Arab-Israeli conflict*".[234]

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[229] Louis D. Brandeis was an Active Zionist, an American lawyer and Associate justice on the US Supreme Court.
[230] Professor Felix Frankfurter was an Austrian-American lawyer and an Associate Justice on the US Supreme Court. Brandeis encouraged him to engage with Zionism so that together the two men lobbied US President Wilson to support the Balfour Declaration.
[231] Saul N.E. (2012, 195-196) 'the life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858-1939
[232] Weir, A (2014, 25-26): Against Our Better Judgement
[233] Under the Treaty, a large part of Middle East formally under the control of the Ottoman Empire was divided up into separate French and British spheres of operation.
[234] Saul N.E. (2012, 197) 'the life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858-1939

Notwithstanding the report's recommendation that the United States should accept the Mandate for Syria, the League of Nations chose to divide it into two separate administrations. France was awarded the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon and Britain granted the Mandate for Palestine on the 24th July 1922.[235]

Britain's Palestine Mandate

Ultimately, with the US having ruled itself out and France a highly unpopular option, a marginally less unpopular Britain was awarded the Palestine Mandate. However, in choosing Britain as the Mandatory Authority, the League of Nations was bound by its own Covenant: "*The wishes of these [Palestinian] communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory*".[236] It is important to note that, as it was suppressed until after the event, League of Nations members could be excused for missing a key finding in King Crane's report. This finding was that according to overwhelming public opinion, not only was Britain an unwelcome presence in Palestine, but the Balfour Declaration was out of step with the "*wishes of these communities*". It follows that by selecting Britain as the Mandatory Power, the League had effectively breached Article 22 of its own Covenant. The Mandate itself was formally approved by the League of Nations on the 24th July 1922 and soon supplemented on the 16th September by the Transjordan Memorandum. This was a development that would have repercussions on Article 25 of the Mandate.[237] Article 25 specified that as the Mandatory Power, Britain was entitled to treat eastern Palestine – Transjordan – as a special case, even though it remained, technically, part of the wider Palestine Mandate. Unlike the mandated territory west of the River Jordan, Jews were barred from immigrating into or purchasing land for permanent settlements in Transjordan. The Transjordan Memorandum was ratified at the Treaty of

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[235] Technically, both sides of the River Jordan were part of a wider Palestine Mandate but, with British agreement, on the 11th April 1921 King Abdullah declared the land sandwiched between the River Jordan and Iraq to the east to be the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, effectively dividing the Palestine Mandate into two entities. Official documents usually referred to 'Palestine' as land west of the River Jordan. Quoting a letter written by Lord Curzon, (Karsh E. Karsh I. 1999, 317): "*His Majesty's Government are already treating 'Trans-Jordania ' as separate from the Damascus State, while at the same time avoiding any definite connection between it and Palestine*".

[236] Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 22.

[237] (Ibid, Article 25)

Lausanne on the 29th September 1923. This confined a future Jewish national home, at its broadest (and most optimistic) to between the western boundary of Transjordan (the River Jordan) and the Mediterranean.[238] As a result of Article 25, some extreme Zionist ambitions for an all-encompassing East/West-Bank State were shattered. Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who had founded the Revisionist Zionist Alliance, refused to accept the partitioning-off of Transjordan. Revisionists demanded not merely a homeland within Palestine, or a partitioned State alongside Palestine, but an independent Jewish State across the entire region of Palestine-Transjordan. Later, as the situation in Nazi-dominated Europe worsened, the latter, while accepting of the inconsistency between their own and Arab claims to Palestine, believed their claim had the greater moral justification. Though Transjordan was on its journey to statehood,[239] committed Revisionists refused to agree and viewed the Jewish Agency as "*weak willed and cowardly*".[240]

Scrutiny of the Palestine Mandate leaves little doubt that the Allied Powers intended that Britain's primary role was to *"[put into] effect the [Balfour Declaration] in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people*". The League of Nations observed that the historical connection between Jews and Palestine was adequate "*grounds for reconstituting their national home in [Palestine]*"[241] The Mandate states that given the legal and administrative powers, Britain was to "*secure the establishment of the Jewish national home*";[242] to co-operate with the Zionist Organisation in matters intended to effect a "*Jewish National home and in the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine*"; to work towards "*the establishment of the Jewish national home*"[243] and to "*facilitate Jewish immigration [so as to encourage] close settlement on the land including State lands and waste lands*".[244] Julius Isaac maintains that "*Palestine held a unique*

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[238] Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (July 1937, 37)
[239] In 1923 Britain officially recognised the Emirate of Transjordan. In 1946 it finally ended its Mandate over Transjordan, giving full independence to the Hashemite Kingdom of modern Jordan
[240] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 44) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[241] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24/7/1922, Preamble, Para 3)
[242] (Ibid, Article 2)
[243] (Ibid, Article 4)
[244] (Ibid, Article 6)

position [as the] only existing country whose Government was bound by ... the Mandate and to pursue an active migration policy".[245] Palestinian national law, the Mandate continues, would be framed in such a way that Jews would acquire Palestinian citizenship.[246] At the same time, Jewish rights would be reinforced; the right to immigrate, to settle in and to build a permanent homeland. The document also imposed responsibilities on Jewish citizens, who would be expected to assist in the overall development of the country. As the Mandate holder, Britain was required to "*encourage local autonomy*".[247] While the Mandate makes no direct reference to a separate Jewish state, this was clearly inferred. In his speech to the House of Lords on the 27th July 1937, the Marquess of Reading stated that he had "*never been confronted with anything more confused, ambiguous, ill-drafted or obscure*" than the Palestine Mandate.[248] Later still, in 1947, the United Nations Special Committee for Palestine (UNSCOP) noted that Partition was not precluded, despite the wording of the Palestine Mandate being inconclusive on this point.

Shaw, Hope-Simpson and Passfield Have Concerns

Throughout the 1920's, the rift between Arabs and Jews widened. In 1929, Britain decided to appoint Sir Walter Shaw to head a Commission charged to determine the primary causes of more recent disturbances between the two disputing parties and to recommend a way forward. In March 1930 his Commission (the Shaw Commission) reported that the violence was the result of "*racial animosity on the part of Arabs*" who feared for their "*economic future*" given that, in their view, Jews had access to unlimited finance. Shaw acknowledged that conflicting promises given to Arabs and Jews was one root cause of the unrest and that Britain should more clearly spell out its intentions. He recommended that Britain should review its immigration policy "*with the object of preventing a repetition of the excessive immigration of 1925 and 1926*".[249] Shaw considered that other than years when Jewish

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[245] Isaac, Julius (1947, 122): Economics of Migration
[246] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24/7/1922, Article 7)
[247] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24/7/1922, Article 3)
[248] Hansard, HL Deb 21 July 1937 Volume 106. Page 798 – Palestine
[249] Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929 Page 112

immigration had exceeded Palestine's "*economic absorbing power*", Arabs too had shared the material benefits of immigration.[250] HM Government responded by imposing a temporary ban on Jewish immigration and the curtailment of land purchases.[251] Ze'ev Jabotinsky was scathing of the Zionist Executive's passivity. He compared the evidence it presented to Shaw as mere discussions similar to some "*society [established] to combat anti-Semitism*" when in reality, *"[t]he Jew was obliged to justify his existence by proving that he was of use to others, that he had no intention to govern, but only requested the right to breathe*".[252] To Jabotinsky, the former's passivity did nothing to further the Zionist cause.

Following on from the Shaw Commission, Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald appointed Sir John Hope-Simpson to conduct a committee of enquiry into land settlement, immigration and development. On 1st October 1930, the Hope-Simpson Report gave details of the way in which Jewish land purchases were affecting both Arabs and Jews. For their part, Jewish settlers, the report continues, had the advantages of capital, science and organisation. This together with the "*energy of the settlers themselves [accounts for] their remarkable progress*". On the other hand, "*the Arab has had none of these advantages and received practically no help to improve [his or her life circumstances]*".[253] Even if the remaining land was distributed evenly among Arabs, each holding would fall short of what was needed to sustain a rural family although this problem could be part-addressed by improved farming methods and the development of irrigation schemes. Even in the arid Beersheba Region, given "*the possibility of irrigation there is practically an inexhaustible supply of cultivatable land*"; if investigations showed that an abundance of ground water existed, then the problem of scarcity of cultivatable land for Arabs and "*indeed for a large number of immigrant settlers, will be easy of solution*".[254]

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[250] (Ibid, 161)
[251] Shaw Commission (see British Palestine mandate 1930)
[252] Schindler, Colin (2006, 111): 'The Triumph of Military Zionism – Nationalism and the Origins of the Israeli Right
[253] Hope-Simpson Report 1930 ('Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development' (See Conclusion – land)
[254] (Ibid. 'The Beersheba Region')

As far back as 1922, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill had already articulated the crux of the problem: "*[T]he future progress and prosperity of the Holy land*" must be "*built up in the spirit of co-operation*".[255] Churchill's sentiment was echoed in 1930, when Hope-Simpson reported that no solution was possible unless "*by joint endeavour of the two great sections of [Palestine's] population*".[256] Again, in 1930, the Shaw Commission had reported that "*there is little prospect either of the success of Jewish colonization in Palestine or of the peaceful and progressive development ... [for without] co-operation ... there is little hope that the aspirations of either people can be realized*".[257] In October 1930, Britain's Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield, whose formal statement made in the aftermath of the 1929 disturbances, maintained Britain's commitment to the establishment of a Jewish Nation Home but that "any *decision in regard to more unrestricted immigration should be strongly deprecated*".[258] Passfield's main concern was that "*no policy, however enlightened or however vigorously prosecuted, can hope for success, unless it is supported not merely by the acceptance, but by the willing co-operation of the communities for whose benefit it is designed*".[259] Unwittingly, Shaw, Hope-Simpson and Passfield reinforced the fact that, without Zionist/Palestinian-Arab "*willing co-operation*" on the principle obstacle of immigration, other than Partition, no workable alternative existed.

Towards the Weizmann/Said Exchange

During the interwar years, phases of uneasy calm were punctuated by violent outbursts. Whenever they occurred, whether Arab on Jew, Jew on Arab, or violence directed at the Administrative authorities, characteristically Britain responded militarily followed by a Government White Paper, none of which achieved the intended objective. During periods of unrest, Hahn confirms, Britain's preferred policy option was to sustain rudimentary stability through the "*exercise of political, police,*

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[255] British White Paper, June 1922,
[256] Hope-Simpson Report 1930 ('Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development' (See Agricultural Development))
[257] Shaw Commission (see also British Palestine mandate 1930)
[258] Palestine: Statement of Policy by HM Government (Passfield White Paper), October 1930, Para 28
[259] (Ibid, Para 2)

and administrative powers". He explains that in 1922, although Jews had the right to immigrate and settle, this right was heavily curtailed, and expressions of Jewish 'rule' or Jewish 'state' began to fall out of favour. Between 1919 and 1921 and again in 1929 and 1933, Hahn writes, Palestine was plagued with violence with hundreds killed on both sides.[260] Hahn argues that the seeds of "*Zionist and Arab nationalism were planted before WWI*" and contends that in 1914, with the relationship between the sides gradually deteriorating, many of Palestine's 66,000 Jews and 570,000 Arabs predicted future conflict.[261] The picture was confused. Paradoxically, Karsh recounts instances where, for example, had ordinary Palestinian Arabs been left to their own devices; they could have *"[taken] advantage of the opportunities offered by the growing Jewish presence*". Periods of calm, he argues, outweighed those of unrest. Arabs and Jews frequently interacted and cooperated on a range of issues. Before the clash of opposing national aspirations, the two communities commonly interacted daily, even aligning "*their political ambitions and intellectual outlooks ... in relation to European imperialism*". By 1923, it was not unusual to find children mixing in one another's schools. British officials cited commonplace examples of animated Jewish-Arab discussion groups compelling officials to question their earlier preconceptions. Menachem Klein describes a world where, before 1948, Arabs and Jews lived alongside and respected each other's institutional and religious traditions. He writes, *"[W]hen Jewish and Arab nationalism reached Palestine, it did not encounter people who lacked identities but rather a local community where everyday life created connections among its members and between them and the place in which they live"*.[262] Klein continues: *"Before nationalism brutally separated the two words 'Arab' and 'Jew' and regarded the inhabitants of Palestine to count themselves one or the other ... Arab Jewish identity was a fact of life"*.[263] However, throughout the 1930's, Arab Nationalism was taking firm hold so that the divide over Jewish immigration was growing.

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[260] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 13): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[261] (Ibid, 12)
[262] Klein, Menachem (2014, IX) Lives in Common, Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron
[263] (Ibid, 19)

On the 9th June 1936, Weizmann had met with Nuri Said (Iraq's Foreign Minister) in London. Said, Weizmann reported, envisaged a vast pan-Arab federation in which Jews would enjoy considerable autonomy, though this would fall short of national self-determination. Nuri Said also predicted that the Arab world would be encouraged if Jews agreed to a voluntary suspension of immigration. Weizmann accepted Said's challenge. He agreed to approach UK Government officials and offer a twelve-month suspension of Jewish immigration. Karsh emphasises the importance of this turn of events. The Jewish National revival depended on immigration; the "*elixir of life*". It was a careless lapse on Weizmann's part, given that Ben-Gurion had warned against "*heretical ideas*".[264]

Two days after the critical meeting, Ben-Gurion cautioned Weizmann that any suspension of immigration was tantamount to national suicide and that the matter was closed. However, it transpired that the idea was not dispensed with. On the 15th June 1936, Weizmann's pledge was relayed to the British Ambassador in Iraq (Sir Archibald Clark-Kent) then to William Ormsby-Gore (Colonial Secretary) and back to Weizmann for clarification. At a meeting with colleagues, an uncomfortable Weizmann denied making promises to Said despite the latter's insistence that he had. The issue went back and forth between Ben-Gurion (he found it "*difficult to work with [Weizmann]*"), colleagues, and high-ranking officials. Weizmann wrote to Ormsby-Gore protesting that he "*never suggested that [the suspension of immigration] should be done 'for a year' [that] to the best of my recollection, I did not agree to this suggestion [although] possibly I did not oppose it as vehemently as I might have done*".[265]

Eventually, the Weizmann/Said incident died a death though it serves as an illustration that Jewish immigration was at the epicentre of the Palestine problem. The flow of new immigrants occasionally slowed, but generally it was relentless. Something had to give. Before long, background

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[264] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 50-51) <u>Palestine Betrayed</u>
[265] (Ibid, 50-51)

hostility erupted into the 1936 Arab Revolt.[266] The UK Government reacted by dispatching an investigative team (the Palestine Royal Commission [Peel Commission]) into the region.

In November 1937 the immigration issue was raised again, this time by Emir Abdullah of Transjordan. Abdullah informed Moshe Sharett[267] (Zionist Foreign Minister) that cutting back on immigration might soothe Arab concerns, but he warned that Arabs would never accept the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish National Home. Instead, Abdullah proposed, Jews could remain or resettle in Transjordan as loyal subjects, provided that their number did not exceed 35% of the population.[268]

Summary

The fifth and final version of the Balfour Declaration emerged following a series of WWI British Cabinet meetings. It was a written pledge to the Zionist movement that Britain would help "*facilitate*" a "*national home for Jewish people*" "*in*" Palestine. The terminology used is calculatingly unclear ("*attenuated and ambiguous*" write Bickerton and Klausner [269]) and has encouraged a near tidal-wave of scholarship. What *is* clear is that while the debate raged, whatever preventative measures were adopted, whichever way the politicians interpreted and reinterpreted Britain's intent, legally or illegally, streams of immigrants were determinedly establishing a largely independent *de facto* Jewish state. However, what is also clear is that Britain had made similar, less formal, promises to Palestinian Arabs and they were not consulted during the process and their presence in the Declaration as "*non-Jewish communities*" appears only in the final two versions almost as an afterthought. Balfour himself had no such concerns. In a memorandum written in the mid-1920's Balfour wrote that Zionist wishes took precedence over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs.

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[266] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 13): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[267] Moshe Sharett became Israel's second Prime Minister serving between Ben-Gurion's first and second terms.
[268] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 48-49) Palestine Betrayed
[269] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

In June 1919, US President Wilson had yet to pass his final judgement. He appointed Commissioners, King and Crane who, after returning from the Middle East, reported that, in their view, the Zionist programme required serious modification. In 1930, Shaw, Hope-Simpson and Passfield had intimated that Balfour's 'dual obligation' commitment was unsustainable. By this time Britain was already politically bound to honour its pledge to Jews while at the same time finding some means of safeguarding Arab rights. Satisfying the 'dual obligation' would require separating the two conflicted parties into two independent states. Still, British policy-makers persistently stuck to their flawed and increasingly unrealistic policy of enforced Jewish and Arab reconciliation refusing to acknowledge that only Partition could satisfy the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

The chapter opens four years after Adolph Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany (30th January 1933) at a time when he had turned his venom on Jews. Although there was a sense of foreboding on what was to come, the full extent was yet to be revealed. Of those Jews that might have escaped, a comparatively small number actually left the danger zone. Meanwhile in Palestine, earlier tensions between Arabs and Jews came to a head in 1936, when Arab groups targeted Jewish communities and organs of the British Administration. In August of that year, a Royal Commission (the Peel Commission) was dispatched to Palestine to investigate the circumstances behind the ongoing conflict; whether the terms of the Mandate had aggravated "*legitimate grievances*" and to make recommendations as to how peace could be restored.[270] In the event, this would prove to be one more unstoppable step towards Partition. On the 30th June 1936, shortly before the Commission's arrival, high level Arab civil servants with close links between the Administration and the Arab population wrote to the High Commissioner for Palestine. The underlying cause of the recent disturbance was, they maintained, due to Arabs of all classes and creeds feeling "*a profound sense of injustice [and that] the present unrest is no more than an expression of ... despair ... [and that] the deadlock ... turns exclusively on the issue of immigration".*[271] The letter was passed to the Peel's Commissioners, who were soon to become preoccupied with the issue.

Sporadic violence throughout the early nineteen-twenties and late thirties, left little doubt that Arabs were prepared to go to extreme measures to thwart Zionist ambitions. Peel cautioned that the added "*pressure of Jews from Europe*" into the region dashed hopes of reconciliation. Arab qualms centred on Jewish ambitions for "*national independence*" and their "*hatred and fear of the*

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[270] League of Nations: C.495. M.336.1937, Para 1
[271] Palestine Royal Committee Report July 1937, Appendix 2, Pages, 401-403

establishment of the Jewish National Home". In response, Peel reasoned that the benefits of a vibrant Jewish economy merging into an underdeveloped Arab one would eventually moderate Arab hostility.[272]

Zionist reaction to the Royal Commission's Report was yet to be finalised. At the twentieth Zionist Conference held in Zürich from the 3rd to the 16th of August 1937, opinion was divided. There were those who claimed that the allocated Jewish state, which was not to include Jerusalem, was insufficient to accommodate large numbers of immigrants and that the proposed Jewish state would be difficult to defend. Others, like Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann believed that with war looming, Britain would be unlikely to go further. They felt that the crisis among European Jewry demanded an immediate solution and that Peel's proposals offered an opportunity for further discussions. Moreover, if the fledgling state was attacked, then the Zionist movement would defend itself and claim the right to readjusted borders. Conference rejected Peel's border proposal but empowered its executive to renegotiate more favourable terms.[273] While Zionists viewed Peel's proposals as an opportunity to continue negotiations, the increasing probability of war in Europe meant that their hopes for a Jewish state would soon take second place to Britain's more immediate strategic concerns and entail a reorientation in its Middle East policy.

In the wake of Peel's report, in February 1938, Britain's Woodhead Commission was instructed to look again at Partition and formalise the necessary boundaries. Expressing its preliminary opinion on the Royal Commission's report, the Permanent Mandates Commission (Woodhead) reported to the League of Nations that "*the present mandate [is] almost unworkable*". Woodhead's Commissioners rejected Peel's population exchange element and were divided on the question of Partition.

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[272] Report of the Palestine Royal Commission, July 1937 (C. 495. M. 336. 1937. Part 1, Chapter1)
[273] Zionist Congress: Congresses During the British Mandate (1923-1946)

In June 1937, with no end to the impasse in sight, Britain announced that the "*irreconcilable conflict between the aspirations of the Arabs and those of the Jews in Palestine … cannot be satisfied under the terms of the present Mandate*".[274]

Just before the outbreak of WWII, the British Government published its now infamous White Paper. This passed into law two important restrictions. Firstly, the level of Jewish immigration was restricted to 1500 per month to achieve a maximum of 75,000 and secondly, there would be an immediate cap on Arab land sales to prospective Jewish purchasers.[275] Winston Churchill and other Parliamentarians were bitterly opposed to this. To Lloyd George, the White Paper was *"an act of perfidy"*.[276] This about-turn in British policy incensed Zionists so that by the end of the war, antagonism towards Britain had erupted into outright violence. Determined to see the creation of an independent state, Zionists insisted that Britain's latest policy reversal contravened Articles ascribed in the Mandate. Strict adherence to the ruling by military means created a non-negotiable divide between the Palestine Administration and the Jewish community. Now the "*Zionist movement was at its lowest ebb*".[277]

The Palestine Royal Commission

The Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) was appointed on the 7th August 1936. However, due to continued instability in the region, their departure to the Middle East was delayed until the 11th November. Initially, the Arab Higher Committee boycotted the proceedings, but finally conceded in January 1937. Pre-empting the Commission's arrival in Palestine, Arab officers of the Civil Service employees of the Administration had sent a joint letter, on the 30th June 1936, to their employers with a request that its contents be relayed to the British Foreign Office. The Arab officers had forged close ties with Palestinian Arabs and acted as a communication channel between them and the Administrative Authority. One passage reads that "*the deadlock in the present phase turns*

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[274] UN General Assembly (A/307), Special Committee on Palestine - Report of the First Committee, 13th May 1947 (Chapter II, Para 74)
[275] White Paper, (UK Parliament) Cmd. 6019, 1939: HM Stationary Office
[276] Manchester Guardian (1939, 14): Broadcast Debate: "An Act of Perfidy" Mr. Lloyd George's Attack on Plan
[277] Laqueur, W (2003, 511) A History of Zionism

exclusively on the issue of immigration". The contents of the letter were expressions of discontent, despair and disillusionment in the British Government and its Mandate. These sentiments, according to its collaborating authors, were shared across a wide range of Arab society. It appears as a carefully crafted appeal to conscience. Rather than demanding an immediate end to immigration, the letter was couched in terms of reason: unless immigration was halted then the officers could see no end to the bloodshed. As public servants, they felt obliged to raise Arabs concerns and to "*protest against the present policy of repression*";[278] a thinly veiled warning of the serious consequences of inaction and a clarion call for pre-emptive action.

Lord Peel's Commission was charged with determining the "*underlying causes of the disturbances*" and whether the Mandatory Authority was fulfilling its obligations under the terms of the Mandate. If lacking, then the Commissioners were to recommend a way forward.[279] They commenced their task by first familiarising themselves with the region. Next, they met with Emir Abdullah in Transjordan[280] and collected samples of written and verbal evidence from a cross-section of witnesses. Both Arabs and Jews, the Commission acknowledged, had deep historical connections with the land. But the Palestine problem was not confined to the antipathy felt by one side against the other. It was a predicament that revolved around fear, a trepidation that uncontrolled Jewish immigration would lead to Arab subjugation. As the Royal Commission was mandated to consider the question of Palestine, justice could only be served by considering the matter of Jewish immigration into Palestine and within its wider European context.[281]

Over centuries, Jewish communities in the Middle East had flourished and become "*a prosperous and influential body*".[282] Until the current outbreaks of hostility, Palestinian Arabs had been generally accepting of their Jewish neighbours and frequently benefitted from their presence.

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[278] Palestine Royal Commission: (Cmd. 5479, 1937, 403)
[279] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Pages IX-X)
[280] Abdullah, I bin Al-Hussein (member of the Hashemite family) reigned as Emir of Transjordan from 1921 before becoming King of Jordan in 1946. He was assassinated during Friday prayers in Jerusalem in 1951.
[281] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 7)
[282] (Ibid, 7)

Conversely, the "*era of persecution*"[283] began whenever Jewish Communities lived alongside Christians. European Jews, particularly those in Eastern Europe, were especially vulnerable, indeed it was "*astonishing... that Jews survived*".[284]

By 1937 when the Report was published, there were four and a half million Jews in the US and another twelve million elsewhere. Ten of the twelve million were in Europe with an estimated nine million of those in Central or Eastern Europe.[285] In 1920 and 1921 when the Jewish National Home was little more than an experiment, 16,000 Jews had emigrated to Palestine.[286] By 1922 the total number of Jews in the country was estimated at 83,000 compared with 589,000 Muslims and 71,000 Christians.[287] At the time Jews represented a little over 11% of the total (just over 1 Jew to 9 others). Compared with the combined total of Jews in the rest of the world (approximately 16,500,000), the annual rate of Jewish immigration at the time barely dented the population of Palestine.[288]

Peel's Commission turned its attention to the years 1920 to 1925 during Sir Hebert Samuel's term in office as High Commissioner.[289] Kedourie maintains that Lloyd George appointed the latter trusting that, as a Zionist sympathiser, he was best placed to implement Balfour's Declaration. Since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Samuel viewed Palestine as a permanent Jewish haven. Years before, he had argued for a Jewish centre in Palestine to "*achieve some measure of spiritual greatness [to shake off past] sordid associations [such that] the value of Jews as an element [in Europe] is enhanced*".[290]

For Zionists, Samuel's appointment was fortuitous. The Mandatory Authority (under Samuel) was required to protect "*the well-being and development*" of *all* people under its authority. According

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[283] (Ibid, 8)
[284] (Ibid, 9)
[285] (Ibid, 11)
[286] (Ibid, 33)
[287] (Ibid, 43)
[288] The numbers are drawn from the Palestine Royal Commission Report. It will be noted that, throughout the thesis, there is a degree of inconsistency between numbers supplied by different Committees/Commissions/authors/individuals at different times.
[289] Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed High Commissioner in April 1920 and served until June 1925. Although not officially a member of the Zionist Organisation he was sympathetic to its cause and cooperated closely with its leaders.
[290] Kedourie, E (1969, 44) Sir Herbert Samuel and the Government of Palestine

to the Mandate, Britain was also obliged to facilitate the conditions essential to a Jewish National Home; one set within the context of a hierarchical "*quasi-feudal*" Arab society. Peel observed that at the top of Palestinian Arab society was a ruling class (often fractured by traditional rivalry) with the next level down featuring an educated, sometimes wealthy, urban professional class. Then there were the small landowners. Below this level were labourers and peasant farmers who were barely making a living. At the bottom of the economic hierarchy there were around 100,000 desert nomads (the Bedouin); whose lifestyle was largely pastoral, adopting primeval farming methods.[291]

During Samuel's term, despite poor sanitation and inadequate public health systems, there were optimistic signs of progress. Arab mortality rates declined, and the overall population was steadily increasing. Money was still scarce, so to compensate for the shortfall, Arab farmers were granted small improvement loans. Nearly two-hundred primary schools were established. Child welfare centres and health clinics were opened. Infrastructure improvements were made, with new roads, faster bus services and an improved railway network - all demonstrating the "*vigorous beginning*" of modernity. Projects were usually conducted by internal and external agencies, with Christian and philanthropic bodies helping to shoulder the financial burden. Usually, funding was channelled towards the Arab population rather than to more self-sufficient Jews.[292]

During this period, stimulated by the Balfour Declaration and in accordance with the Mandate's obligation that Jewish immigration should be facilitated under suitable conditions the pace of Jewish immigration gathered momentum. Samuel had the task of regulating the inflow and, looking back, Peel noted that from 1918 until the end of his term in office, Samuel had accorded with the terms of the Mandate and paved the way for an increase of the Jewish population to an estimated 108,000, many of whom were young and skilled. Money poured in through Zionist organisations in Europe and America, helping to build schools or establish social services. The Hebrew language was revived, and crops were planted in reclaimed former swampland. The momentum with which

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[291] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Pages 43-44)
[292] (Ibid, 45)

resources were dedicated was meant to benefit Jews, but Palestinian Arabs also reaped the rewards. Peel reported that although matters were steadily improving, greater resources and more effective measures were essential to bridge the gap between "*educated, resourceful, Western-minded [incomers] and [Arabs who] were still living in an atmosphere of the past*". Jews and Arabs were separated by centuries of discord and for so long as separation persisted there was little prospect of *rapprochement*.[293]

At this point it is important to emphasise Peel's deliberations on Jewish 'separateness'. He described the uniqueness of the Jewish experiment in terms of immigrant settlements built by and run by Jews. Internally, the Jewish Agency carried considerable influence and often cooperated successfully with the Palestine Administration. The Jewish community represented an entire society in miniature. It had influential international Jewish support and enjoyed significant financial backing from powerful American organisations. Nevertheless, each step on the way was matched by Arab resistance. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Arabs insisted that the Balfour Declaration was a repudiation of their right to self-determination. The problem was compounded by sporadic Arab attacks on Jews. Arabs constantly feared that Jewish immigration would lead to their political and economic demise under the authority of a Jewish National entity. These fears were constantly fuelled by Pan-Arab and Pan-Muslim propaganda from outside Palestine. Palestinian Arabs refused to co-operate with any mix of government other than one that gave them ultimate control.[294]

Between the years 1920-1936: (see Table below)[295], levels of authorised immigration were recorded. The figures did not include a considerable, and wildly speculative, number of unauthorised Jewish and Arab immigrants.[296] The below (again authorised) immigration figures should be balanced against the rates of emigration. The years 1925 to 1928 are particularly noteworthy. Peel reported

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[293](Ibid, 45-46)
[294](Ibid, 50-56)
[295] (Ibid, 279)
[296] The Department of Migration estimated that in 1936 the Jewish population of Palestine was 370,483 or around 30% of the total. Estimates vary but according to some Authorities, the true population was somewhere in the region of 400,000 to 420,000 including illegal immigrants. Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Pages 279-280)

that in 1925, while over 33,000 Jews arrived, only 2,151 departed. By contrast, in 1926, the number of new arrivals had dropped to around 13,000, while over half that number decided to leave. For Zionists, matters worsened when in the following year, nearly twice as many Jews left than arrived. This is partially explained by the collapse of the Polish *Zloty* and the subsequent internal currency restrictions. Given that around half of incomers to Palestine were Polish, many would have remained just as impoverished as they had been in Poland. In the two years until 1927, revenue per head dropped in Palestine as unemployment rose from 400 to 5,000.[297] The Zionist project faced a doubtful future. However, by 1928 the economy was improving. Unemployment dropped and although immigration rates were slow to respond, the inward flow far exceeded the outward drift so that by late 1928 "*the National Home had survived [its] worst crisis*".[298]

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[297] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Pages 62-64)
[298] (Ibid, 63)

Year	Jewish Immigration	Non-Jewish Immigration
1920	5514	202
1921	9149	190
1922	7844	284
1923	7421	570
1924	12856	697
1925	33801	840
1926	13081	829
1927	2713	882
1928	2178	908
1929	5249	1317
1930	4944	1489
1931	4075	1458
1932	9553	1736
1933	30327	1650
1934	42359	1784
1935	61854	2293
1936	29729	1944*

Figures indicate that from 1929 to 1932, the improving economy encouraged Jews and non-Jews into the region. Thenceforth, coinciding with the rapidly deteriorating political situation in Germany and beyond, Jews poured into Palestine. Using Peel's data, the *average*[299] rate of immigration in the years 1933 to 1936 (inclusive) was a little over 41,000. At that rate (not taking into account the impact of WWII – unknown at the time) by around 1952 the Jewish population would have overtaken the Palestinian-Arab population which was, itself, according to the statistics, increasing at a steady rate of some 24,000 per year.[300] Palestinian Arabs "*watch[ed] the immigration figures with close and anxious concern*".[301] Undoubtedly, Jewish immigration posed a challenge. Within a unitary Palestinian state, it was not beyond the bounds of credibility that if the latter situation continued Arabs would be in a minority in a majority Jewish state. Unsurprisingly, Arab concern turned to anger at the prospect of Jewish domination. It was becoming increasingly clear that neither Jews nor Arabs would accept large-scale assimilation in a unitary Palestine

so that, ultimately, the one long-term solution lay in a partitioned Palestine.

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[299] Using the arithmetic mean

[300] Estimated from graph: 'Forecast of Future Population Trends' - Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 282). For detailed breakdown of Immigration statistics also see (Ibid, Chapter X, Pages 279-307)

[301] (Ibid, 280)

* Statistics drawn from Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 282)

In 1936, sporadic clashes between the sides quickly intensified into outright hostility when Palestinian Arab militias escalated the frequency of their attacks on Jewish communities. The Royal Commission reported that for so long as the Mandate was in force, the "*stronger and more bitter Arab antagonism to it became*". Sir Arthur Wauchope, who became High Commissioner in 1931, had stated that while he would make every effort to reconcile the "*two races*", it should be understood that if he failed, the "*Government must, regardless of criticism, carry out whatever policy it considers best in the interests of the entire population and in accordance with the Mandate*".[302] Peel pointed to the importance of the wording of Wauchope's words. The problem with the Mandate lay in Britain's commitment to the dual obligation. The task of reconciliation, Peel wrote, was not merely "*supremely difficult [but] impossible*".[303]

Wauchope had attempted to reassure the Arab Executive that Jewish immigration was within Palestine's absorptive capacity and that his policy had helped increase agricultural productivity as well as protecting the rights of Arab farmers. Further, Wauchope had negotiated a concession from a Jewish group involved in the construction of a drainage scheme that excess land would be reserved specifically for Arab settlement. However, Wauchope failed to reconcile the disputing parties. As a gesture of goodwill, he agreed to the release of several convicted Arab prisoners and commuted two death sentences to life imprisonment. His efforts came to nothing and were made worse by the discovery of a cache of concealed weapons, especially since Jews were the prime suspects. The find was hailed in a hostile Arab press as evidence that Jews were embarking on a secret large-scale armaments programme. Tensions that were building now rapidly escalated.[304]

When, on the 15th April 1936, Arab paramilitaries murdered two Jews, Zionist militias swiftly retaliated by murdering two Arabs. The funeral of one of the Jews on the 17th April prompted further violence against Arabs in Tel Aviv. Two days later, rumours of Jewish atrocities incited Arab

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[302] Permanent Mandates Commission 82-86
[303] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 88)
[304] (Ibid, 88)

insurgents who attacked and murdered three Jews in Jaffa. The Administration mobilised police and troops to quell rioters. Tel Aviv and Jaffa were placed under curfew and a state of emergency was declared across the entire country. On the 20th April an Arab National Committee was constituted at Nablus. The new Committee declared a general strike intended to continue until Arab demands were met. Outside Tel Aviv, smaller towns and villages soon joined the call for strike action. The impetus for collective action grew. On the 25th Arab parties established the Arab Higher Committee led by Haj Amin El Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem.[305] [306] The Mufti threatened to wreak the "*revenge of God Almighty*" unless Jewish immigration was terminated forthwith. Enforced by his strong-arm men, his call for action widened. Soon, Arab agriculture, businesses, Government and public transport services ground to a standstill. Rather than taking punitive action against the instigators, High Commissioner Wauchope's policy of constructive engagement was swiftly rejected. Now, local irregulars were joined by hundreds of volunteers from Syria and Iraq and the ferocity of attacks on Jews increased. Finally, after months of the crippling effects of armed rebellion on local Arabs, and aware that 20,000 British troops, soon to be reinforced by 10,000 more, were already stationed in Palestine the Mufti was persuaded by neighbouring Arab statesmen to call off the immediate battle. Now, "*Severely mauled by the British Army*", guerrilla bands returned to their homes leaving behind a toll of some 1,300 deaths and injuries.[307]

Still determined and speaking with one voice (for there was no effective opposition) the Arab Higher Committee restated Arab claims. They demanded the complete stoppage of Jewish immigration; the prohibition of land transfer to Jews and the establishment of a representative Palestine National Government.[308] Conversely, the Jewish Agency insisted that the viability of a

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[305] (Ibid, 96)

[306] Haj Amin El Husseini was a prominent Palestinian nationalist leader. Both anti-British and vehemently anti-Zionist he was appointed Mufti of Jerusalem by Herbert Samuel (Britain's fist High Commissioner of Palestine) probably because he had helped to quell the 1921 disturbances. Following the 1936 riots he was dismissed but continued to promote his extremist activities from abroad. During WWII he strove to mobilize Muslim support for Germany. Haj Amin met Hitler on the 30th November 1941. (Sachar, Howard M. (2007, 229) A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time)

[307] Sachar, Howard M. (2007, 200-201) A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time

[308] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 97)

Jewish state depended on achieving a critical mass of Jewish settlers. Thus, the Royal Commission had arrived at a stalemate. It became clear that the Commissioners should focus attention on immigration, as this was now viewed as the principal obstacle to a solution.[309]

On the 3rd June 1921, Sir Herbert Samuel had defined the term 'Jewish National Home' to mean that, "*within the limits fixed by numbers and the interests of the present population*" the Jewish Diaspora should be enabled to "*found their home*".[310] Britain's June 1922 White Paper referred to "*a Jewish National Home in Palestine*" (own emphasis); a centre for Jewish people assisted by Jews in the Diaspora. Samuel's wording implies that the entire landmass of Palestine could be viewed as a Jewish Homeland, albeit also for the benefit of non-Jews. Against that, far from a wholly Jewish Palestine, the 1922 White paper stated that Jews were "*in Palestine as of right*" provided that the 'centre' comprised some as yet undetermined fraction of Palestine. Peel noted the statements, though his focus was less on the apparent inconsistency and more on the fact that neither interpretation gave "*any Jew at any time ... the right to enter the country*".[311]

From 1932 onwards, the annual rate of Jewish immigration increased to levels far beyond previous years. In 1933 Jews were increasingly marginalised in Nazi Germany, while Polish Jews came under intense economic pressure. With the situation rapidly deteriorating and other means of escape increasingly rare, Zionists responded to the crisis by stepping up the pace of legal (and illegal) immigration.[312]

The Royal Commissioners' acknowledged that Palestine offered Jews an avenue of refuge but believed that ameliorative action was constrained by the terms of the British Mandate. They reasoned that Palestine's absorptive capacity was not infinite, but that industrial centres such as the wholly Jewish city of Tel Aviv "*which had grown in such a spectacular manner*" had more to offer. It was a

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[309] Statistical analysis demonstrates that had Jewish immigration increased at the 1933-1936 average annual rate, then by 1956, the Jewish population would have outstripped the population of non-Jews. Note, the "average annual rate" referred to in the text excludes illegal immigration. For a detailed analysis see Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Chapter X, 'Immigration' Pages 279-307)

[310] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 304)

[311] (Ibid, 304-305)

[312] (Ibid, 305)

city that had grown out of sand and in four decades had a population of 150,000. It, and other centres, would continue to grow as long as immigrants poured in. The Commissioners noted that the Jewish community in Palestine at the time numbered 400,000 giving rise to their observation that *"[T]he Jewish National Home had practically grown into something like a State within a State*".[313]

The Royal Commissioners refuted the claim that "*economic absorptive capacity*" should be the one determining factor for immigration. There were social, psychological and other inherent risks in applying this as the unique guiding principle as, indeed, "*a more serious weakness [lay] in its exclusiveness*". Nevertheless, in spite of their earlier caution, the Commission, recommended that for five years immigration should be restricted to 12,000 per year "*subject [again] to the economic absorptive capacity of the country*".[314]

The inconsistency of immigration policy is a recurring theme throughout Peel's four hundred-page report. Peel argued that while ever-increasing numbers of Jews was anathema to the Arab majority, limiting the inward flow was merely palliative and destined to fail. The problem was worsened by the fact that impoverished Arabs were obliged to stand by while their Jewish neighbours were busily modernising. Palestinian Arabs watched while Jews seemed destined to attain national statehood. "*The difficulty has always been ... that the existence of a [Jewish] National Home, whatever its size, bars the way to the attainment [of the same status as] all other Arabs*".[315]

Without drastic measures, the Palestine question was insoluble. Britain's WWI policy was partially responsible. During the Middle East campaign, it was essential to create close ties with allies, but close support demanded a *quid pro quo.* Britain had made peremptory promises to both Jews and Arabs and had nurtured irreconcilable expectations. Britain had accepted its commitments under the terms of its Mandate anticipating that, before long, its obligations to both sides would be satisfied. It was expected that when Arabs reaped the material benefits of Jewish development then joint

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[313] (Ibid, 305)
[314] (Ibid, 306)
[315] (Ibid, 307)

cooperation would follow. However, this earlier confidence that Arabs too would benefit was misplaced. Peel writes that Jews were predominantly of European origin while Arabs were chiefly Asiatic. The two groups were separated by religion, language, culture and social life. They were "*as incompatible as their national aspirations*".[316]

When, in 1936 the crisis intensified, nationalist Arabs (frequently the "*patriotic youth-movement*") mounted sporadic attacks against their Jewish neighbours and vented their anger against a beleaguered British Administration. *"[A]s each community [grew] the rivalry between them deepen[ed]"*. Peel reported that even had Britain "*adopted a more rigorous and consistent policy*" it would only have been a temporary solution.[317]

The Royal Commission Review Cantonisation

The Royal Commissioners accepted that the Arab-Zionist impasse particularly over the issue of Jewish immigration was so firmly intrenched as to demand some form of partition. First, they examined a system of Cantonisation which, the Commissioners reasoned, had some merit. They envisaged a federation of separate Jewish and Arab provinces (cantons). Jewish cantons would broadly include areas with the maximum concentration of Jewish people. The remainder would be allocated to Arabs. They contemplated that these cantons (whether Jewish or Arab) would be self-governed and autonomous in matters of health, education, and public works policy. These autonomous regions would decide on issues of immigration and land acquisition but matters relating to defence, foreign relations, railways and customs duty would be retained at the centre by the Mandatory government. The Commissioners reviewed the problems associated with the scheme. They felt that disputes would arise over overlapping functions, giving rise to rival claims, and that both sides were likely to resent the Mandatory Authority making decisions that were rightfully theirs. Also, the positioning of lines of demarcation would involve complex constitutional issues. Finally, though broad delineation already existed, the partial intermixing of Jews and Arabs made it

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[316] (Ibid, 370)
[317] (Ibid, 371)

impractical to fully separate rival factions into 'own' cantons. Hence these intermixed areas were the principal obstacle to Cantonisation. The Commissioners believed that with their widely different goals, Jews and Arabs could not coexist in the long term.[318] Any practical solution must take account of the breakdown in political relations between the three principal players. Zionists would settle for nothing less than the freedom to build a sovereign Jewish state with the right to determine their own immigration policy. Palestinian Arabs too demanded an independent state and dismissed Zionist ambitions.

Partition is the Royal Commission's Favoured Option

The Royal Commissioners reasoned that if the problem could not be solved by granting political authority to one or other of the two sides over an unwilling minority then *"neither [Arabs nor Jews] in the end [should] govern Palestine"*. However, for all practical purposes, the Commissioners could see no reason why *"each race should not rule part of it"*.[319] Severing off Transjordan from historic Palestine was *"bad enough"* but carving up the Holy Land was unacceptable to both sides. In answer, while there was clearly no moral value in perpetuating *"hatred, strife and bloodshed"* it was ethically acceptable if, in time, *"peace and goodwill"* emerged across a political dividing line.[320] For the Royal Commissioners, Partition was the only feasible option, but unachievable for as long as the existing Mandate remained in force. They argued that steps towards the termination of the Mandate were a prerequisite for the success of Partition and a new Mandate should be drawn up specifically for the protection of the Holy Places. Palestine should be governed under a Treaty arrangement corresponding to precedents set in Iraq and Syria. Arabs and Jews would be separated by way of two independent sovereign states. To achieve this, the Commissioners adopted what would later be a controversial proposal. The Arab section, comprising the South West and eastern portion of partitioned Palestine, would be united with Transjordan (East of the River Jordan) which would

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[318] (Ibid, 377-379)
[319] (Ibid, 375)
[320] (Ibid, 377)

become a single contiguous Arab state. A varying ten-mile East-West strip of land connecting and

including Jerusalem to the Mediterranean port of Jaffa would become a British controlled Mandated

Zone. The remaining land to the north and west of the recommended border between the two new

states, consisting of approximately 70% of the Mediterranean coastal plain, should be a fully

independent Jewish state.[321] (see Annex 6) The Commissioners' report included an outline map

showing new state borders that reflected the approximate Arab/Jewish demography. Wherever it was

achievable, Arabs and Jews should be separated. Apart from most of the coastal plain, where the

majority of Jews lived, they were also allocated the northern valleys and all of Galilee which

comprised approximately 20% of western Palestine.[322] Broadly, Jews were to be rewarded with land

that they had already largely developed or were developing. Much of this land was potentially fertile,

with ready access to the Mediterranean. Although Palestinian Arabs were to have less readily

developable territory, they would have the lion's share of the total if united with Transjordan. Uriel

Dann emphasises the importance of understanding Transjordan's physical disadvantages. Before

1967, he explains, the country had no mineral resources and barely one tenth of its 40,000 square

miles was arable.[323] Until major improvements could be implemented, conditions in the enlarged

Transjordan would remain harsh and although, as a result of Partition, while the united entity would

be denied the cultivable coastal plain, access to shipping routes via the Gulf of Aqaba, overland traffic

routes to Jaffa and the deep-water port of Haifa would be guaranteed.[324] Britain had military and

commercial interests in the regions so that provision for the maintenance of land, sea, air and other

assets would be attached to Treaty arrangements. Article 1 of the Covenant of the League of Nations

included provision allowing a state to apply for membership. The Peel Commissioners assumed that

Britain, as the Mandatory Authority, would undertake to support applications from both new states.

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[321] (Ibid, Annex 6)
[322] Elad Ben-Dror (2014, 21): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP
[323] Dann, Uriel, (1989, 3) King Hussein and the challenge of Arab Radicalism, Jordan 1955 – 1967
[324] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Pages 381-386)

Population Exchange as a Last Resort

The Royal Commissioners left the most difficult questions until last. If it was essential that Jews and Arabs should be separated, then simply drawing a border between the two states was not a satisfactory solution, as hundreds of thousands of people would find themselves stranded on the wrong side of that border. It was unclear how many people would be affected but, in any case, considerably more Arabs than Jews would be adversely impacted. Then there was the question of land. The problem for Jews presently living in the proposed Arab state was more easily resolved. As they were few, these Jews could readily be absorbed alongside their fellow Jews in a Jewish state and land found for their speedy resettlement. Jewish landowners in the proposed Arab state would sell their land to the Mandatory Authority at a fixed price which, in turn, would sell it on to Arabs. The problem facing Arabs left on the Jewish side of the border was more complex. First, there was the extensive number of Arabs involved. Second, while a small minority of Arabs could occupy the land vacated by Jews, the rest would be obliged to relocate to a region (including Transjordan) that was already deeply impoverished. Third, like Jewish landowners, Arabs would sell their vacated property to the Mandatory Authority leaving thousands of displaced Arabs on barren land incapable of supporting whole families.

The Royal Commissioners cited a case where the exchange of people and land had been carried out. A year after the 1922 Greco-Turkish war, 1,300,000 Orthodox Greeks had been uprooted from Turkey and compelled to relocate to Greece. Similarly, some 400,000 Moslem Turks had relocated from Greece to Turkey. The shift was traumatic and *"sharply criticised at the time for [its] inhumanity"* but was completed inside eighteen months. However, "*[t]he ulcer had been clean cut out"* and calmer relations restored.[325]

The above analogy was poor. Northern Greece had surplus cultivable land. Arab Palestine did not. To offset the disadvantage for Arabs, Peel proposed, opportunities for developing and irrigating

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[325] (Ibid, 390)

barren land needed to be identified and executed quickly. The essential finance would come from the British Exchequer and the Commissioners proposed that, if necessary, population exchange should be rigorously enforced.[326]

On 20th July 1937 British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain conceded that his Government had not been consulted before Peel's Report was officially handed over. He refuted Liberal MP, Sir Geoffrey's Mander's assertion that the Royal Commission had exceeded its terms of reference.[327] In that case, Mander responded, the Prime Minister was apparently unaware that Peel had admitted to this accusation.[328] While Lord Peel's unanticipated population-exchange recommendation ultimately condemned the entirety of the report, his Commissioners were the first to officially declare the need for Partition.

Ignoring the population-exchange element, the Commissioners' report offered a credible proposal. The Royal Commission's recommendation for a sovereign Jewish state was tantalising, but at just 5000 square kilometres, it fell short of what most Zionists believed was viable. Yet, for the first time a Jewish 'state' via Partition (unlike the blurred terms of Home or Homeland) was firmly implanted into official Government language, given, as Wasserstein argues, that years before Peel, Jewish and Arab leaders had already formed separate governances and created, in effect, "*internal institutional Partition*"[329]

In an article published on the 16th of July 1937, the Spectator described the unanimity of the Royal Commissioners', "*impressive*" and the fact that their report had met with the almost universal approval of the press may have persuaded the British Government to offer its guarded support. The Spectator ventured that although Jews and Arabs expressed considerable reservations, neither had rejected the Report in its entirety. Although regretting the necessity, the present inclination shared in

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[326] Members of the Royal Commission, Lord Peel, Horace Rumbold, Laurie Hammond, William Morris Carter, Harold Morris and Mr. R. Coupland signed the Report on the 22nd June 1937.

[327] Sir Geoffrey Mander was Liberal MP for Wolverhampton East from May 1929 until July 1945. He was a regular speaker having made over 9000 interventions and speeches during his time in Parliament (See Geoffrey Mander MP: Hansard)

[328] Hansard: HC Deb 20 July 1937 Volume 326 cc1970-1

[329] Wasserstein, B (2004, 106-114). Israel and Palestine

many quarters was that Partition was a *fait accompli* and it was therefore best to reserve criticism for the finer details.[330] The Spectator article referred back to the years during and just after WWI: The then war-time Cabinet might be accused of "*having sold the same pup twice*", but despite this, had an all-encompassing greater Arab state emerged out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, then the Arabs may well have accepted a Jewish state in one relatively tiny quarter. Also, had Britain pursued the Balfour pledge to Jews in the very early stages then it is arguable whether Arabs may have accepted a Jewish state in just part of Palestine as an irreversible fact. However, twenty years on and far from nearing a resolution, events had permitted the Palestine question to become more complex. The Spectator article maintained that even if the Royal Commission report signalled "*the inevitability of partition*" it was not yet an accomplished fact and it would be a mistake to underestimate Great Britain's difficulties with its implementation.[331] One major concern was Palestine's strategic importance as an accessible maritime nation in the vital Eastern Mediterranean. Another was that Palestinian Arabs were troubled that while neighbouring countries had fulfilled or were about to fulfil their destinies, theirs was in doubt since "now*here was the spirit of [independence] more acute after [WWI] than in ... Middle East*".[332] A case in point was Syria, with whom Palestinians and Syrians had a longstanding connection. Events in either Palestine or Syria affected the other.[333] From the beginning, Syrian nationalists had rejected the idea of mandatory governance and refuted Britain's claim that Palestine was not part of a wider-Syria. By 1925, France had yielded in the face of fierce Arab opposition and divided Syria into nominally Arab administered, self-governing, entities (including Lebanon), prepared to join their Palestinian kinsmen during a general strike in 1925. Three years before, in 1922, a treaty of alliance between the British and Iraqi Governments replaced the British Mandate so that by 1925 an Arab constitutional monarchy became another Arab independent member of the international community.[334] Again, intensifying Palestinian nationalism seemed bound

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[330] Spectator Archive, 'The Partition of Palestine' 16 July 1937, Page 4.
[331] (Ibid, 4)
[332] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 58)
[333] (Ibid, 58)
[334] (Ibid, 60)

to change the political status of Transjordan. Transjordan was an extension of the Palestine Mandate and although subject to the advisory rule of Britain, it was recognised as the independent country of Transjordan in 1923. It seemed apparent to Palestinian Arabs that their East Bank neighbours had been singled out for special treatment. Transjordan had gained independence despite being poorer, grossly underdeveloped, and with only a third of Palestine's population. In 1922 Winston Churchill (Secretary of State for the Colonies), while accepting that Palestinians were as "*advanced*" as their Transjordanian neighbours, excused the lack of progress towards independence because "*the creation at this stage of a [Palestinian] national Government would preclude the fulfilment of the pledge made by the British Government to the Jewish people*".[335] Palestine's situation was unique. Its mandate was dissimilar to others in that both the Balfour Declaration and Britain's Mandate for Palestine contained an irreconcilable pledge to two conflicting parties under the terms of the "*dual obligation*"; a pledge that was "*wholly untenable*".[336]

Before WWII, in the heyday of the British Empire, Great Britain had willingly subjugated its Dominions and the prevailing mood was that competing claims should be resolved in favour of "*the tillers of soil*".[337] Undeniably, Arabs laboured on the land; nonetheless the Royal Commission conceded that, though in a minority, Jews too were increasingly engaged in cultivating the land. The Spectator article also argued that the Commissioners had failed to grasp the full extent of the personal situation of German Jews or 3,000,000 Polish Jews, whose personal predicament was equally bad but whose economic conditions were worse. Until now, the Spectator article continues, it is "*the unhappy fate of the Jewish migration to Palestine to palliate one tiny fraction of an immense problem by creating another problem, perhaps less extensive, but certainly not less insoluble*".[338] Like the Jewish Agency, Arabs too objected to features of Peel's report. The Spectator maintained that unlike the

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[335] (ibid, 55)
[336] Defries, H. (2001, 163) Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, (1900-1950)
[337] Spectator Archive, 'The Partition of Palestine' 16 July 1937, Page 4.
[338] (Ibid, 4)

Arab argument, the Jewish case had all the advantages of financial support and commendable marshalling of the world press, but it was unwise to assume that the principle of '*les absents ont toujours tort'* should undermine Arab concerns.[339]

Now, facing the possibility of war, Britain was reconsidering its options. This, coupled with the strategic value of Middle East alliances, meant that Britain's seeming initial endorsement of Partition was temporarily relegated. It was essential for Zionist leaders to draft a response to Peel's report before the opportunity was lost.

Round Table Conference

On the 7th of February 1937 Britain's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, assembled a Round Table conference in London. Zionists were becoming increasingly isolated and the messages coming from London did nothing to soothe their unease. It was no secret that Hitler and Mussolini supported the Arab cause. Mussolini believed that a Jewish Palestine would become another Malta or Gibraltar, simply outposts of the British Empire. The United States and France did not exhibit any immediate concern for Jews nor did the Soviet Union as its sympathies lay with Arabs. "*Zionism*", Laqueur maintains, "*was thus totally isolated, completely dependent on British goodwill*". A message from German Jewry reached London; "*it is a question of life or death [and] inconceivable that Britain will sacrifice the German Jews*". The appeal had little impact. Still, Ben-Gurion and Weizmann saw London as an opportunity for direct talks with Arab leaders. Both refused to believe that, whatever happened, Britain would turn its back on the Zionist cause. Ben-Gurion predicted "*two historically inevitable processes*"; an Arab federation or alternatively, a Jewish state. Nonetheless, Jewish immigration was always a prerequisite before negotiations.[340]

The tenor of the Round Table talks focused on the shifting circumstances in the lead up to war. In a fraught atmosphere, the Jewish delegation repeatedly stressed that Britain could rely on Jewish over Arab support in any military endeavour. British representatives were unimpressed. They

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[339] (Ibid, 4)
[340] Laqueur, W (2003, 523-525) A History of Zionism

reasoned that on balance, the Arab revolt posed a greater strategic threat than any advantage likely to be gained from Jewish involvement. British representatives were unmoved by "*veiled threats*" of Jewish retaliation if illegal immigrants were refused entry into Palestine. Malcolm MacDonald (Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs) cautioned that Jewish non-cooperation could lead to Britain turning its back and leaving Jews to their fate.[341] The Conference closed on the 17th March. London was a failure. This about turn in British attitudes was, Laqueur contends, "*an unmitigated disaster*"; "*a death sentence*" for Jews according to Weizmann.[342]

Zionists Grapple with the Problem

Just before Peel's report was published in July 1937, an entire cross-section of Eretz Israel and the Diaspora were engulfed in a "swirling" debate. The "*Great Pulmus*" in 1937 created "a *schism between and within the political parties, academics, teachers, writers and rabbis*" and prompted "*unprecedented ideological soul-searching and practical deliberations*".[343] The schism pitted those who were strongly opposed to the Royal Commission's Partition Plan against others who contended that it was a step in the right direction. A stubborn minority insisted that all of Eretz Israel was rightfully Jewish. Others argued that a plan was better than no plan and if Zionists rejected it, then Britain may decide that Partition was a step too far and impose a unitary state. Strong proponents of the Royal Commission's plan argued that it was a springboard; a small foothold offering the prospect of an immediate sanctuary to thousands of distressed European Jews. Then, Galnoor maintains, there was an *"undecided"* group whose support was conditional on several preconditions. There was the question of size. The state had to be large enough to guarantee its economic viability. Then, whatever its size, came the question of security. State borders must have adequate defences against attack. Furthermore, the 'undecided' needed reassurance on their non-negotiable principle of immigration. Jews and Arabs could live together, but only on the condition that Jews were in a majority. Others

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[341] (Ibid, 525)
[342] (Ibid, 527)
[343] Galnoor, Itzhak (essay, Page 7), included in Gavison, R (Editor). (2013): 'The Two-State Solution' (translated from Hebrew)

were concerned about the probable negative Arab reactions to Peel's plan. Peace was paramount but future Jewish/Arab relations depended on peaceful coexistence. Pragmatists offered qualified support and reasoned that although the Plan was deficient in some key areas, it opened the door to a future Jewish state.[344] Again, there was unease that an ill-considered or unduly delayed response would result in a British about-turn on its pledge to Jews. The Great Pulmus of 1937 had no obvious impact on Britain's Palestine policy, but it did expose the spiritual and political cracks running through worldwide Jewry.

20th Zionist Congress

Time was running out when on the 4th of August 1937 the 20th Zionist Congress assembled to decide on the next move. Zionist leaders needed to formally respond to the Royal Commission's report. David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann led the debate. Of the two, Weizmann was the pragmatic Zionist. An independent Jewish Homeland, Galnoor notes, "*stood at the centre of [his] spiritual and practical world*". Ben-Gurion was socialist in practice and Zionist at heart. Whenever heart and head conflicted, his sense of Zionism fused with Weizmann's pragmatic Zionism so that together, they were heavily influential and instrumental in the decision-making process.[345]

Weizmann rose to speak. He announced that the Royal Commission had made a "*revolutionary proposal*"; a recommendation favouring Partition; a Jewish state in *Eretz-Yisrael*. Weizmann put the alternatives directly. There were just two options: either to accept a sovereign Jewish state in one small region or to remain a permanent minority within a majority Arab Palestine. For practical Weizmann, if the strong or more moderate opponents persuaded those who were wavering or undecided to rebuff the Commissioners proposal, then a golden opportunity would be lost. There was impasse, but Weizmann was a shrewd political operator. A temporary respite was called for. Rather than accept defeat, he proposed that Congress empower a Directorate to open

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[344] (Ibid, 9)
[345] (Ibid, 8)

negotiations with British officials.[346] For Weizmann there were unchallengeable issues. First, the inviolability of a Jewish statehood (often couched in the vague rubric of 'Jewish home') and second, the state must have the right to determine its own policy on immigration. On the first, Weizmann recalled a biblical prophecy he had previously quoted to members of the Royal Commission: "*God*", he urged, "*promised Eretz-Yisrael to the Jews*". When questioned about Jewish immigration he had responded that in his opinion, just two million out of the total seven-million European Jews should be free to immigrate to Palestine and that this two million should comprise of young people. The aged, he said, "*... have already become dust, economic and moral dust in this cruel world*" and that, he understood, accorded with Jewish tradition.[347]

By a nearly two thirds majority, the 20th Zionist Congress supported Partition in principle and rejected the Royal Commissioners' hypothesis that the national aspirations of Jews and Arabs were irreconcilable. The Zionists declared their readiness to conduct joint talks. In the meantime, the Royal Commission's recommendations spelled disaster for Arabs and they roundly rejected Partition. For them, the prospect of further Jewish immigration into a Jewish state, even in one in a small corner of Palestine, was an abomination and a population exchange involving swathes of Arabs against a trickle of Jews was unthinkable.

Galnoor argues that by adopting the "*all-or-nothing approach*", Arabs ignored the political reality. They had a choice between either a practical compromise or continued British subjugation. Insisting on an all-Arab Palestine meant that in the "*long term all of Palestine was lost*". Moreover, Galnoor contends, their rejection of Partition as the only practical option left Arab Palestinians even more resistant to the prospect when it was offered ten years later in 1947.[348] The Palestinian problem was now "*irretrievably insinuated ... into the intricate, and ultimately devastating, web of pan-Arab*

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[346] (Gavison, R (Editor). (2013, 87-92): 'The Two-State Solution' (translated from Hebrew)
[347] (Ibid, 92)
[348] Galnoor, Itzhak (essay, Page 7), included in Gavison, R (Editor). (2013): 'The Two-State Solution

politics".[349] "*Of all the dangerous places*", Gerald Isaacs[350] declared, "*in which to set up an unsupported, inexperienced State, I wonder whether at the present moment you could find a more perilous spot than the eastern end of the Mediterranean*".[351]

While many Zionists rejected the Royal Commission's Partition scheme the Zionist Executive was authorised to open negotiations with the British Government. Peel's tantalising proposal had helped ally most diehard proponents and opponents of Partition. While there was near-unanimity among Zionists over the fundamental right for Jews to immigrate into a future Jewish state, questions remained as to its size and precise boundaries. Balfour, the Mandate and, in 1937, Peel had persuaded Zionists that independence was foreseeable. From here on, Zionist leaders were sufficiently assured not to react in haste, but to return to the negotiating table with their own set of proposals. Ben-Dror maintains that the significance of Peel's plan lies less in its minutiae, but rather that the concept of Partition had been flagged as an option.[352]

In June 1937 Weizmann had met with a group of sympathetic British politicians, telling them that he was minded to consider Partition provided it included provision for between 50,000 and 60,000 Jewish immigrants per year. Winston Churchill reacted strongly against Weizmann's proposition. "*Your [envisaged Jewish] state is a mirage [but, when fascism is defeated] your time will come*". Arabs, Churchill warned, would "*revert to provocation by shooting and bombing and eventually blaming [Jews] for sparking a bloody war*". Churchill also conceded that Arabs would not be discouraged, given Britain's "*disastrously weak government*".[353] Now HM Government reverted to type. While prevaricating over the recommendations of one Commission, it bought time by commissioning a second. Thus, in September 1937, HM Government informed the League of Nations

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[349] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 48): Palestine Betrayed

[350] Gerald Isaacs (2nd Marquess of Reading) succeeded his father, Rufus Isaac (1st Marquess) and followed him into Liberal politics. From a well-known Jewish family, he was one member of the Counsel selected to present the Jewish Agency's case before the Shaw Commission; Hansard, HL Deb 21 July 1937 Vol. 106, 798

[351] Hansard, HL Deb 21 July 1937, Page, 799: Volume 106. Pages 797-824 – Palestine

[352] Ben-Dror, E. (2014, 21): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP

[353] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 56): Palestine Betrayed.

Council that it had decided to send in another Commission with instructions to examine and report back with its recommendations.

The Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead Commission)[354]

In the first half of 1938, violence seemed never-ending; intimidation and murder were commonplace. Hundreds of police, British personnel and many civilians were killed or injured. Distressed by the violence, the sensitive and impressionable General Sir Arthur Wauchope, who assumed that Arab and Jewish communities were fundamentally compatible, was induced by Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore to resign. He was replaced on the 3rd March 1938 by the aloof and independent minded, Sir Harold MacMichael. The new High Commissioner moved to suppress the Arab revolt and pursue "*harsh implementation of the White Paper*" with, Kolinsky maintains, "*inflexible disregard of the human consequences*". Yet, at the end of his tenure in July 1944, MacMichael too "*advocated partition as a means of reducing the impact of Jewish immigration … on Arab opinion*".[355]

By the time the Woodhead Commission arrived in Palestine, more than a year had passed since the publication of the Royal Commission's report. Now, Arabs adopted a policy of non-co-operation and refused to submit to formal questioning.[356] Distancing itself from the Royal Commission and clearly implying the need for Partition, the Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead Commission) concluded that based on available evidence it was clear that there was no appetite from either of the two parties and even less support from rural communities for an exchange of land; Jewish to Arab land or Arab to Jewish. Woodhead wrote that "*[W]e have found it impossible to assume that the minority problem will be solved by the voluntary transfer of population*".[357]

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[354] The Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead Commission) was essentially a technical commission. It was headed by Sir John Woodhead and included two civil servants (Thomas Reid and Percival Waterfield) together with a lawyer (Sir Alison Russell). They travelled to Palestine in April 1938, returning to London in July. The report was published in November of that year. Sir Harold MacMichael had succeeded Wauchope as Palestine's High Commissioner in February 1938 not long before the Woodhead Commission started its investigation. MacMichael imposed a crackdown on Arab violence that had become widespread since the previous October. (Defries, H. (2001, 161) Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, (1900-1950)
[355] Kolinsky, M. (1999, 13) Britain's War in the Middle East, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1936-42
[356] Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead) Report, October 1938, Pages 17-20
[357] (Ibid, 53)

Woodhead referred specifically to the compulsory element in Peel's Arab relocation proposal and noted that in his dispatch of the 23rd December 1937, Lord Harlech[358] reaffirmed HM Government's rejection of Peel's proposal for compulsory transfer policy. Harlech found "*it impossible to assume that the minority problem will be solved [in that manner]*".[359] Further, it was impossible to devise state boundaries so "*as to include no Arabs at all in the Jewish State*". It was inconceivable that neither Peel nor HM Government had regarded the latter other than as a "*fateful objection to any partition scheme*". Woodhead feared that, post-Partition, Arabs would have been fated to minority status in an immigration-swollen Jewish state and the morality of subjecting Arabs to Jewish political domination was questionable. Mass Jewish immigration, Woodhead argued, would make matters worse.[360]

Zionists too rejected the need for population exchange but were encouraged that while a Jewish state lay somewhere in the near future, precise state boundaries were less clear cut. Zionist leaders argued that in the previous year, Peel's Partition plan had made for an unsatisfactorily bordered state with little scope for planned future Jewish immigration. The Jewish Agency proposed an alternative. It proposed a state extending over most of the Northern Region, bounded in the north by Lebanon and Syria and to the west and east by the Mediterranean and the River Jordan respectively. Towards the north-east the new state would extend east across the River Jordan taking in a narrow north/south strip of Transjordan. Other than providing a narrow east/west access corridor from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and Jaffa, the Jewish state would gain the northern and coastal region stretching from Lebanon's southern border south to within approximately twenty kilometres of Gaza City. Where the Royal Commission had proposed a wide Mandatory-controlled strip from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean, the Jewish Agency proposed to narrow the width to the benefit of the Jewish state. The Agency proposed that the Arab state should consist of a near-horizontal elliptical shape

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[358] Lord Harlech, formally W.G.A. Ormsby Gore, served as Colonial Secretary between 1936 and 1938. He resigned partially as a protest against Partition. Woodhead's report was addressed to Malcolm MacDonald (Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies) and presented to Parliament in October 1938.
[359] Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead) Report, October 1938, Page 235
[360] (Ibid, 235)

(100km x 70Km) incorporating approximately 50km of the Mediterranean coastline and Gaza. Also, the Arab state would extend south to Beersheba with the West Bank and the Negev remaining under Mandatory authority. The Jewish plan broadly followed the pattern of existing Jewish settlements but enlarged to accommodate new immigrants and indigenous non-Jews. For its part, the Woodhead Commission contended that state size and levels of Jewish settlement were questions of degree; the degree to which they might be acceptable to both parties. Woodhead's Commissioners explored three possible alternatives: Plan A (Appendix 7) was somewhat similar to the Jewish plan, but with important differences. First, there was no question of incursion into Transjordan. Secondly, most of the land that the Jewish Agency had proposed should remain under the authority of the Mandatory Authority (including the Negev) would instead become part of Arab-Palestine. Thirdly, and most contentiously, the Jewish state would be divided north and south (a tiny proportion of the whole) by a Jerusalem enclave (Mandated territory) 10km wide south of Tel Aviv but widening considerably up to and surrounding Jerusalem. Although a fair proportion of the land allocated to Palestinian Arabs was relatively infertile, except for a small region around Tel Aviv, their state would be contiguous and at least twice the size of the Jewish state. Although Jews were allocated naturally fertile coastal regions and areas that they had helped cultivate, the restricted area on offer was wholly insufficient to satisfy Zionist demands.[361] The Commissioners' second alternative (Plan B - Annex 8) was like the first but offered less capacity for Jewish settlement; approximately a quarter (Galilee) would be mandated territory. The region allocated to Arabs remained relatively unaffected.[362]

The most radical proposal was the division of Palestine under Plan C (Annex 9).[363] Under this Plan, the Jewish state would be restricted to a relatively tiny part of the coastal plain. Galilee and the northern territory would be classified as the Northern Mandated Territory. The boundaries of the northern section of the Arab state would remain relatively unaffected and, as before, the southern area

[361] Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead) Report, October 1938, Annex 7
[362] (Ibid, Annex 8)
[363] (Ibid, Annex 9)

(including the Negev) would become part of an Arab state. Questions arose on issues surrounding freedom of movement between and across the partitioned states: on administrative, educational, economic, employment and the critical matters of immigration and security. In the case of security, it was essential that this tiny would-be Jewish state, fronted by sea and surrounded by potential enemies, could defend itself. The military authorities impressed on the Commission the difficulty of positioning defensible borders west of the River other than one providing minimal protection from small arms fire. Unless the opposing sides chose peace, then the strategic border issue of this plan cast serious doubts over the advisability of Partition itself.[364] Still, Plan C, was, according to the Commissioners, "*the best plan of partition which [they had] been able to devise*".[365] Plan C was a reduced version of "*the plan outlined by the Royal Commission [which was already] open to the objection that the area of the Jewish State is too small*" [366] for "*large numbers of Jews … facing ruin in eastern and Central Europe*".[367]

Although Woodhead's report signalled rejection of the Royal Commission's Partition plan, its commissioners failed to agree on any one alternative plan. One of the four argued that Partition was impractical.[368] The chairman and one other recommended reducing the size of the Jewish state and limiting its degree of sovereignty. A fourth disagreed and proposed its enlargement.[369] However, the four unanimously rejected population transfer. Both Commissions had, in their separate ways, highlighted advantages and exposed the disadvantages of various forms of Partition. Nevertheless, the drive towards a two-state solution was accelerating.

It is instructive here to outline Commissioner Thomas Reid's[370] balanced argument for and against Jewish immigration and what drew him to his independent conclusion.[371] Thomas Reid was

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[364] (Ibid, Annex 236-242)
[365] (Ibid, (232)
[366] (Ibid, 111)
[367] (Ibid, Jewish Memorandum, 111)
[368] Gavison, R (Editor). (2013, 212): 'The Two-State Solution' (translated from Hebrew)
[369] (Ibid, 212-213)
[370] Thomas Reid was a former Indian civil servant. He served as a Commissioner with the Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead Commission)
[371] Palestine Partition Commission (Woodhead) Report, October 1938, Pages 263-281

opposed to Partition and though he confined his observations to Plan C, most, if not all his criticisms also applied to Plans A and B: The Woodhead Commission was directed to devise an equitable plan so that the minimum number of Jews would occupy Arab lands and vice versa. Plan C limited the Jewish state to a parcel of land on the Coastal Plain (around 300,000 acres "*about as large as an English county*"[372]) which, according to the Commissioners, was "*the least objectionable*". The quandary was that in Plan C, while Arabs would comprise just 20% of the population of the proposed Jewish state, they would have owned a substantial 65% of the land.[373]

Reid turned to the matter of consent.[374] In July 1937, a British Government Statement of Policy included a statement that a scheme of Partition should secure "*an effective measure of consent on the part of the communities concerned*".[375] No universal consent was forthcoming from the Jewish community, and Palestinian Arabs had resorted to violence. Jews were unwilling to accept a plan unless it assigned an area at least on par with that proposed by the Royal Commission. "*The Arab/Jewish divide was unbridgeable, thus, without consent*", Reid argued, Partition was impracticable.[376] Just a single Arab witness suggested that in the long term most Arabs would consent to live peacefully in a partitioned Palestine. Without exception, the rest were opposed. One witness said that any attempt to impose Partition against the will of the majority would result in a major upsurge of violence. Others agreed, with one insisting that Arabs would refuse to accept a *fait accompli* and that "*opposition will become more serious … a disaster*" for Jews.[377] Under Plan C, the Northern Territory was to remain under the Mandatory Authority with controlled levels of immigration. Reid argued that although there was a clause that required Arab consent for Jewish immigration, Arabs feared that Jewish immigrants would ignore the ruling and gradually comprise a

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[372] (Ibid, 268)
[373] (Ibid, 268)
[374] (Ibid, 263-268)
[375] (Ibid, 268)
[376] (Ibid, 264)
[377] (Ibid, 265)

majority. Similar concerns applied to the Southern Territory, though it was less likely given that the population of this area was largely Arab.[378]

Arab suspicions were well founded. Increasing Jewish immigration stimulated the demand for land. Limited supply and increasing demand resulted in soaring land prices. Some Arab families who had scraped a living for generations, parted with their land despite a risk of Arab reprisals. Moreover, future land sales would be financed from Jewish National funds and distributed under leasing arrangements; Jewish lessees were forbidden to rent to or even employ, non-Jews. Similarly, non-agricultural Jewish employers were actively discouraged from employing Arab labour.[379] New territorial borders presented anomalies. For example, hill families would be banned from supplementing their earnings during peak harvest seasons and families living on one side of the border could be separated from their land, which remained on the other. Jewish leaders claimed that their state would be non-discriminatory, yet Jewish labour policy favoured Jewish employees over Arab. The "*system of Jewish economic penetration*" Reid predicted, would inevitably lead to a climate of communal ill-will.[380] Witnesses warned that the ill-will that some Arabs held against Jews would infect neighbouring Arab countries. If levels of violence escalated, then the police and military would be obliged to protect the borders of any new Jewish state. The costs involved in crushing resistance would be high; in lives, resources and in the loss to British reputation. Reid argued that the League of Nations, the British Government and the British people would quickly realise that the price was too high for what was, after all, a "*defective partition plan*".[381] Although Reid judged "*Plan C [to be] the least objectionable that can be devised under our terms of reference*", he nevertheless urged against it claiming that "*Immigration is one thing [but] immigration [that gives rise to] periodical additions to the Jewish State is quite another*".[382] To Reid, Partition was an issue because he believed that it was unworkable. Although he appears to accept the inevitability of Jewish immigration, his

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[378] (Ibid, 273)
[379] (Ibid, 270)
[380] (Ibid, 271)
[381] (Ibid, 270)
[382] (Ibid, 273)

main concern was on the question of its scale. Nevertheless, by the time Reid and his fellow Commissioners left Palestine, it was evident that the Zionist leadership would settle for nothing less than a sovereign Jewish state. However, under the Commission's latest Partition Plan, the availability of land for Jews would soon be overwhelmed by demand. Jews would be condemned to immigrate into and build a Jewish state in a tiny enclave in an already small and impoverished Palestine.

When, on the 11th of November 1938, HM Government convened to consider Woodhead's report, it concluded that "*the political, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the proposal to create independent Arab and Jewish States inside Palestine are so great that this solution of the problem is impracticable*".[383] Britain's endeavours to establish a Jewish state, whether by Woodhead's solution or another, were coming to an end. Nevertheless, Partition had been raised again as a preferred option. Before finally rejecting Peel's recommendations on Partition, which had already been deemed impractical by Woodhead, and recognising the strategic war-time value of the Middle East, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain stated that in his view it was more advantageous to "*offend Jews rather than the Arabs*".[384]

From 1933 when Hitler was elected Reich Chancellor, he was doggedly determined to rid the Reich of its Jewish population. Between 1933 and 1938, 150,000 Jews had fled persecution although worse was to come. Before the doors were finally shut, between November 1938 and September 1939, Britain rescued some 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.[385] Many of the parents were left to their fate and in the few remaining years before the outbreak of WWII, the situation for European Jewry swiftly deteriorated. Matters moved from bad to worse following the Nazi annexation of Austria on 12th March 1938 and worse still, from 9th to the 10th of *November* during *Kristallnacht*[386] when 267 synagogues were destroyed, 91 Jews killed

[383] Cmd. 5893, Statement by HM Government (11th November 1938, 4)
[384] Zionist Congress: Congresses During the British Mandate (1923-1946)
[385] Known as the *Kindertransport* programme and agreed under Chamberlain's UK Government.
[386] Defries, H. (2001, 162) Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, (1900-1950)

and 30,000 incarcerated in concentration camps.[387] Britain's *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin reported to London that the latest persecution was "*on a scale and of a severity unprecedented in modern times*".[388] Months later, 30th July 1939, Chamberlain wrote to his sister, Hilda. Before speculating about Hitler's sanity, he provides an insight into his personal sentiments: He wrote: "*I believe that the persecution arose out of two motives, a desire to rob Jews of their money and a jealousy of their superior cleverness. No doubt Jews aren't a loving people; I don't care about them myself; but that is not sufficient to explain [Kristallnacht]".*[389] Now, as their situation became more despairing, Jews pleaded for a way out.

Evian-les-Bain Conference

With the pressure mounting, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated a conference (FDR's "*grand gesture*"). This was a move supported half-heartedly in Washington (the US sent a lower-level representative), but one applauded by FDR's Jewish constituency; "*splendid*" wrote Herbert H. Lehman (New York Governor) – "*I wish I could do more*", replied Roosevelt. Accordingly, on the 6th July 1938, representatives from thirty-two countries accompanied by scores of observers and journalists, gathered at the Hotel Royal in Evian-les-Bain.[390] Wells claims that many participating nations were less than enthusiastic over the prospect of being drawn in and attended only out of respect for Roosevelt. FDR assured delegates that whatever assistance they gave would have no long-term implications on their internal immigration policy arrangements and that any operation would be privately funded.[391] The British Government was reluctant to attend for fear that it would open the debate over its own Palestine immigration policy. Therefore, Wells proposes, the HM Government needed persuasion. The nudge came from FDR who reassured Whitehall that Palestine was not on the agenda and that the debate would not stray beyond the bounds of German and Austrian Jews.[392]

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[387] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: The Kindertransport and Refugees
[388] London, Louise (2000, 98) Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust.
[389] (Ibid, 106)
[390] Berenbaum, M. (2000, 49) The World Must Know
[391] Wells, A (2009, 1) Tropical Zion
[392] (Ibid, 2)

Berenbaum maintains that Roosevelt agreed to the latter because he was anxious to avoid upsetting Britain, one of his closest political allies.[393] FDR's intervention was potentially crucial. Where, he asked, were many thousands of European Jews to be safely resettled? His own country, like many others, was still suffering in the aftermath of the great depression. He was conflicted on two fronts. Detractors were concerned that a sudden influx of thousands of immigrants would disturb America's post-depression recovery. Other argued that the problem facing European Jews was so extreme that America must do more.[394]

One after another, delegates rose to express sympathetic platitudes, but little of concrete value. The United States representative spoke in nonfigurative terms about "*political refugees*"; Australia had no "*racial problem and [did not] want to import one*"; Canada was struggling with the Depression and therefore "*none*" the delegate stated, "*was too many*". The Columbian delegate was dismayed that Christian civilisation could "*lead to this terrible tragedy*" but offered nothing of substance and Venezuela could not disturb its "*demographic equilibrium*". While Holland and Denmark opened their doors to a few escapees, the British delegate claimed that Britain was too small to take more.[395] The French delegate declared that France had reached saturation point and was closing its borders. It was not, according to a Foreign Ministry memorandum, "*in France's interest to appear as a refuge [for] all misfits and ... everyone Germany considers its natural enemy*".[396] The one notable exception was the Dominican Republic's compassionate offer of sanctuary to 100,000, though there were few takers. The German Foreign Office sneered "*Since in many countries it was recently regarded as wholly incomprehensible why Germany did not want to preserve ... an element like the Jews ... it appears astounding that countries seem in no way anxious to make use of these elements themselves now that the opportunity offers*". Now that its policy of forced emigration had failed, Nazi Germany

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[393] Berenbaum, M. (2000, 49) The World Must Know
[394] (Ibid, 49)
[395] (bid, 50)
[396] Wells, A (2009, 2) Tropical Zion

soon adopted an alternative solution. Plainly, Berenbaum confirms, "*no one wanted the Jews*".[397] By the time Evian ended nine days later (15th July 1938), Britain's Jewish immigration policy had finally crystallized. Earl Winterton[398] stated that it was unrealistic to expect that the solution lay in unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. The country itself was, he said, too small. In addition, the present unrest and the dual obligations prescribed in the Mandate made "*such a proposition ... wholly untenable*".[399] It was a clear signal that Britain intended to deprive thousands of European Jews one of their last means of survival.[400] Further, in May 1939, the Secretary of State cloaked Britain's anti-Jewish immigration policy in the guise of Article VI of the Mandate, necessary to protect the "*rights and privileges [of non-Jews]*".

Now the HM Government was caught in a dilemma. Balfour and the Palestine Mandate were written pledges that Britain would facilitate a Jewish Homeland. However, in the charged atmosphere of pre-war Europe and the imminent requirement to reinforce Middle East alliances that might turn out to be strategically important, the Balfour promise had to wait. Meanwhile, in Europe anti-Semitism was endemic. Some more fortunate or wealthy Jews were able to pay or bribe their way to join family or friends in America or Britain while others made it to temporary sanctuary elsewhere. Tens of thousands journeyed to Palestine, either illegally or through half-open legal channels, while British forces struggled to stem the flow. The Jewish population of Palestine burgeoned so that by 1939 it comprised approximately one third of the total. Arab/Jewish tensions mounted, but neither side gave way.[401] Whether Britain liked it or not, partition was unavoidable.

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[397] Berenbaum, M. (2000, 50) The World Must Know

[398] In May 1937 Winterton was appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster before being promoted to the Cabinet by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlin in March 1938. Winterton led the British delegation at Evian.

[399] Defries, H. (2001, 163) Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, (1900-1950)

[400] It should be noted that while Britain refused to amend its Palestine immigration policy, Britain's own internal Jewish immigration policy was relaxed so as to allow thousands of victims of the Nazi purges to find refuge in Britain. They were saved through the efforts of Foreign Secretary, Samuel Hoare, and, most particularly, Neville Chamberlain. (for extensive detail see London, Louise (2000) Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust.

[401] The figures used here are drawn from the UK Parliamentary White Paper of 1939 although UNSCOP estimated that around 84,000 Jews had settled in Palestine by 1922 rising to nearly 400,000 by 1937. From 1933 to 1935 – the first years of the Nazi purges – it is estimated that 135,000 Jewish people escaped to Palestine.

'An act of perfidy': The White Paper of May 1939

The approaching war in Europe and the 1936-1939 Arab revolt had a profound effect on British policy in 1939. By the time Chamberlain had negotiated the Munich Pact with Hitler in September 1938 (described by Churchill as a "*total and unmitigated disaster*"[402]), "*civil government had virtually collapsed in Palestine*".[403] Sachar argues that the Arab revolt had an unforeseen impact on the Arabs themselves. Jewish labour had supplanted cheaper Arab labour and markets now sold Jewish rather than Arab produce. The most crippling impact of the revolt was on local Arabs, and even the Arab middle classes were nearing the limits of their resources. While "*the cost to the Arabs themselves became increasing punitive*", ironically, the revolt stimulated the Jewish economy.[404]

On the 26th September 1937, Arab rebels delivered another long-term disservice to their cause by murdering the District Commissioner of Galilee and Acre Lewis Y. Andrews and his accompanying police constable. Four days later, the Mandatory Government imposed "*the most stringent emergency regulations in its history [with widest powers to deport] undesirables [and dissolve organisations] inimical to the Mandate".[405]* The Arab Higher Committee was abolished. Five of its members were exiled to the Seychelles but the Mufti escaped the police cordon and made his way to Lebanon. Still, there was no let-up in the violence. Shootings and bombings continued, troop trains were derailed, and an oil pipeline from Mosul to Haifa was seriously damaged. Britain responded by dispatching additional army battalions and two RAF squadrons. Life sentences were commonplace and, in 1938 alone, fifty-four Arab insurgents were hanged. Hundreds of what remained of the functioning Arab leadership were either murdered or had fled in terror.[406]

As the Palestinian Arabs' ability to wage war against Jews was steadily eroding, the Haganah adapted its tactics to suit the extremes of full-scale conflict. The Haganah, first created as a self-

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[402] The life of Churchill, The Munich Crisis: International Churchill Society
[403] Ovendale, Ritchie (2004, 77): The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars
[404] Sachar, Howard M. (2007, 200) A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time
[405] (Ibid, 211)
[406] (Ibid, 212)

defence force in 1920, grew to be an effective fighting force as increasing numbers of the able-bodied youth of the Yishuv were mobilised.[407] By 1936, significant funds were directed towards military training and purchasing illegal weapons. Youth commanders were trained to "*anticipate Arab marauders by striking first*". Now, with tacit British support, light weapons were distributed to "*uniformed Jewish auxiliary guards*" who carried out scores of ambushes and inflicted heavy casualties on Mufti rebels, keeping them "*off guard and increasingly ineffective*".[408] *"20,000 British troops struggled to stem the revolt"* until it finally petered out in 1939.[409]

The Arab revolt had permanently transformed the Hagenah into an active military force. The near nonexistence of effective Palestinian-Arab leadership obliged their citizens to suffer the unavoidable economic, political and military costs. "*Egypt and Lebanon were crowded with nearly 18,000 fugitives of terror*",[410] providing an opportunity for the Haganah to take the advantage. Christopher Sykes too argues that Palestinian Arabs suffered the long-term political consequences of the Arab revolt. The Mufti, their "*one really vigorous leader"* escaped, and in November 1941 made his way to Berlin and was soon collaborating with Hitler.[411] Not a single Palestinian representative attended the inaugural meetings of the Arab League.[412] This state of affairs continued beyond the end of WWII, when Palestinian Arabs most needed strong leadership. Sykes writes of an "*odd paradox*": while Arab states outside Palestine were united over the Palestinian-Arab cause, "*nationalists within Palestine were so disunited that no possibility of a strong Arab leadership in Jerusalem now remained*".[413] Moreover, as the Jewish population in Palestine had soared from 174,606 in 1931 to 474,102 ten years later, on any measure, the Arab revolt had failed to achieve its prime objective.[414]

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[407] (Ibid, 213)
[408] (Ibid, 215)
[409] Tessler, M (1994, 245): The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict
[410] Sachar, Howard M. (2007, 213) A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time
[411] Sachar writes that in November 30th, 1941 Haj Amin was greeted cordially by Hitler and was "*gratified by [his] assurance*" that after "*the destruction of Palestine Jewry ... the Mufti would become the official spokesman for the Arab World*" (Sachar, Howard M. (2007, 229) A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time
[412] The Arab League was established between July 1943 and February 1944.
[413] Sykes, Christopher (1973, 264-266): Crossroads to Israel
[414] See Chapter 5 in this thesis: UNSCOP Report to the General Assembly

Yet, despite the Arab revolt and against the background of probable war, Britain was about to readapt its wider Middle East policy and look beyond the recent Arab revolt. Ovendale argues that it was vital for Britain to re-establish friendly relations with the Arab world so as to maintain oil supplies and Near and Far East communication channels. It was clear that cessation of Jewish immigration was essential to soothe Arab concerns and draw Britain and the Middle East into closer alignment. PM Neville Chamberlain and Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, agreed that "*benevolent neutrality*" was essential in any coming war and that if either one or the other had to be marginalised then it was "*preferable to offend Jews rather than the Arabs*". Chamberlain held that "*in the [event of] war it was essential to keep control of Egypt and the Middle East ... to bring about a complete appeasement of Arab opinion in Palestine and in neighbouring countries*".[415] Similarly, Tessler confirms that with WWII just around the corner, "*Britain had a strong interest in placating the Arabs of Palestine ... and leaders of Arab states*".[416]

The question of Palestine was debated in the House of Commons on the 22nd and 23rd May 1939, to end the confusion and pave the way to the termination of the Palestine Mandate.[417] The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Malcolm MacDonald) pronounced that the Palestine Mandate should not be interpreted to imply that HM Government intended to allow unrestricted immigration for all the time and in all circumstances; nor, he stated, should immigration continue indefinitely. In a statement British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain sought to clarify the term "*a national home for the Jewish people*". The extract, he contended, did not suggest that there should be a separate Jewish 'state' rather there should be "*a [Jewish] home ... founded in Palestine*" (own emphasis). Nor, he continued, did his Government accept Arab contentions that in 1915 Britain had undertaken "*to recognise and support Arab independence*". His Government regretted "*the misunderstandings which have arisen as regards some of the phrases used*". Instead it was decided that following a ten-year

[415] Ovendale, Ritchie (2004, 79): The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars
[416] Tessler, M (1994, 245) The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict
[417] The political history of Palestine under British administration (1947, 34): Memorandum by HM Government presented to UNSCOP

transition period, Palestine should be independent, vis a vis *"[a unitary state] one in which Arabs and Jews share government in such a way as to ensure [that] the essential interests of each community are safeguarded*" with a proportionally representative government.[418]

The 1939 White Paper echoed HM Government's 1922 Command Paper: that Jewish immigration should not exceed the "*economic capacity of the country*". It is unclear whether the 'economic capacity' was a calculated figure based on a formula, or merely speculative. Nevertheless, according to the White Paper, 'economic capacity' was not the only limiting factor. Palestinian Arabs were fearful of Jewish domination, so that any increase whatsoever could bring about "*a fatal enmity between the two peoples*".[419] Evidently, concern about the latter assumed priority over "*the present unhappy plight of large numbers of Jews who seek refuge from certain European countries*".[420] This near closed-door policy effectively blocked the one means of escape. Just 25,000, out of the hundreds of thousands of Jews who might have migrated to Palestine would be granted legal entitlement to leave immediately provided that their maintenance was guaranteed. They would be followed by 10,000 each year for the next five years and thereafter, an Arab Authority would decide.[421]

Britain was required to grapple with the dual issues of Jewish immigration and its attendant land settlement policy. If the Jewish population continued to increase then, so too would the demand for land. The Government responded by restricting the pace of land transfer from Arabs to Jews for fear it would materially alter the land ownership balance and significantly increase tensions. Land transfer deals, the White Paper argument continued, would deprive Arabs of cultivable acreage and add to the problem of Arab landlessness. Britain's territorial policy was adopted under the Transfer Regulations of 1940; that Palestine was to be divided into Zones. In Zones A and B, together comprising 95% of the land, sales were either prohibited or heavily restricted and transfers that did

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[418] Hansard, HC Deb 23 May 1939 volume 347, 2129-2197: House of Commons debate on the White Paper.
[419] (Ibid, Section 2, 'immigration')
[420] (Ibid, Para 13 (Hansard, Vol. 248))
[421] (Ibid, Para 14)

take place would be subject to Administrative approval. Jews were permitted to purchase land in the remaining 5%; land chiefly on the coastal plain, with a relatively small acreage around Jerusalem.[422] Arguably, Britain's land-transfer decision was a self-interested compromise. While land sales were practically brought to a standstill to comply with Arab demands, it also minimally fulfilled the Balfour pledge of a Jewish Home/State. It was a cynical attempt to extricate Britain from its dilemma. The Jewish Home (would-be State) on offer was tiny, but one built on prime land; productive land on the coastal plain; land with Jewish farms, factories and shared infrastructure. Eight years later members of the Special Committee for Palestine (UNSCOP) described a thriving Jewish economy that was also benefiting Palestinian Arabs.

On the second day of the debate (23rd May) an Amendment to the Government's White Paper Policy was tabled by Members who opposed the Bill. The Amendment read that Government policy is "*inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Mandate and not calculated to secure the peaceful and prosperous development of Palestine, this House is of the opinion that Parliament should not be committed pending the examination of these proposals by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations*".[423] The significance of the Amendment lies in the concerns; the depth of opposition and the degree of uncertainty expressed by individual Members on both sides of the House. The Amendment was a delaying tactic to give time for the Mandates Commission to express an opinion. It had little chance of success, but at least it opened the debate and offered the Opposition benches and Government opponents an opportunity to argue their case.

Herbert Morrison (Labour) opposed the White Paper; supported the Amendment and was first to speak. He captured the widespread unease in the Commons. He started by accusing the Government of endeavouring to "*twist*" the wording of the White Paper creating the impression that it somehow reflected the spirit of the Balfour Declaration when, in his view, it did not. Morrison scathed that the Paper condemned Jews to permanent minority status - never allowed to exceed one third of the total

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[422] Palestine Land Transfers Regulations: Letter to the Secretary General of the League of Nations: London, February 1940
[423] Hansard, HC Deb 23 May 1939 volume 347, 2129: House of Commons debate on the White Paper

population – in a professed independent Home. The Government wished for and hoped that Jews and Arabs could live together in "*friendly harmony*" but, Morrison scolded, "*hoping does not make the change occur*".[424] His scorn swiftly turned to attack. In the starkness of worldwide persecution, what safeguards, he questioned, guaranteed Jewish safety? These were "*matters for consideration when the time arrives*", the Secretary of State responded, "*I do not know; I have not considered it*".[425] It was an essential point given, Morrison revealed, that most disturbances were inspired, not by the majority, but by a minority; Arab agents provoked by the forces of European tyranny.[426] Although the White Paper policy allowed for limited immigration (to a prescribed maximum), Morrison alleged that Government proposed a "*crystallised Jewish National Home at its present stage of development*".[427]

While Morrison opposed the White Paper, he was at pains to emphasise that neither he nor the Opposition were "*at enmity with the Arabs [and had] no prejudice against them*".[428] He supported raising the social and economic standards of all Arabs in all Arab countries but believed that those efforts should not prevent Jews from developing their own Jewish Home. Indeed, he suggested, Jews had done more to raise standards across Palestine than the Palestine Administration had achieved during the lifetime of the Mandate. HM Government, he claimed, had been "*weak and uncreative*"; constantly vacillating over inconsistent policies, giving the widespread impression that "*the way to make the British lion run is to make disorder, to murder, to ambush and to assassinate*".[429]

Sir Ralph Glyn (Conservative) supported the Government's position. No two MPs, he accepted, agreed on the policy issues involved. Glyn perceived a Jewish National Home as "*spiritual*", a "*Vatican City*" type solution; a centre of excellence; a place where Jews would flock to, and once fortified, leave.

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[424] (Ibid, 2137)
[425] (Ibid, 2131)
[426] (Ibid, 2138)
[427] (Ibid, 2134)
[428] (Ibid, 2136)
[429] (Ibid, 2137-2139)

Sir Archibald Sinclair (Liberal Party leader) claimed that one Prime Minister after another had pledged that Jews would return to a Jewish land. It was a primary condition of the Mandate. Jews, he said, were not responsible for poor living conditions outside of the Jewish nucleus, but that nevertheless Arabs had also benefitted from the Jewish presence. Arab interests were also of primary concern; best served by continued prosperity. He reminded fellow MPs of the wording of Royal Commission report, that "*the worst possible form of settlement*" was one where Jews lived under Arab political domination against their will.[430] Arbitrary limits set on Jewish immigration were unrelated to the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine. Thus, without corresponding limits on Arab immigration, the policy *"[discriminated] against Jews on grounds of race and religion [and was a] grave departure from the terms of the Mandate*".[431] Worse, the policy would provoke hostility within the five million strong Jewish communities in the United States and sour relations with Washington.

In his maiden Parliamentary speech, Reverend Dr James Little (Ulster Unionist) warned that after termination of the Mandate, Arab resistance to immigration would multiply "*ten times*". God, he entreated, "*still has a deep interest in the Jews*". He drew parallels with Northern Ireland; invoked biblical verse and ended with a call for temporary withdrawal of the Paper while awaiting "*Divine guidance*".[432] The amusement that accompanied Dr Little's speech should not, Mr Maxton MP kindly offered, be misunderstood as "*derisive*", rather the laughter "*arose from all the older Members of the House because we were delighted at the way with which this novice was getting away with something that all the rest of us would have been stopped doing*".[433] Like many, Maxton had grave doubts about opposing the White Paper. It was for Jews and Arabs, he suggested, to determine their own destiny.

Winston Churchill (Conservative) opposed the White Paper. For years, he explained, HM Governments' remained sympathetic to Zionist ambitions. Zionists now looked to the Prime Minister

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[430] (Ibid, 2148-2155)
[431] (Ibid, 2157)
[432] (Ibid, 2160-2162)
[433] (Ibid, 2162)

to honour and stand by his own deep convictions. Paraphrasing his own 1922 dispatch: Britain would not repudiate its obligations to Jewish people. Moreover, self-governing institutions in Palestine were subordinate to the promise of a Jewish National Home; a promise to Jews everywhere.[434] The White Paper, Churchill stated, was a violation of the intention and the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. Placing immigration policy in Arab hands, he affirmed, was a "*plain breach of a solemn obligation*".[435] While the Mandatory Power had the right to "*control or suspend*" immigration, the League of Nations had not conferred an entitlement to end it. Churchill was adamant on this point. The Mandatory Power, he urged, had no right "*to wash their hands [of immigration and] close the door*".[436]

In his closing argument, Sir Thomas Inskip (Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs) claimed that few debates had the potential for such far reaching consequences and (referring to the deep divisions in the House) "*still fewer in which the ordinary party divisions have had so little influence upon the formation of opinion*".[437] Although the final result was never in doubt, it fell on Inskip to present the Government's case in the best possible light and persuade the majority in the House that despite Members' misgivings, the White Paper was the fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate.

The Government's case for imposing immigration restrictions largely rested on the supposed limits of Palestine's 'economic capacity', though the term itself does not appear in the Balfour Declaration or in the Mandate. Nevertheless, Government Ministers cynically adopted the term to justify policy as and when it suited. That said, the Mandate itself is a somewhat ambiguous legal instrument enabling politicians to construe its intentions. The Government seized on the Mandate's interpretive vulnerability and morphed its sense towards its immediate pre-war Arab-leaning policy objectives. Ministers contended that in view of the progress Jewish people had made over the decades,

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[434] (Ibid, 2170-2171)
[435] (Ibid, 2171)
[436] HC Deb 23 May 1939 Volume 347, 2174
[437] (Ibid, 2181)

Britain had by now "*facilitate[d] the achievement*" of a Jewish Home in Palestine under the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate.

The Amendment was defeated (281 to 181). The policy of the White Paper was approved (268 to 179).[438] In the end, although Churchill voted 'for' the Amendment he abstained on the substantive issue. Later, when he became Prime Minister, he failed to help reverse his own Government's latest anti-Jewish policy. As he bristled over the White Paper, any action he might have taken would have been too little, too late.

The House of Lords and the Commons debated the Government's policy on the same day.[439] Again, with some caveats, the Government's case was clear-cut. The Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies) argued that the Mandatory Administration was obliged to place Palestine "*under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home*" though Britain was also duty bound to safeguard "*the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race or religion*". Arabs, Dufferin continued, were apprehensive that the establishment of a Jewish National Home inferred unregulated immigration with the certain consequences of Jewish domination. Britain's latest policy, Dufferin stated, mitigated Arab fears by guaranteeing their numerical superiority.[440] He argued that because Jewish land purchases had led to an increase of landless Arabs, the Government had decided to restrict and, in many cases, prohibit land transfer.[441]

Lord Snell (Labour) opposed the Government. The Mandate, he confirmed, left the term 'Jewish National Home' undefined. The Mandate was, he judged "*the worst drafted document that was ever issued or accepted by a responsible Government [and was] confusing*", even unclear to the Mandatory Administration.[442] If, he argued, 'home' was to be defined as a place for a Jewish minority surrounded by a hostile Arab majority then, in spite of newly acquired Jewish political and economic

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[438](Ibid, 2192-2197)
[439]Hansard, HL Deb 23 May 1939 volume 113, 81-145: House of Lords debate on the White Paper
[440](Ibid, 81-85)
[441](Ibid, 89)
[442](Ibid, 94)

rights, 'home' merely implied maintaining the status quo. If the definition held, Snell continued, Jews already lived in 'National Homes' in, for example, Germany, Russia and Poland. Latest Government policy condemned Jews to live in a state of "*perpetual minority*".[443] The White Paper, Snell predicted, would be deeply resented and leave Jewish people "*deeply wounded in their soul*".[444]

Viscount Samuel (Liberal) opposed the Government's land transfer restrictions. The policy, he proposed, would "*strangle the Jewish National Home*".[445] However, like Sir Ralph Glyn speaking in the Commons on the same day, Samuel said that he imagined the Jewish National Home in a religious rather than a territorial sense, analogous to Vatican City.[446] [447]

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Gordon Lang) focused his contribution on the number of Jewish immigrants. If immigration was restricted to the limits set in the White Paper then after five years, Palestine would fall short of its potential "*economic absorptive capacity*" by as much as fifty per cent. Earlier, the Under-Secretary of State had countered similar arguments by saying that as neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Mandate had coined the term, Britain was *not* obliged to consider it.[448] The Archbishop continued: The White Paper stipulated that the Jewish population should not exceed one third of the total unless Arabs agreed to more. That, he quipped, would be "*another of the wonders of the world*".[449] Affirming Lord Snell's contention, the Archbishop maintained that if carried to its limits, latest Government policy condemned Jews to life not dissimilar to that they experienced under Nazism. [450]

With no consensus and no agreed alternative to fall back on, the Government Motion was carried in the House of Lords on the 23rd of May 1939.[451] Though the debates in both Houses bristled

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[443] (Ibid, 94-95)
[444] (Ibid, 96)
[445] (Ibid, 102)
[446] (Ibid, 111)
[447] In 1932 the Colonial Office estimated that out of a Jewish population of 800,000, there were just 664 instances of land transfer from Arabs to Jews. (See Hansard, HL Deb 23 May 1939 volume 113, Page 111: House of Lords debate on the White Paper)
[448] (Ibid, 81-97)
[449] (Ibid 115)
[450] (Ibid, 122)
[451] (Ibid, 145)

with controversy, the speeches, particularly in the Lords, were master classes in Parliamentary diplomacy. The debates left Britain's 'dual obligation' claim in tatters. Later, reaction against the White Paper was fierce. Winston Churchill had railed against his own Government. Lloyd George called the Paper *"an act of perfidy"*.[452] James Rothschild pronounced that "f*or the majority of Jews who go to Palestine it is a question of migration or of physical extinction"*.[453]

Arab leaders criticised the length of the transition period, though according to an HM Government memorandum later presented to UNSCOP, there were signs that they were prepared to acquiesce to the policy.[454] For their part, the Jewish Agency protested that Britain's latest policy was a violation of the terms of the Mandate which would lead to Jewish subservience to Palestinian Arabs. It added that if future Jewish immigration was left to the mercy of Palestinian Arabs, then Jews would remain in a similar state of perpetual minority, as they were elsewhere. In a contemptuous response, the Jewish Agency wrote that the White Paper constituted "*a breach of faith and surrender to Arab terrorism*". Prohibiting the Jewish population from exceeding one third of the total was tantamount to erecting "*a territorial ghetto for Jews in their own homeland*". The Agency predicted that any such policy would have to be maintained by force.[455]

Jewish resistance to the policy deepened. In the shadow of intensifying Nazi persecution, the Paper's restrictive policies had the unforeseen effects of stimulating levels of illegal immigration and heightening British/Jewish tensions so that nothing short of partition had any chance of success.

Less than a month later (June 1939), the Permanent Mandates Commission reported to the Council of the League of Nations that four of its seven members believed that the policy set out in the White Paper was at variance with the Commission's understanding of the Palestine Mandate. The remaining three members were persuaded that the prevailing circumstances had changed such that the variance was now acceptable.

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[452] Manchester Guardian (1939): Broadcast Debate: "An Act of Perfidy" Mr. Lloyd George's Attack on Plan
[453] House of Commons Debates, 1939
[454] The political history of Palestine under British administration (1947, 37): Memorandum by HM Government presented to UNSCOP
[455] Laqueur, W. & Rubin, B. (2001,50) 'The Israel-Arab Reader

In the immediate pre-war years, the one realistically available means of escape for the mass of European Jewry was barred. For his part, US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt was dismayed over latest UK Government policy. "*This White Paper [he said] is something that we cannot give approval to*". However, after France had fallen in June 1940, the US State Department warned against undermining Britain's concerns in the Middle East, especially since Britain was the "*last barrier to complete Nazi domination of Europe*". With geopolitical matters taking priority over domestic politics, in the early days of war, FDR heeded his State Department's advice.[456]

At the twenty-first Zionist Conference held in Geneva from the 16th to the 25th August 1939, just days before the outbreak of WWII, delegates condemned Britain's 1939 White Paper and praised organisers of illegal immigration. Closing the Conference, Dr Weizmann implored that he had "*no prayer but this: that we shall meet again alive*".[457]

With Axis-controlled doors being gradually closed, the annual rate of Jewish immigration plummeted from a 1935 high of 61,800 to just 16,400 in 1939 – a fraction of the potential demand.[458] Against the odds, an escape organisation (*Beriha*) rescued thousands of Jews from Nazi occupied Europe. Of the sixty-six ships that set sail only a handful avoided a Naval blockade and disembarked their passengers in Palestine. The captured immigrants were incarcerated in holding camps in Cyprus where most remained until Israel's independence. Between 1939 and 1948, just 110,000 illegal immigrants (*Aliyah Bet*) escaped to Palestine.[459] For millions more, as the Holocaust gathered pace the "*international constellation could not have been worse … Never had the [Zionist] movement counted for less*".[460] In 1939 the Palestine question was overshadowed by WWII.

Again, the Balfour Declaration had been incorporated into the Mandate. Britain's pledge – ratified by the League of Nations – was a commitment to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine while preparing this Class-A mandated country for independence. For their

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[456] Little, D. (2002, 20-21) American Orientalism
[457] Zionist Congress: Congresses During the British Mandate (1923-1946)
[458] Laqueur, W (2003, 509) A History of Zionism
[459] Immigration into Israel: Aliyah Bet (1939 – 1948)
[460] Laqueur, W (2003, 511) A History of Zionism

part, Palestinian Arabs demanded an independent Arab-majority in Palestine. Predictably, it was the fear of the consequences of the Mandate giving open-ended entitlement to Jewish immigrants that continually fuelled the Arab-Jewish-British conflict. While Zionists insisted that the Judaism had an historical and religious connection to the Holy Land, Arabs opposed this, asserting that it belonged to them as the long-standing majority. The differences were irreconcilable. Cantonisation had been dismissed by both sides. With no other options available, full-scale Partition was unavoidable.

Summary

Partition had been mooted as an option. The Royal Commissioners had dismissed alternatives and recommended that Partition was an acceptable way forward. Initially, the British Government was minded to accept the recommendation. However, the fact that the Commissioners proposal included a population exchange element against fierce Arab opposition caused the Government to have a serious rethink. The prospect of disruption, with deeply contentious state borders, consigned a promising proposal to gather dust.

Peel had noted that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate had contained an explicit undertaking that with British assistance, Jews would be enabled to establish a permanent Homeland and that neither of the two documents had set an upper limit on the would-be scale of Jewish immigration. Nonetheless, there was an implicit understanding that the numbers should not prejudice "*the rights and position of other sections of the population*".[461]

Arabs argued that on-going Jewish immigration contravened the latter, by threatening to displace Arabs as the rightful heirs to the land. Thus, they asserted that Jewish immigrants should be barred. As far back as 1922, Winston Churchill had stated that "*immigration [must not exceed] ... the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals ... immigrants should not be a burden on the people of Palestine as a whole*".[462] Echoing the latter, on the 13th February 1931, Ramsay MacDonald had written to Chaim Weizmann confirming that while his Government stood

[461] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24th July 1922, Article 6)
[462] Churchill Memorandum, (3rd June 1922): White Paper, Cmd. No. 1700

by the wording of the Mandate, "*immigrants should not be a burden on the people of Palestine as a whole [and that] immigration regulations must be … relevant to the limits of absorptive capacity*".[463] It is noteworthy that Britain repeatedly stated that levels of Jewish immigration should not exceed Palestine's '*absorptive capacity*' – (a term that is addressed in later chapters). On the question of immigration, Peel had argued that Jewish options were limited by immigration restrictions, unsustainable economic pressures forced on Jews in Poland and by Nazi fanaticism. He ventured that the emerging Jewish state's rapid development was due to "*the desire of the Jews to escape from Europe*".[464] Nonetheless, faced with increased Arab hostility, Peel sought to appease Arab demands by proposing that Jewish immigration should be limited. He recommended that for a period of five years, Jewish immigration should be restricted in line with, again, Palestine's "*absorptive capacity*".

Peel contended that "*neither Arab nor Jew has any sense of service to a single State*".[465] Therefore, Partition was thought to provide the solution and boundary plans were drawn up. Zionists were troubled by the inadequacy of the land allocated but it was an implied statement by a British Commission that in the foreseeable future, Jews would have a state of their own. It was also clear that Arabs and Jews would never agree. The predicament was compounded by predictions that given the status quo, it was unavoidable that Arabs would increasingly emerge as the numerically dominant partner in a unitary state. Estimates provided later by UNSCOP, show that by 1946 (without Jewish immigration), in a unitary state, there would be nearly twice as many Arabs than Jews.[466] If Christians and other non-Jews were added to the mix, Jews would comprise just 38% of the total population of Palestine – not taking account of some 90,000 Bedouin seasonal workers. It follows that in a proportionally representative unitary state, unless there was a radical increase in levels of Jewish immigration, it was quite impossible for the Jewish constituency to gain control over their own

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[463] British White Papers: The MacDonald Letter, 13ᵗʰ February, !931
[464] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Chapter V)
[465] Palestine Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 5479, 1937)
[466] A/364, 3 September 1947, 22-24

destiny. It is also worth noting that under Peel's Partition Plan, Jews would constitute a narrow majority – 55% of the total.[467] Clearly, Peel's Partition boundaries were intended to confine the Jewish state into the smallest possible area containing a minimal Jewish majority. Taking all into account, Peel's Commission was persuaded that a two-state solution was the only feasible option and becoming increasingly likely.

When Zionists met to discuss Peel's report, it generated a heated debate. There were those who envisioned an all-Jewish Palestine but now, since Peel, any notion that Britain or the Arab World, would allow that situation to develop was folly. Nevertheless, Peel's Partition proposal was, for Zionists, a step in the right direction. Now Britain dispatched a follow-up Commission into the region to look again. Woodhead's Commission dismissed Peel's population exchange element considering it unnecessary and unrealistic. However, it is important to note that only one of the Commission's four members (Thomas Reid) opposed partition while the others, like Peel, were supportive but failed to reach a consensus on how best to divide up the region. One of the four had no such concerns arguing that the proposed Jewish state should be enlarged.

Now, the UK Government was grappling with two Commissions both of which, while at odds over border issues, broadly accepted the inevitability of Partition. Nevertheless, just months before the start of WWII, Zionists suffered a temporary setback when Britain reversed its former pro-Zionist sympathises in favour of Palestinian Arabs. British policy- makers estimated that in spite of the encouragement given to Zionists, it was now more strategically advantageous to keep the Arab Middle-East onside even at the risk of weakening Jewish support. It was crucial to any future combined war effort that Britain and its allies could maintain trade routes especially though Suez and rely on an uninterrupted flow of oil from Iraq, through Transjordan then Palestine to the Mediterranean port of Haifa.[468] Hence, to placate Middle-East leaders, Britain ruled that for five

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[467] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Subchapter 4, Part II (Boundaries)).
[468] Bonne, A (1932, 116-126) The concessions for the Mosul-Haifa Pipeline

years, Jewish immigration levels should plummet. Britain had manipulated both Arabs and Jews to suit their own purposes [469] and had forsaken European Jews and taken a calculated risk trusting that Jews would not do likewise to Britain. In fact, as predicted, thousands of Jewish fighters would later join the battle against Germany.[470]

Referring to Peel's Partition proposal, Tessler argues that "*Partition was a logical response to the deepening conflict [between Arabs and Jews]*".[471] Britain's 1939 White Paper policy satisfied neither Arabs nor Jews. The British found themselves "*reaping the bitter harvest of their own self-interested way into Palestine ... indeed, by 1939, it was doubtful if any policy satisfactory to both ... could have been devised*".[472] Undoubtedly, Partition was on its way but must wait until the world crisis was resolved.

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[469] Tessler, M (1994, 170): The History of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict
[470] During the war, 27,000 Jews and 12,000 Arabs served British forces and in 1944 a Jewish Brigade was established. (The political history of Palestine under British administration (1947, 39): Memorandum by HM Government presented to UNSCOP)
[471] Tessler, M. (1994, 242): A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
[472] (Ibid, 246)

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

On May the 6th 1942, while millions of their fellow Jews were soon to be herded into the gas chambers, Zionists and other interested parties gathered for a conference in the Biltmore Hotel in New York. Chapter 3 begins with this conference where Zionists met to debate the Palestine question and decide on a way forward.

Conference attendees were divided. Stein argues that some preferred Weizmann's cautious optimism and that their future remained in British hands, while others were swayed by Ben-Gurion's conviction that after the war the United States would take the lead in world affairs. There were those who believed that the long-term solution lay in Arab-Jewish cooperation, while idealists insisted that the entire region of Palestine was rightly Jewish. Worldwide, there were broad variations: from those Jews who were content where they were to more strictly orthodox who were convinced that their destiny lay in the Promised Land.[473] In the meantime, knowledge that European Jews were being systematically murdered, played no small part in convincing most Jews to follow Ben-Gurion's unshakable conviction that the future survival of Judaism depended on the present nucleus developing into a secure, independent, Jewish state. It was not a question of "*if*", as Stein argues, but more a question of "*when* and *how*".[474] Ben-Gurion dismissed the notion that a growing Jewish 'commonwealth' (at this point he avoided the more controversial term 'state') would drive Arabs out of their homes. In any event, Ben-Gurion persisted, Arabs owned huge tracts of underdeveloped land. Like Horowitz and Weizmann in their testimony to the Special Committee in 1947, Ben-Gurion rejected as meaningless Britain's ruling that Jewish immigration must be limited according to Palestine's 'economic capacity'.[475]

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[473] Stein, K (2011, 1): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion
[474] (Ibid, 1)
[475] see also A/364/Add.2 PV.16, 4 July 1947, 34

The Biltmore Conference of 1942 was a milestone. Conference resolved that a Jewish 'Commonwealth' should be established; one entitled to decide on its own internal immigration and land purchase policies and with non-Jews guaranteed civil, political and religious equality. Ultimately, Ben-Gurion's pro-American stance won the day and cemented his authority.

The end of WWII signalled a seismic shift in the political landscape. The US had emerged from war as the undisputed world military superpower and demonstrated its capability to deploy nuclear weapons; a warning to Stalin that a military or ideological threat to America could be met by superior military firepower. After the war, news of the Holocaust provoked a groundswell of revulsion and public outrage. Ever the shrewd politician, Truman seized the moment and voiced his support for the Zionist struggle. He trusted that it would guarantee the crucial Jewish vote and improve his chances of winning a second term. With the mid-term elections just two years away and with Democratic colleagues facing similar electoral challenges, their political antennae were tuned to the influential news media and the all-important Jewish financial donations. Countering this, the US State Department feared that Truman's pro-Zionist position would upset the political balance of the Middle East. State Department advisors argued that US support for Israeli statehood with the inevitability of Jewish immigration would damage US-Arab relations and clear the way for increased Soviet Union involvement. Then as now, scholars have debated Truman's motives for refusing to budge against the powerful forces ranged against him.

Like Governments across Europe, Attlee's Labour Government was struggling to recover from the aftermath of war. To add to its problems, Britain's Mandatory Authority was enmeshed in a seemingly unresolvable conflict in Palestine. With its military and economic resources stretched to near breaking point and all previous attempts at a solution having failed, the time had come for Britain to relinquish its League of Nations Palestine Mandate to its successor. In a speech to Parliament on the 13th of November 1945, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin confirmed that it was unlikely that the

differences between Arabs and Jews could be reconciled.[476] As a result, HM Government believed it was time to refer the Palestine question back to the recently created United Nations which, in turn, established the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). UNSCOP was charged to make recommendations concerning the future of Palestine; to report back its findings and propose possible solutions. However, the Arab Higher Committee had imposed a boycott on association with UNSCOP making it difficult to elicit comprehensive Arab views on the present unrest. Nevertheless, towards the end of their investigations, UNSCOP met with representatives from Arab states in Beirut and arrived at a more detailed assessment.

To Arabs, UNSCOP reported, Zionism was viewed as nothing less than expansionism at the expense of Arabs and that Jewish aggression was the result of the Administration's weakness. A Jewish state born out of violence would be met by *"violence",* seen as a legitimate means of self-defence.[477] In December 1945, the Arab League had imposed an economic boycott on Jewish goods believing that it would break *"Zionist existence".* Jamal Husseini, soon to installed as vice-president of the Arab Higher Committee, warned Arab *"traitors"* to beware of the consequences of any Arab foolish enough to break the boycott.[478] Interested parties were asked to cooperate, but at its first meeting in Jerusalem, the UN Special Committee was informed that the Arab Higher Committee had chosen to *"abstain from collaboration"* and had resisted repeated requests. Arab states were less inflexible. Representatives from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen (though indirectly through Lebanon) were invited to contribute. Apart from the latter, they accepted. Transjordan responded, but as non-member UN-state it felt obliged to abstain. Instead, King Abdullah offered to host a UNSCOP delegation in Amman.[479] [480]

[476]UN General Assembly (A/307), <u>Special Committee on Palestine - Report of the First Committee</u>, Chapter II, Para 122: 13th May 1947
[477] UN General Assembly (A/307), <u>Special Committee on Palestine - Report of the First Committee</u>, 13th May 1947 (Chapter I, Para 120)
[478] (Ibid, Para 121)
[479] (Ibid, Chapter 1, Para 40)
[480] After completing their work in Beirut, seven Committee members spent a brief time in Amman

Zionists' Set Out Their Stall: The Biltmore Conference

The 1939 White Paper had been a setback for the Zionist project. While Britain had not rejected the concept of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, its restrictive immigration policy had deferred the final decision for at least five years. Even then, Britain had no clear policy on how the 'dual obligation' could be reconciled. British policymakers were not yet prepared to accept nor admit to the Arab World that partitioning Palestine was the only way to resolve their problem.

For their part, Arabs refused to acquiesce to a five-year deferral of their long-term ambitions for independence; still less, five more years of Jewish immigration.[481] Accordingly, both parties had rejected the White Paper.

On the 7th December 1941, the 22nd Zionist Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland (the first important meeting since the outbreak of World War II). Attendees rejected any arrangement "*which might postpone the establishment of a Jewish State, based on full equality of rights for all …*". While the Zionists preferred option was the constitution of all of Palestine, significantly, they had opened the door to Partition; a Jewish state "*in an adequate area of Palestine*".[482] In the meantime, while the full extent had yet to emerge, news of the unfolding tragedy facing European Jews was filtering through. It was already known that during the first years of war the Nazi regime had relocated tens of thousands of *'undesirables',* including many thousands of Jews, to concentration camps. When, in June 1941, the Axis Powers invaded the Soviet Union, thousands more Russian Jews were murdered by the Nazis. Not content, in January 1942, Hitler approved the 'final solution for the Jewish problem'; a plan to eliminate all European Jews.

Against this background, six-hundred American Jews gathered from the 9th until the 11th of May 1942 for an emergency conference at the Biltmore Hotel in New York.[483] Colleen Brady

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[481] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 67) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[482] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 83): Palestine Betrayed
[483] Little, D. (2002, 21) American Orientalism

describes the conference as a *"significant turning point in the history of American Zionism"*;[484] when the US was soon to replace the UK as the main decision-maker on the Palestine question.

From the early nineteen thirties onwards, Ben-Gurion had little doubt that if Jews were ever to achieve full self-determinations then American-Jewish support was paramount. Determinedly, he began stimulating American Jewry to support Zionism without which it would remain a *"weak and fractured movement"*.[485] Britain had already made its Palestinian policy clear in its 1939 White Paper. It had gone from initial support for Zionism to one of neutrality and finally to a complete about turn. To Ben-Gurion, Britain was now a lost cause and heavily dependent on American military might. It was clear that the United States was the emerging superpower and that post-war, Britain would carry less weight. Conference attendees also recognised that *"the United States would [be] one of the primary architects of the post-war world"*[486] therefore they must *"demonstrate their loyalty to the US Government"*.[487] The leadership were addressing a largely American audience and whether consciously or not, appears to have followed Samuel Halperin's guidance that *"[e]very organised interest must conform to the prevailing expectations and normative standards of the total society"*.[488]

Opinions were mixed: There were those American Jews who insisted that the priority was to expend their energy into rescuing European Jews from Hitler's clutches, rather than to fulfil Zionist would-be ambitions. Then, Stein continues, there were those who preferred Weizmann's stance of 'wait and see' what Britain would do after the war. Others were likely to be persuaded by Ben-Gurion's active US engagement approach. For the majority, Stein contends, it was the combination of Ben-Gurion's speech and the realisation of Hitler's plan to eradicate European Jews that motivated American Zionists towards a consensus for a Jewish National state in Palestine.[489]

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[484] Brady, Colleen (2010, 2): American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Prof. R. Hudson.
[485] Stein, K (2011, 1): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion
[486] Brady, Colleen, (2010, 13): American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Prof. R. Hudson.
[487] (Ibid, 12)
[488] Halperin, Samuel (1961, 219): The Political World of American Zionism
[489] Stein, K (2011, 2): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion

Aside from an unspoken sense of anti-Semitism within some US political circles, Ben-Gurion was encouraged by an implicit acknowledgement of the need for a Jewish state. Yet, with the Allies deeply embroiled in a world-war, many American Jews were reluctant to aggravate the situation by insisting on their demands or opposing the White Paper, for fear of accusations of "*divided or treasonous loyalties*".[490] Ben-Gurion dismissed these concerns as little more than expressions of "*cowardice*". American Jews, he insisted, could not afford to remain neutral and must press ahead. Jewish efforts, he persisted "*must be overboard*". This was not a time for waiting in hopeful silence for events to unfold, but a time for American Jewry to speak out and boldly confront the issue. Others disagreed. Rabbi Stephan Wise argued that with the world currently in turmoil, the Jewish struggle should take second place.[491] Restraint while protesting the White Paper was called for. Jews, he asserted, "*should shout in low tones*". Wise argued that after the war, Zionists would be rewarded for their restraint. Rejecting this, Ben-Gurion advocated a policy of protest; a strong public campaign against Britain's 1939 White Paper; "*we must help the [British] army as if there was no White Paper and we must fight the White Paper as if there was no war*".[492]

From 1940 until 1942 Ben-Gurion had spent extended periods in the US, during which he came to understand the vagaries of the US political system. Unceasingly, he struggled to sway Zionist doubters towards his own unshakable viewpoint. Nahum Goldmann described Ben-Gurion as the "*most single minded, undeviating Zionist leader of [his] generation*".[493] [494] Ben-Gurion was operating in a multifaceted environment. There were those who had no intention of leaving their comfortable surroundings in the United States. There were others who preferred the notion of a Jewish spiritual homeland in Palestine. Others still, including Nahum Goldmann and Rabbi Wise, supported

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[490] (Ibid, 2)

[491] Rabbi Stephen Wise was an American Reform Rabbi and significant Zionist leader. In his review essay, (Orthodoxy's Finest Hour) Dr David Kranzler criticises Wise for disregarding reports of Hitler's atrocities and refusing to acknowledge the need for rescue. In his book The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945, Saul Friedlander alleges that Wise supported a complete embargo on aid to European Jews on the grounds that this would directly or indirectly assist the enemy.

[492] Stein, K (2011, 3): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion

[493] Goldmann, Nahum (1969, 291) 'The autobiography of Nahum Goldmann', Translated by Helen Sebba

[494] Nahum Goldmann was a prominent Zionist. In 1936, he, together with Rabbi Stephen Wise helped establish the World Jewish Congress. Goldmann is credited with having predicted the early threat posed by Hitler's Nazi Party (World Jewish Congress – 1918-1982)

Weizmann's cautious confidence in Britain. Many believed that to declare an independent Jewish state in a majority Arab region would be suicidal and some argued that a Jewish state should wait until Arab support was assured. Otherwise, they maintained, an Arab/Jewish war was foreseeable.[495] Years later, (November 1978) Nahum Goldmann told a meeting including German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, that he believed that the United Nation's failure to consult Arabs "*began our Original Sin*".[496]

Throughout his lengthy delivery, Ben-Gurion studiously avoided the term Jewish 'state' preferring instead Jewish 'Commonwealth' probably because the US State Department did not provide the term with a specific political status.[497] Also, the syntactical difference, Stein suggests, would have appealed to his American audience since 'Commonwealth' echoed former President Woodrow Wilson's idealistic pro-Zionist rhetoric.[498] The political circumstances in the present war were different from those in World War One. During and after WWI, Britain and its Allies resolved to restore a Jewish Homeland and because the situation was "*not as yet hopeless, [rebuilding and resettlement] could proceed at a leisurely pace*".[499] Now though, the situation facing European Jews was urgent. The rate of immigration must reach unprecedented levels. Ben Gurion claimed that Zionists must respond to the crisis with radical solutions, or Zionism itself was meaningless.

Between the wars, particularly on occasions when immigration limits were relaxed, Palestine had absorbed more Jewish refugees than all other countries combined. Ben-Gurion addressed the term "*absorptive capacity [which he described as] a peculiarly Zionist, or perhaps an anti-Zionist, invention*". The term itself, he argued, had no meaningful scientific definition. It was a "*dynamic and fluctuating*" concept. The human factor of *"need"* far outweighs natural conditions or land area. "*It is need [he continued] that drives creativity, enterprise and devotion to Homeland founded, necessarily, on the political and administrative organs of the regime*". Ben-Gurion reminded his

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[495] Stein, K (2011, 4): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion
[496] Executive Intelligence Review (1979, 26)
[497] US Department of State Foreign Affairs manual, Volume 7
[498] Stein, K (2011, 4): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion
[499] (Ibid, 6)

audience that wave upon wave of Jewish immigrants had tilled the soil, irrigated it until it was richly fertile, planted seeds and used modern agricultural and animal husbandry techniques. All these methods were laying the foundations for successive waves of Jews to come. Five years before, the Peel Commission had stated that though the Jewish state had started out as an experiment, "*today it is a going concern*" and that the Jewish population had increased fourfold. Ben-Gurion portrayed an optimistic future: land that once sustained a fixed number of families now supported ten times that number and there was every reason to suppose that this trend should continue. For every family employed in agriculture, experience showed that at least three others could be employed in the industrial, professional and service sectors.[500]

Ben-Gurion next turned his attention to the more difficult political problem, one, he stated, that had caused "*so much confusion and misunderstanding*". Unlike Jews, Arabs were neither homeless nor landless. They owned vast tracts of largely undeveloped land. Theirs was not a problem of maximum absorptive capacity, but one of extreme paucity of population. For example, Transjordan's population density was one twentieth of western Palestine's. The latter under-population factor, Ben-Gurion maintained, was "*not only an economic impediment, but a grave political danger*". It was clear, he continued, that Jewish immigration and expanding Jewish settlements had *not* been at the expense of the indigenous Arab population. Jews were cultivating and increasing yields on previously uncultivated land. Not only did this provide the means for new immigrants, it also improved the general standard of living for all inhabitants. Ben-Gurion predicted large-scale Jewish colonisation, negating the need for Peel's population transfer element.[501] Quite the reverse, he envisaged a Jewish state with some one million Arab citizens sharing the same benefits. Then there was the suggestion that Arabs and Jews might benefit from parity in a bi-national state. At face value this appeared the best possible solution but ignored the "*only problem that matters:*

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[500] (Ibid, 6-7)

[501] Up until WWI, early Zionists used the Hebrew nouns *'hitanchalut'*(settlement) and *'hitayasvut'* (colonisation) since during that time "colonisation was very positively received by the public" (Barat, 2015, 21).

Jewish immigration". Ben-Gurion claimed that Jews must accept that while immigration must and would continue, Arab opposition was the unavoidable consequence. Jews needed no one's permission to inhabit the land of Palestine. Jews belonged to the Holy land. The Palestine Mandate, Ben-Gurion asserted, was an unchallengeable international commitment and immigration was an unstoppable tide "*the only way of salvation and survival*". While Ben-Gurion was busily canvassing American support, Jews were determinately purchasing land, creating businesses, building and extending settlements in the embryotic Jewish state.[502]

Ben-Gurion's Essential Principles

Now, Ben-Gurion presented delegates with his three "*most essential principles*":

1. The re-establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine; affirmed by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate and clarified by President Woodrow Wilson on the 3rd of March 1919.

2. The Jewish Agency should have full control over Jewish immigration and be vested with decision-making powers in connection with land development.

3. All Palestinians, whether Arab or Jews, would have complete equality in civil, political and religious matters and autonomy for each community on questions relating to their own internal affairs.

Politically, whether Palestine should be part of a broad Near-Eastern Federation, part of the British Commonwealth, or an Anglo-American entity or similar could not yet be determined. However, whatever the future constitutional arrangements, Ben-Gurion sought to reassure doubters that Jews would cooperate with Palestinian Arabs and surrounding Arab countries. He believed that, once the contentious issues around Jewish immigration were removed, the Jewish Commonwealth (State) would adopt full control over its own immigration policy and ultimately return to hitherto levels of Jewish-Arab cooperation. Finally, Ben-Gurion made an impassioned plea reaching into the very soul

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[502] Stein, K (2011, 1-15): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion

of Judaism: was there, he questioned, something fundamentally wrong with Judaism if Jews were singled out as the "*first and most catastrophic victims*" when trouble erupts. At present, Jews faced total annihilation, but he urged that this threat should not mean the end of Judaism. Instead it should signal "*the beginning of a new set-up for the world and for ourselves*".

By the end of the Conference, the majority leadership affirmed their commitment to a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. Articles adopted on the final day of the Conference reaffirmed American Zionists' commitment to the Allied war effort (Article 1).[503] Palestinian Jews would contribute to the military struggle and to Ben-Gurion's demand for a "*Jewish military force fighting under its own flag*" (Article 6).[504] Expressions of hope and encouragement were to be conveyed to "*their fellow Jews in the Ghettos and concentration camps of Hitler's dominated Europe*" (Article 2).[505] Homage was to be paid to the achievements already made by Jews in Palestine - encouraging the "*desert to blossom*" (Article 3).[506] Article 5 called for the fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate by establishing a Jewish Commonwealth, as stated by President Wilson. Conference repudiated HM Governments' 1939 White Paper and denied its "*moral or legal authority*".[507] Articles 7 and 4 are especially relevant. Article 7 acknowledged that Arabs had shared the benefits of the Jewish presence and Jews welcomed Arab redemption in economic and other terms. Article 4 emphasised that Jews desired full co-operation with their Arab neighbours. Finally, Conference delegates demanded unrestricted access to Palestine for Jewish people as a means to create a Jewish homeland. Conference "*urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration ... that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth*".[508] This proclamation was the first explicit announcement that a "*Jewish Commonwealth*" predestined "*the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine*". Brady argues that by demonstrating their support for

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[503] Brady, Colleen, (2010, 16): <u>American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict</u> by Prof. R. Hudson.
[504] (Ibid, 15)
[505] (Ibid, 16)
[506] (Ibid, 15)
[507] (Ibid, 16)
[508] Stein, K (2011): '<u>The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion</u>

America's war aims and by acknowledging that the US replaced Britain as the *"new battleground [for Zionist ambitions]"*, Zionists had gained renewed credibility for an independent Jewish state. *"Biltmore" Brady writes, "was a positive step forward for statehood"*[509] and, by implication, Partition.

A Rift in Zionism

The Biltmore Conference was dismissed by Weizmann as "*Just a resolution like the hundred and one resolutions passed at great meetings*". Weizmann sensed, however, that there was a shift in favour of the younger Ben-Gurion. Although Weizmann remained highly regarded as the "*spiritual and titular leader*",[510] it was Ben-Gurion's American strategy that won the day and ultimately reinforced his personal authority. Soon after the conference ended, Ben-Gurion took the helm as Zionist leader from the more elderly Weizmann.[511]

By the time the conference was over, the rift between the Zionism's leaders had widened. Brady contends that American Zionists could be accused of being preoccupied with statehood at the expense of rescuing Jews caught up in persecution. Aaron Berman argues that powerful leaders concentrated on the Zionist cause rather than devoting their energies into extricating fellow Jews from the Holocaust.[512] Brady, citing Berman, argues that twinning "*an immediate haven [for survivors, with] a post-war solution*", represented an attempt to resolve both essential requirements as both were being addressed in parallel.[513] Ben-Gurion rejected Weizmann's gradualist approach. Instead, he was determined to sway American Zionists towards his point of view. Ben-Gurion was convinced that Zionist ambitions were best achieved by meeting the present predicament "*by the use of force if necessary*".[514] To Ben-Gurion, American pro-Zionism was irreplaceable. He had the foresight to see that without the blessing of the United States it is improbable that the State of Israel could come into

509 Brady, Colleen, (2010, 12-18): American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Prof. R. Hudson.
510 Stein, K (2011, 5): 'The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion (Ibid, 5)
511 Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 72) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
512 Berman, Aaron (1990, 183) 'Nazism, the Jews, and American Zionism' 1933-1948
513 Brady, Colleen, (2010, 17): American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Prof. R. Hudson.
514 Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 72) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

being. That said, while the United States was about to become deeply enmeshed in war[515] *"[d]espite the moral injunctions unleashed by the Holocaust"*, Cohen argues that *"[American] Zionists ... were Americans first, and that the cause of America at war transcended all others"*.[516]

The five-year restriction of immigration in 1939 came to an end in 1944. Of the 75,000 immigration certificates that had been granted, only 51,000 had been utilised. The remaining 24,000 individuals would have found it almost impossible to escape from Nazi occupied Europe. Under the circumstances, HM Government decided to extend the deadline, so that by the end of 1945 the residue of certificates was finally exhausted. From then onwards, the Government reverted to its former restriction of 1,500 per month pending a report expected from the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.[517]

Jewish Demands

In May 1945 the Jewish Agency formally presented the British Government with its full set of demands: that there should be an immediate announcement that *"Palestine [would be established] as a Jewish State"* and that the Agency should be responsible for settling as many Jews into Palestine as it saw fit. The Agency also requested that an international loan be provided for the *"transfer of the first [of] millions of Jews"*; that Germany (as the aggressor) should provide the Jewish people with reparations and finally, that the international community should make facilities available and assist with the transfer of *"all Jews who wished to settle in Palestine"*.[518] This policy was formally adopted by the Zionist Movement.[519]

At this point it is useful to pause; to reflect on the implications of the latter. Zionists were in no mood to enter endless political dithering over immigration after millions of European Jews had been systematically killed. Britain had refused to do other than offer a palliative solution now that a would-

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[515] The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour on the 7th December 1941 – the same day as the Biltmore Conference
[516] Cohen, Naomi (2003,169): The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948
[517] The political history of Palestine under British administration (1947, 38): Memorandum by HM Government presented to UNSCOP
[518] Royal Institute for International Affairs: 'Great Britain and Palestine' (1946, 139-140) Chatham House, London, UK.
[519] Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1917-1988, Page 47

be Jewish state existed in Palestine in all but name. In 1945, the Jewish Agency had made demands, fully aware that Britain would reject them. In a Jewish 'state', the Agency insisted, (regardless of the endless semantic manoeuvring over terminology) Jews would decide for themselves how many immigrants should enter. Provision must be made for the exodus of the first tranche of survivors and the thousands more to follow. Britain could be in no doubt that the Jewish Agency had reached the end of its patience. To all intents and purposes, a Jewish state existed. Jews were determined that they were prepared to defend it and see it flourish, whatever the cost. Either Palestine must be partitioned giving rise to a Jewish state or Jews would fight against any aggressor bent on the wholesale elimination of the existing proto-Jewish state. Post-war, there would be no more pogroms or Holocausts.

A new chapter in the history of Palestine was about to unfold. The United States emerged from the war as the undisputed premier power and was the pre-eminent Western decision maker in the immediate post-war period. In the event, Ben-Gurion predicted that the Zionist Movement was best served by concentrating on garnering support in the United States; paralleling, as Brady maintains, a "*Zionist drift away from Great Britain ... in their pursuit of support for their cause*". This shift in emphasis is demonstrated by two sections of Article 5. Here, two discreet sections are juxtaposed in the same Article. The first highlights the US President's support for a "*Jewish Commonwealth*" while the second "*affirms [the Biltmore Conference's] unalterable rejection of [Britain's 1939] White Paper*".[520]

Britain Enters a New Phase

By the end of WWII much had changed. On the 7th of May 1945 the German High Command signed the Instrument of Surrender. In October 1945 the United Nations was established and on the 18th of April of the following year, the beleaguered League of Nations and its Permanent Mandates Commission were finally disbanded. At the League's final meeting a resolution was passed noting

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[520] Brady, Colleen, (2010, 16): <u>American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict</u> by Prof. R. Hudson.

that its Articles of responsibility over mandated territories were effectively mirrored in the Charter of the United Nations.[521] From that point on, the United Nations, rather than its predecessor, became the organ through which Britain was obliged to exercise its responsibilities. Apart from the creation of the United Nations there were other shifts too. First was Britain's Labour Party landslide victory in 1945 under the radical premiership of Clement Attlee. The second and arguably more important for the future of Israel, was the start of Harry Truman's ("*the most powerful and diligent advocate of the Zionist cause*"[522]) first term in office as president of the United States. Yet another was the early years of the Cold War during which official United States policy was fixated on Soviet containment. To the US State and Defence departments the Soviet Union inferred global instability and threatened America's emerging pre-eminence as the principle world superpower. Great Britain and the United States had vital military and economic interests in the Middle East. Instability in Palestine between Arabs and Jews and worsening Arab-British relations raised the spectre of opening the door to Soviet influence and shutting it to the West. Zionists had their own aspirations, and nothing would sway them from their right (enshrined by Balfour and reinforced by the British Mandate) to a Jewish Homeland. Zionists poured time and money into the United States to achieve their aspirations.[523] As knowledge of the holocaust grew, so did public sympathy: "*Public opinion also encouraged Truman to support Zionism*",[524] a fact that Truman could not ignore. Nor could he ignore the constant pressure he was under from Jewish Lobbyists, his Jewish colleagues and many of his White House advisors. In 1947, his mid-term elections were less than two years away and many of his Democratic colleagues faced their own electoral challenges. He strove to keep the powerful Jewish-friendly press, Jewish financial backers and the sizable Jewish electorate on side.[525] He wavered but finally tended towards the Zionist position against the advice of his State Department officials who advised him that US

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[521] League of Nations Official Journal (Special Supplement 194): Records of the 20th and 21st ordinary sessions of the Assembly

[522] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 28): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961

[523] Weir, A (2014, 34-39): Against Our Better Judgement

[524] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 28): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961

[525] (Ibid, 26-31)

support for a Jewish state would damage US/Arab relations and turn Arabs towards the Soviet Union.[526]

For its part, Britain's policy towards Palestine, expressed by the UK's somewhat tactless Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was inconsistent. In a broad sense, Bevin shared the US State Department's analysis over maintaining good relations with the Arab countries and fears of creeping Soviet involvement in Middle East affairs. Also, by the middle to late 1940s, Britain's forces in Palestine came under frequent attack from radical Jewish militants, so that any compassion Bevin had for Holocaust victims quickly evaporated. If anything, he was an Arab rather than a Jewish sympathiser and refused to entertain Zionist calls for a Jewish state or a major policy shift on immigration. Statements and correspondence between and within their respective countries suggests a fraught relationship between Bevin and the U.S. President. For years, there has been controversy over whether Ernest Bevin was anti-Jewish (or anti-Israel) in policy and personally anti-Semitic. Barder[527] argues that "*casual anti-Semitism was largely taken for granted in the English upper and middle classes*" – even in the post-war years when Nazi atrocities against Jews were well understood. In a nakedly partisan research paper commissioned by the UK Foreign Office and published in August 1950, the author (unknown) reported on military engagements from 14th May 1948 until the Israeli-Transjordan Armistice was signed on 3rd April 1949. The research paper strikingly supported an Arab contention that "*Jews turned back [a] supply column on the pretext that it contained hidden arms and ammunition*" while, obligingly, "*the Arab Legion permitted the free passage of supply convoys to the isolated Jewish troops*". For Zionists, the research paper mocked, Partition "*was to be accepted when it worked in favour of the Jews but not where it acted in favour of the Arabs*".[528] Barder maintains that the Foreign Office had a reputation for pro-Arab, anti-Israeli bias stemming from the former influence of the so-called 'Camel Corp' - young men who were "*bright, diplomatic service officers*

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[526] (Ibid, 28-29)

[527]Barder, Sir Brian, KCMG: (Former British Ambassador to Ethiopia, Poland and Benin; Former High Commissioner to Nigeria and Australia. He participated and was present when the UNSC adopted Resolution 242 in 1967). His words (in quotation marks) were included in an email exchange in June 2015 between Sir Brian and this researcher.

[528] Foreign Office 816/170 – UK National Archives

trained as Arabists". At the time they were usually graduates of the FO's Middle East Centre for Arab Studies in Lebanon where they were immersed in Arab history and culture and became fluent in Arabic. They followed in T. E. Laurence's swashbuckling footsteps and were regarded as the "*crème de la crème of the service [and] rose to top jobs [and] undoubtedly had a strong influence on UK foreign policy in the Middle East*".[529] The tenor of language and bias expressed would not have struck FO officials as anything other than perfectly commonplace. Whether Bevin was intrinsically anti-Semitic is hard to judge, but statements he made to a Labour Party gathering does nothing to quell the suspicion. In June 1946 Truman was pressing Britain to admit 100,000 displaced European Jews to Palestine. Bevin observed that Truman was exerting such pressure because "*They did not want too many Jews in New York".[530]* Bevin lacked diplomatic finesse and "*tended to make a bad situation worse by making ill-chosen remarks*".[531]

WWII had left vast numbers of displaced people scattered across Europe. One way or another, thousands of Jewish survivors escaped their makeshift conditions and poured into the embryonic Jewish state. At the same time countries across Europe were preoccupied with recovery. A severely weakened Britain was no exception. In a speech to the House of Commons on the 13th of November 1945 Ernest Bevin confirmed that it was unlikely that the differences between Arabs and Jews could be reconciled.[532] The time was approaching for Britain to pass on its poisoned chalice. Britain's official sentiment was captured by the following statement: "*His Majesty's Government are not prepared to continue indefinitely to govern Palestine themselves merely because Arabs and Jews cannot agree upon the means of sharing its government between them*".[533]

During WWII Churchill had forged a strong working relationship with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. After Roosevelt's death in the last months of war, his successor Harry H. Truman came

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[529] Barder, Sir Brian, KCMG (June 2015)
[530] Bevin, Ernest: Text of speech at the Labour Party Conference: Bournemouth, June 12, 1946
[531] Leitch, D: Explosion at the King David Hotel: Quoted by Sissons, M., French, P, (1963, 83): Age of Austerity 1945-51'
[532] UN General Assembly (A/307), Special Committee on Palestine - Report of the First Committee, 13th May 1947 (Chapter II, Para 122)
[533] **The** Political history of Palestine under British administration

to the fore. This coincided, a few months later, with Churchill's defeat in the United Kingdom's general election. He was replaced by a new Labour government under Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. With the appointment of the arguably anti-Zionist, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, Zionists had lost a British champion in Churchill. On the 12th August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill had signed the Atlantic Charter: "… *respect[ing] the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they shall live*". Later, Churchill was pressurised by Washington to extend the rights across much of the world including India and probably Palestine. On the 9th August 1942 he wired Roosevelt: "*...in the Middle East the Arabs might claim that by majority they would expel the Jews from Palestine. I am strongly wedded to the Zionist policy of which I am one of the authors*".[534] In fact, up until 1939, the United States had shown little real interest in the Palestinian issue. However, as US troops forged East from Normandy on 6th June 1944 and reports filtered back describing of the degree of Nazi atrocities, Roosevelt felt powerless to intervene until the war was won. When the latter died on the 12th April 1945, his successor, Harry S. Truman, agreed with Attlee to dispatch a fact-finding delegation to Palestine. The Anglo-American delegates were given just 120 days to complete their task and report back to their respective governments.[535]

Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry

From 4th January 1946 until the 4th of the following month, members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry convened first in Washington DC, then in London and on to mainland Europe. Twelve members were elected to serve. They were a mix of academics, politicians and diplomats – six representing the United States and six representatives from Britain.[536] Under its terms of reference, the Committee was required to explore the situation regarding Jewish Holocaust survivors presently displaced in the temporary holding camps. They were to examine what practical measures could be

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[534] Narendra Singh Sarila (2009, 152-153) The untold story of India's Partition
[535] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and HM Government of the United Kingdom, Preface, Para 4
[536] The American chairman was Judge Joseph Hutcheson joined by Bartley Crum, Frank Aydelotte, William Phillips Frank Buxton and James McDonald. Sir John Singleton chaired the British contingent including Robert Morrison, Sir Frederick Leggett, Wilfred Crick, Reginald Manningham-Buller and Richard Crossman.

taken by European countries to alleviate their suffering and were charged with estimating the numbers "*impelled by their conditions*" to settle in Palestine.[537] To expedite proceedings, they divided into several subcommittees. Thus, between the 8th and the 28th February, subcommittee members visited camps in the British and American zones of Austria and Germany. However, the Soviet authorities advised that there was no problem in its sphere of operations and Committee members were denied the opportunity of observing conditions for themselves, including those in the Soviet zone in Austria. Although they had free access to France, Switzerland, Greece, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Poland, problematic circumstances prevented access to camps in Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Poland and Germany, according to anecdotal evidence, were deemed "*the cemetery of European Jewry*".[538]

The report reads as a fraught account of the conditions experienced by liberated survivors living in temporary accommodation. On the one hand it is a hard-headed report detailing the numbers needing assistance. On the other hand, and barely disguised behind cold-print, it is an expressively emotional account. Five million Jews, the Committee stated, had been exterminated, most of whom were amongst the weakest: elderly, sick, disabled including millions of innocent women and children. Those children who had survived were frequently orphaned. It was rare to find a Jew who was physically or emotionally unscathed or to encounter a fully functioning Jewish family.[539] Jewish survivors, they found, were living under harsh conditions and were embittered seeing their former persecutors rebuilding their own shattered lives. A lasting image of the extermination camps was brought home forcefully when Committee members toured the remains of the Warsaw ghetto. It left "*an impression which will forever remain*".[540] The Report acknowledged that while military authorities did what they could to assist there is an implied accusation that European countries, a number of which had been complicit partners in the extermination programme, should have

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[537] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom, Para 2
[538] (Ibid, 11)
[539] (Ibid, see Appendix II - European Jewry-Position in Various Countries)
[540] (Ibid, Para 9)

shouldered a greater responsibility. NGO's in the region had fought against the odds to restore some degree of normality. The recently established United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)[541] had assumed a co-ordinating and humanitarian role. The latter organisation had followed the Allies northern advance though Italy and had become the Army's humanitarian wing; providing shelter, food, clothing and essential medical supplies. Jewish relief agencies of varying complexions were also singled out for praise. One was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC) which, apart from providing health, welfare and other essential services also offered specialist education and guidance on spiritual matters. Importantly, it provided information on resettlement opportunities – specifically, ways and means for Jews to emigrate to Palestine. Whatever their circumstances, Jewish survivors, whether rich, poor, young or old, were reduced to the same level of need; reduced by years of interment and forced labour "*to the same level of mere existence and homelessness*".[542] Thousands drifted across Europe trying to locate missing family members. Many migrated to the American zones, reacting to a rumour that this offered the surest way to Palestine.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry had also been tasked with recommending what practical measures might be taken to combat discrimination. Country after country professed its opposition to anti-Semitism ("*a poison which after years of infection takes time to eradicate*") but did little.[543] The consequences of European anti-Semitism and vivid accounts of industrialised extermination impelled Committee members to report that nothing short of a new life in Palestine could compensate for the loss. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors clamoured to escape but found potential escape routes barred. Witnesses expressed an "*urgent, indeed frantic, desire*" to

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[541] The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was an international organisation established in 1943. Originally under the umbrella of the United States to provide relief for the victims of war, it comprised representatives from forty-four nations and helped to coordinate the work of numerous charitable organisations. While not a UN agency when it was first conceived by the White House it became part of that Organisation in 1945, UNRRA played a major role in assisting displaced persons return to their homes in Europe. Its operations were largely superseded by introduction of the US Marshall Plan in 1948. (Agreement for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration)

[542] (Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the US Government and HM Government of the United Kingdom, Para 13)

[543] (Ibid, Para 17)

emigrate.[544] To partly relieve the pressure, Committee members recommended that, in the short term, 100,000 immigration certificates for admission to Palestine should be issued, in the hopes of encouraging others to wait "*patiently*" until their time came. Alternatively, if the post-war situation improved, there was a possibility that many Jews might decide to settle back in Europe.[545] On the other hand, given the reluctance of many European governments to accept them and proven anti-Semitism, Palestine offered the one safe option. The journey to Partition was becoming unstoppable.

After just over three weeks examining the predicament of displaced people across mainland Europe, the full Committee travelled to Cairo and then on to Palestine, arriving on the 6th March to carry out the final stage of their investigation. Here they set about acquainting themselves with the everyday life of Palestinian people and from time to time dispatched subcommittees to regional capitals. On their travels they amassed a considerable body of private and public opinion and took witness statements from Arab Governments and representatives of other interested parties.[546]

Giving his evidence before the Committee, Professor Martin Buber[547] stepped aside from the commonly held Zionist viewpoint. He believed that while the idea of a Jewish National Home was widely recognised, the concept itself was not fully understood. Most Zionists demanded nothing less than the freedom to acquire land; land to which Jews held a centuries old spiritual connection. Reconstruction of the land required "a *permanent powerful influx of [preferably youthful] settlers*" with an unimpeded right to decide on their own fate and institutions. However, he contended, Jewish rights should not be at the expense of another's. Jews and Arabs had always lived side by side. Rather than setting a Jewish majority against an Arab minority, Jews should "*absorb [into Palestinian society]*". Buber disagreed with mainstream Zionism: that self-determination presupposed a Jewish

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[544] (ibid, Chapter II, Para 19)
[545] (Ibid, Para 11)
[546] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and HM Government of the United Kingdom, (Appendix I)
[547] Professor Marin Buber was a scholar, political activist and well-known author. His most famous philosophical work published in 1923 was the powerful 'I and Thou' – the dual relationship that exists between the self and the other; between subjects and objects of thought and action.

majority within a separate Jewish state.[548] [549] Based on the evidence presented to the Committee, there was broad consensus among the Jewish contingent on issues surrounding the right to settle, the right to acquire land and on the matter of Jewish self-determination. However, Buber's position was unrepresentative of majority Zionist opinion on whether Jews should be enabled to establish a majority in an independent Jewish state.

For his part, Moshe Sharett[550] argued that Jews could only be secure in Palestine within a "*framework of statehood, resting on the Jewish majority*". He contended that this did not deny Arabs their independence. After all, he argued, Palestine was surrounded by Arab neighbours and therefore Palestinian Arabs would always be a small section of a wider Arab majority in the Arab Middle East. Contradicting Buber's evidence that Jews and Arabs had usually enjoyed social and economic harmony, and therefore Jews could be absorbed into the fabric of Arab society, Sharett argued that there had long been an undercurrent of "*political strife*". He claimed that Palestinian Arab society would not absorb them and certainly not in terms of "*twos or threes over the existing Arab villages*". In any case Jews migrated to Palestine in the search of their own independence *"[not, according to Sharett, with the] intention of assimilating*".[551] When Jews were invited to compare Jewish to Arab wage levels, Sharett continued, the question was really one of comparison between the wages paid by Jewish employers to Arab workers against those paid by Arab employers to Arabs. Commonly, he claimed, Arabs fared better under Jewish employers who had also helped to reduce Arab unemployment. Under British law, European Jews were prohibited from emigrating to Palestine even though "*to the Arab race Palestine is a mere corner [but] to Jews it is the only place ... the Jewish State is an urgent necessity ... a burning world issue*". There was no protection other than that afforded

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[548] Gavison, R (Editor). (2013, 95-96): 'The Two-State Solution' (translated from Hebrew)

[549] Ruth Gavison reproduced the text of Buber's speech - taken from 'The Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, 1945-1948, Public Hearings (Zug: InterDocumentation Co., 1977, 14/3/1946)

[550] Moshe Sharett (formally Moshe Shertok) succeeded David Ben-Gurion to became Israel's second Prime Minister (1954-55). He was succeeded again by Ben-Gurion. Sharett was Foreign Minister from 1955–56.

[551] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom. Pages 134-135

by a prospective Jewish National State.[552] When questioned by the American representative, Bartley Crum,[553] on whether he had once favoured partition, Sharett replied, "*No, not quite*", but as the Jewish Congress of 1937 had decided, it was an option worth exploring.[554]

The Committee also took evidence from Emil Ghoury who appeared on behalf of the Arab Higher Committee. British legislative and administrative policy, he explained, had been forcefully imposed on Arabs. Ghoury claimed that, to Arabs, anti-Semitism was a foreign concept, a European phenomenon and that Arabs had no quarrel with Jews. Instead, the dispute was explained by Arab opposition to political-Zionism's resolve to press ahead with its plan to transform the Holy Land into a fully Jewish state. However, Jewish ambitions went further: they reached beyond Palestine to a "*Land of Israel extending from the Tigress to the Nile*".[555] Jews could, if they wished, embrace equal minority status as did 135,000 Christian Arabs. As a result, there should be no need to insist on achieving some "*special status*". Ghoury confirmed that the wider Arab world supported Palestinians in their resistance to Balfour and Britain's Mandate that had resulted in calamity. In 1918 Arabs had an absolute majority of 93% which was reduced to 68% in less than three decades. This reduction also coincided with the loss of Palestine's most fertile lands. British policy, Ghoury argued, had allowed Jews to take control over Palestine's economic resources. While Arabs had endured "*a policy of bias and discrimination*"; the Jewish Agency had gained the status of privileged de-facto government within government.[556] Ultimately, it was not so much a question of whether Arabs had benefited from Jewish immigration and the Jewish economy, it was a fundamental matter of principle. The question was whether "*might [should prevail over] "right*".[557] Under questioning from Committee members, Emil Ghoury was asked specifically to address the issue of Jewish immigration.

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[552] (Ibid, 141-142)
[553] Bartley Crum was a well-known American lawyer and author. He was one of the members of the Committee that persuaded President Truman to support unrestricted immigration and the subsequent creation of the State of Israel. A few years later he defended individuals accused of "un-American activities" and was himself labelled as subversive. He was placed under surveillance and lost many of his clients. He committed suicide in 1959.
[554] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom. Page 127
[555] (Ibid, 98)
[556] (Ibid, 96-98)
[557] (Ibid, 98)

Richard Crossman started the questioning. He asked whether Jewish immigration would be acceptable to Arabs if the concept of a Jewish majority state was abandoned and a Palestine Arab state was granted immediately. He also asked if Ghoury believed that there was actually a place for Jews anywhere in the Arab Middle East. Ghoury answered emphatically that under all conceivable circumstances there would be a total ban on Jewish immigration but, provided Jews abandoned Zionism and were prepared to "*live in harmony with the Arabs ... then there is a place for Jews in the Middle East*".[558] William Buxton and Reginald Manningham-Buller expanded on Crossman's line of questioning. Mannington-Buller appealed to Ghoury's sense of conscience. He reminded him that amongst the remnants of Jews remaining in Europe many were "*elderly, sick and infirm ... and were seeking a home and shelter ... for the last few years*". "*Palestine*", Ghoury responded, *"was not an asylum*" and he claimed that Jewish immigrants posed a "*danger and a threat to the Arabs in Palestine*".[559] It may not have escaped Ghoury that there was a degree of anti-Semitism within British officialdom. Sir Alan Cunningham,[560] for instance, described a Zionism where "*the forces of nationalism are accompanied by the psychology of the Jew which it is important to recognise as something quite abnormal and unresponsive to rational treatment*".[561] While in Palestine with the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, Richard Crossman noted that *"[British Officials] are not really anti-Semitic [but] off the record, most of the officials here will tell you that Jews are above themselves and need taking down a peg or two*".[562]

Finally, in April 1946, the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry made its recommendations. The principle of one was "*that Palestine shall be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state*".[563] Four members of the twelve-man Committee had warned that it was impractical to expect that Palestine could cope with a large-scale influx of displaced European Jews. Some, they

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[558] (Ibid, 100)
[559] (Ibid, 101)
[560] General Sir Alan Cunningham was the last High Commissioner for Palestine.
[561] Karsh quoting from Palestine: Future Policy. Secret Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. 16 Jan 1947, Annex 1,
[562] Karsh quoting from Crossman, R (1947, 131) Palestine Mission: A Personal Record
[563] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom. (Recommendation No. 3)

imagined, would choose to remain in Europe though many more would seek a way out. Now it was time for the wider international community to accept its share of the ultimate responsibility. However, the signs to date were uninspiring "*information as we received about countries other than Palestine gave no hope of substantial assistance in finding homes for Jews wishing or impelled to leave Europe*". To ease the pressure, the Committee had recommended that 100,000 immigration certificates should be issued immediately. Britain's Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, refused. He insisted that mass immigration should be curtailed until such time that the Yishuv disarmed. Morris argues that this was a cynical ploy on Britain's part when it knew perfectly well that disarmament was unachievable without large scale military intervention. Attlee's Cabinet conditioned its acceptance on substantial US military involvement.[564] Hoffman contends that, in any event, Attlee reasoned that both Arabs and Jews would reject the substance of the Committee Report and that Jews in particular – in line with the central argument of this thesis - were resolutely determined to accept nothing less than Partition.[565]

For its part, the US Department of War estimated that military intervention would necessitate the deployment of some 300,000 of its personnel. However, the United States was, like Britain, weary of war and decided against taking drastic measures. Instead, President Truman endorsed both the recommendation for 100,000 Jewish immigrants and another that would have rescinded Britain's 1939 White Paper restrictions on Arab to Jewish land transfer.[566] In a statement of 4th October 1946 Truman was "*gratified*" that the Anglo-American Committee had accepted his "*suggestion that 100,000 Jews be admitted to Palestine ... [and still] maintained [his] deep interest in the matter ... that steps be taken at the earliest possible moment*" to implement the plan.[567] By contrast, Britain rejected the immigration recommendation and with it, the Committee Report in its entirety. Bickerton

[564] Morris, Benny (2008, 34) 1948: A history of the first Arab-Israeli war
[565] Hoffman, Bruce (2015, 261): Anonymous Soldiers. The struggle for Israel
[566] Gurock, J. S. (1998) American Jewish History: An Eight-volume Series.
[567] President Truman, Statement on October 4, 1946

and Klausner argue that Bevin's refusal to accept the Committee's suggested immigration increase "*was a serious error of Judgement*", because it may have part-appeased Zionists and prevented much of the bloodshed that followed.[568] The reason for the rejection is explained by the fact that Bevin's military advisors warned that such a move would involve a considerable deployment of troops and impose a financial burden that Britain could ill-afford. Attlee contacted Truman on the 26th May advising him that Britain was ready to accept military intervention provided the US would help shoulder the burden. This, together with differences that had arisen over the future of Palestine, caused friction between the two Powers. Truman was anxious to press ahead and allow Jewish survivors to emigrate to Palestine. Attlee and Bevin were angered by Truman's attitude. Bevin accused Truman of bowing to Jewish internal pressure and in any event, "*they did not want the Jews*" coming to America. Indeed, between the end of the war and September 1946, fewer than six thousand immigrant Jews had been admitted into the United States. This contrasted with Britain's commitment. By the end of 1945, as well as other military obligations, it had deployed 80,000 troops to Palestine and sustained numerous casualties. The region was scarred by attacks from opposition groups including the Stern Gang[569] and the Irgun who were intent on creating pandemonium despite punitive British reprisals. In this highly charged political atmosphere relations between the United States and Britain became decidedly frosty.[570]

The Anglo-American Committee's proposals were published on the 1st May 1946. Given the present unrest and having recommended that Palestine should be neither wholly Jewish nor Arab, the Committee stopped short of bowing to the inevitability of Partition but recommended instead that Britain should continue temporary stewardship pending a UN Trustee arrangement. This temporary arrangement, the Committee suggested, might well continue for some time to come. There is scant evidence that the Anglo-American Committee accepted the Arab contention that Zionists had wider

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[568] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 75-76) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[569] Granados portrays the Stern Gang as "*the most violent, the most extreme and the most audacious underground organisation*": Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 150): 'The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[570] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 75-76) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

territorial ambitions. However, the Committee may have been swayed by Arab reassurances that the present Jewish minority would benefit from equal status in a majority Arab Palestine, or (despite evidence to the contrary) by Buber's argument that Jews could be readily absorbed into mainstream Arab society. In arriving at their recommendation for a unitary state, the Committee had bypassed evidence that European countries were refusing to accommodate a share of refugees, yet it had somehow acknowledged that 100,000 of these should gain immediate access to Palestine leaving hundreds of thousands of Jews to an unknown fate.

The Morrison-Grady Plan

Following on from the Anglo-American report, British and American officials drew up a further plan. On the 10th June 1946 Ambassador Henry F. Grady met in London with British representatives including the Deputy Leader of Attlee's Labour Party, Herbert Morrison. The Anglo-American proposals were the basis for talks. The outcome was the Plan for Provincial Autonomy. Under the Plan, Palestine was to be effectively partitioned though this time divided into four provinces (cantons): one each allocated to Arabs and Jews with the remaining two under British authority. Collectively, the four would comprise a broad federation controlled at the centre by a British High Commissioner. Reflecting on the Anglo-American recommendations, British restrictions on land purchases were to be rescinded. Somewhat surprisingly, considering Bevin's former opposition, there was to be provision for 100,000 Jewish immigrants.[571] Ultimately, the Morrison-Grady Plan failed to impress. Arab delegates restated counter proposals that Palestine should form a single unitary state overseen by a proportionally apportioned Legislative Assembly, but that Jewish representation should not exceed one third of the total.

After the war, British naval efforts to stem the flow of illegal Jewish immigrants disembarking in Palestinian ports imposed a heavy strain on British/Jewish relations. Opposition elements (notably the Stern Gang and the Irgun Zvai Leumi[572]) created chaos amongst British forces, which came to a

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[571] Economic Cooperation Foundation Database: 'The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
[572] The Stern gang was a Zionist extremist organisation in Palestine formed in 1940 after a split with the right-wing Irgun Zvai Leumi movement

head on the 22nd July 1946 with the bombing of the King David Hotel, "*the nerve centre of British rule in Palestine*" and causing the deaths of ninety-one people including Britons, Jews, Arabs and others. Hoffman argues that the Irgun had achieved its objective by alerting the world's press to its struggle and the mayhem in the region. In its analysis of the atrocity, the Manchester Guardian reported that the bombing would "*be a shock to those who imagined that the Government's firmness has put a stop to Jewish terrorism and brought about an easier situation in Palestine. In fact, the opposite is the truth*".[573] Events had reached a crisis point and British forces reacted swiftly by incarcerating over two thousand Jews. In the meantime, politicians dithered over Papers and Plans while unprecedented numbers of refugees streamed out of the post-war chaos of Europe into Palestine. To make matters worse, Zionist forces intensified the pressure on the beleaguered Administration. In a letter addressed to General Sir Alan Cunningham, the High Commissioner for Palestine, the Arab Higher Committee demanded the death penalty for all Jews found guilty of terrorism. The Jewish Agency responded that they had no connection or control over terrorist organisations and denied a Daily Telegraph suggestion that the Agency had the power to prevent attacks. Meanwhile, the Stern Gang vowed to fight on. Bevin was reportedly willing to consider Jewish and Arab counterproposals but for the moment, in his view, provisional autonomy was "*fair and workable*". Looking ahead, he referred to the possibility of a United Nations controlled trusteeship arrangement.[574]

Britain's Last Gasp – Ernest Bevin's Plan

In February 1947, Ernest Bevin, Britain's Foreign Secretary, convened a meeting of interested parties in a last-ditch attempt to break the current deadlock. Having already wasted time with commissions, parliamentary procedures and endless political manoeuvrings, HM Government had consistently failed to arrive at a policy which was acceptable to either of the two conflicting parties. Jews demanded free immigration into an independent homeland (a Jewish state) while Arabs refused to

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[573] Hoffman, Bruce (1999, 48-52) 'Inside Terrorism
[574] Mornington Bulletin, 18th September 1946

concede on both demands. Bevin was running out of patience. Notwithstanding the problematic issue

of Palestine, HM Government was also preoccupied with other concerns. Like many European states,

it was struggling with the herculean burden of recovery from the ravages of a war that had ended less

than two years before. Bercuson sets a vivid scene: Wartime rationing remained in force; major

factories were lying idle and unemployment was increasing. Wheat and simple household goods were

in short supply. With coal at critically low levels, power stations failed to meet demand. Millions

strove to make ends meet. Parts of Europe were in an even sorrier state. Whole cities lay in ruins. A

large percentage of Jews had died in the Holocaust: homes and personal belongings had been

destroyed or appropriated and many survivors roamed across the European continent in search of

missing family and friends. Now in the winter of 1946/1947, huge numbers of displaced people

crowded into makeshift camps including most uprooted Jews "*unable or unwilling to return 'home'*"-

a 'home' that no longer existed in the European killing-grounds.[575] Against this background and

during an abnormally savage winter, Bercuson highlights what was soon to become one of Britain's

final political acts on the Palestine question. Continuing in evocative style, Bercuson writes that in "*a

cold room at the Foreign Office, with the lights flickering because of power shortages, Bevin [laid

out his plan]*".[576]

Under Bevin's plan, again, Palestine would be partitioned into 'Cantons'. Individual Cantons

would have either sizable Jewish or Arab majorities reflective of local demographics; each to enjoy

a large measure of political autonomy. For five years, Britain would enter into a Trusteeship

arrangement supervised by a High Commissioner charged with protecting minority interests. The

Trusteeship would oversee the formation of a representative Advisory Council and later, an elected

Constitutional Assembly. If all agreed after the five-year period, Palestine could become an

independent entity. If not, the matter would be referred to the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

4,000 immigration certificates were to be issued each month for a period of twenty-four months (i.e.

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[575] Bercuson, David, J., (1985, III): <u>Canada and the birth of Israel – a study in Canadian foreign policy</u>
[576] (Ibid, Introduction)

96,000 in total) after which the High Commissioner, in consultation with the Advisory Council, would rule on the matter.[577] In fact, Bevin's plan was not too dissimilar to the Morrison-Grady plan, so it would have come as little surprise that it too was also roundly rejected. Later, the majority of UNSCOP members were unimpressed by both the cantonal and the bi-national state proposals. These would have necessitated dubious artificial adjustments to achieve the required political and numerical divisions. Also, the majority of UNSCOP members later argued that given the manner in which the Arab population was diffused across Palestine, Bevin's cantonal proposal implied troublesome fragmentation of service provision. Both the Morrison-Grady and Bevin plans were compromise solutions. The Plans were predicated on a theoretical two-state solution with Cantonisation being a disjointed form of Partition; itself the legal consequence of immigration policy under Article 6 of the British Mandate, vis-à-vis *"The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration".*[578] Jews and Arabs rejected Cantonisation leaving full-scale Partition as the one available option. Jamal Husseini, who had recently become vice-president of the Arab Higher Committee, refused to consider any solution other than an independent Arab Palestine. On 30th December 1946 he reported to *al-Wahba*:[579] *"[Arabs will fight Partition since] even the tiniest Jewish state will be a rotten apple in a box of otherwise good apples"*.[580]

As the years passed, it became increasingly apparent to one investigative Commission after another that Balfour's 1917 'dual obligation' pledge could only be resolved by Partition. Now, thirty years on and still unprepared to grasp the unavoidability of the latter, Britain found its forces trapped in a conflict spiralling out of control. With its military and economic resources stretched to its limits, the time was ripe for Britain to surrender its League of Nations Mandate to the United Nations. Matters had reached a critical point. In a speech made to the House of Commons on 18th February

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[577] UN General Assembly (A/364), Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly. Supplement N0. 11, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, 3 September 1947, Chapter IV, Para 7
[578] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24th July 1922, Article 6)
[579] *Al-Wahba* is an Arab daily newspaper published in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
[580] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 83): Palestine Betrayed

1947, Bevin stated that *"[Arabs] regard the further expansion of the Jewish National Home as jeopardising the attainment of national independence by the Arabs of Palestine ... [Arabs] are therefore unwilling to contemplate further Jewish immigration into Palestine"*.[581] Karsh argues that Bevin's motives were mixed. Either the UN would react to his announcement by providing a clear mandate for a British imposed trusteeship, or alternatively, by establishing a unitary Arab state either controlled by or absorbed into Transjordan.[582] Either way, Jews would comprise a minority of the population. Bevin justified his announcement by suggesting that a two-state solution was not viable though, evidently, a one-state solution was. In either case, Jewish immigration was unstoppable. It was time for Britain to relinquish responsibility and for the United Nations to find an alternative arrangement.

Britain Surrenders the Mandate to the United Nations

On the 2nd April 1947, with pressure mounting and options running out, the United Kingdom government referred the question of Palestine to the United Nations General Assembly, requesting that a Special Committee be constituted to prepare and submit an account of the Palestine Mandate and to make recommendations. As a result, on the 28th April, Secretary General, Trygve Lie, summoned UN members to a special session. First there were procedural matters to attend to: Representing the UK, Sir Alexander Cadogan set out his government's position "*We have tried for years to solve the problem of Palestine. Having failed so far, we now bring it to the United Nations, in the hope that it can succeed where we have not*".[583] It was unavoidable that as neither of the two main protagonists was prepared to surrender its position, Britain, as the Mandatory Power could do no more. As a result, the General Committee (which served as the Agenda Committee of the General Assembly) met in New York on the 29th April 1947. They discussed the United Kingdom's proposal

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[581] Hansard, 18th February 1947: Ernest Bevin, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Vol. 433 cc985-94

[582] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 84): Palestine Betrayed

[583] UN General Assembly (A/364), Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly. Supplement N0. 11, United Nations   Special Committee on Palestine, 3 September 1947, Chapter I, Para 12

that a special committee should be established to prepare a report on the question of Palestine. Most members of the Assembly had already responded favourably to the UN Secretary-General's request to convene in special session.[584]

Mr Asaf Ali, the Indian representative opened the questioning. He asked Sir Alexander Cadogan (United Kingdom) that if press reports were to be believed, the UK Government would not necessarily abide by a United Nations recommendation. He went further and retorted that if this was the case, there was no point in considering the agenda item. Hassan Pasha, representing Egypt, agreed and insisted that the United Kingdom answer the question, since only then could he decide whether to support inclusion of the item. The USSR representative, Mr Gromyko also agreed. The Chairman, Osvaldo Aranha (Brazil), reminded Ali that this committee was charged with deciding only on the inclusion of an agenda item and not, according to Rule 33, to rule on political questions. Clearly, Ali's question was intended to disrupt proceedings. Aranha gave Cadogan the opportunity to respond. Cadogan referred to a recent House of Lords debate during which Lord Hill had stated that he could not "*imagine His Majesty's government carrying out a policy of which it did not approve*". Hill's statement, Cadogan continued, did not imply that HM Government would refuse to accept any recommendation; just those it believed were wrong.[585] Neither Pasha nor Ali were satisfied. Hill's statement, Ali persisted, implied that if HM Government did not approve of a UN recommendation then it "*will walk out of the whole show*", despite an understanding that all UN signatories should accept and agree to abide by its decisions. Ali argued that, by implication, consideration of the present agenda item was "*a sheer waste of time*". In response, Cadogan reasoned, that if the GA's decision ignored the fact that Britain bore the "*responsibility [of Palestine] single handed ... [one] which we could not reconcile with our conscience, should we single-handed be expected to expend blood and treasure in carrying it out?*".[586]

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[584] A/PV.28 29 April 1947, 1
[585] (Ibid, 2-5)
[586] (Ibid, 6)

Egyptian and other Arab delegates had proposed a supplementary or amending proposal, one that would bind the special committee to accept that the independence of Palestine was guaranteed. In Arab terms, this would imply that Arab Palestine was a single indivisible entity but after a vigorous debate the inclusion of the UK proposal on the agenda was adopted vis-à-vis "*Constituting and instructing a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of Palestine at the [General Assembly]*".[587]

Now the question of the Special Committee's terms of reference was referred to the then UN First Committee for consideration. After a series of twelve meetings the First Committee reported back on the 13th May 1947.[588] The Committee had granted hearings to representatives from the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine as it was agreed that these organisations were pertinent to the constitution, and instructions given to the Special Committee. Some fringe organisations had asked to be heard but were refused because it was felt that they did not necessarily speak for Palestinians. It was agreed that a future Special Committee would be free to decide otherwise.[589]

Before arriving at an agreement, the First Committee and its sub-committees were obliged to navigate through a maze of proposals, counter proposals and amendments from the US, the USSR, India, Poland, Iraq and others. India and the Soviet Union submitted a joint proposal for "*the establishment without delay the independent democratic state of Palestine*". The proposal was defeated.[590] The First Committee accepted an amendment extending the Special Committee's terms of reference. Provided Special Committee members agreed, they would be free to conduct their investigations "*wherever it may deem useful*".[591] Thus, Special Committee members were given the freedom to journey to any camp in any city of their choosing, including those in war-torn Europe and permitted to collect testimony from Jewish survivors. The latter amendment was crucial. At a stroke,

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[587] A/PV.28 29 April 1947, 2
[588] UN General Assembly (A/307), Special Committee on Palestine - Report of the First Committee,13th May 1947
[589] (Ibid, 1-2)
[590] (Ibid, 2-3)
[591] (Ibid, 3)

the First Committee had forged a plausible associative connection between displaced European Jews and Palestine. Yet to be determined was the composition of the Special Committee and whether it should include one or more of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The Australian representative argued against this, suggesting that it should be composed of eleven independent members. His proposal was narrowly accepted. With little contention, the countries selected were Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.[592] However, there was some dissent to the overall proposal. This came from the Lebanese representative who echoed the views of Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He announced that he would abstain from voting since there was no "*mention of independence of Palestine [which] had been severely suppressed from [the Special Committee's] terms of reference*". Likewise, he protested that the scene had shifted from one of offering advice to the Mandatory Authority on how it should conduct the future governance of Palestine to "*consideration of the so-called problem of Palestine in general*".[593]

Finally, by a majority, the First Committee recommended to the General Assembly that: a United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) should be created and its membership should be as above,[594] it should be granted the widest powers to ascertain, record and investigate all questions relating to Palestine,[595] it should determine its own procedure,[596] it should "*investigate in Palestine and wherever it may deem useful*",[597] it should consider all *"religious interests in Palestine"*[598] and make proposals for a solution reporting back to the General Assembly no later than on the 1st September 1947.[599]

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[592] (ibid, 3)
[593] (Ibid, 4)
[594] (Ibid, 4, Resolution 1)
[595] (Ibid, 4. Resolution 2)
[596] (Ibid, 4, Resolution 3)
[597] (Ibid, 4, Resolution 4)
[598] (Ibid, 4, Resolution 5)
[599] (Ibid, 4, Resolutions 6, 7)

The United Kingdom had negotiated the first UN hurdle relatively unscathed and had taken a step towards extricating itself from the Palestine predicament. Zionists had also taken another step towards their goal. From day one it was evident to all participants that whatever the eventual decision, Arabs would accept nothing less than an independent Arab-majority Palestine. They were seen to be fighting for their cause, but their intransigence would doom them to failure.

The General Assembly Decide

On the 14th May 1947, the GA convened at Flushing Meadow, New York to discuss the First Committee's report and consider its recommendations. Again, President, Oswaldo Aranha (Brazil) was in the chair.[600] He explained that the report was the subject of high controversy. The rapporteur for the First Committee outlined the work that had gone before and called attention to the strongly held reservations of some of the previous participants. He warned that if the problem was to be solved at all it was one that required a spirit of fairness, understanding and conciliation. It was not just a legal problem, but *"above all, a problem of human relations"*.[601]

Mr Jamal, representing Iraq, lost no time in coming to the point. He claimed that draft after draft had contained the term 'independence', but now suddenly the word had been removed entirely from the terms of reference when independence was the only way to "*peace based on Justice*". In Jamal's opinion, justice meant granting political freedom specifically for the Arabs of Palestine. The Mandate should be terminated, but the terms of reference implied that "*the only instruction was that there shall be no instruction*".[602] Jamal was adamant that though the Palestine question was difficult, the answer was simple. To "*prevent the aggressive invasion [by Jews]*" intent on establishing a Jewish state in Arab occupied land, the solution lay in reaffirming those principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter guaranteeing the political rights of the present inhabitants.[603] Jamal's delivery was

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[600] UN General Assembly (A/2/PV.77) Seventy-Seventh Plenary Meeting, 14 May 1947
[601] (Ibid, 1-4).
[602] (Ibid, 4)
[603] (Ibid, 5)

uncompromising and would have come as no surprise to the gathered Assembly. However, all members would be concentrating on the translation when the influential voice of a permanent member of the Security Council, Soviet representative Andrei Gromyko, delivered Stalin's verdict.[604]

Stalin Lays His Cards on the Table

That the Palestine question had been referred by the United Kingdom exposed the acuteness of the political problem. It followed, Gromyko stated, that the Mandatory Administration had failed. The Peel Commission of 1937 echoed the Permanent Mandates Commission's conclusion that it was impossible to implement the Palestine Mandate and the 1936 Arab uprising merely confirmed the "*bankruptcy*" of the Administrative system. Gromyko reminded the GA that, on the 18th February 1947, UK Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin had himself confessed that "*the mandate [was] unworkable*" because Jewish and Arab political ambitions where irreconcilable.[605] Both sides were at odds, but they were also at odds with the British administration. The "*so-called*" Anglo-American Committee, Gromyko mocked, arrived at the same conclusion: "*That Palestine ... has become "an armed camp" is a fact that speaks for itself*".[606] Time and again Gromyko was increasingly cynical about Britain's administrative efforts. He cited the burgeoning numbers of police and prison service personnel employed in Palestine. He derided the fact that while expenditure on law and order had burgeoned, only a tiny fraction of available funds had been devoted to the essential services of health and education. Levelling his condemnation directly at the United Kingdom he quoted the Anglo-American Committee's appraisal that "*even from a budgetary point of view, Palestine has developed into a semi-military or police state*".[607] This, he said, raised the question whether a satisfactory solution could be found in conformity with the interests of all concerned. Gromyko drew a link between Jewish displaced people in Europe and a future Palestine administration. Jews, he

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[604] (Ibid, 6)
[605] (Ibid, 6-7)
[606] (Ibid, 8)
[607] (Ibid, 8)

emphasised, had undergone "*suffering [that was] indescribable ... only around a million and a half [out of approximately seven and a half million in Western Europe] had survived the war*".[608] He pointedly accused Western European countries of failing to provide adequate assistance to Jews and to protect their very existence as a people. He argued that this underlined the fact that Jews needed to establish their own state, so it was incumbent on UNSCOP to consider this important aspect. *"[T]here are many different plans regarding the decisions of the Jewish people in connection with the Palestine question*". Among the best known, he continued, were: a single Arab-Jewish state in Palestine with equal rights for all its inhabitants, or the Partition of Palestine into two independent states, or an Arab state without due regards for Jewish rights, or finally, a Jewish state lacking consideration for Arab rights. He emphasised that as both sides had historical roots in Palestine, it was their shared homeland as each belonged to the economic and cultural life of the whole. Thus, the latter two extreme unilateral solutions to the Palestine question should be ruled out. In an ideal world the Soviet Union favoured the establishment of a single "*independent, dual, democratic homogeneous Arab-Jewish State*"; one dependent on a climate of mutual co-operation.[609]

Gromyko had forged a strong link between Jewish refugees in Europe and a Jewish state in Palestine. "*It would be unjust [he said] not to take this into consideration and to deny the right of the Jewish people to realize this aspiration*".[610] Of course, mass Jewish immigration into Palestine was the crux of Arab-Jewish hostility. This new-found sympathy with Zionism was a reversal of the Soviet Union's earlier position. Ben-Asher explains that as far back as 1919 Jewish communists had encouraged the Soviet authorities to outlaw Zionism. Leon Trotsky had labelled Zionism as "*a reactionary utopianism, an unrealisable chauvinistic dream,*" though Vladimir Lenin had denied Zionist assertions that anti-Semitism ran through the fabric of Soviet society. Up to this point, the Soviet leadership had shown no special concern regarding the issues in Palestine.[611] However, now

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[608] (Ibid, 9)
[609] (Ibid, 11)
[610] (Ibid, 10)
[611] Ben-Asher, Haim (2010, 132). The Zionist Illusion

that the war was over, the political climate began to favour Zionism. Jews, who had previously supported the Allies, now turned on Britain's Mandate. This encouraged Stalin to achieve two aims in parallel; to end Britain's imperialistic interference in the Middle East and to open the door to Soviet Communist involvement in Palestine. One small step came in 1945 when the Kremlin authorised and smoothed the passage for thousands of Jewish survivors in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary to relocate to the American zone - one step closer to Palestine.[612]

Gromyko had referred to the deteriorating situation at some length so before launching into the final part of his speech that surely had Stalin's blessing, he announced his country's final position. He avoided addressing separate Jewish and Arab Cantons and announced that, if in the event, UNSCOP concluded that due to irreparable Jewish-Arab relations, a single state "*proved impossible to implement*" then Partition was the only available option.[613] At this early stage Gromyko had made Stalin's views clear. Having stated that Partition may prove to be the one realistic option, then as a powerful permanent-five UN member state, the Soviet Union's stance would have carried considerable weight within its sphere of influence and made Partition significantly more probable.

Arabs State Their Bottom Line

Arab countries disagreed and objected strongly on grounds that the Special Committee's term of reference did not include consideration of a Palestinian-Arab independent state. They dismissed outright a credible connection between displaced European Jews and Palestine. Citing ancient historic and biblical sources, the Syrian representative, El-Khouri, rejected claims that Jews had proven claims on Palestine.[614] Rather than assimilate into what is, after all, an Arab country, Jews could "*create good understanding with the people of their own homes from which they had been displaced ... with people who speak the same language*" and migrate to European countries that claimed to have re-established democracy and liberty. Instead, displaced Jews were actively

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[612] UN General Assembly (A/2/PV.77) Seventy-Seventh Plenary Meeting, 14 May 1947, pages 132-132
[613] (Ibid, 11-12)
[614] UN General Assembly (A/2/PV.78), Seventy-Eighth Plenary Meeting, 14 May 1947

dissuaded from this by the political ideals of Zionism. El-Khouri argued that Palestine was a land of deserts and mountains with a population of around two-million and too tiny to consider partitioning. Palestine had already taken in thousands of Jewish survivors leaving "*no room [for] more*".[615] Jewish refugees, he asserted, must not be enabled "*to dominate [nor] exterminate*".[616] Malik, representing Lebanon, expanded on El-Khouri's denial of the Jewish refugee/Palestine connection. He argued that it was the Jewish Agency that had persuaded the authors of the draft terms of references to grant permission to UNSCOP to investigate "*wherever it may deem useful*".[617] He claimed that this was an open invitation to Special Committee members to visit displaced Jewish camps in Europe. The Committee would necessarily draw a connection, however strained and artificial, between the problems of Jewish refugees and Palestine. This connection had been established without study into the subject and without definitive General Assembly authority. Malik also protested that whenever it was proposed that Palestine could expect to become independent like other Class-A mandated countries, it was argued that "*independence would prejudge the issue*". Moreover, Malik continued, the Jewish Agency had somehow persuaded many that *de facto* recognition of Palestine's independence would load "*the dice [in favour of] Arabs against the Jews*".[618] Henríquez Ureña representing the Dominican Republic, reminded the Assembly that although the term 'independence' was not in UNSCOP's terms of reference, it was likely to be considered "*one of the solutions*".[619]

The General Assembly Debate UNSCOP

The First Committee had recommended that permanent members of the Security Council should be denied membership of UNSCOP because the Permanent-Five carried considerable authority that could tip the balance one way or the other. It was probable that some undecided or dependent countries could be leaned on by one or other of the great Powers. However, Mr Picerno, representing

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[615] (Ibid, 6-7)
[616] (Ibid, 7)
[617] (Ibid, 14)
[618] (Ibid, 14-15)
[619] UN General Assembly (UNGA, A/2/PV.79), Seventy-Ninth Plenary Meeting, 15 May 1947. Page 10

Argentina, supported their inclusion as they were "*important and influential powers in the political structure of the world [and could] render valuable assistance*".[620] Nonetheless, the Permanent-Five members ruled themselves out.

Quo Tai-Chi's was an important intervention. As neither a majority Jewish, Moslem nor Christian country, he said China (P5 member) was a "*completely disinterested [though not an] uninterested party*" to the Palestine question.[621] The aspirations of Palestinian Arabs 0acknowledge the Balfour Declaration which was, on reflection, merely a British statement of policy supported by a questionable British Mandate. However, the Holocaust had aroused "*spontaneous [international] sympathy*" and having contributed much to mankind, Jews were surely deserving of "*a place [they] can call its own ... free from the eternal fear of persecution*". He suggested that the answer to the problem was not to be found in history or in legal terms, but rather in "*the clear voice of the human heart and the human conscience*". China too had drawn a direct connection between Holocaust survivors and Jewish independence in Palestine. Like Quo Tai-Chi, Henríquez Ureña (Dominican Republic) called for action to lessen the suffering of thousands of displaced Jews.[622]

On the second day of the two-day Special Session, Asaf Ali (India) made his country's position known. It was a significant development given that India too was about to be entangled in the violent consequences of Partition.[623] While Ali expressed reservations (undoubtedly under instruction from Nehru) and started prudently, he later ill-advisedly overlooked Nehru's ruling. Kumaraswamy claims that Ali had been advised to seek Indian membership of UNSCOP, but not to commit India to any substantive viewpoint without first obtaining permission from New Delhi. Egypt, Kumaraswamy writes, had proposed an agenda item which, if approved, would have opened a debate on the question of Arab-Palestine independence. While Nehru was sympathetic to Egypt's proposal, he was anxious to avoid straining relations with other countries.[624] Ali supported Nehru's Indian

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[620] (Ibid, 3)

[621] UN General Assembly (A/2/PV.78), Seventy-Eighth Plenary Meeting, 14 May 1947, Page 12

[622] UN General Assembly (UNGA, A/2/PV.79), Seventy-Ninth Plenary Meeting, 15 May 1947. Pages 11-12

[623] India and Pakistan became two independent countries at midnight on the 14-15th August 1947

[624] Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010, 85): India's Israel Policy

National Congress plainly pro-Arab position, but disregarded New Delhi's cautionary advice that it was for sponsors to make their own case but instead he "*argued vehemently [for the] Arab proposal*".[625] Ali had been instrumental in persuading Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, to give evidence before the General Committee. Now, in a move that surprised and upset many of his fellow Muslims, he pressed that leaders of the Jewish Agency should be afforded the same courtesy. If one or other of the two main parties were denied this opportunity then, Ali argued, the United Nations would be seen to be favouring one side over the other.[626] Kumaraswamy confirms that in accordance with Indian official policy, Ali voted against a Panama-Guatemala proposal allowing UNSCOP members to visit displacement camps in Europe. Delhi consistently refused to accept any connection between displacement camps and Palestine. Also, Ali agreed to the exclusion of the five permanent members of the Security Council from serving on UNSCOP. During his unguarded delivery he inferred that, other than China, the neutrality of the remaining P5 members was questionable because they had interests of one form or another in the Middle East.[627] On several occasions Ali drew parallels with the situation facing his own country. Directly aimed at Middle East representatives, Ali pressed that should the GA reject independence then Arab countries "*will be free to do exactly as you like. Who says you should not?*" He compared the Arab fight for independence in Palestine to that of India's; "*you can kill us [but] we are independent, and we shall see that nobody treats us otherwise*".[628]

Jewish Immigration at the Core of the Problem

Asif Ali next focused on Jewish immigration - "*the core of the problem*". He deflected his evident opposition by suggesting that, rather than Jews, there could be two million Arabs from elsewhere who may decide to enter Palestine. He asked, "*do you realize the danger?*".[629] Nevertheless, he

[625] (Ibid, 88)
[626] Ibid, 88)
[627] Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010, 89): India's Israel Policy
[628] UN General Assembly (UNGA, A/2/PV.79), Seventy-Ninth Plenary Meeting, 15 May 1947. Page 6
[629] (Ibid, 7)

appealed to Middle East States to maintain a climate of peace. Then, allowing his emotions to overcome reason, he warned, "*that if the peace of Palestine is disturbed, the third great world war will definitely be precipitated. I have no doubt of that*".[630]

Asif Ali's speech infuriated the Indian Congress Party. Reacting to Ali's suggestion that the Jewish Agency should testify, 'The Dawn*'* (a Karachi-based daily newspaper) reported that "*Ali does not represent Muslim India and is acting contrary to Muslim India's views*". Zionists were also upset by Ali's clearly pro-Arab stance.[631] On the 14th May 1947, Nehru voiced his concerns: "*It pays often enough not to give too frequent expression of our views ... when there are many observations they are apt to irritate one party or the other needlessly*".[632] Nevertheless, it was obvious to the General Assembly that Palestinian Arabs had gained a predominantly Hindu country to their cause.

During the lengthy two-day session, the United Kingdom found itself at the centre of criticism. Other than stating the "*extreme complexity*" of the problem and assuring members of its intention to facilitate the investigation, Sir Alexander Cadogan refused to be drawn into the wider substance of the matter.[633] In the meantime, the United Kingdom would continue its restrictive Jewish immigration policy. The Special Session was originally convened to debate procedural issues and establish the ground rules for what would eventually become UNSCOP. However, the debate had strayed onto the complexities of the Palestine question and as a result the divergent views of the assembled countries were exposed before UNSCOP had examined the issue and expressed its opinion.

UNSCOP Established by the UN General Assembly

On the 15th May 1947, the General Assembly adopted the recommendation of the First Committee by a majority decision. Thus, an eleven-member UNSCOP was established and granted *"widest powers"* to investigate, to travel to whatever destination most suited and to gather evidence from

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[630] (Ibid, 9)
[631] Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010, 90) India's Israel Policy
[632] (Ibid, 91)
[633] UN General Assembly (A/2/PV.78), Seventy-Eighth Plenary Meeting, 14 May 1947, Page 12

sources including governments, organisations and individuals. A Norwegian proposal calling for a climate of peace in Palestine to ease progress towards "*an early settlement of the question of Palestine*" was passed unanimously.[634]

Members of the GA were determined that UNSCOP should remain free from outside interference. Britain, as the mandatory power, had first-hand knowledge of the complexity of the issues involved. However, other than participate as a key witness, it had no role to play in the decision-making process.[635] Ben-Dror explains that the United States, having been recently involved in the fraught Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry deliberations, stepped to one side without argument. Again, the Soviet Union distanced itself from UNSCOP. By excluding the Permanent Five members, the General Assembly intended that the eleven members elected to serve should "*make their recommendations free of any pressure of the great powers*". Similarly, Arab representation was also excluded.[636]

General Assembly Members Elected to Serve on UNSCOP

Out of 56 full members of the General Assembly, it was decided to exclude the five Permanent Members and members of Arab states. Eleven countries selected their official Representatives and Alternates. In his memoirs of the time written soon after the event, UNSCOP's Guatemalan Delegate, Jorge Garcia-Granados gives his impressions of his UNSCOP colleagues:

Granados describes UNSCOP's Chairman, former Justice of Sweden's Supreme Court, Emil Sandstrom, as a slim, white-haired, handsome individual usually dressed in a white shirt and maroon-coloured bow tie. A man who stood out from the from the crowd. Clever and cunning, autocratic at times, he was accustomed to getting his own way.[637]

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[634] UN General Assembly Resolution 107 (S – 1), Official Records of the Second session, Supplement 11, UNSCOP, Volume 1. (A/364,3 September 1947)

[635] UN General Assembly Resolution 106 (S – 1), Official Records of the Second session, Supplement 11, UNSCOP, Volume 1. (A/364,3 September 1947)

[636] Ben-Dror, E. (2014, 14-19): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP See also:
   Ben-Dror, E. (2016, 23) Ralph Bunche and the Arab–Israeli Conflict Mediation and the UN, 1947–1949

[637] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 12): 'The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it

Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand was Canada's representative. Granados describes him as a large, balding, slightly stooped, middle-aged man with a near-melancholic air given to ruminating over some obscure legal point.[638]

Australia's delegate was John D. L. Hood. A "*retiring, soft spoken and athletic figure*". Hood was a former Rhodes scholar and had worked for the London Times.[639] During days of debate, his opinion was influential.

Having served in several European cities, Czechoslovakia's delegate, Dr Karel Lisicky had long experience in the diplomatic world. Granados describes him as "*a big painstaking man*" somewhat sardonic in tone with an undercurrent of bitterness towards the world in general. Unflatteringly, Granados describes Lisicky as "*slow in action, conservative in policy and exact in his labours*".[640]

The Netherland's delegate Dr Nicholaas Blom is characterised as smiling, blond-haired and early middle aged. With a passion for detail he was inclined to meticulously dissecting a discussion "*until he had exposed it with [exhaustive] clarity*".[641]

Unlike the other ten appointees to UNSCOP who were assisted by just one Alternative representative, the Yugoslav delegation consisted of Dr Vladimir Simic (President of the Yugoslav Senate), his Alternative, Dr Jose Brilej, six secretaries and a press officer. During WWII, Brilej had fought with the Yugoslav Partisans and had been a member of the non-communist Catholic Workers Association in Yugoslavia. His senior, Vladimir Simic, is characterised by Granados as a non-communist, democratic president of the Yugoslav Bar Association.[642]

Sir Abdur Rahman was a middle-aged, non-drinking (explained also by his faith), non-smoking, highly excitable individual with an explosive temperament. Nevertheless, despite his "*constant irritation*", Granados warmed to him. A devout Muslim, member of the Indian Congress

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[638] (Ibid, 12)
[639] (Ibid, 12)
[640] (Ibid, 10)
[641] (Ibid, 11)
[642] (Ibid, 10)

Party and High Court Judge, Rahman was appointed by Nehru, Prime Minister of a largely Hindu India. In the aftermath of the post-Partition riots in India and Rahman's concern for his family's safety, it transpired that he was constitutionally opposed to Partition.[643]

Rahman and Nasrollah Entezam, former Foreign Minister of Iran,[644] were the two Muslim members of UNSCOP. Entezam, was a dark, slight man who combined "*the courtesy and the subtlety of the Oriental with the customs and expression of the West*". He and Granados became close colleagues.[645]

Uruguay's delegate, Professor Enrique Rodriguez Fabregat, was a former Minister of Education. His character becomes clear in Granados's account of when he, Garcia Salazar (the Peruvian delegate) and Fabregat first drove into Jerusalem. Fabregat was a romantic who thrilled in the delights of his surroundings. He gloried in all that was noble and beautiful. His innate romanticism was swept along in a tide with laughter that shook him from head to his "*somewhat bandied legs*". Granados revelled in his good nature.[646]

Peruvian delegate Dr Arturo Garcia Salazar was Peru's ambassador to the Vatican. He represented Latin America in UNSCOP, along with Fabregat (Uruguay) and Granados (Guatemala). As a Conservative Catholic, Salazar was initially stoic when it came to the future of Jerusalem. Later, he was prepared to compromise on several issues and subsequently emerged as an independently minded member of UNSCOP.

The final member of UNSCOP's team was Jorge Garcia-Granados himself. He was a grandson of former President of Guatemala, Miguel Garcia-Granados. He compared the backward social and political systems that once affected his own country, with present-day Palestine. Both countries were essentially agrarian economies with tracts of land in need of modernisation. His background was scarred by violent upheaval and political struggle. He suffered frequent terms of

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[643] (Ibid, 8-9)
[644] Nasrollah Entezam also served as President of the United Nations General Assembly in 1950.
[645] (Ibid, 12)
[646] (Ibid, 37)

imprisonment, had been exiled and, on one occasion, had faced a possible death sentence. In 1944, Granados was elected to serve on the Constituent Assembly, becoming its President until 1945 when he served as Guatemala's Ambassador to the United States.[647] Having been elected to serve on the Special Committee, the above eleven members were ready to move onto the next stage.

Summary

Britain's 1939 White Paper posed a challenge to Zionists though by the time they met to discuss the matter at the Biltmore Hotel in New York in May 1942, attitudes had begun to crystalize. To Ben-Gurion, who had by now assumed the lead role, Britain was a lost cause so that while Jews should demonstrate their loyalty to Britain in wartime, they must also realise the advantages to be gained by close alignment with the United States Government and American Zionists.[648] Ben-Gurion sought a compromise sufficient to satisfy colleagues who believed that rescuing endangered Jews from the European arena was of more immediate concern than others who believed that Zionists ambitions for a Jewish state came first. Ben-Gurion's twin-track approach that these two requirements were not mutually exclusive persuaded the majority of the need for an independent Jewish state free to set its own immigration policy with the proviso that the non-Jewish community retained civil, religious and political autonomy over their own internal affairs. Although dismissed by Weizmann as inconsequential, Biltmore, Brady contends, was a significant step towards Jewish statehood[649] and, by May 1945, the Jewish Agency was in no mood for compromise. The Agency demanded that Britain should announce the immediate establishment of a Jewish state and the transfer of the first million Jewish survivors.[650] However, Britain under Prime Minister Clement Attlee, and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, had other ideas. Any sympathetic consideration was soon dispelled by the extreme levels of violence perpetrated by Jewish militants on British troops in Palestine.

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[647] (Ibid, 17-22)
[648] Brady, Colleen, (2010, 13): American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Prof. R. Hudson.
[649] (Ibid, 12-18)
[650] Royal Institute for International Affairs: 'Great Britain and Palestine' (1946, 139-140)

After witnessing the predicament facing Jewish survivors in post-Holocaust Europe, Anglo-American Committee members, while undoubtably mindful that a number of European Nations were complicit, proposed that all should help shoulder the burden. As a starting point, the Committee supported the issuance of 100,000 immigration certificates to Palestine. Truman accepted while Bevin's refusal was "a serious *error of judgement*" and conceivably added to future bloodshed.[651] Most notably, the Committee had established a causal connection between Jewish survivors and Palestine.

In 1946 Britain's Herbert Morrison and American Henry Grady proposed fragmented Partition (separate Provinces) as did Bevin in 1947 with his Cantonisation proposal. Both arrangements met the same fate. With options exhausted, Britain surrendered its task to the United Nations. In turn, the UN General Assembly established an eleven-member UNSCOP with free rein to gather evidence from Middle East sources and war-torn Europe. This decision was a major milestone on the way to Partition.

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[651] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 75-76) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The thesis continues with an examination of the pivotal work of UNSCOP. It scrutinises Britain's near-impossible mission in Palestine and casts a fresh eye on the conflicting evidence offered by British, Arab and Jewish interviewees.

In contrast to Palestinian Arabs who refused to participate in the proceedings, the Jewish contingency cooperated. The Arab omission was offset to some extent by evidence presented by statesmen from neighbouring Arab states, all unanimously agreeing that continued Jewish immigration threatened the stability of the region. While materially and economically life had improved for all, Jews were the major beneficiaries while the pace of progress within the Arab community was painfully slow. Palestinian Arabs protested that the majority of available finance was used to shore up internal security rather than providing essential services. Arabs gains from the expanding economy failed to quell fears that immigration posed an existential threat to Arab-Palestine.

The Special Committee members recalled bouts of violence inflicted by dissident Jewish groups on British Administration forces and the latter's preventative measures. Hundreds of Jews had been incarcerated so that from the beginning, members were inundated with pleas for intervention. On one occasion they anguished over a case where three young men had been condemned to death. This case is important in that it exposed Committee divisions, introduces key UNSCOP members with their individual and country standpoints. The issue highlights the fissures within UNSCOP itself, but also demonstrates the limits of UNSCOP's influence on internal matters and Britain's imperialistic inclinations.

Evidence gathered indicated that legal and/or illegal immigration would persist as long as Jews were determined to create a Jewish state. Special Committee members considered the latter to be the main obstacle to a peaceful solution. Statistical analysis demonstrated that, although over the

previous decades the Jewish population had increased as a percentage of the total, Jews would constitute an ever-decreasing minority if immigration stopped. An Anglo-American committee's recommendation for the issue of 100,000 immigration certificates would only partially rectify the imbalance.

From the start of UNSCOP's deliberations, no straightforward solution could be devised that would satisfy the conflicting demands for an independent Arab-Palestine on the one hand and an independent Jewish-state in all or part of Palestine on the other. Ultimately, the Committee narrowed the options down to just two: A minority maintained that the wider mixed population of Palestine was best served by partitioning Palestine into the somewhat artificial federation of two semi-autonomous nations while the majority favoured partitioning Palestine into two independent states both participating in a joint system of economic unity.

Before returning to New York, an UNSCOP sub-committee visited Jewish refugee centres in Europe to establish which option was the most practical: resettlement in their present host country, repatriation to their former homes, or immigration to Palestine or elsewhere. UNSCOP reported that most survivors had their hearts set on Palestine.

The Special Committee Establishes its Modus Operandi

UNSCOP members met privately in New York on the 26th May 1947 to establish their rules of procedure. The Secretary General, Trygve Lie, reminded them that the General Assembly had authorised maximum flexibility and that UNSCOP was "*master of its own procedure*".[652]

The First Committee had previously heard representations from the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee. Other groups and individuals had requested a similar courtesy, but it was decided that, with limited time remaining before the completion date of 1st September, their evidence should be presented in writing followed if necessary, by verbatim evidence. Other practical matters were left to a Procedural Working Group drawn from UNSCOP members.[653]

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[652] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.1) 26 May 1947, Page 1
[653] (Ibid, 4)

Sweden's Chief Justice Sandstrom was elected to chair UNSCOP, easily defeating the Guatemala contender Ambassador Garcia Granados.[654] The new chair read out a letter which was to be sent to interested organisations. The letter stated that although their presence before the First Committee had been denied, they would not necessarily be deprived of an opportunity to present their evidence.[655]

It was agreed that the Mandatory Authority, the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee, could appoint liaison officers to distribute and supply information to UNSCOP.[656] Meetings would be held in public, but those of a more sensitive nature would remain private. A Press officer would accompany UNSCOP and make available public information as and when appropriate. UNSCOP sub-committees would carry out agreed specific functions and secretarial staff were appointed to prepare the essential groundwork, minute verbatim accounts and other necessary reports.

Before departing to Palestine, Special Committee members held their final meeting in New York on the 7th of June 1947. Since the previous meeting, potential witnesses had responded to an earlier invitation with many asking for special consideration. One such witness was an inmate from the Jewish displaced camp in the American Zone in Germany. The presiding secretary explained that the sentiments expressed were representative of a further 20,728 received. Abdur Rahman, the Indian member, argued that rather than attend to the many communications it had received, UNSCOP should focus on the specific issue involved. Sandstrom concluded that from what he had gleaned, the sentiments did not justify formal hearings. Without further comments, the matter was dropped. Apart from concerns about their own safety, Garcia Granados (Guatemala) asked if the safety of underground organisations could be guaranteed should they wish to testify and wanted assurance to this effect from the Palestine Administration. Sandstrom acknowledged the anxiety but proposed that general security issues should be addressed when UNSCOP arrived in Palestine.

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[654] UNGA (A/AC.13/PV.2) 2 June 1947, Page 2
[655] (Ibid, 3)
[656] (Ibid, 4-6)

Before they left New York, a press release was issued to the Palestinian press detailing UNSCOP's expected arrival date and asking for interested parties to submit their written statements.[657] While the Palestine Administration and the Jewish Agency acquiesced, a similar request was declined by the Arab Higher Committee.[658]

UNSCOP Committee Members in Palestine

On the 15th June 1947 UNSCOP arrived in Palestine. The following day all eleven of its members, together with two of the secretariats (UN Assistant Secretary-General and Garcia Robles) convened in private at the YMCA Building in Jerusalem. Robles informed members that the UN Secretary-General had received a telegram from the Vice Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee advising him of its refusal to collaborate with UNSCOP.[659] It was anticipated that the Arabs would eventually relent or at least provide written evidence. Adopting a tellingly different attitude, both the Jewish Agency and the Palestine Administration extended welcomes; expressed their willingness to cooperate at all levels and appointed liaison officers so to help facilitate the process. The Administration was concerned about the risk attached to staff giving evidence in a public forum. In response, two members Granados (Guatemala) and Brilej (Yugoslavia) warned of "*political repercussions*" if members of the public were excluded. Countering this, Hood (Australia) quipped that the Committee could choose to hear this evidence in private "*or not at all*". He proposed that the press be informed that while meetings would generally be open to the public, it would be necessary for some to be heard in private session. He explained that this was not with a view to gathering previously undisclosed confidential matter but "*on grounds of the prevailing [violent] situation*".[660]

On the same day (16th June 1947), Sir Henry Gurney, Chief Secretary of the Palestine Mandatory Authority gave his evidence. Special Committee members devoted time to questions surrounding Palestine's population density. They focused on the Gaza region. This, members learned,

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[657] UNGA PAL/21, 3 June 1947
[658] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.4) 6 June 1947, Page 4
[659] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.5) 16 June 1947, Page 1
[660] (Ibid, 3-4)

was divided into two sub-districts totalling 13,689 square kilometres. The first of these, Gaza itself, consisted of a narrow coastal strip with a predominately Arab population of around 150,000. The other sub-district was Beersheba, which included the Negev – a sparsely populated desert area with around 90,000 nomadic Bedouins and a settled population of some 7,000. Provided ground water existed, the Negev had growth potential.

The Special Committee's first visit to the Holy Places had been arranged to take place two days later. Because of Palestine's instability, the Committee decided that the press should not be informed until after the event.[661] During their investigative tour UNSCOP members witnessed armoured military vehicles negotiating between barbed wire protected road blocks. They discovered that violence was ongoing, curfews were commonplace, and that hundreds of Jews had been incarcerated with many denied the right to appeal.[662] [663]

By 1947, British military forces were struggling to stem the flow of tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants some of whom had resorted to a campaign of terror. Despite this, UNSCOP also found instances of amicable relations, such as joint Arab-Jewish strike action and collaboration on several agricultural forums. Though limited, these examples might yet provide a way forward for more significant Arab-Jewish economic cooperation in a future solution.

From the start, the Special Committee was inundated with requests for assistance over immigration certificates, internment camp conditions and interventions over prisoner release. One such was an appeal by the relatives of three young Jewish men faced with execution imposed by the Military Court of Jerusalem. Although letters of concern were exchanged, the Special Committee resolved that issues outside of its own narrow remit should not dissuade it from carrying out its

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[661] (Ibid, 4)

[662] United Nations Official Record (A/364) 3rd September 1947, Supplement No 11, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) – Report to the General Assembly. Chapter 1, Para 117

[663] In February 1947 the Palestine Administration had imposed 'Statutory Martial Law' in a number of districts (The political history of Palestine under British administration (1947, 37): Memorandum by HM Government presented to UNSCOP

primary task. In his diary, Ralph Bunche (future mediator) wryly noted that the "*British helped the committee get started by sentencing five (three?) terrorists in military court today to death ...*".[664]

Events were moving quickly. Acting through informal channels, David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann and Moshe Sharett reminded pliant Committee members that the principle of Partition was worthy of serious consideration. Again, acting on their own initiative, Ben-Gurion and his associates presented a confidential map outlining boundary proposals of a partitioned Jewish state which effectively covered some 70% of western Palestine.[665]

Since Britain's 1939 White Paper, Jewish immigration and land sale restrictions were major obstacles to Zionist ambitions. Palestine had been divided into zones, each determining the extent to which land could be sold to Jews leaving just 5% freely purchasable. During his evidence before the Special Committee on the 17th June 1947, Moshe Sharett[666] maintained that land transfers had not resulted in a landless class and emphasised that in instances where land had been purchased from absentee landlords, former tenants had been resettled. The Jewish Agency had identified land that offered potential for Jewish settlement including the Negev region comprising around 40% of the country's total. This largely desert region was sparsely populated, but with effort and irrigation its northern section could flourish and offer "*extensive agricultural development*". Jews, he asserted, were drawn to Palestine. Driven out from elsewhere by suffering, it "*was the only country where [Jews] could hope to rebuild their lives on secure foundations and become a nation again*"[667]. Immigration, Sharett argued, was the "*prime agent of [Palestine's] progress*". Turning his bitterness on Britain, he protested that the 1939 White paper represented a *"somersault"* in British policy. It was this reversal, he claimed, that had resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocents who might otherwise have escaped to Palestine.[668] In 1947, the restrictive White Paper policies remained in force.

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[664] Ben-Dror, E. (2016, 14) Ralph Bunche and the Arab–Israeli Conflict Mediation and the UN, 1947–1949
[665] Ben-Dror, E. (2014, 21): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP
[666] Writing just one year later, the Guatemalan delegate was impressed by Sharett's demeanour. He portrayed him as a "vigorous, dark haired man with alert black eyes [with] an encyclopaedic knowledge of his subject" Garcia-Granados (1948, 48): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[667] UNGA (A/364/Add.2, PV) 17 June 1947, Pages 2-4
[668] (Ibid, 3)

It was noticeable that during the previous decade the Jewish Agency had focused on resettling young people. During that period around 18,000 Jewish adolescents and children had been resettled making a combined total Jewish population of some 630,000. Of this number, a little over a third were born in Palestine with the remainder claiming fifty-two national origins representing, in Sharett's words, "*a vanguard preparing ground for the absorption of more to come*".[669] He added that the Jewish Agency welcomed Jewish assimilation to encourage a distinct Jewish identity. Palestine was to be a home in which, by their own efforts, Jews would be "*independent in the real sense of the term*". That independence, Sharett maintained, could only be realised via an independent Jewish state. Moshe Sharett argued that existing Jewish towns and villages had scope for further expansion and could absorb many more Jewish immigrants. If, ultimately, Palestine was partitioned into two states, Jews had no need to live amongst the "*Arab population in the economic and territorial sense ... [a self-contained national system] is the only way [Jews could] hope to settle in large numbers and to feel economically secure and nationally independent*".[670] Sharett had made it clear that, unlike Arabs who had refused to discuss the matter, Zionists were prepared to negotiate on a two-state Palestine. Thus, without the prospect of a workable compromise, Partition was unavoidable.

While Zionists enthusiastically proposed their own solutions to the Palestine question, UNSCOP was hampered by the lack of communication from the Palestinian-Arab contingent. On the 17th June 1947, UNSCOP members met in private to discuss this omission. Acting on behalf of the Arab Higher Committee, its Vice-Chairman Jamal Husseini, telegraphed UNSCOP via the UN Secretary General reiterating the Committee's intention to impose an Arab boycott on UNSCOP's investigatory work. An Arab general strike was called involving public and private concerns with all forms of communication with UNSCOP forbidden. There were to be no exceptions to the ruling.[671] The Arab refusal to co-operate presented UNSCOP members with a dilemma. Without any opposing

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[669] (Ibid, 4)
[670] (Ibid, 4)
[671] UNGA (A/364/Add.2, PV) 17 June 1947, Page 3

evidence, UNSCOP's enquiry was seriously flawed. With the General Assembly as the final arbiter, Jamal Husseini's refusal to allow Palestinian-Arab participation had delivered a fatal blow to their ambitions. Partition became all but certain. UNSCOP's Yugoslavian member, Dr Jože Brilej, captured UNSCOP's sentiments. While the Yugoslavian people supported Arabs and the Palestinian *"[fight] for their freedom and independence [non-cooperation with UNSCOP] would make it impossible for the interests of the Palestine Arabs to be represented before the Committee [and that the boycott] might postpone the final solution of the Palestine problem"*. He proposed informing the Arab Higher Committee that an Arab presence would help fulfil the interests of Arab Palestinians. Sandstrom (Chairman) and others agreed with Brilej's reasoning but finally favoured Sir Abdur Rahman's contention that it was advisable to await developments.[672] In the event, the Arab Higher Committee held its ground and refused to change its position.

UNSCOP Members Face a Stiff Test

It had been previously agreed that the majority of UNSCOP's meetings would be open to the public. However, at times some were conducted in private, particularly those where potentially incendiary matters were discussed. In these cases, public disclosure would usually follow after decisions had been made. One of the issues debated in private concerned the death sentences handed down by the Military Court on three Jewish men found guilty of acts of sabotage. As a result, relatives of the young men had written to the Special Committee hoping to "*to prevent the execution ... by procuring commutation of the death sentence*".[673] However, intervention on legal and/or political matters could call into question the Special Committee's independence and credibility and raise security concerns or even jeopardise individual Member's safety.

The death sentences had been imposed on the very day of UNSCOP's arrival in Palestine. So far as the British Administration was concerned, Norway's call at the UN for a climate of peace while UNSCOP was in the region had gone unheeded. The timing of the sentences could not have been

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[672] (Ibid, 4-6)
[673] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.9), 18 June 1947, Page 1

more inappropriate. Importantly, the effectiveness of the British Mandate and the Palestine Administration's enactment policy, were now openly questioned. The Administration's perceived mishandling of the Mandate was already under scrutiny and the potential negative ramifications to Britain were evident. Moreover, this inept timing placed UNSCOP's specific role under the gaze of the press.

The debate was vigorous. Several UNSCOP members insisted that legal matters fell within the Committee's remit while others, most notably Sandstrom the Chairman, argued against. Though he accepted that his Committee was caught in a dilemma, he reasoned that "*any decision constituting intervention would reflect on the prestige of the Committee*".[674] With no consensus in sight on whether the matter fell within UNSCOP's terms of reference, Sandstrom finally ruled that he would personally approach the High Commissioner.

By the time the Committee met for a second time two days later, UNSCOP's deliberations had been leaked to the press through an unknown source. Garcia Granados (Guatemala) revealed that a newspaper source had told him that somehow the press had obtained information regarding Sandstrom's visit to the High Commissioner and that the leak had come from a Briton. Sandstrom advised his Committee against making unguarded comments. He outlined his conversation with the High Commissioner: He reported that there was a second aspect that had been largely misunderstood. Since the General Assembly's call for calm during UNSCOP's investigations, Sandstrom reminded his colleagues, that the "*Jewish underground*" had murdered over thirty British soldiers. These acts, according to the Chairman, were against individuals who were "*perform[ing] a heavy duty under strained conditions*" so it was perhaps inadvisable for UNSCOP to interfere with the Mandatory Authority's due process. It seemed to him that the Irgun and other radical organisations had ignored the truce and were "*use[ing] the Committee to get out of the line of fire*". Responding to a question posed by Sir Abdur Rahman (India), Sandstrom reassured him that his conversation with the High

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[674] (Ibid, 4)

Commissioner was in a personal capacity and not necessarily reflective of the Committee's position. The Committee members remained divided on the issue, so it was decided to seek guidance from the UN Secretary General. Later, the Committee were informed that according to a press report, Trygve Lie had refused to be drawn into the debate, believing it to be a matter for the Special Committee. Granados stated, supported by Fabregat (Uruguay), that in the event of an announcement of non-entitlement to intervene, he (Granados) reserved the right to inform the press that he disagreed with this decision. Instead, he would report that, in his opinion, the Committee could have "*ask[ed] for mercy*". Deliberation over this matter was temporarily deferred, but in the meantime the record was to be considered confidential.[675]

By Sunday 22nd June 1947 the Special Committee met again to deliver its final judgement on whether to intervene in the Administration's internal legal affairs. Individual members had had time to reconsider and were ready for a robust debate. The Chairman was confronted by a minor rebellion. Some members notably, Simic (Yugoslavia), Granados (Guatemala) and Fabregat (Uruguay) challenged Sandstrom's opinion that, under its term of reference, the Committee lacked legal and/or political authority to intervene. Rahman (India), Hood (Australia), Lisicky (Czechoslovakia) and Rand (Canada) took the opposing viewpoint. There were also implied criticisms of Sandstrom's discussions with the High Commissioner. Simic (Yugoslavia) opened the debate, one that highlighted the fraught relationship slowly developing between several UNSCOP members. The debate centred on whether *"[executing] the three men [was] liable to entail undesirable consequences and that the Committee [should] take appropriate steps with the Government of Palestine to obtain mercy for the condemned men*".[676] There were procedural matters to resolve: whether without the express direction of the General Assembly, the UN Secretary General was empowered to address individual governments (in this case the Administrative Authority), whether interference in sovereign affairs would set a precedent, whether individual members necessarily spoke for their governments and

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[675] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.10) 20 June 1947, Pages 3-5
[676] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.11) Page 2

whether a GA appointed Committee was empowered to approach a foreign government without going through the proper channels of the General Assembly. There was speculation but none of the questions were definitively answered.[677]

At the end of a heated debate, Sandstrom shrewdly led his Committee. He gave free rein to dissenters and compromised on several bureaucratic issues. Ultimately, his authority prevailed. By a majority it was agreed to send two letters – one to the relatives of the condemned men and another to the UN Secretary General.[678] The relatives were informed that it was "*beyond the scope of [UNSCOP's] instruction and function to interfere with the judicial administration of Palestine [but that the matter was now in the hands of] the proper authorities*".[679] A majority voted to send a letter to the Secretary General expressing "*concern as to the possible unfavourable repercussions [on UNSCOP]*" if the execution went ahead. The letter asked that this message should be conveyed to the Mandatory Power. The representatives of India, the Netherlands and Canada dissented from expressions of 'concern' and Australia and one other country (unrecorded) abstained. A press release was approved.[680]

It came to nothing. In early July 1947, the three men were hanged. On the 11th and 12th of July, the Irgun reacted swiftly by hanging two British sergeants. Bagon argues that this reprisal had a profound effect upon on Anglo-Jewry "*testing dual allegiance to its limit and resulting in anti-Jewish rioting across Britain*". The act is "*irrefutable evidence that the Jewish underground ... had a direct ... and discernible impact upon Anglo-Jewry*".[681]

Analysis of the three-day debate reveals UNSCOP's determination to achieve goals, but also the limitations of the various members. During the debate, the Swedish Chairman, Emil Sandstrom

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[677] (Ibid, 2)

[678] The Committee had debated the issue, but other than expressing its concern that the executions could result in "unfavourable repercussions" to the Committees deliberations, there was little it could do. The UK Government failed to see the relevance of the GA to this case. In any case the sentences were still sub-judice and not yet confirmed. Thus, it was decided that the matter should be closed.

[679] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.12), 22 June 1947, Page 2

[680] (Ibid, 5)

[681] Bagon, P. (2003, 14): 'The Impact of the Jewish underground upon Anglo Jewry: 1945-1947

demonstrated his ability to garner support and force his will by steering "*widely varied types of personalities, each accustomed to authority*".[682] He was, Garcia-Granados writes, "*a wily old fox*".[683]

Sandstrom judged correctly the widespread unease felt among UNSCOP members. Despite the General Assembly's resolution of the 15th May calling for peace during the investigation, there had been no let-up in the level of violence. Sandstrom proposed issuing a public statement to the effect that continuing violence "*constitute[d] a flagrant disregard*" of the GA's wishes.[684] It is probable that UNSCOP's seeming acceptance of the Palestine Administration's process over the death sentences would have incensed radical elements of the Jewish underground. This perception together with Jamal Husseini's mistrust of UNSCOP's motives were enough for some members to fear that, despite security measures, their own safety was at stake. Nevertheless, there was still disagreement. Viswanathan, the Indian Alternative, challenged Sandstrom's proposal. He declared that while he too condemned the violence, he believed that UNSCOP had no jurisdiction over internal matters.[685] Apart from Viswanathan and Hood abstaining, Sandstrom's proposal was accepted.

The executions and the reprisals that followed inflamed an already volatile situation and widened an already unbridgeable divide between the opposing sides. To UNSCOP, finding a way to best satisfy Jewish and Arab ambitions on the dominant issues of Jewish immigration and land sales was paramount. Arguably it was Emil Sandstrom's influence and strong grip on UNSCOP's majority that was steering the way to a two-state solution.

Ben-Gurion Presents His Evidence

Time was slipping by and the Arab boycott was likely to lead to one-sided appraisal of the Palestine question. There was no shortage of Jewish evidence and they willingly filled the void left by Palestinian Arabs' refusal to participate.

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[682] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 41): 'The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[683] (Ibid, 155)
[684] UNGA (A/AC.13/SR.14) 29 June 1947, Page 4
[685] (Ibid, 3)

On the 4th July 1947, Ben-Gurion, representing the Jewish Agency, took his place in a public session. After formal courtesies, Ben-Gurion began his delivery. He expressed his disappointment with the "*numerous commission*s" that had gone before. He suggested that it was understandable that people were sceptical as to their value and baffled by Britain's contemptuous shelving of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry's recommendations. These had been unanimously agreed and considered "*a tremendous achievement*". While welcoming the latest enquiry, he doubted Britain's willingness to respect its outcome any more than on previous occasions.[686]

Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion accepted that as it was no longer in Britain's hands and, as UNSCOP was a United Nations inspired committee, the solution to the Palestine problem lay in the involvement of the international community. It was, according to Ben-Gurion, "*the [UN's] supreme test*".[687] He questioned whether it was presumptuous to expect that the United Nations was prepared to fulfil its obligations "*in the spirit and the letter*". He referred to the Balfour Declaration and maintained that it was a commitment by the British government to preside over the reconstitution of a Jewish national home in Palestine. This same commitment was embodied in the Mandate and supported by the then 52 member-states of the League of Nations. The Balfour Declaration was a public statement of intent that Jews are "*a people with rights to a national home*"; a place for the "*Jewish people in its entirety*". Now, though this contention provoked conflict it was a conflict between two unequal parties with one being "*stateless, homeless … people with nothing but the graves of six million [Jews]*", confronting a mighty Empire. Ben-Gurion insisted that the League of Nations had merely granted Britain temporary custodianship and that Palestine was not Britain's dominion. Britain's presence in Palestine was intended by the League of Nations only "*to give effect to internationally guaranteed pledges*".[688] Time and again, statesmen had accepted the concept of a Jewish 'home'. In 1920, Churchill had envisaged a Jewish National "*state*" of up to four million Jews

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[686] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.16) 4 July 1947, Page 2
[687] (Ibid, 3)
[688] (Ibid, 5-6)

living under the umbrella of British Crown. Churchill had stated that notwithstanding its worldwide benefits, a Jewish state would serve the "*interests of the British Empire*". Again, Ben-Gurion continued, in 1937, Peel's Commission reasoned that the Balfour Declaration encompassed the entire area of Palestine including Transjordan. Writing in 1918, the scholar George Adam Smith imagined millions of Jews migrating to Palestine in sufficient number to "*form a nation*", having adequate space and the means to support them. Article 4 of the agreement between Emir Feisal and Dr Weizmann (3rd Jan 1919) confirmed that large scale Jewish immigration into Palestine should be *"encourage[d] and stimulate[d]"*. At the time of Balfour, Lloyd George contemplated that provided Jews eventually comprised a majority, Palestine would become *"a Jewish Commonwealth"*. Yet despite this pledge, HM Government's 1939 White Paper effectively "*scrapped the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate*". This, Ben-Gurion argued, condemned Jews to permanent minority status; people forbidden to acquire land in meaningful amounts. The Jewish Agency's immediate response had been to denounce the White Paper as a "*breach of faith … a surrender to Arab Terrorism [that threatened to widen the breach] between Jews and Arabs*".[689] Britain's 1939 White Paper represented a death sentence for millions of Jews who might otherwise have been saved. Its restriction on Jewish immigration had come as "*a mortal blow to the Jewish people*".[690] Ben-Gurion was merciless in his account. By closing entry to Palestine "*in the hour of the greatest peril [the White Paper was] responsible*" for the extermination of thousands who might otherwise have escaped the gas chambers. He recalled the case where just before the outbreak of war, permission was refused for the safe passage of 20,000 Polish children and 10,000 young people from the Balkan states to Palestine. As a result, they met their end in Dachau and Treblinka. He also referred to the steamer 'Struma' bound for Palestine with 729 Jewish passengers. After repeated pleas for assistance were rebuffed, the ship sank and everyone on board lost their lives. For these and many more Jewish people, reaching Palestine was a matter of "*life or death*". Ultimately, they were "*direct victims of the White*

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[689] (Ibid, 5-11)
[690] (Ibid, 13)

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Paper" Ben-Gurion continued. He cited a recent Gallop Poll conducted by the Military Authorities in the American Zone in Germany which indicated that as many as 60% of Germans approved of Hitler's extermination programme. The former birthplaces of the survivors had become "*graveyard[s] of their people*". What remained was a longing to return to *"their national home"*. Ben-Gurion argued that a "*Jewish national home*" in Palestine was a place as "*Jewish as an Englishman is English*". Ben-Gurion was unequivocal. To him, Jews must live in a Jewish 'state'; one entirely Jewish in character. He stated that Jews needed no justification for building a Jewish *"civilisation"* with Hebrew as its language and conducting its affairs in accordance with Jewish principles and beliefs. Jews would not assimilate into a non-Jewish culture and had not assimilated with Europeans. Even supposedly assimilated Jews had not been spared from the Holocaust. However, he emphasised, non-integration did not prevent a return to good relations with Arab neighbours whose fate is "*bound up with ours and whose advancement is as vital for us as it is for [them]*".[691]

Repeatedly Ben-Gurion criticised the White Paper. Its restrictive policies were imposed by force. Palestine had become a police state. The Palestine Administration adopted unlimited powers of arrest, search and confiscation of property. There was detention, often without trial. Thousands of prisoners were serving extended sentences and denied justice. Military Courts had wide powers. They could impose death sentences for using or even just carrying firearms, with the liability extended to other members of a group. Civil liberties were effectively abolished. For years the press had been censored and curfews and identity checks were enforced. Collective punishment was commonplace. The list of oppressive policies was striking. Ben-Gurion confirmed that the fault lay not at the level of the soldier or the policeman, but solely with Britain and its 1939 White Paper policy which represented, in Churchill's words, a "*squalid war against the Jews*".[692]

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[691] (Ibid, 5-19)
[692] (Ibid, 15-16)

Special Committee members were divided on how best to organise Palestine, but these views were not shared by Ben-Gurion. He was committed to an independent Jewish state therefore the "*most crucial question is immigration*". Ben-Gurion cited two conflicting options. First there was the anti-Zionist bi-national option, as envisaged in the 1939 White Paper. This, he continued "*prohibits Jewish immigration, condemns Jews to remain a permanent minority and perpetuated the homelessness of the Jewish people*".[693] Second, there was the Zionist option where the population of the Jewish state would increase by up to four million; a state where citizens would exploit its developmental potential and cultivate large tracks of previously uncultivated land. This policy would raise living standards for all in a state where Jews and Arabs "*cooperate and work together as free and equal partners*" so as to fulfil the Balfour original intentions.[694] He entreated UNSCOP members to consider that although millions more had suffered, Hitler had singled out Jews as a special case for extermination because they possessed neither land nor sanctuary in a "*state of [their] own ... able to protect, to intervene, to save and to fight [for]*".[695]

Ben-Gurion had conflated the first option under one broad anti-Zionist heading, but fundamentally he raised the question of an entirely Jewish Palestine; one to which a notable number of his Zionist colleagues subscribed and believed was just and achievable. Ben-Gurion walked a fine line between the realists and the idealists. Recognising that his compromise might have to be a partitioned Palestine, he ventured that after WWI, Arabs had gained their freedom in an area of some 1,250,000 square miles, 125 times larger than Western Palestine. This left the restoration of the Jewish nation unfulfilled under the term of the Balfour Declaration.[696] Ben-Gurion considered it a mistake to consider Arab-Jewish relations in terms of one small Arab country (Palestine). The problem should be viewed within the wider context of the wider Arab Middle East. If before the war, the Jewish people had had a state of their own, then the Holocaust could have been avoided. Given

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[693] (Ibid, 22)
[694] (Ibid, 23)
[695] (Ibid, 24)
[696] (Ibid, 23)

the status quo, he ventured, who was "*prepared and able to guarantee that what happened [to Jews] will not happen again?*". Jews in Palestine and Jews worldwide, he asserted, must be given the freedom to determine their own destiny. Only Palestine could fulfil the Jewish *"desire or the prospect of attaining statehood".[697]*

During his lengthy delivery, Ben-Gurion argued three Zionist objectives: an immediate reversal of HM Government's 1939 White Paper restrictions on immigration, a renewed Arab-Jewish alliance and, crucial to worldwide Jewry, a United Nations commitment to an independent Jewish state in Palestine.

Horowitz Gives His Analysis

Jewish Agency representative, David Horowitz, provided an important contribution to UNSCOP's work. It was understood that the level of immigration was limited by Palestine's "*absorptive capacity*", but the question was how many immigrants Palestine could absorb before it had a serious negative effect on the existing population and whether Palestine's economic productive capacity could meet the challenges of large-scale immigration?[698] Horowitz addressed these questions directly. UNSCOP members were now faced with an array of instructive facts and figures. Horowitz maintained that the limit to economic absorption was a question that applied across the world, not just in Palestine. Absorptive capacity was not some arbitrary arithmetic concept, but rather a complex function of variables: a function of area, "*natural resources ... skill, knowledge, capital, productivity [of the workforce] ... [and] the determination of the people to reconstruct a certain economy*".[699] Horowitz had the support of Chaim Weizmann who confirmed that 'absorptive capacity' is a man-made concept, but in order to create it "*you need [a majority to develop] on a scale which only government could give*".[700] Similarly, Horowitz made the case that absorptive capacity is in constant

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[697] (Ibid, 24-24)

[698] For a useful analysis of 'economic absorptive capacity' see: Migdal, Joel S. (1988, 142-176): Strong Societies and Weak States, State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World, (Chapter 4, Laying the basis for a strong state: the British and Zionists in Palestine)

[699] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.16), 4 July 1947, Page 34

[700] UNGA (A/AC.13/PV.21), 8 July 1947, Page 6

flux; it is a man-made creation. He exemplified his point by comparing Palestine with roughly equal sized states. Palestine had population of some 2,000,000 in an area of some 10,000 square miles. On the other hand, Sicily, Lombardy and a successful economy like Belgium (for example) were roughly the same size, but with populations of 4,000,000, 6,000,000 and 8,000,000 respectively. Conversely, neighbouring Transjordan was three times larger than Palestine, but housed a population density fifteen times smaller.[701] In short, the relationship between land area and population density is complex, but in general, the '*absorptive capacity*' of a country is fluid.

There is an inherent paradox in the idea of this fluid absorptive capacity, but it is unclear if Special Committee members noticed it. On the one hand, Zionists insisted on the need to inhabit as large a space as possible. On the other, according to Horowitz, from an economic perspective "*human factors [outweighed] the availability of space*".[702] If he was correct, then taken literally, (and using Belgium as an example) the coastal plain alone was more than sufficient to accommodate millions more incomers.

Using a range of charts, Horowitz demonstrated that given modern agricultural methods, land and livestock could be turned into highly productive resources. He compared Jewish and Arab agricultural regions. On produce after produce, Jewish farms were significantly more productive than Arab. The increase was the result of large-scale irrigation projects making previously arid land fertile. He claimed that already, seemingly barren land had been turned into fertile farms. In the time taken for the population to increase by 144%, the amount of irrigated land had increased by a factor of five proving just "*how elastic the capacity of absorption is and how vastly it can be increased*". The same rules apply to industrial expansion: "*the process of industrialisation exceeded by far the increase in population*".[703] Tellingly, Horowitz demonstrated the inverse relationship between increased Jewish immigration and decreased levels of unemployment. He produced convincing evidence showing that

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[701] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.16), 4 July 1947, Page 34
[702] (Ibid, 35)
[703] (Ibid, 36-39)

in predominantly Jewish areas of Palestine (industrial and agricultural), Jewish immigration stimulated growth and growth reduced unemployment. In 1931, the Palestine Administration had conducted a census of Palestine. It showed that far from approaching its absorptive capacity, Arabs from across the region had tended to immigrate into rather than emigrate out of Palestine. Despite the supposed oversaturation, the latter trend was most marked in the coastal plain. Horowitz claimed that Arabs gravitated from more sparsely populated areas to the most densely populated "*because [of] Jewish development*".[704] He also affirmed that far from demonstrating a lack of cooperation between Arabs and Jews, the opposite was true. Also, without exception there was a consistent correlation between immigration and Government revenue: "*As immigration increases, revenue increases; as immigration decreases, revenue decreases*". Horowitz inferred strong correlations between the growth of the Jewish population and increased Arab living standards and life expectancy, decreased infant mortality, decreased incidences of sickness and decreased incidence of malaria.[705] He illustrated credible causal links to support this hypothesis.

Horowitz confirmed that his figures were based on Government statistics as presented to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.[706] This calls into question of how, in its 1939 White Paper, HM Government deduced that maximum absorptive capacity would be breached by anything over an additional 75,000 Jewish immigrants incrementally over a five-year period. Also, Horowitz's analysis does not tally with the Anglo-American Committee's proposal that the figure should be 100,000 Jewish immigrants. Judging from Horowitz's evidence, there was little logic attached to either Britain's 1939 White Paper or the Anglo-American Committee's estimates of Palestine's capacity to absorb Jewish immigrants. Horowitz's statistical analysis was fundamental to UNSCOP's understanding of the implications of Partition.

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[704] (Ibid, 35)
[705] (Ibid, 42-47)
[706] (Ibid, 43)

A Jewish State and Still No Compromise

Ben-Gurion had been heavily critical of the Mandate and the way it been implemented by the Palestine Administration. He faced questions two days later.[707] It is important to note that while UNSCOP sampled conflicting evidence, Ben-Gurion (representing the Jewish Agency) reflected majority Jewish opinion.

Sandstrom took control of the public meeting. Which Authority, he asked, would oversee immigration and what type of Government would be put in place if the Mandate ceased? Ben-Gurion contended that the terms of the Mandate had been violated and that the White Paper policy was "*illegal*". He proposed that any transition would be determined under the "*highest supervision of the United Nations*" for a period pending the establishment of a Jewish state. As for the type of Government, Ben-Gurion described a democratic and independent Jewish state with a Jewish majority; one "*based on absolute equality of all her citizens*". The Jewish Agency would oversee material development but functions of Government such as "*safety, security, [and foreign] relations*" were temporary matters best decided by the United Nations. He predicted that the first wave of around 1,000,000 Jewish settlers would arrive relatively quickly to speed up development raising the living standards of Arabs "*to the same level, as possible, as the Jewish*".[708]

Sir Abdul Rahman (India) was quick to challenge, asking if the United Nations should impose on Arabs a Jewish 'state' or Jewish immigration by force of arms. If so, Rahman quizzed, *"[w]ould it not mean an absolutely bloody war between [Jews] and the Arabs?*". The question was rhetorical, and Ben-Gurion avoided answering directly. It was presupposed, he replied, that "*no armed forces are loosed against anybody*". British armed forces were already used to prevent Jewish immigrants from landing. He argued that this was evidence of racial discrimination against Jews. The United Nations would be duty bound to implement any decision made. Rahman was clearly irritated and

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[707] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.19), 7 July 1947
[708] (Ibid, 5-7)

quick to show that he supported the Arab position. There was a short stand-off between the two men.[709]

Now Sandstrom turned to Ben-Gurion's interpretation of the specific term 'Jewish National Home (not a State) '*in* Palestine' - according to the wording of the Balfour Declaration. It was a crucial question and posed a potential obstacle to Jewish ambitions. Speaking on behalf of the Jewish Agency, he approached the question cautiously. He commenced his lengthy reply by addressing the Balfour reservation that "*non-Jewish communities should not be prejudiced*". However, he proposed that the definition of 'National Home' rested at the heart of this reservation. He reasoned that *if* Balfour had intended that Jews were to comprise a minority in a majority Arab Palestine, then Arabs would have no need for safeguards. A majority community would provide for its own safeguards. It would follow that minority Jewish rights would be prejudiced, and it was Jews who would require protection in a majority Arab state. If on the other hand it was contemplated that Jews should remain a minority, Ben-Gurion questioned, *"why [state or no state] must you [provide] safeguards for the rights of a majority. It is nonsense*". He claimed that this was evidence that it was *not* intended that Jews would comprise a minority. Therefore, he concluded, Balfour and the Palestine Mandate had envisaged a Jewish majority in a Jewish 'state'.[710] Under the Balfour Declaration the British Government had no legal authority to give Palestine as a *"State"* to either Jews or Arabs. It could commit only to using its "*best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object*" (See the Balfour Declaration - final draft). At the time it was for the League of Nations only to rule on the outcome. Ben-Gurion argued that the Declaration clearly stated that Jews should have a *"National Home"*. The emphasis here is on the word 'National' which has a definitive meaning. For example, the French are French 'nationals'; citizens of the Nation 'State' of France. Balfour used the terminology "*the establishment in Palestine of a national home ...* "(own emphasis). The phraseology "*in Palestine",* he inferred, did not preclude Palestine from becoming a Jewish state "*because if [Britain] had meant*

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[709] (Ibid, 8)
[710] (Ibid, 12)

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in *part of Palestine they [the British] would have said so*" (own emphasis). He entered a discourse on the issue of Balfour and reasoned that the words 'National' and 'State' are mutually inclusive.

The Chairman now focused on the 'dual obligation'. Did Ben-Gurion consider that while Britain was committed to protecting the rights "*of existing non-Jewish communities [that obligation acted as] an obstacle to Jewish immigration?*". Ben-Gurion's reply was unequivocal: "*[W]e [agree with the commitment] wholeheartedly ... because it is right*". However, he continued, although 'immigration' did not feature in the Declaration, its political implications were conveyed into the Mandate. This afforded Jews the opportunity to immigrate into Palestine to build "*a Nation ... a National Home*".[711] Sandstrom persisted. Did the Mandatory Administration's commitment oblige it to impose Jewish immigration on resistant Arabs despite the risk of a Jewish/Arab war? Ben-Gurion objected. He claimed that Jews and Arabs could coexist on equal terms and insisted that the Britain should remove its armed forces from Palestine and should not "*impose non-immigration*".[712]

Special Committee members continued to press Ben-Gurion on his interpretation of the Declaration, the Mandate and its implementation. In answer to questions posed by Ivan Rand[713] (Canada) Ben Gurion conceded that had it not been for the protection offered by the Mandatory Authority as far back as 1922, the small minority of Jews could have been wiped out. However, events had moved on. Members explored the issue of 'protection' and how far Jews would go to protect themselves. Ben-Gurion foresaw no problems in this respect as Jews had shown themselves to be perfectly able live in peace with their Arab neighbours.[714] If, however, "*right [prevailed] and force [proved] necessary, you have to apply it*"[715] If necessary "w*e will defend ourselves by all means and we will build by our own means. We will bring Jews by our own means. We will not give up*".[716]

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[711] (Ibid, 12-16)
[712] (Ibid, 16)
[713] Ivan Cleveland Rand was selected to serve as Canada's representative on UNSCOP. Out of a list of possible candidates presented to Canadian Prime Minister, MacKenzie King, he considered Rand as "easily the best". Although Rand lacked clear knowledge of the issues he emerged as an astute politician and had previously formed an affinity with Louis D. Brandeis so would have been fully aware of his fellow Harvard graduate's deep commitment to American Zionism (Bercuson, David, J., 1985: 'Canada and the birth of Israel – a study in Canadian foreign policy)
[714] UNGA (A/364/Add.2 PV.19), 7 July 1947, Pages 22-23)
[715] (Ibid, 18)
[716] (Ibid, 37)

In answer to a question posed by Lisicky (Czechoslovakia) on whether in Zionist terms, compromise implied Partition, Ben-Gurion replied that Jewish Agency had previously agreed to consider Partition provided the division of the country left a Jewish state in control of an "*adequate area*". He refuted Simic's reference to parity of Government. He maintained that parity in a bi-national state led inevitably to permanent deadlock and could not be contemplated over decisions involving levels of immigration or development.[717] Although there was scope for compromise on state-size and economic cooperation, Zionists would stop at nothing to secure and defend an independent Jewish state.

By now UNSCOP had been conducting its investigation for nearly a month. Before leaving Palestine, those members seen to be supportive of Partition were invited to a meeting on the 14th July 1947 held at Moshe Sharett's home.[718] Senior members of the Jewish Agency were in attendance as well as Sharett (head of the political department). These included Ben-Gurion (Chairman of the Jewish Agency), Golda Myerson[719] (Sharett's deputy at the time), Eliezer Kaplan (Jewish Agency treasurer), Leo Kohn (political department secretary) and others. Ralph Bunche took notes for internal circulation. This *"secret meeting"*, Ben-Dror maintains, was so sensitive that for the most part it was written out of participants' memoirs. During the meeting, UNSCOP members elicited the Agency's opinions for and against Judah Magnes's[720] proposal for a bi-national state based on political and numerical equality and their interpretation of UNSCOP Canadian member, Ivan Rand's "*commonwealth of two states"* proposal. Ben-Gurion took his position as Chairman of the Jewish Agency to beyond its usual limits. Abba Eban, liaison officer to the Jewish Agency,[721] describes "*our*

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[717] (ibid, 21)

[718] Ben-Dror, E. (2014): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP

[719] Later, Golda Meir. On the 17th March 1969, she was elected to serve as Prime Minister of Israel.

[720] Judah Leon Magnes was a founder member of the bi-national political party, Ihud and in favour of a bi-national Arab-Jewish state.
In J. l. Magnes and the promotion of bi nationalism in Palestine' (2006, 51), Rory Miller writes that Magnes believed that Palestine was neither "just an Arab land . . . or just a Jewish land" [and] believed in the "indissoluble historical association of the Jewish people and of Judaism with Palestine". He also believed that Arabs had "natural rights" in Palestine. Zionism therefore could only thrive, both practically and morally, if it was committed to peaceful co-operation and co-existence with the Arab community of the country". Judah Magnes died in New York on the 27th October 1948, five months after Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel.

[721] Abba Eban one of the two Zionist liaison officers to UNSCOP. He was Deputy Prime Minister of Israel from 1963 until 1966. The other liaison officer was David Horowitz.

[members of the Jewish Agency] astonishment [when Ben-Gurion crossed a red line] took out his pencil ... and sketched a map [of a would-be Jewish state while] at his most authoritative, [having] broke[n] all precedents".[722]

The Mandatory Authority Comes under Fire

HM Government, the Palestine Administration, the Mandate and its implementation had all come under fire. On the 19th July 1947, representatives of the Administrative Authority had the opportunity to refute Zionists' allegations and present their case.[723]

Chief Secretary to Palestine, Sir Henry Gurney, maintained that far from failing to fulfil its international pledge under the terms of Mandate, a Jewish National Home was an established fact thanks to Britain but gained at the expense of British lives and resources. But for British defensive forces, the National Home "*would have disappeared*" under the Nazis. By referring twice to the "*establishment [of a Jewish] National Home*" Gurney had endowed Jews with a sense of permanence in Palestine.

Ben-Gurion had accused the Mandatory Authority of failing to fulfil an international pledge given to Jewish people. Countering this, Gurney argued that under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Mandatory Authority was bound by specific obligations relating not only to Jewish people, but also to the non-Jewish population. The enforcement of a Jewish 'state' against the will of the Arab constituency would be a violation of Article 22.[724]

Gurney also addressed the question of immigration. Before WWII, British officers had rescued thousands of Jewish legal certificate holders from Germany just before international frontiers had barred their means of escape. After 1945, when the 75,000 legal immigration quotas were reached, an additional 30,000 Jewish immigrants also entered Palestine. Relative to its size, Gurney confirmed, an influx of Jews on that scale was the equivalent of 6.5 million entering the United States.

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[722] Ben-Dror, E. (2014, 27-28): The success of the Zionist strategy vis-a- vis UNSCOP
[723] UNGA (A/AC.13/PV.36) 19 July 1947
[724] (Ibid, 3)

But Gurney had skirted the main point. Zionists objected to the 1939 White Paper, claiming that had it not been for immigration restrictions many thousands of European Jews might have survived. Nevertheless, after gathering evidence in Palestine, the Special Committee had still not heard the Arab case. This omission could be partially rectified, and it was time to move on

Arab States speak for Palestinian Arabs

Palestinian Arabs were obliged to accept a ruling passed down by the Arab Higher Committee forbidding their appearance before the Special Committee. Nevertheless, neighbouring Arab countries had expressed a willingness to represent their own and Palestinian-Arab interests. Arrangements were in place for a joint meeting between UNSCOP members and the former at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beirut.

On the 22nd of July 1947 the Vice President of the Council of Lebanon (Bechara El Khoury) opened proceedings.[725] Finding a satisfactory settlement appeared complicated but, EI Khoury claimed, it was "*very simple if settled in the right light*". Otherwise, he warned, the imposition of a Jewish home in Palestine was a threat that Arab states would not ignore.

The Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Hamid Frangieh brought matters into focus. He reiterated what had been said at the General Assembly. The *"simple"* solution was to end the British Mandate and to declare Palestine as an independent Arab state, in conformity with the founding principles of the United Nations. He declared the Balfour Declaration invalid and affirmed that its text was inherently ambiguous. He said the Declaration had opened the door to Zionist sponsored immigration into a Jewish National Home.[726] Although Palestine was 93% Arab, Arab opinion had not been formally tested. From the fall of the Ottoman Empire there was steady rise in Arab nationalism. Both Jews and Arabs were competing for Palestine and Balfour had caused serious disruption. Frangieh characterised this nationalist trend as the "*the natural awakening of the Arab*

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[725] UNGA (A/AC.13/PV.38) 22 July 1947
[726] (Ibid, 2-6)

peoples".[727] He maintained that the Allies had reneged on their promises. While most Arabs countries had gained their independence, Britain had rigorously imposed the Mandate so that it worked in favour of Jews, rather than encourage Palestine towards self-empowerment, "*National liberation [was, Frangieh claimed] nothing more than a mirage*".[728] To Frangieh (who was also articulating the views of Arab states), the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate were illegal instruments biased in favour of Zionists. This enabled Jews to immigrate into the predominately Arab world in such numbers that eventually Arabs would be displaced by a Jewish majority.

In his summing up, Frangieh maintained that Zionists were intent on expanding their reach beyond Palestine into the wider Middle East. He argued that at first, Zionists had been content to view Palestine as a place of refuge, but later this had morphed into a desire for a Jewish homeland *in* Palestine. Later plans involved the establishment of a Jewish state and following this, a state encompassing the entire region of Palestine. Not content with that, Zionists were fixated on expansionism, threatening the very existence of neighbouring Arab countries. He continued: a Zionist memorandum presented at the 1918 Peace Conference claimed territorial rights over Transjordan (later, Jordan) and beyond to regions of Syria and Lebanon. This was proof of expansionist ambitions. Frangieh argued that Ben-Gurion had convinced Jewish settlers that Palestine was just one small step towards their ultimate goal which had been stalled temporarily by a feeble Administration. Jewish terrorism was proof that Zionists would allow nothing to stand in their way. Further, because mass immigration was vital to the Zionist agenda, Arab states had "*the right to oppose [it] … it is their duty*".[729]

By the end of the first session, Arab countries had unanimously set out their demands. Palestine was an Arab land and must be declared as an independent Arab state. The Zionist ambition

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[727] (Ibid, 4)
[728] (Ibid, 5)

for numerical superiority must be stopped by an immediate ban on Jewish immigration. Palestine's Arab neighbours had drawn a non-negotiable line which paralleled the intransigence of the Jewish Agency just two weeks before. At this late stage, with complete polarisation and no real expectation of reconciliation, UNSCOP seemed certain to recommend a form of Partition.

Arab Statesmen Have the Last Word

The above meeting had been held in public, but the following day, 23 July 1947, Arab statesmen gave their evidence in private session.[730] [731] UNSCOP's first questions focussed on issues surrounding immigration and land issues. In the absence of one common language there was confusion around the term 'illegal immigration'. Emir Adel Arslan (Syrian representative), Fadel Jamali (Iraq) and Fouad Hamza (Saudi-Arabia) responded, but as before, it fell upon Frangieh to provide a definitive answer. Since Balfour, he maintained, all Jewish immigrants had entered Palestine illegally. Those who had been granted permission by the Mandatory Authority would therefore be classed as "*citizens de facto*". Jews who had not acquired citizenship status would be "*considered as foreigners*". In the meantime, until an Arab-Palestinian state was established with its own judicial system, immigration should be prohibited together with land transfer from Arabs to Jews. Frangieh contended that apart from the unique 1941 *coup d'état* in Bagdad when the Nazis had incited Arab violence against Jews, Jews and Arabs had enjoyed centuries of *"perfect harmony"*. That aside, Jews would continue to benefit from autonomy in an independent Palestinian Arab state. Zionism, he maintained, had poisoned the relationship. Jews, according to Fadel Jamali (Iraq), are "*part of us*" and had achieved prominent commercial and political success, but Zionism had soured an otherwise cordial atmosphere. The latter sparked a contest among Arab states vying for the distinction of having enriched and politically integrated the greater number of Jews.[732]

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[730] UNGA (AC.13/PV.39) 23 July 1947

[731] The Arab statesmen were: Hamid Frangieh and Camille Chamoun (Lebanon), Emir Adel Arslan, and Riad Solh (Syria); Fadel Jamali (Iraq), Fouad Hamza (Saudi-Arabia), Emir Abdel Rahman Hakki (Egypt) and Ali Al Mouayed (Yemen).

[732] (Ibid, 3-5)

Of the options available: partitioning Palestine into two independent states with separate immigration policies, or a federation of semi-autonomous states also with individual immigration policies, or finally, a bi-national state implying substantial curtailment of Jewish immigration, were all dismissed on grounds that each shared "*the same number of disadvantages*".[733] In his summing up, Jamali argued that "*alien dreamers formed designs to come and occupy Palestine [but it was an act] of aggression and a violation of the principles of peace, justice and democracy".* As there was an outright refusal to consider the alternative options for Palestine, Jamali maintained that it should be declared an independent Arab state. In that state, Jews whose status was deemed 'legal' could remain, benefiting from equality, citizenship and a degree of autonomy. Jewish immigration would stop, and future policy left to the vagaries of a predominantly Arab political authority. The fate of non-citizens ('illegal' immigrants) was uncertain, though they faced the prospect of expulsion. While Arabs condemned the Holocaust and sympathised with the predicament faced by survivors, the problem was one that required wider international attention. "*Palestine*", Jamali stated, "*is not a land without people to be given to a people with no land*".[734]

UNSCOP's Swedish Chairman, Sandstrom, focused on the nub of the problem. Given a single Palestinian Arab state, he questioned the fate of illegal Jewish immigrants already living in Palestine. Hamid Frangieh (Lebanon), replied that it was important to define the term 'illegal'. He argued that Arab states were unified in their opinion that as the Balfour Declaration was itself illegal, then it followed that all Jews who had entered Palestine since Balfour were illegal immigrants. However, he conceded that Jews who had been granted Palestinian citizenship under the Mandatory Authority could be regarded as *de facto* Palestinian citizens but those who had entered the country under British restrictions would be considered as having entered the country illegally. They would be treated in the same manner as an Arab illegal entrant and faced "*expulsion from the country*". A future independent Arab Government of Palestine would determine the fate of Jews who had entered according to the

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[733] (Ibid, 14)
[734] (Ibid, 26)

rules in force under the Mandated Authority, but who were not yet Palestinian Nationals. Noting Frangieh's former qualification, Lisicky (Czechoslovakia) asked for clarification. Adel Arslan (Syria) did nothing to oblige. To him, whether an immigrant was a *de facto* citizen or not, those who had entered Palestine post Balfour were illegal entrants. Now there was an air of confusion.[735] Although the dilemma was left unresolved, Arab intentions were clear. The Balfour Declaration was null and void and the British Mandate an illegal instrument. Jewish immigration since Balfour was illegal and immigrants would be subject to the restrictive laws of a future Palestinian-Arab state.

Reading from a prepared statement, delivered in public on the previous day, the President of the Council of Lebanon now adopted a more conciliatory tone. Again, he was speaking on behalf of his fellow Arab Leaders. He reminded Special Committee members that the non-Jewish population of Palestine was nearly nine-tenths of the whole. Collectively, Arab states were "*emphatically against the entire Zionist programme [and it was] one thing upon which the population of Palestine was … agreed upon*".[736] No state, he argued, would tolerate immigration on the scale that Palestine was experiencing. It was natural that all countries should impose immigration restrictions in their own best interests. It was the opinion of Arab states that the solution lay in the formation of a free Government of Palestine based on proportional representation. Although Arabs had long believed that Jews who had entered since Balfour in 1917 were illegal immigrants, those who had entered "*though legal channels*" would be granted the same rights as Arabs.[737] The Arab position on Jewish immigration still remained unclear. Sandstrom persisted with his line of questioning.[738] He asked how a ban on Jewish immigration and land transfer would harmonise with the claim that Arabs adhered to the principles of human rights. In his reply, Hamid Frangieh (Lebanon) retreated to familiar territory. Ignoring Sandstrom's reference to human rights, he insisted that Jewish immigration and land transfer would cease until the new Palestine Government decided future policy.

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[735] The confusion may have been due to the difficulty in translation. Some of the Arab statesmen spoke only Arabic, others, according to Fouad Hamza (Saudi Arabia) did not understand English and some of the interpretation was from French.
[736] UNGA (A/AC.13/PV.38) 22 July 1947. Page 4
[737] (Ibid, 8)
[738] UNGA (AC.13/PV.39) 23 July 1947

One after another, Arab statesmen insisted that Jews had always enjoyed the same rights as their Arab counterparts in Middle East countries. Indeed, several Jewish people had achieved high office. Apart from the single instance in 1941 during which Baghdad was the scene of a Nazi *coup d'état* that had provoked anti-Semitism, Jews were well assimilated into the mainstream. Many more Arabs than Jews had died because of the coup and those Arabs who had participated in the disturbance had been severely punished. Speaking in support, Fadel Jamali (Iraq) maintained that *"[w]ere it was not for Zionism ... [the atmosphere between all religions] would be very harmonious and peaceful"*.[739] The problem was not the result of differences between ordinary Jews and non-Jews. The enemy was Zionism.

Seeking a compromise and thinking ahead, Sandstrom asked the Arab statesmen if they believed there was danger involved in a small Jewish state being carved out of Palestine. Frangieh responded with the collective view of his fellow leaders that whatever its size, a Jewish state would create friction, exert economic pressure and would *"gradually infiltrate in order to create disorder"*. He drew a connection between a Jewish state and immigration. A Jewish state, he argued, would control its own immigration policy, leading to the probability of unlimited and unsustainable population growth. Since Balfour, Zionist demands had shifted from the question of *"cultural home"* to *"national home"* and then to a demand that all of Palestine should become a Jewish state. By some accounts, this could even stretch *"from Sinai to the Euphrates"*. Fadel Jamali (Iraq) elaborated. He maintained that it was in the very nature of Zionism to start with the modest before demanding the intolerable. Therefore, under such provocation, he predicted, *"struggle will be coming"*.[740] Reacting to Lisicky's (Czechoslovakia) provocative logic that the Arab concept of compromise implied that *"[Arabs] ask for one hundred per cent of [their] claims and the others can share the rest"*, Fadel

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[739] (Ibid, 4)
[740] (Ibid, 12)

Jamali retorted that compromise was not the issue. Would Lisicky, he quizzed, compromise in the face of an assault and part-annexation of Czechoslovakia?[741]

In a pre-prepared statement, Fadel Jamali (Iraq) subscribed to the unified view of the Arab Higher Committee. Balfour, he said, was a violation of the principles of moral and human rights and "*the root cause of all the trouble*". He contended that the League of Nations had violated its own covenant and turned Palestine into a land of bloodshed. He added that Jews had a spiritual connection to the Holy land, as did Christians and Moslems, but this did not imply an implicit political connection. Jamali refuted the Zionist claim that Jews had materially raised Palestinian Arabs' living standards. It was the age-old Imperialistic argument; "*the white man's burden*" and a fallacy that had led to numerous wars. Arabs needed no help from Zionists and were, he confirmed, rich *"in civilisation and culture*".[742]

Next, Jamali addressed what his colleagues had agreed was a *"dangerous"* supposition that Jews were homeless and therefore needed a homeland they could call their own. There were vast underdeveloped regions as far flung as the United States or Australia, where unrestricted immigration was an alien concept. He submitted that a Jew's home is the country of his or her citizenship. An Iraqi Jew is at home in Iraq, an English Jew's home is England, a French Jew's in France. The list was endless. Jamali cautioned that the Zionist concept of Jewish state was "*rendering a great disservice to Jews all over the world*". He argued that Zionists exert huge economic and political pressure. Arab farmers gave way and sold land to Jews at exorbitant prices which were far beyond the reach of ordinary Arab land owners. Through a well organised machinery of propaganda, Zionists had infiltrated the centre of Western public opinion, manipulating it into the mistaken belief that Arabs had much to gain under *"Zionist domination"*. Zionists, he continued, exploited the issue of displaced European Jews for their own political ends, making it a humanitarian concern requiring an international response. Summing up, Jamali questioned whether "*money, distorted propaganda,*

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[741] (Ibid 22-23)
[742] (Ibid, 26-27)

political pressure and Terrorism [should be allowed to overcome] the principles of peace and justice".

Nearing the end of their investigation, a party of UNSCOP members made a brief visit to Amman to meet King Abdullah of Jordan. Previously, the King, had privately offered his support for Partition in return for Jordan's annexation of the remaining area. Now, with "*winks and smiles*", he changed tack.[743] According to a report of the visit seen by Garcia Granados,[744] the King was asked whether he would accept Jewish refugees into his own country. Now that the Arab world had spoken with one voice, King Abdullah laughed and responded that it would be like "*asking me to cut my own throat*". In an impartial world, there would be no Jewish nor Palestine problem. Later, in a supposedly off-the-record private conversation, Jordan's Prime Minister claimed that Jewish immigration should be ended. As far as illegal immigrants were concerned and in contrast to the attitude voiced by fellow Arab leaders, the Prime Minister conjectured that remaining Jews, whether legal *or illegal*, should be granted citizenship.[745] By the time UNSCOP left the region there was no doubt that other than Abdullah who had other ambitions, Arabs bluntly refused to accept Zionist ambitions. With neither side prepared to give way, UNSCOP left the region to decide on the least-contentious way to partition Palestine.

Summary

By refusing to participate in proceedings, the Arab Higher Committee had delivered Palestinian Arabs a disservice. Fortunately, neighbouring Arab statesmen had partially filled the breach and made a compelling case that Britain, in choosing to ignore Arab opinion, had rendered The Balfour Declaration illegal. Moreover, the Declaration, having been ratified by the League of Nations also rendered the Mandate illegal. Thus, to Arab statesmen both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate were illegal instruments and had no legal status whatsoever. In their evidence, Arab statesmen

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[743] (Ibid, 29-30)
[744] Granados did not attend the meeting as he was on his way to Geneva
[745] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948): 'The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it

considered that Palestinian-Arab resistance was justified. Above all, Arabs were determined that Jewish immigration had gone beyond acceptable levels and were fearful that granting more was merely a prelude to a Jewish takeover of large swathes of Arab territory. In any event, the post-war Jewish refugee crisis was of wide international concern, and not one to be imposed solely on Palestine. Therefore, under new constitutional arrangements, Jewish immigration would stop and those deemed to have entered illegally would be expelled. Nevertheless, Jews who had entered through legal channels would enjoy equal rights in an Arab-majority Government. Of course, the latter was a far cry from Zionist aspirations. Giving his evidence, Ben-Gurion was determined that, whatever the obstacles, Jewish immigration would continue. Also, David Horowitz had dismissed Palestine's apparent lack of 'absorptive capacity'. If immigration was important before the war, then it was doubly so since the Holocaust. Jews had died because they were trapped. Ben-Gurion and others seemingly accepted Partition and were (in the same way that Arabs had agreed to a Jewish minority in an Arab-majority state) willing to accept Palestinian Arabs on equal terms in a Jewish-majority state.

UNSCOP had entered into a country that was rife with violence - barely contained by extreme and repressive measures of control. Without an immediately orchestrated alternative solution to the Mandate, Palestine would soon descend into anarchy.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

The early chapters of UNSCOP's final report deal with issues surrounding its own origins, demographic and economic matters and a review of the British Mandate, together with an appraisal of the Arab and Jewish cases. This chapter continues with matters specifically relating to the Holy Land.[746] While the above topics are discussed in previous chapters, the thesis would be incomplete without UNSCOP's analysis of the main solutions proposed. The proposals fell into three broad categories. First, a Palestine partitioned into two independent states with or without economic unity. Second a disjointed but otherwise partitioned federal state constructed such that minority rights are guaranteed in politically autonomous or semi-autonomous regions. Lastly, a single state where an Arab majority guaranteed Jewish autonomy over primarily Jewish affairs. This last option would be quickly ruled out.

The Palestine Royal Commission (Peel) had argued that the differences between Arabs and Jews were so entrenched that Partition was the only feasible option. The Special Committee acknowledged that Peel's Commission was first to draw boundaries of separation between the two sides. 'Partition', according to Peel, was "*the only solution which offered any possibility for ultimate peace*".[747]

Although Peel's report had been published ten years earlier, it is interesting to note the similarities between its analysis of the divide between Jews and Arabs with UNSCOP's own findings. Both reports leave little doubt that nothing short of Arab-Jewish separation by way of full-scale partition into two independent states or, at the very least, partition by way of Cantonisation were the only realistic options. Also, given that Partition in any form was now roundly rejected by Arabs and

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[746] A/364, 3 September 1947, 3-66
[747] (Ibid, Page 66)

that both groups were seemingly prepared to fight one another over the issue, the prospect of future long-term stability looked bleak.

UNSCOP Report to the General Assembly

Census statistics from 1922 to 1946 offer an insight into the interconnection between a Jewish state and its reliance on immigration. During that time the total population of Palestine had almost tripled. While the Arab population had nearly doubled, the Jewish population had burgeoned from (83,790) by over seven-fold (608,255) largely due to immigration.[748] In 1922 Jews made up nearly 13% of the total population. In the space of just twenty-four years this had increased to 33%.[749] It is a complex picture, but given similar trends, extrapolating over the following twenty-four-year period, by 1970 Jews would outstrip Arabs by over two million. The increase in overall population from 1922 to 1946 is partially explained by natural birth rate (Arabs greater than Jews) and increased life expectancy for both groups. However, by far the greatest factor was Jewish immigration. If Jewish immigration continued at the same rate as 1922-1946, then by 1970, in a single state, Jews would become the dominant population. Arabs had conceded that Jews could share proportional political representation in an independent Arab state provided that the Jewish population did not exceed one third of the total. This fraction was already reached by 1946. To Arabs then, the Jewish population was about to exceed acceptable limits.

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[748] (Ibid, 22)

[749] The figure given in the report of 31% in incorrect. It should be noted that quantitative data occasionally vary throughout the existing literature.

Population of Palestine by Religions *

	Moslems	Jews	Christians	Others	Total
1922	486,177	83,790	71,464	7,617	649,048
1931	493,147	174,606	88,907	10,101	966,761
1941	906,551	474,102	125,413	12,881	1,518,947
1946	1,076,783	608,225	145,063	15,488	1,845,559

* Statistics drawn from UNSCOP Report to the UN, A/364 3 September 1947, Page 22

By 1960, *excluding immigration*, the estimated population distribution was as follows: **

	Estimated population of Palestine in 1960 (*excluding* immigration)				
	Arabs	Jews	Christians	other	Total
1946 (actual)	1,076,783	608,225	145,063	15,481	1,845,559
1960 (estimated)	1,533,000	664,000	176,000	21,000	2,394,000

** Statistics drawn from UNSCOP Report to the UN, A/364 3 September 1947, Page 23

The figures indicate that if immigration ended, then, by 1960, the percentage of Jews to the total population was projected to drop from 33% to 28% of a total population which itself was expected to increase by approximately 30%. Before long, given a complete stoppage of Jewish immigration, unequal natural birth rates threatened to create an unacceptable (to Zionists) ever-decreasing Jewish minority in an ever-increasing Arab majority single state. Crucially, if, according to Arab states, illegal immigrants were expelled, the problem facing Jews was significantly worsened and certainly not envisaged in the Balfour Declaration, the British Mandate or any one of a number of investigative Committee in the thirty years from 1917 until 1947. While there is no evidence that the above statistics were examined, this thesis argues that their implications would have led inevitability to Partition.

Also, as Jewish communities were clustered mainly around the Coastal Plain, West Jerusalem and the Northern Uplands a plan could be devised for a partitioned Jewish state.

Now UNSCOP members turned their attention to the many thousands of European Jews anxiously waiting their turn to start a new life in Palestine. Committee Members noted that the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry recommendations for immigration conflicted with Britain's own policy. The Anglo-American Committee had proposed that 100,000 Jewish immigrants should be admitted immediately. Later, Britain appeared to have endorsed the substance of the proposal, but it was never acted upon. Neither was the Anglo-American Committee's recommendation that all land transfer should be free for "*sale, lease or use of land irrespective of race, community or creed*", which would have effectively freed land transfer from the restrictive policy set out in the 1939 White Paper.[750] With regard to land use and agricultural practices, from its earliest days the Palestine Administration had entered a country that was "*disease ridden, under-developed, poverty stricken*" with "*an indifferent agricultural regime*" and beset with lawlessness.[751] From 1921 until the Special Committee arrived in 1947, there were outbreaks of civil disturbance. This meant that attention was shifted towards containment of unrest rather than expenditure on essential social and economic development. The slow rate of progress in Arab occupied areas drew criticism from influential Arab leaders who contrasted it with the rapid pace of development within Jewish settlements. The Special Committee noted that Jewish finances were directed primarily at improving Jewish services. Therefore, theoretically, the larger share of governmental financial resources were available to meet Arab needs. However, Arabs were critical of this assumption, and not without reason. Less than 4% of total expenditure was devoted to education and a miserly 3% was spent on public health. Meanwhile expenditure on police and other security measures multiplied. Despite the inadequacies of provision, in the previous twenty years there had been improvements in health. An example of this was a fall in child mortality. Though literacy rates had improved, illiteracy remained uncomfortably

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[750] (Ibid, 40)
[751] (Ibid, 43)

high. Just over half of school-age boys and less than a quarter of girls attended Government schools. The Special Committee accepted the Royal Commission's analysis that this shortage of educational facilities intensified Arab frustration.[752] Despite the evident deficiencies, there were material improvements across the population and the Jewish community had contributed to this increased prosperity. Two years before, the Royal Commission had reported that "*Arabs have shared to a considerable degree in material benefits which Jewish immigration has brought to Palestine*" and that their "*economic position ... has not so far been prejudiced by the establishment of the National Home*". Reporting ten years later in 1947, the Government of Palestine reached a similar conclusion. It cited improved material standards, an increase in self-sufficiency and a decreased mortality rate, which all combined to improve the lives of the Arab community.[753] Although improved living standards were also partially due to their own efforts, Arab leaders refused to concede that many of the gains made were as a direct result of a sizeable Jewish presence in the region. Nevertheless, with the opposing sides firmly set on their own viewpoints, there was no realistic scope for conciliation.

From the early days of the Mandate, Britain had taken some positive steps forward. In 1923 Britain proposed the establishment of an Arab Agency. This Agency would have been established under the same Article 4 accorded to the Jewish Agency and analogous to it. Again, the proposal was rejected claiming it failed to meet Arab aspirations. However, occasionally matters improved. In 1937 Peel's Royal Commission reported that it was impressed with the Arab National movement. It reported that it was an efficient centralised political machine representing Arab and Christian interests with party leaderships represented on the Arab Higher Committee. Decisions taken at the centre were relayed to mainly agrarian Arab communities via a network of local committees.[754] On several occasions, particularly during the crisis days of the late nineteen-thirties, Arabs who refused to abide by Arab leadership rules were intimidated, or in some instances, assassinated.[755]

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[752] (Ibid, 44)
[753] (Ibid, 99)
[754] (Ibid, 44)
[755] Government of Palestine – Supplementary Memorandum (including Notes on Evidence given to the UN Special Committee on Palestine up to the 12th July 1947): Jerusalem 1947

British policy favoured the establishment of Palestinian self-Government but preferred a gradual approach. In 1922 a proposal for a Legislative Council had been rejected by the Palestine Arab Executive, claiming that Arabs should maintain an overall majority. By 1935 twenty elective municipal councils were in operation and another equally balanced council was established in that same year. Though Jews criticised perceived restrictions on their own municipalities, these were positive steps on the way to local autonomy. Later in 1935, moves were afoot to revive a Legislative Council. A twenty-eight-member legislature Committee would be empowered to make legislative recommendations, provided that the provisions of the British Mandate were inviolable and immigration policy remained under the control of the High Commissioner. Arab attitudes were divided between moderates inclined to accept the proposal and those who believed it failed to satisfy demands for full Arab national autonomy. Jewish leaders, however, feared Arab domination.

The 1939 White Paper showed that Britain was reaching the end of its tether and set its sights on terminating the Mandate. If, within ten years, Britain's *"commercial and strategic requirements"* had been satisfied and provided that *"peace and order"* had been restored, British and Palestinian representatives would meet to discuss constitutional arrangements. During this time, Palestinians would gradually have an increased role in running their own affairs. Ultimately, Palestinians would be placed in charge of all Government departments but with ultimate control exercised by the High Commissioner.[756] Unsurprisingly, Jewish reaction was opposed. As before, Arab opinion was split between National Defence Party moderates in favour with Arab opposition forces against. With insufficient support, the proposal was dropped.

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[756] A/364, 3 September 1947, Page 47

UNSCOP Members Address the Concepts of State versus Home

"*Homeland provides nourishment, permanency, reassurance and an identification with the soil, and ... historical ties of identity*".[757]

It was widely understood that Zionists had long aspired to creating a Jewish National Home. UNSCOP addressed the political implications of the term: use of the word 'Home' rather than 'State' had been the result of a compromise between UK Government Ministers who considered that statehood was the goal, and those who were opposed. It seemed Britain was reluctant to officially commit itself. So far as was possible, the Special Committee explored a precise meaning of 'Jewish National Home', a term that had provoked much controversy. The British Mandate had stipulated the *"dual obligation";* an undertaking to reconcile the conflicting demands of the Jewish and Arab populations of Palestine. The Mandate was phrased in such general terms that its primary intention should be investigated:

Britain, as the Mandatory Power, was entrusted to administer Palestine and to put into effect the Balfour Declaration of 1917.[758] The League of Nations gave Britain responsibility over the political, administrative and economic organs of the country to ensure the establishment of a Jewish National Home and the development of self-governing institutions.[759] Article 6 of the Mandate provided a qualification which effectively charged Britain with facilitating the establishment of a Jewish National Home through immigration. However, UNSCOP criticised Britain for having (in 1922) construed the meaning of Article 6 to imply that the number of Jewish settlers should be controlled according to the economic capacity of the country to absorb them. This interpretation was agreed at the time by the executive of the Zionist Organisation. Thus, in the opinion of UNSCOP, the above restriction on the terms of the article became established as fact.[760] By 1947 a fully independent

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[757] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 11) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[758] Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 22. HM Stationary Office.
[759] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24th July 1922. Article 2)
[760] A/364, 3 September 1947, Page 54

Jewish entity was in the making, but even though it was still developing, a Jewish National Home remained well within Palestine's economic capacity. But how then was the term 'Home' to be understood?

The concept of 'Home' was first used in the 1897 Basle Programme[761]. Since then, much debate has been prompted over the precise meaning of a *"legally assured home",* as this wording lacked legal precedent in international law. Later, the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate adopted the term Jewish National 'Home'. UNSCOP argued that the vagueness of the terminology was intentional. The wording 'home' rather than 'state' was employed by the drafters of both documents to mollify Arabs and elements of Jewish public opinion.

UNSCOP's argument was speculative for the word 'Home' did not preclude the establishment of a future Jewish 'State'. There is little doubt that the intentions expressed in the Balfour Declaration are unclear and open to a variety of interpretations. Thus, on the 3rd June 1922, Britain moved to place a restrictive construction on the Balfour Declaration. In a statement issued by the Colonial Office. Britain recognised that Jews had an historical connection to Palestine and were there "*as of right and not on sufferance*". The statement was intended to remove any lingering doubts about Britain's intentions by implying that a Jewish National Home was to be established in a part of Palestine, not the whole. It was a significant if somewhat unclear point of clarification and the statement also extended and reinforced the Balfour reference to non-Jews. Arab nationality, culture and language were not to be subordinated to Judaism.[762] The Mandate itself was an international commitment. It committed Britain, as the Mandatory Power, to facilitate a Jewish 'Home' in Palestine. Notwithstanding that the Jewish Population at the time was just 80,000, it also appeared to be a firm commitment that any Jew in the world was free to immigrate and settle in Palestine. However, the Special Committee noted the impracticality of accommodating all Jews worldwide into a small and

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[761] The Basle Programme emerged from the inaugural congress of the Zionist Organisation held in Basel (Basle) Switzerland (29th to 31st August 1897). Its goal was that those sympathetic to Zionism should aim at *"establishing for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine"*.
[762] A/364, 3 September 1947, Pages, 54-55

underdeveloped region. Authors of the Mandate would have been aware that compared with an overwhelming Arab population, Jews would have remained in permanent minority unless Jewish immigration was encouraged. As a minority, Jews would be susceptible to aggressive force, the prospect of which was neither intended nor implied in the terms of the Mandate. The Committee could only conclude that the League of Nations had assumed (rightly or wrongly) that the provisions contained in the Mandate relating to Arab concerns would eventually allay Arab fears. By the time UNSCOP arrived in 1947, fear had given way to outright hostility. This was perpetrated by Jewish proponents and Arab opponents of Jewish immigration, which was essential to the effective establishment of a secure Jewish Home/State. Even given the prospect of economic development, Arabs remained implacably opposed to Jewish immigration. Further, the Special Committee's report sought to clarify the issue. It stated that it was unlikely that the League of Nations intended that Jewish immigration should be on such a scale that Jews comprised a majority across all of Mandatory Palestine. This would be ignoring the wishes of the present Arab majority and at worst it could raise the spectre of a violent struggle.[763]

The Permanent Mandates Commission had accepted the general principle that under the terms of the Mandate, Britain was obliged to ensure that equal weight should be accorded to the wishes of both the Arab and Jewish populations. Also, in the preamble to its 1937 report, the Royal Commission was assured that a central feature of the Mandate was to "*promote the establishment of a Jewish National Home*"[764]. The phrase itself obliged the Royal Commission to devote an entire chapter to its meaning. The phrase *"Jewish National Home"* was an acknowledgement that Arabs too had their 'Home' in Palestine. While Britain was empowered to facilitate the growth of a Jewish national 'Home', it was not empowered to facilitate a Jewish 'State'. The latter depended "*mainly on the zeal*

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[763] (Ibid, Page 57)
[764] Report of the Palestine Royal Commission – League of Nations Mandates: (C. 495. M. 336. 1937) (Chapter II, pare 42) (July 1937)

and enterprise of the Jews". The Royal Commission reported that within twelve years the Jewish Home had evolved from "*experiment [to] a going concern*".[765]

In June 1922, Winston Churchill[766] had denied "*unauthorised statements*" that HM Government intended a wholly Jewish Palestine. The terms of the Declaration did "*not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded <u>in</u> Palestine*" *(original emphasis).*[767] The Special Committee noted the Royal Commission's argument that Churchill's statement did not preclude a future Jewish state,[768] one in which Jews would build a "*common home*".[769]

Quite what the authors of the Balfour Declaration actually intended for Palestine was merely "*speculative*"[770] but whatever their motives, certainly by 1937, Jews had already established a common home; a quasi-state in which adult Jews, whatever their political viewpoint, could vote for an Elective Assembly.[771] Tax revenues supported schools, public health and social services systems so that this "*highly organised and close-knit society*" merited its status as "*a state within a state*".[772] Peel had concluded that although Britain may have helped establish a National Home this did not imply that it should remain "*crystallised at its present size*" nor should Britain shut the doors on Jewish immigrants.[773] Nonetheless, UNSCOP members accepted Arab criticisms that Britain was remiss by not "*accelerat[ing] the tempo of Arab development*".[774]

The Home/State quandary has never been satisfactorily resolved but after the Holocaust, Zionists had taken matters into their own hands. It was inescapable that a Jewish Home/Homeland/Commonwealth/State actually existed, and, for that matter, its community

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[765] (Ibid, 37-39)
[766] Winston Churchill was Secretary of State for the Colonies. According to UNSCOP, his statement at the time was the *"authoritative interpretation"* of HM Policy (UNSCOP Report, Para 77).
[767] The White Paper stated that "*His Majesty's Government adhere to this interpretation of the Declaration of 1917 and regard it as an authoritative and comprehensive description of the character of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.*" (Cmd. Paper 6019, para.6.)
[768] A/364, 3 September 1947, Page 38
[769] (Ibid, page 38): see also the Churchill Memorandum, 3rd June 1922): White Paper, Cmd. No. 1700
[770] (Ibid, 55)
[771] The Elective Assembly then created Vaad Leumi (National Council).
[772] (ibid, 39-40)
[773] (Ibid, 42-43)
[774] (Ibid, 44)

boundaries were fairly well defined. It was inevitable that, despite strong Arab opposition, time and again, UNSCOP pressed the need to formalise Partition as the only "*workable basis for meeting in part the claims and aspirations of both parties*".[775] It is almost inconceivable that the General Assembly would disregard UNSCOP's recommendation.

UNSCOP Members visit Post-War Europe

Following a meeting with a representative of the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organisation who reported *"resettlement activities",* it was proposed that the Committee visit and interview Jews in Europe and "*Jewish displaced persons in particular*". Some Committee members believed that the visit served no useful purpose, because it was already known that that "*people in the camps wanted to go to Palestine*". Others thought it ill-advised to connect the Jewish refugee problem in Europe to the Palestine question. After an exchange of views, it was finally agreed to form a sub-committee of members willing to explore Jewish attitudes to "*resettlement, repatriation or immigration into Palestine*". Thus, between 8th and the 14th August 1947, a delegation of members visited camps in Germany and Austria.[776] [777]

In a substantial appendix to the main report, Sub-Committee members described their visits to Assembly Centres in the US Zone of Germany, the US Sectors of Berlin and Vienna together with the British Zone in Germany. These Assembly Camps were, writes Chomsky, little different to "*Nazi extermination camps except that there were no crematoria*".[778] In private session, UNSCOP interviewed a representative sample of one hundred individuals out of many thousands of Jews still seeking some form of resolution. Members gleaned that since the Anglo-American Committee's visit in January 1946, the attitude of respondents appeared even more fixated on migrating to Palestine. A tiny minority of Jews felt sufficiently safe to return to their former homes but the large majority, faced

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[775] (Ibid, 80)

[776] A/364, 3 September 1947, Pages, 16-17 – see Annex 18 of the report.

[777] UNSCOP Members (or Alternatives) who visited DP Camps in Germany and Austria were: J. D. L. Hood (Australia), Chairman of the delegation, Leon Mayrand (Canada), Richard Pech (Czechoslovakia), J. Garcia Granados (Guatemala), V. Viswanathan (India), Ali Ardalan (Iran). A. I. Spits (Netherlands), Paul Molin (Sweden), E. R. Fabregat (Uruguay) and Dr Jože Brilej (Yugoslavia).

[778] Chomsky, Noam & Pappé, Ilan (2015, 61-62): 'On Palestine

with continuing anti-Semitism and *"haunted by memories of endured horrors"* resisted attempts to repatriate them. Overwhelmingly, interviewees favoured Palestine over resettlement in a third country and were prepared to journey there illegally if necessary.[779] During an informal meeting between Rabbi Bernstein and members of the Sub-Committee, Bernstein maintained that given a free choice, all Jewish displaced persons would leave for Palestine. If both Palestine and the United States were immediate options, then the split would be 75% and 25% respectively. However, if Palestine was not a legal option, and assuming the US would take them, then 50% would go to America and the remaining 50% would remain in Europe before travelling to Palestine legally or illegally if the legal route was barred. Committee Members confirmed that "*there was a mass urge towards settlement in Palestine [and that] such a situation must be regarded as at least a component in the problem of Palestine*".[780] Nonetheless, though the psychological climate was at an all-time low, morale improved whenever survivors dreamed with "*fanatical urge*" of Palestine. The urge was stoked by several contributing factors. Apart from the breakdown of trust in former neighbours and haunting memories of the Holocaust, there was an element of self-persuasion. According to UNSCOP this stemmed from a "*Zionist background in eastern European Jewry*". Children were being taught Hebrew in preparation for a new life in Palestine. Posters extolled the advantages of Palestine, for example, 'Palestine, a Jewish state for the Jewish People'. A range of Jewish organisations relentlessly promoted Palestine by a process of "*general indoctrination*" although UNSCOP members conceded though that they had no proof of organised propaganda.[781] Nevertheless, the visit left a deep impression. Pappé contends that after the event, many UNSCOP members claimed to have been moved to associate "*the fate of the Jews in Europe – demographically and arithmetically – with the fate of the Jews in Palestine [putting Palestinian Arabs] in a very weak position*". "*Who are you [Palestinian Arabs] to be against our wish to solve the problem of Jews in Europe as a whole?*".[782]

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[779] A/364 Add 1, 3ᵈ September 1947, Page 25
[780] (Ibid, 25-26)
[781] (Ibid, 26)
[782] Chomsky, Noam & Pappé, Ilan (2015, 64): 'On Palestine

Before leaving Europe, UNSCOP members had collected sufficient evidence to convince them that given the choice of resettlement, repatriation or immigration, immigration to Palestine was crucial for most survivors.

Members of the Special Committee would soon be faced with choosing between one of three possible options. The first of these was that Palestine should be a single state; a homeland for both Jews and Arabs living under one corporative Authority. The second was that Palestine should be a federated state of separate Jewish and Arab cantons. The third option was that Palestine should be partitioned into two independent states with both Arabs and Jews reaping the mutual benefits of economic collaboration. However, as there was still no sense of compromise, partition was the only available option. While UNSCOP's majority accepted this option, others had reservations.

In a personal note included in an annex to UNSCOP's main report, Sir Abdur Rahman (India) expressed his own views which mirrored those of Iran and Yugoslavia.[783] Drawing from inferences contained in a wide range of pre and post-WWI documentation, Rahman argued that it was incontrovertible that Britain had pledged to liberate Palestinian Arabs; that promises had been made and broken; that in constructing the Balfour Declaration the Arab constituency had been ignored and the British Mandate was inconsistent with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and was therefore invalid and unworkable. Rahman inferred that there was documentary evidence showing that PM Lloyd George's predecessor, Herbert Asquith, was not enthusiastic about the British annexation of Palestine and "*plant[ing] in this not very promising territory about three or four million European Jews*".[784] Since then, however, hundreds of thousands of European Jews had entered Palestine. Rahman proposed that those who had "*been allowed to come [and] cannot be turned out [under present rules]*", should have the right to acquire Palestinian citizenship. He had nothing to say on Jews who had supposedly entered illegally. Rahman was not unsympathetic to the plight of Jewish survivors, but from the beginning of UNSCOP's deliberations it was clear that he favoured a federated

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[783] A/364 Add. 1, 3 September 1947, Pages, 37-54.
[784] (Ibid, 42)

state. John D.L. Hood (Australia) explained his reasons for choosing not to commit himself to either Partition or Federation. For Hood, both arguments were equally persuasive and both merited consideration. However, in his opinion there were features, including political factors, which were beyond the scope of the Special Committee. Therefore, Hood maintained, the General Assembly should decide.[785] Garcia Granados (Guatemala) also had reservations, though not on whether Partition or Federation was best. His concern was in the wording of Recommendation XII (Chapter V) that it was "*accepted as incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem in general*".[786] His objection centred on the phrase "*Jewish problem in general*". Certainly, a comment following the recommendation appears to conflate the predicament facing Jewish survivors in Europe as though it was representative of world-wide Jewry. Granados argued that Jewish communities in many countries including the US, the Soviet Union, France, the Latin American Republics and others enjoyed protection under the law and equal rights with fellow citizens. Millions of Jews, therefore, must not be considered as part of a wider "*Jewish problem*", when no such wider problem existed. It was unlikely that Jews would willingly choose to "*leave the countries where they were born and leave their homes and interests*". The *"Jewish problem"* was confined only to those in assembly centres or elsewhere where the desire to leave was strongest. This amounted to some 1,500,000 people, anxious to be absorbed into "*the proposed Jewish State*". Granados had signalled Guatemala's intention to support Partition.

Impasse - The Jewish Case

Special Committee members considered the majority viewpoints of both Jewish Organisations and Arab states. Most Jewish organisations in Palestine and elsewhere accepted the Jewish Agency's demand for a Jewish state in Palestine. Opinion was divided as to its form. Some called for a Jewish state in the entire region of Palestine. Others believed that partitioning Palestine was the way forward, provided that the territory allocated to Jews was sufficiently large to accommodate large numbers of

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[785] (Ibid, 36-37)
[786] (Ibid, 37)

immigrants. The latter was formalised by the Zionist Organisation in Basle. It stated that Palestine should be a democratic Jewish Commonwealth with "*the gates of Palestine open to Jewish immigration*", as long as the area allocated was sufficient to afford Jewish resettlement on a large scale leading, with minimal delay, to the "*establishment of a Jewish State*".[787] The instrumental case for defensible boundaries enclosing adequate territory in which Jews share the expressive goals of history, religion, language, culture and community was central. A Jewish state demanded likeminded Jews to share those goals. Thus, to Zionists and a large constituency of Jewish people, Jewish immigration and a Jewish state were inextricably interwoven. There could be no sovereign Jewish state if Jews constituted a minority. It follows that given the overall predominance of Arabs, a Jewish state covering the entire region of Palestine was unachievable. A workable Jewish state could only emerge out of a partitioned Palestine where Jews outnumbered Arabs and even in this scenario, Jews were likely to comprise only a slim majority. Further Jewish immigration could redress the balance, provided Palestine was adequately partitioned to provide scope for a majority Jewish state. The political case for immigration rested on the Mandate. The humanitarian case for refugees was clear. Political or humanitarian, the emphasis was on immigration and the expressive historical, cultural and religious right for Jews to return to the Promised Land.

Impasse – The Arab Case

The Arab case was based on observations presented by the Arab Higher League. It sought the immediate creation of a Palestinian state stretching from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean. For some years, it was evident that relations between the two sides had deteriorated. Discord was constantly intensified by streams of Jewish immigrants entering a hostile and disproportionately large Arab world with little in the way of common language, religion or culture. Arabs claimed an ancient 'natural right' to the land and were prepared to defend it from "*foreign intruders*" and continue to

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[787] A/364 Add 1, 3ᵈ September 1947, Chapter IV, Paras 8-10

pursue their exclusive independent economic, political and cultural development. Palestinian Arabs, UNSCOP noted, claimed ancient 'natural' rights to a land that was not 'sovereign'; a land that Jews too had inhabited for centuries. The Arab Higher League had argued that Britain was obliged to fulfil its WWI pledge to grant Palestinian Arabs the right to self-determination. That pledge, Arabs argued, was instrumental in motivating Arabs to join Britain during its war against the Ottomans. Britain contended that while the principle of self-determination applied to other class 'A' mandated territories the same did not apply to Palestine. Significantly, the Committee reasoned that the omission of Palestine was intentional, and that Britain had left open the possibility of a future Jewish National Home (State). For Arabs, the Balfour Declaration had no legal validity. In addition, Paragraph 4, Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter states that "*the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory*". Arab states rightly argued that Palestinian Arabs had not been consulted and therefore the British Mandate was null and void. Arab states were not members of the League of Nations and refused to be bound by its edict. Further, Arabs contended that while the Palestine Mandate was in force Jewish immigration was illegal.[788]

As for the violation of Article 22, the Royal Commission of 1937 had confirmed that in 1918 the Allied Powers had agreed that the Balfour Declaration was predicated on an understanding that Palestine would be "*treated differently from Syria and Iraq*" and that the League of Nations endorsement of the Palestine Mandate ratified that difference.[789]

Arabs produced a set of proposals. These were articulated by Arab States delegates at a Palestine conference in London in 1946 and later in evidence presented to UNSCOP by Arab states. The proposals were diametrically opposed to the concept of a Jewish state. Under the Arab plan, during a short British-Mandatory transitionary period, a High Commissioner would establish a provisional government comprising seven Arab and three Jewish members, followed later by an elected sixty-member constituent assembly. Constitutionally, Palestine was to become an Arab-

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[788] A/364, 3 September 1947, Pages, 57-58
[789] (Ibid, Chapter II, Para 177c, Page 61)

majority unitary state after the termination of the Mandate, but with a guarantee that all sections of the community would enjoy freedom of religious and cultural expression. Though democratic, Jewish representation on the legislative assembly was not permitted to exceed one-third. [790] Land transfer restrictions and anti-immigration policies would be applied. For the above reasons, Arabs contended that the Zionist case was invalid and that Arab proposals should be enacted with the minimum delay.[791]

UNSCOP Members Make Their Decision

During their final deliberations held in Geneva, it was clear from the early stages that there was little support among members of the Special Committee for a solution that would lead to domination by Arabs or by Jews in a single unitary state. Jews and Arabs had ancient historical and religious connections to the Holy Land, but while Arabs had numerical superiority and were naturally indigenous to the Middle East, one group's claims should not be at the expense of creating a *"gross injustice"* to the claims of the other.[792]

Zionist violence against the Administrative Authority had intensified since the war in Europe had ended. This factor, coupled with increasing strains on Arab/Jewish relations, made the business of finding a speedy solution more urgent. A glimmer of hope came when, because of the spiralling violence, Britain was finally forced to admit officially that its Mandate was unworkable and that the *"obligations undertaken to the two communities in Palestine have been shown to be irreconcilable"*.

Both Arabs and Jews insisted on the termination of the Mandate and independence for Palestine. The Committee were left in no doubt that both parties were at odds over the form this independence should take. Without internal contention, the Committee's first recommendation was that the Mandate should be terminated.[793] The Permanent Mandates Commission had been accountable to the League of Nations. However, like the League, it too was dissolved in April 1946.

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[790] (Ibid, Chapter IV, Para 11, Page 69)
[791] (Ibid, Chapter IV, Paras 11-12, Pages 69-70)
[792] (Ibid, Chapter V, Para 2, Page 71)
[793] (Ibid, Page 72)

As a starting point, Britain had announced its intention to surrender the Mandate to the United Nations. It was also generally agreed that one way or another Palestine should be granted independence. The United Nations would be the ultimate decision maker, but the task of preparing Palestine for self-government would fall on an Administrative Authority.

In 1939, Britain had imposed savage restrictions on levels of immigration. In 1947 its official policy remained in force resulting in swathes of Holocaust survivors routinely crowded into assembly centres across Europe; most of whom clamoured to escape to Palestine. Now Committee members were faced with a dilemma. Though they recognised the "*intense urge ... among the [Jewish] people themselves*", they also needed to allay Arab fears that Palestine and its immediate neighbours would be a region set aside for world-wide Jewish settlement. Committee members advised the General Assembly that it was an international problem; a problem of numbers to be solved by actions of a "*general nature*". They argued that it was not within their remit to devote time to the issues surrounding displaced people. Even so, members felt obliged to recommend that as a vital prerequisite to the eventual settlement, all measures should be taken to ameliorate the conditions of the large Jewish subdivision of displaced people in Europe.[794] Committee members were divided on the issue. Some believed that the solution lay in the hands of the wider international community and that Palestine should take its share of Jewish immigrants in proportion to its existing population and that other countries should do likewise.

There was broad agreement on safeguarding the sanctity of the Holy Places to millions of Jews, Christians and Muslims and the population of Palestine as a whole. The Special Committee made the uncontroversial recommendation that whatever the outcome on independence, stipulations regarding the preservation of places of worship, their maintenance and rights of access should be enshrined into any new Constitution. [795]

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[794] (Ibid, Recommendation VI, Page 75-76)
[795] (Ibid, Recommendation V, page 75)

Special Committee members admitted that they were divided as to how best to organise Palestine. A minority tended towards a federal state, where Palestine would comprise a federation of all its inhabitants. The majority however, favoured that Palestine should be partitioned into two separate states. Hence, it was decided that UNSCOP members would separate into two working groups to consider each case on its merits.

UNSCOP's Minority Recommendation – Partition by Federation

This option had the support of UNSCOP's India, Iran and Yugoslavia members (Annex 10, 13). It was accepted that neither Partition nor Federation could solve the Jewish problem in its entirety. The 'federalists' believed that Partition would create geographical and political disunity making social unity impossible in the long term. They argued that the greater interests of the Arab majority outweighed Zionist demands for a partitioned Jewish state. Given the right conditions and with international support, it was reasonable to suppose that semi-autonomous states could co-exist together in a wider Federal state. They argued that apart from the obvious democratic advantages, this satisfied both Jewish and Arab nationalistic aspirations and pointed the way towards unified loyalty to an independent Palestinian state. The federalists argued that Arabs were overwhelmingly opposed to Partition, as were a number of influential Zionists. It followed that a federal solution was neither anti-Jewish nor anti-Arab. The federalist group envisaged a future federal state where the difficulties associated with boundaries, economic unity, Jerusalem, human, religious and minority rights were largely absent. However, their solution regarding the central political question of Jewish immigration was less clear-cut. Federalists next addressed the issue of Palestine's *"absorptive capacity"*. This term had been raised time and again over the preceding years. At best, any number attached to the term was subjective and, at worst, it was meaningless. Now, Federalists proposed that a representative nine-member international commission (three each from Jewish and Arab agencies and the United Nations) should be charged with estimating more objectively the absorptive capacity of a Jewish entity within a federal Palestinian state. Regarding the predicament facing the hundreds

of thousands of displaced European Jews, UNSCOP's federalists argued that resolution of that issue demanded an international response. UN Member states, they reasoned, should each accommodate a defined share of Jewish immigrants. Palestine too must take its share. Palestine, they argued, was a country of limited resources. This and Arab opposition persuaded federalists to reject "*Jewish immigration into Palestine [and not be] contemplated that Palestine is to be considered in any sense as a means of solving world Jewry".*[796]

UNSCOP's Majority Recommendation – Partition with a Continuous Boundary

This was based on the premise that since the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate, the claims submitted by both Arabs and Jews were incompatible. The conflict was "*a clash of two intense nationalisms*" with Jews in the region outnumbered two to one by Arabs. Strongly challenging the opinions of the federalists, the majority opinion of the Special Committee was that "*Jewish immigration is the central issue [and the] one factor that, above all others, rules out the necessary co-operation between the Arab and Jewish communities in a single State*".[797] The problem seemed insurmountable when UNSCOP attempted to draw acceptable lines of demarcation between the two states enough to satisfy the disparate demands of both parties. Arabs, they reported, were dispersed across the whole region, while Jews were *mainly* concentrated in the area around the Coastal Plain between Haifa and Tel Aviv. Both new states would require space for future land settlement and further development. Therefore, the land purchase restrictions imposed under Britain's 1939 White Paper ruling should be rescinded. Committee members reasoned that any border-line drawn between the proposed new states left Jews with just a slim overall majority over Arabs in a Jewish state. On the other hand, Jews would constitute a virtually insignificant proportion in an Arab state. Leaving Jerusalem out of the equation, as it was to be divided roughly equally between Jews and Arabs and

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[796] (Ibid, Chapter VII, Recommendations (III), Federal State Plan, Pages 99-109)
[797] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Part I, Para 7 – see also, Pages 80-99)

was to be internationally administered, based on estimates conducted during the previous year (1946) the population figures were as follows:

	Jews	Arabs – and others	Total
Jewish state	498,000	407,000	905,000
Arab state	10,000	725,000	735,000

* Statistics taken from A/364 UNSCOP Report 3 September 1947, Chapter VI, Subchapter 4 (Page 93)

Special Committee members also noted that in addition to the 407,000 Arabs and others in the Jewish state, there were some 90,000 Bedouins in the region.[798] Jews then would have constituted a just a tiny majority in what was to have been an independent Jewish state. As the natural population growth rate among Arabs exceeded that of Jews then, within a short measurable timeframe, the situation would be reversed. By contrast, the numbers indicate that unless there was an unlikely shift in the demographics of the Arab state, it would remain overwhelmingly Arabic. To partially correct the impending imbalance in the Jewish state, Special Committee members recommended that during a two-year transition period before Partition should come into effect Britain would remain as the Administrative Authority under the auspices of the United Nations, 150,000 immigrants would be admitted into the proposed Jewish state, made up of an initial 30,000 admitted on humanitarian grounds followed by a further 120,000 spread uniformly over the two years. The Jewish Agency would be responsible for their care and decide its own selection process[799]. Provided that the projected state met constitutional requirements, it would be free to apply for membership to the United Nations and set its own immigration criteria. The latter conditions also applied to a partitioned Arab state.

Like Peel's proposals of a decade before, the Special Committee accepted the inevitability of political separation – reinforcing the central argument of this thesis. However, unlike Peel's population exchange proposal, UNSCOP proposed that Arabs and Jews should collaborate in an all-

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[798] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Subchapter 4, Part II (Boundaries)).
[799] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Recommendations II, (Transitional period)).

encompassing economic union. It was proposed that, under a Joint Economic Board, the two new states and Jerusalem should share a common currency, common infrastructure and development projects. Attention would be paid to irrigation, soil conservation and land reclamation. Three members drawn from each of the two states, together with three UN representatives would serve on the Board for an initial three-year period. UNSCOP acknowledged that while arbitration was normally an acceptable method of solving economic disputes, it was less useful in the fractious Palestinian political arena. The Committee expected that political differences would be resolved by the "*necessities of the overriding interest of unity*". As a starting point, UNSCOP recommended that, for the first three years after Partition, outside arbitrators would help to resolve disputes.[800]

Summary

Two and a half months had elapsed since UNSCOP's arrival in Palestine on the 15th June 1947. During this time UNSCOP delegates had travelled thousands of miles, received volumes of correspondence and spent five days gathering evidence from Arab statesmen in Lebanon and another day in Jordan. They had toured DP camps in Germany and Austria and held dozens of public, private, formal and informal meetings, many reported on by some two hundred international journalists. All eleven delegates had gathered in Geneva to carry out the final stages of their work. Members had explored the underlying reasons for the conflict and made recommendations to the General Assembly on how the Palestine question could be resolved. The report itself is meticulously detailed with all pertinent matters closely scrutinised. Members had dissected previous Plans and Proposals and concluded that, for one reason or another, all had been rejected by either Jewish or Arab leaders or by both.

On the 3rd of September 1947, UNSCOP concluded that the British Mandate should be terminated. The majority also reached the predictable conclusion that Palestine should be partitioned into two independent states. In the medium term, each state would set its own immigration policy,

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[800] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Subchapter 4, (Economic Union of Palestine)

but both should collaborate in a system of economic unity. Moreover, due to its sensitive religious significance, the Committee recommended that Jerusalem should have special administrative status exercised under the authority of the UN.

Having decided on the matter of political separation, the matter of economic viability was considered. While the scale of economic development in Jewish regions was impressive UNSCOP's secretariat had doubts about the economic viability of an Arab state. UNSCOP's majority responded that viability depended on an appropriate distribution of customs revenues.[801] Against reservations expressed by a minority of UNSCOP members, the prospect for prosperity, the report reads, had all the advantages of Jewish dynamism and scientific endeavour and an Arab *"intuitive understanding of life"* such that *"In each State, the native genius [should] evolve into its highest cultural forms"*.[802]

Finally, on the 31st August 1947, a weighty report of eight chapters containing verbatim and other evidence gathered from British, Arab and Jewish representatives, an appendix, annexes and UNSCOP's recommendations was officially approved, signed and dispatched to individual UN Member States and the UN Secretary General[803] sparking in the event, as Tal argues, *"[t]he real Jewish-Arab intercommunal war"*[804].

[801] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Subchapter 4, Part II)
[802] (Ibid, Chapter VI, Subchapter 4, Part II)
[803] (PAL/91 and PAL/93 - 31 August 1947).
[804] Tal, David (2004, 469) War in Palestine, 1948: Israeli and Arab Strategy and Diplomacy)

CHAPTER 6

Introduction

Previous chapters argue that after the Balfour Declaration was ratified in the League of Nation's Mandate, there was no turning back. After the Holocaust, Jewish survivors were drawn towards a secure Jewish state while the West's closed-door policy effectively left them with little choice. Having analysed the work of previous investigative committees, UNSCOP agreed with Peel's main conclusion: As neither Zionists nor Arabs would budge, particularly over the issue of Jewish immigration, and although both parties had presented persuasive cases, the impartial solution demanded that each should share part of the whole. Jews and Arabs were already separated (partitioned) along community lines so that future state borders could be readily formalised. Partition seemed certain.

A two-thirds majority of the then fifty-six Member states was required to ratify a proposal. Truman was caught in the middle between anti-Zionists, Arab states and his State Department on the one hand and pro-Zionists, supportive White House officials and Jewish friends on the other.[805] He finally came down in favour of Partition. Stalin, via his UN representative Andrei Gromyko, relished the opportunity to denounce Britain's handling of the Mandate and criticise its imperialist past. With post-war Britain's grip on the Middle East weakening, a Jewish state presented itself as a would-be socialist ally. In his speech to the General Assembly earlier that year Gromyko had spoken in favour of a bi-national state, but if Arabs and Jews failed to agree, Partition was the Soviet Union's next best option. Against heated Arab protests, the UN General Assembly approved UNSCOP's majority recommendation that Palestine should be partitioned into two independent states with shared economic unity. Jerusalem would be administered by International authority.[806]

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[805] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 39-43): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961

[806] It is interesting to recall that in this early cold-war year, with the notable exception of Britain which abstained from the vote, three of the four remaining permanent members of the Security Council voted for partition - including cold-war enemies, the US and the USSR. Although Permanent Member China also abstained it was not unsupportive of Zionist objectives.

On the 14th of May 1948, Ben-Gurion declared the founding of the independent State of Israel. It was free to determine its own immigration and land policy issues. There can be little doubt that under President Truman, the United States had played the key role. In a congratulatory letter to mark the former president's 80th birthday (8th May 1964) Ben-Gurion fondly recalled Truman's "*moral courage and wise statesmanship*". He continued, "*In the annals of our people you will always be remembered as the man who ensured the inclusion of the desolate and empty Negev in the State of Israel for the absorption of the remnants of the Nazi holocaust ... none of us will ever forget your momentous gesture in recognising renascent Israel two hours after I was privileged to proclaim its resurgence*".[807]

Ben-Gurion's proclamation of the state of Israel set the stage for war. On the 15th May 1948, combined Arab forces launched an attack on the new Israeli state[808]determined to fulfil Iraq's Prime Minister's prophesy to *"obliterate every place the Jews seek to shelter"*.[809]

The UNGA Debate Partition

On the 26th November 1947 the United Nations General Assembly convened to debate Resolution 181 (III) [Plan of Partition].[810] Adoption of this resolution required an absolute two-thirds majority of the then fifty-six-member states. UN Delegates may have weighed their decision against the post-war partitions across Europe and of the carnage unleashed when the Indian sub-continent was partitioned. Now, although on a smaller scale, the Palestine problem was exacerbated by the UK's announcement that it intended to relinquish its Mandate and withdraw its armed forces. The latter also announced its intention to abstain on any resolution it believed was unacceptable to either Jews, Arabs or both.

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[807] Ben-Gurion to Truman, Letter marking former President Truman's 80th birthday. (8th May 1964). Held by the Ben-Gurion museum in Tel-Aviv and accessed by this researcher in June 2018.
[808] The Arab armies came from *Lebanon, Syria*, *Iraq*, and *Egypt while Saudi-Arabian forces fought under Egyptian command.*
[809] Morris, Benny. (2008, 61) 1948: A history of the first Arab-Israeli war
[810] A/RES/181(II)29 November 1947

The White House came under intense pressure from a powerful Jewish lobby and from fellow politicians. These politicians were fearful that voting against Partition would cost them the Jewish vote and, in some cases, essential re-election campaign funding. With feeling running high, Truman complained of "*unwarranted interference*".[811] Cohen explains that when Truman finally announced that the US intended to support the Resolution, Jews could be under no illusion that they had won Truman's support primarily because of the "*sheer pressure of political logistics that was applied by the Jewish leadership on the United States*". Pressure was mounting both from inside and outside the UN. On the 21st of November 1947, just eight days before the crucial vote, influential protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and six other signatories wrote to the New York Times. "*We would like to see the lands of the Middle East practice democracy as we do here ...Jewish Palestine is the only vanguard of progress and modernisation in the Middle East*".[812] Writing in 1992, Edward Said argued that the pronoun "*we*", (that is, sensibly minded Christian-Americans), felt at liberty to speak on behalf of tens of millions of Muslim Arabs whose "*want[s] and wish[es] are of little interest. [Western enlightened] wishes ought to override their wishes*". Niebuhr's remarks, protests an exasperated Said, "*are nothing short of violent*".[813]

Inside the United Nations building, Cohen maintains, rumours abounded that wavering countries had been bribed or threatened with economic sanctions if they failed to support Partition.[814] Historian, Peter Hahn provides compelling evidence showing that later investigations conducted by the US State Department confirmed that Zionists had pressurised delegates from Cuba, Honduras, Haiti, Ethiopia, Liberia, the Philippines and even Permanent-Five-member, China. Countries were cajoled with cash if they supported or threatened with financial sanctions if they refused.[815] "*Nothing was left to chance*".[816] Hahn cites the cases of New York Democratic Representative, Sol Bloom,

[811] Cohen, Michael J (1990, 162): Truman and Israel
[812] (Ibid, 162)
[813] Said, Edward, W (1992, 29-30): The Question of Palestine
[814] Cohen, M (1990, 162):Truman and Israel,
[815] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 41): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[816] Weir, A (2014, 54): Against Our Better Judgement

telephoning to pressurise the Liberian delegate and thirty-one other senators cabling the Greek legation. Truman was apparently unaware of the extent of the lobbying, though he was accused of behind-the-scenes persuasion. Ultimately, Zionists gained time to organise themselves when to, "*intensified ... Arab anger*", the White House ordered a four-day delay in the vote.[817] Weir confirms that before the vote itself, the Philippines' delegate spoke passionately against Partition although, after receiving threats that beneficial Congressional bills would be withheld, their delegate voted in the Zionists favour.[818] The Saudi Foreign Minister charged that the lobbying made a mockery of the United Nations; "*I was there myself and saw the change in attitude of delegates before and after the pressure was applied*".[819] Morris confirms that Arab nations were passionately opposed to Partition and pledged support for the Palestinian cause with, Morris relates, "*men, money and arms*". He describes an instance when Iraq's Prime Minister threatened that Iraq would "*smash the country with our guns ... obliterate every place the Jews seek to shelter*"[820] and warned that "*severe measures should be taken against all Jews in Arab countries*".[821] This was no idle threat, since after the resolution was passed an estimated 800,000 Jewish people either left of their own accord or were expelled from Arab countries.

Once home to some three and a half million of their number, Poland's Jewish population had been decimated. Now, its UN representative Oskar Lange, expressed Poland's special interest in the fate of those who remained. After all, Lange continued, Poland had been home to a major part of world Jewry and both State and survivors maintained good relations. He was proud that Jewish achievements in Palestine owed much to their Polish origins. He reminded Assembly members of the suffering Jews had experienced and recalled their heroic struggle against Nazi oppressors' in the Warsaw Ghetto. Lange stated that Poland intended to support Partition because it ensured that *both* Jews *and* Arabs gained independence. The Palestinian problem, Lange argued, was frequently

[817] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 41): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[818] Weir, A (2014, 55): Against Our Better Judgement
[819] Hahn, P. L. (2004, 41): 'Caught in the Middle East: US Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945 – 1961
[820] Morris, Benny. (2008, 61) 1948: A history of the first Arab-Israeli war
[821] (Ibid, 412)

characterised as a problem between Jews and Arabs whereas both groups were fighting to free themselves from a British "*police state*".[822] "*Arab colleagues should not block a solution [as it is the only way to ensure] political independence to the Arab people of Palestine*".[823]

Amir Faisal Al Saud representing Saudi Arabia opposed Poland's position. He claimed that support for the "*aggressor*", conflicted with the spirit of the UN Charter just to "*please the Zionist Gang and politically self-seeking accomplices.[824]* Had the motives been humanitarian then Saudi Arabia, like all Arab states, would have helped rescue Jewish refugees. Connecting the European refugee crisis with Palestine was none other than an imperialist plot.[825]

Syria's representative, Amir Arslan, alleged that the Partition plan had been sold by Zionists to the public as a humanitarian gesture rather than "*the greatest political scandal of all time*" and contrary to the principles of natural justice. Support for a Jewish state in Palestine was, Arslan accused, a ploy by Poland to rid itself of its Jews. [826]

Lebanon's representative Camille Chamoun questioned the democratic principles of the UN. He stated that judging from press reports, delegates had been bribed, threatened with economic sanctions and waylaid in bedrooms and corridors in a concerted effort to gain support for Partition. He criticised the US for having consistently preached the principles of justice and liberty and had donned, "*the fatal shirt of Nessus*". Chamoun recalled that the Soviet Union had contended that a state's future should be determined by all its citizens. In a thought-provoking contribution, he argued that if there was to be a minority of Arabs in a Jewish marginal-majority state then it would follow that Arabs could justifiably claim an Arab sub-division of that Jewish state. Following his logic further, he continued that if there was a minority Jewish population in that subdivided Arab state, then Jews would be entitled to a Jewish only subdivision of that Arab sub-state. This would mean

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[822] A/PV.125 26 November 1947, Pages 1-4
[823] (Ibid, 5-6)
[824] (Ibid, 6)
[825] (Ibid, 8)
[826] (Ibid, 7)

subdividing ad infinitum though he conceded that his argument conflicted with *"the actual state of world affairs"*.[827] Nevertheless, Chamoun's speech did illustrate the likely impact on Palestine if a Jewish state was to be unjustly imposed on an Arab region.

From his early days in Palestine, it was clear that Professor E. R. Fabregat, UNSCOP's Uruguayan member, would support Partition.[828] Now, Rodriguez Fabregat, Uruguay's UN representative reinforced the professor's reasoning. Establishment of a Jewish state, he argued, was the only way discrimination against Jews could be eliminated. For two years, Holocaust survivors had waited while the international community chose whether to finally fulfil the League of Nations *"promise"* to help create a Homeland where any numbers of Jewish immigrants would be free to determine their own destiny. Fabregat prophesised that while the UN vacillated, and for so long as anti-Semitism existed, Jews could face some future incarnation of the Holocaust. Uruguay's support for Partition, he stated, was not just for a Jewish state, but to ensure that Arabs too reaped the benefits of an independent state.[829]

Speaking for the Netherlands, E. M. J. Sessen explained that on balance, while Arabs had presented a strong case, his country supported Partition over a unitary state because the Jewish argument was the stronger of the two. He criticised Arabs for their lack of cooperation because had they adopted a different attitude they might have *"influence[d] the course of events"*. Sessen sympathised with the humanitarian aspect of the Jewish case, noting that it had received strong support from other receptive UN Member states.[830] Sessen had criticised Arabs for their non-cooperative spirit. However, he neglected to remind UN colleagues that while Palestinian Arabs had boycotted or been pressurised by the Mufti of Jerusalem into boycotting UNSCOP's investigations, the Arab case had been thoroughly aired during UNSCOP's cooperative meetings with Arab states in Beirut.

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[827] (Ibid, 9-13)
[828] A/364 Add., 3 September 1947, 65-67 - Fabregat's observations
[829] A/PV.125 26 November 1947, Pages 15-16
[830] (Ibid, 20-21)

Against the advice of his State Department, it was an open secret that Truman had decided that the United States would support the Zionist position. To add to his problems, less than two years previously (5 March 1946), Churchill had delivered his legendary 'Iron Curtain' speech.[831] With the Cold War brewing, the US State Department feared the prospect of Arab realignment from the West towards the Soviet Bloc. Overruling his State Department's objections but perhaps sensing that Stalin too saw Partition as a sooner-or-later *fait accompli,* Truman's spokesman prepared to deliver the President's verdict. During his speech, Herschel V. Johnson (US Deputy Representative to the United Nations) pointedly suggested that collective agreement on some fundamental issues had helped to counterbalance the differences that divided Members. Johnson confirmed that UN representatives were united in their beliefs that the Mandate should be terminated; that Palestine should be independent, that the Holy Places should be protected, that the fundamental principles of human and minority rights should be guaranteed and finally, that economic unity should be preserved. If agreement could be reached in the economic field then who "*can now tell whether ... in the foreseeable future ... common action in the political, social and educational fields [are not equally achievable]*". The city of Jerusalem, as the "*inevitable metropolitan [as well as the] joint spiritual, social and cultural [and] educational centre*" might prove to be the catalyst in joining the two sides. After all, experience had shown that no previous plan had been acceptable to both parties and though imperfect, the partition proposal offered the tantalising prospect of peace.[832]

Now that Herschel Johnson had spoken for the US, it was the turn of the latter's cold-war enemy to support or reject the US decision. All attention now turned to USSR Representative, Andrei Gromyko as he prepared to state Moscow's final position. Previously, Gromyko had ridiculed the UK over its handling of the Palestine Mandate and been heavily critical of the West's failure to offer protection to an entire race of people. Gromyko had previously revealed that if UNSCOP decided that the divide between Arabs and Jews was unbridgeable then, as a last resort, the Soviet Union must

[831] Winston Churchill, Iron Curtain Speech, 5 March 1946
[832] A/PV.124 26 November 1947, Pages 14-17

consider Partition. In his opening remarks to the General Assembly, Gromyko claimed (arguably to a sceptical audience) that the USSR "*has no direct material or other interests in Palestine*", but as a great Power it bore special responsibility for the maintenance of world peace. He restated the USSR's former position that if a unified state proved unworkable, then separating Palestine into two independent states was its favoured option. This was in line with UNSCOP's majority; an option shared, he predicted, by most UN Member states.[833] Gromyko rejected Lebanon's claim that the "*single united family*" of the USSR had ulterior motives in voting for Partition, but he had no doubt that Arab countries would look again to Moscow in their struggle against the last remnants of foreign imperialism.[834] As before, Gromyko seized the opportunity to savage the UK for its failure to properly implement its Mandate and for imposing contradictory conditions. On the one hand, Sir Alexander Cadogan had pledged that the UK would help implement whatever decision the General Assembly might make and yet, on the other hand, UK support was conditional only on the unrealisable stipulation that Arabs and Jews agreed. This showed that "*the United Kingdom has no real desire ... to cooperate fully with the United Nations in solving this problem ... tantamount to burying this decision even before the General Assembly has taken it*".[835]

UNSCOP member for Guatemala, Jorge Garcia-Granados, actively participated in events during the final days before the crucial vote. In his memoirs of the time he denies the existence of the so-called "*powerful Latin-American bloc*", since these countries were a mix of liberal and dictatorial states and overall agreement was unusual.[836] Also, Granados was convinced that by insisting that both Arab and Jews must agree to an implementation plan, Britain was prepared to *"sabotage ... partition"*[837] and treat the process with the same *"cavalier distain"* directed at UNSCOP during its investigation in Palestine.

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[833] A/PV.125 26 November 1947, Pages 23-24
[834] (Ibid, 25)
[835] (Ibid, 25-27)
[836] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 247): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[837] (Ibid, 248)

Nevertheless, US Deputy Representative to the UN, Herschel V. Johnson stubbornly clung to the notion that Britain would eventually relent and implement the proposal rather than obstruct it. A UN Palestine Commission was to be established to oversee the implementation process, but Britain decided that it alone would judge when the Mandate should end. It would hand over authority to the Commission only "*when the time came*". Granados argued that this was an example of Britain having adopted "*artful and devious means [to] destroy the entire partition plan*".[838] Arabs argued that disproportionate pressure had been exerted on anti-partitionists to persuade Governments to change their positions. The Haiti delegate, for example, having first intended to support Partition, changed tack following Government instructions then reverted to its original decision.[839] Yugoslavia, with its large Moslem population, had intended to reject Partition, but in the end, it abstained. Greece was expected to abstain, but finally voted against Partition. The Philippines delegate implied that his country would vote 'against', before reversing his position and voting 'for'. Paraguay changed its doubtful stance to one of support. Friedman confirms that the Arab bloc could be counted on to vote against Partition and without exception they did. Other Muslim states (Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey) and states with significant Muslim minorities (India and Greece) followed suit.[840]

Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Soviet Union, Sweden, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela voted for Partition.

Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and Yemen voted against while Argentina, Chile, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia abstained.

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[838] (Ibid, 251-262)
[839] (Ibid, 263-265)
[840] Friedman, Saul (2006,248): A History of the Middle East

Of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the US, the Soviet Union and France had voted 'for' Partition while China and the UK abstained. The voting pattern shows that, very broadly, North America and European countries were supportive, as were Latin American, Caribbean and African countries by a majority of approximately 2:1.[841]

Bercuson seeks to explode the myth that Western leaders supported Zionists out of "W*estern civilisations guilt over the age-old anti-Semitism which had culminated in genocide"* or, for that matter, that Israel's success was partially by way of outside moral and material support. He argues that Canada supported Partition out of national self-interest trapped in the practicalities of Anglo/British/US foreign policy objectives rather than what policy-makers believed to be "*right or wrong*".[842] Friedman argues that the US, Western European and Latin American countries voted for Partition largely because of a powerful "*domestic Jewish influence*". Stalin's reasons for supporting Partition are less clear cut, but his backing was crucial for Zionists. His order in support of Partition was an inescapable signal to Czechoslovakia and Ukraine to follow the Soviet Union's lead.[843] Granados describes a climate of promise, discord, indecisiveness and anxious waiting for Government instructions.[844] Deals were done in the delegates' lounge - "*that fascinating centre of international gossip and intrigue*".[845] Lobbyists on both sides had attempted to swing the vote in their favour. Member states had had their final say. After final attempts by opposition forces to defer the question, or refer it to the International Court of Justice, the Resolution was put to the General Assembly. Finally, on the 29th November 1947 Resolution 181 (III) was adopted by a majority with 33 countries in favour, most of whom agreed that Partition was the only credible option. Of the remainder, 13 voted against, 10 abstained with Thailand absent for the final vote. Immediately after

[841] Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, 1917-1988, (June 1979, Pages 19-20
[842] Bercuson, David (1985, Preface): Canada and the birth of Israel – a study in Canadian foreign policy
[843] Friedman, Saul (2006,248): A History of the Middle East
[844] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 264-268): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it
[845] (Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 5): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it

Resolution 181(III) was carried by two votes more than the required two-thirds majority, the Arab representatives walked out of the Chamber.[846]

Other than a few Zionist doubters, the 'Partition Plan with Economic Union' (Annex 11, 12) was accepted by the Jewish Agency and greeted with euphoria.[847] While Jews celebrated, Arab governments rejected the outcome. Buehrig portrays the passage of Resolution 181 at the General Assembly as one of the "*most ambitious attempts in the history of international organisation to change the status quo by formal enactment*".[848]

The Aftermath

On 30th November 1947, the day after the Resolution was adopted, sporadic civil war broke out. Volunteers from neighbouring Arab countries joined local units of the Arab Liberation Army and attacked Jewish settlements. Jewish armed forces immediately fought back. Matters quickly descended into chaos. Then, on the 14th May 1948, Ben-Gurion formally declared the independent Jewish State of Israel.[849] This was the point of no return. That evening, full scale hostilities erupted when military units from neighbouring Arab countries launched an attack against the nascent state.[850] Ultimately, Israel gained the upper hand. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs were displaced from their homes with some having been physically expelled *(al Nakba)*. The latter was authorised by the Haganah leadership under Plan D. Tessler writes that Plan D's "*character and significance ... are disputed by many Israeli sources*". He contends that violence was "*tolerated*" provided it furthered some political objective. Whether it was "*premeditated or not, [it] created a climate of fear in which it was possible to employ other methods to stimulate ... the exodus*".[851] Benny Morris, who has conducted systematic research into Israel's role in the Arab exodus, explains that plan D was a blueprint drawn up by Haganah leaders whose objective was to secure the emergent

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[846] New York Times 29th November 1947, Page 1: <u>On This Day</u>

[847] Question of Palestine: Brochure DP/2517/Rev. 1: Chapter 2, <u>The Plan of Partition and end of the British Mandate</u>

[848] Buehrig, E. H. (1971, 3): <u>'The UN and the Palestinian Refugees, a study in non-territorial administration'</u>

[849] Provisional Government of Israel Official Gazette: Number 1; Tel Aviv, 5 Iyar 5708, 14.5.1948 Page 1 <u>The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel</u>

[850] Department of State (US) - Office of the Historian: <u>The Arab-Israeli War of 1948:</u> Also, Foreign Office 816/170 – UK National Archives

[851] Tessler, M. (1994, 294): <u>A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict</u>

Jewish State. Under the plan, military commanders were empowered to conduct "*operations which are in the rear of, within or near our defence lines, with the aim of preventing their use as bases for an active armed force*". Morris writes that Plan D "*was neither used by nor regarded by the senior Haganah field officers as a blanket instruction for the expulsion of the country's civilian population*".[852] [853] From the beginning, Palestinian society was "*fragmented and factional ... unprepared [for war] by almost every criterion ... [a war] that many [Palestinians] did not want*".[854] [855] The lesson was clear. A military conquest of Israel, Halliday warns, "*is simply a fantasy ... [It] is not ... a remotely feasible alternative. Nor will it ever be.*"[856]

Reflecting later, Ben-Gurion commented to Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, that "*If I was an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country. Sure, God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them? Our God is not theirs. We come from Israel, it's true, but two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?*".[857]

Summary

After a vigorous debate between pro and anti-Partitionists, the General Assembly ruled that the British Mandate should be terminated, and that Palestine should be partitioned. Although, supposedly, all Member states had an independent say, the two principal Powers had stamped their authority over proceedings. Undoubtably, a few wavering states accepted the unavoidability of Partition now that the two Cold War rivals had spoken with one voice.

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[852] Morris, Benny (1987, 62) The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949

[853] On the 11th December 1948, the UN responded with Resolution 194, conferring the 'right of return' to the refugees and their descendants. It should be noted that Resolution 194 was intended to provide temporary humanitarian assistance to "**descendants**" of refugees; a curious, perhaps mistaken, substitute for the more appropriate **dependents** of refugees more reflective of the intended temporary nature of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Commonly, UNHCR refer only to dependents. Until the latter is addressed, this anomalous construction continuously gives rise to an exponential growth in the number of descendants' under UNRWA's umbrella. **[The descendent/dependent conundrum offers a rich seam for further research].**

[854] Tal, David, (2004, 470) War in Palestine, 1948: Israeli and Arab Strategy and Diplomacy

[855] For a more detailed analysis of the war see, Tal, David, (2004) War in Palestine, 1948: Israeli and Arab Strategy and Diplomacy

[856] Fred Halliday's words taken from: Linfield, Susie (2019, 210) The Lion's Den – Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky

[857] Morris, Benny. (2008, 393) 1948: A history of the first Arab-Israeli war

Before and during the main debate, Britain's alleged mishandling of the Mandate had been ridiculed. Palestine had descended into conflict and many lives had been lost. Britain's response was to abstain from the final vote and turn its back. Nevertheless, the Balfour Declaration had started a train of events that led directly to Partition.

Whether Partition was imposed on Palestinian Arabs or was the result of the independent will of individual UN Member states is questionable. Nevertheless, research in this thesis supports the hypothesis that in the thirty years from Balfour in 1917 until 1947, Partition was unavoidable. While the Jewish Agency agreed to the state on offer, Palestinian Arabs refused to accept. When on the 14th May 1948, the State of Israel came into official being, war broke out between Israel and surrounding Arab states. Israel won their war for independence and gained additional land at the long-term cost of an independent Palestinian state.

CONCLUSION

"At Basle I founded the Jewish State … if I said this out loud today; I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years and certainly in 50 everyone will know it".[858]

The Balfour Declaration was issued in November 1917. When Lloyd George spoke about this twenty years later, he noted how its issue corresponded with a gruelling period during WWI, at a time when continuing French and Italian support was weakest and when Russian anti-Tsarists had other preoccupations. Crucially, he cited that it was also at a moment when, although having officially declared war on the 6th April 1917, the US was in the relatively early stages of preparedness. It was vital that America deploy its considerable force without which the outcome of war looked bleak. Already, President Woodrow Wilson was under pressure from many US citizens who favoured neutrality over involvement in a foreign war. Nevertheless, UK wartime decision-makers were optimistic. They were confident that influential Jewish insiders, sympathetic US press barons, the Jewish electorate and Zionists on both sides of the Atlantic would persuade wartime allies to remain militarily engaged. It was particularly essential to the combined war effort for the President to fully commit to supporting the Allies. Therefore, 1917 was an opportune year for Britain to promote Jewish collaboration by declaring its support for Zionism.

The first versions of the Balfour Declaration proposed that Palestine should be "*reconstituted*" as a Jewish homeland. However, by the time it left the Cabinet Office the wording had been amended to read that Britain would use its *"best endeavours"* to establish a Jewish home *in* Palestine. The final version of the Balfour Declaration emerged after a series of compromises. While the majority of Lloyd George's wartime cabinet accepted the need to make a commitment to Zionists by earmarking Palestine as a place for a permanent Jewish homeland, others were opposed to the concept and a few

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[858] In 1897, Theodore Herzl was a founder member of the Zionist movement established against a background of anti-Semitism and pogroms in Eastern Europe. Herzl's quotation is taken The Triumph of Survival, Rabbi Berel Wein (2004, 238).

remained sceptical. Bickerton and Klausner argue that the Balfour Declaration is a vaguely worded document.[859] There is ample evidence confirming that while the civil and religious rights of the majority Arab population were to be protected, Arabs were not consulted and had not agreed to the contents. In a memorandum written by Lord Balfour less than two years after the Declaration, he wrote "*in Palestine we [the UK Cabinet] do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country ... right or wrong, good or bad ... [the future of Zionism] is of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit this ancient land*".[860] After President Wilson had given his qualified blessing, the completed version was approved in November 1917 and incorporated into the Palestine Mandate in 1922. This was the first in a series of steps that would lead to Partition.

On the 24th of July 1922, the League of Nations entrusted the Mandate for Palestine to Britain. The Mandate itself was a Class-A Mandate under which "*Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone.*" However, the Mandate continues "*the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory*".[861] In the event, Arab public opinion favoured the United States as overseers of the Mandate. Britain accepted only after the latter had declined.

In 1922, the total landmass of Mandatory Palestine covered an area of approximately 24,500 square miles with a predominantly Arab population of some 1.3 million. Around the same time the area east of the River Jordan became Transjordan, leaving Palestine much reduced to an area of a little over 9,000 square miles, but with a much-increased population density. Transjordan was nearly

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[859] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 39) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict'
[860] Said, Edward, W (1992, 16) 'The Question of Palestine'
[861] Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 22. Para 4.

three times larger than Palestine and sparsely populated by comparison.[862] Britain's exclusion of the larger part of Mandatory Palestine (classed as a British Protectorate and permitted under Article 25 of the Palestine Mandate) left Palestinian Arabs and Jews in dispute over a reduced fraction of original Palestine. Although technically both areas east and west of the River Jordan comprised a single Mandate, they were viewed as separate entities. Initially, Transjordan's first Emir, Abdullah bin-al-Hussein, made a commitment forbidding Jews to settle. However, in 1937 he adopted a more conciliatory approach. He reported to the Royal Commission that Jews could remain provided they did not exceed 35% of the total population. At a stroke, mandatory Palestine was now confined to an area west of the Jordan and reduced to around one-third of its former size. Moreover, 300,000 East-Bank residents were transformed from Palestinians into Palestinian-Transjordanians. This left their remaining 1,000,000 West-Bank fellow-Palestinians in dispute with Jews over a share of the residual land. With no prospect of Arab/Jewish reconciliation in sight, Partition became increasingly inevitable.[863]

After the Ottoman Empire surrendered, Karsh et al question why it was that Transjordan and Palestine took separate paths. "*Whether [that was] because of [Transjordan's] unimposing geographic attributes and its socio-economic underdevelopment compared with Palestine, or because of their reluctance to open it to Jewish immigration and settlement required by the Palestine Mandate [are questionable reasons for British surrender of Transjordan]*".[864] What is certain is that Britain's effective partitioning of Mandatory Palestine into now present-day Jordan meant that the problem was irreversibly magnified. It compelled Arabs and Jews to compete for land amounting to one-third of what was once considered as Palestine.

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[862] United States Department of State – Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: The Treaty of peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, signed at Versailles, June 28, 1919, Page 101. See also, International Court of Justice Reports of Judgements, Advisory opinions and Orders, legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestine Territory – advisory opinion, 9 July 2004, Page 165

[863] Today, a large percentage of Jordanian citizens are of Palestinian ancestry reviving the truism coined by King Hussein in 1981 that "*Jordan is Palestine and Palestine is Jordan*".

[864] Karsh E., Karsh I., (2001, 315) Empires of the Sand, 'the Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East 1789-1923'

From 1917 until 1947 there was a near blizzard of Commissions, Committees, UK White Papers and proposals, which were all aimed at resolving the Palestinian question. Britain's policy towards Palestine was erratic and unpredictable. It had twisted and turned as world events changed. It was pro-Zionist and anti-Arab, then pro-Arab and anti-Zionist depending on the political atmosphere. One proposal (the Royal Commission of 1937) was accepted by Zionists as a starting point to negotiations. Conversely, Arabs were insisting that nothing short of a proportionally representative majority Palestinian-Arab state, including a blanket ban on Jewish immigration, was worthy of consideration.

In 1937, ten years before UNSCOP arrived to carry out its survey, the Royal Commission (Peel) had come closest to proposing a workable solution. During its time in the region, the Royal Commission had conducted a scrupulous step-by-step examination of the Jewish-Arab question. First, they explored it in its historical context: the early relationship between Judaism and Islam in Palestine. They tested the inherent ambiguity contained in the Balfour Declaration and its close coupling to the British Mandate. They explored in some depth Zionist calls for, and Arab rejection of, a Jewish Home/State. The Commissioners plotted the course of the disturbances during the 1920s and 30s which led to the near-uncontainable Arab Revolt that erupted in 1936 and continued until 1939. They concluded that the Balfour Declaration was ambiguous, and that certain Articles contained in the British Mandate were irreconcilable. Peel's Commission turned its attention to the rise of Palestinian Nationalism. It considered Arab and Jewish proposals and their respective attitudes towards a Jewish National Home, with particular reference to the Arab/Jewish impasse over Jewish immigration. They examined the contentious questions of land, irrigation, agriculture, forestation, development opportunities and the likelihood of co-operation on any number of these issues. The Commissioners addressed the situation in the Holy Places and the impact of any one solution on the inhabitants. Time and again, they were met with the obstacle of Jewish immigration until it became a major preoccupation. Peel's report also addressed Arab fears of Jewish dominance - the 'raison d'être' of

the disturbances. Finally, after travelling the region, taking numerous statements and balancing the weight of evidence on both sides, the Royal Commissioners favoured Partition. Though there was evidence of some degree of co-operation between the two conflicting parties, it was insufficient to guarantee that Jews and Arabs could live together in permanent peace. Amongst several *"Separation [and] Co-operation"* clauses intended to *"play an important part after partition in helping to bring about an ultimate reconciliation of the two races"* the Commissioners recommended that with little prospect of peaceful coexistence, neither Jews nor Arabs should be permitted to purchase property from each other.[865] On the question of the economic sustainability of a future Jewish homeland, Peel recommended that it was for Jewish leaders to determine the extent of their own *"economic absorptive capacity"*. In their concluding remarks, the Royal Commissioners argued that while neither side would get all it wanted, *"half a loaf was better than no bread [at all]"*.[866] Under Partition, the Royal Commissioners envisaged that Palestinian Arabs would be on an equal footing with their Arab-State neighbours. They would be freed from the fear of subjection to Jewish rule and strengthened by the knowledge that the Holy Places would be internationally protected. Additionally, Arabs should receive a subvention from the Jewish state and in view of the poverty of Transjordan, a sizable British grant towards land improvements. For Jews, the prize was beguiling. While Peel's proposals only went part way to satisfying their demands, they met the primary principles of Zionism. Jews would have the freedom to build an independent Jewish state in a manner they saw fit. The Royal Commissioners had addressed the main themes: Arab demands for an independent Palestinian state and their *"hatred and fear"* of the consequences of mass Jewish immigration into an independent Jewish homeland or Jewish state. However, there were other factors at play. These were Jewish reservations regarding *"the advance of Arab nationalism"*, Arab concerns over *"Jewish [influence over British] public opinion"*, "*Arab distrust in the sincerity of the British Government* [and] *alarm*

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[865] Palestine Royal Commission: (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Page 393)
[866] (Ibid, 394)

at ... Jewish purchase of land" and suspicions over Britain's "*ultimate intentions*".[867] While many of the Royal Commission's recommendations were echoed in UNSCOP's report ten years later, the Commission went a step too far which contributed to the report's downfall. The Commission concluded that in its opinion, as that neither side could peacefully co-exist over the issue of immigration, there should be a wholesale population exchange. The Commissioners reasoned that "*the existence of minorities constitutes to the most serious hindrance to the smooth and successful operation of Partition*".[868]

Predictably, after the report was published, it was roundly rejected by the Arab Higher Committee. Raider and Sarna confirm that unlike the outright denunciation of Peel's proposals by Arabs, Ben-Gurion's Zionist Congress faced down dissenters and accepted Peel's proposal as a starting point towards future negotiations.[869] Palestinian Arabs were inflamed by Peel's proposal for a population exchange, given the negative impact it would have on large swathes of Arabs against a relative handful of Jews.

A year later Britain dispatched yet another Commission (the Woodhead Commission) to review the situation. Woodhead's Commissioners unanimously ruled out a population exchange. They devised three Partition plans, each of which was met with opposition by one or more of the Commissioners. In the end, the majority decided reluctantly that Partition Plan C was the least implausible.[870] Like the other plans, it too was dismissed by both sides in the dispute. HM Government were minded to endorse and then decided against the Royal Commissions proposals. In November 1938 it announced that Woodhead's would suffer the same fate. Nevertheless, through Peel and Woodhead, 'Partition' was firmly planted into official language. This was a major step towards it being adopted as a solution.

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[867] (Ibid, Part 1, Chapters III & IV)
[868] (Ibid, Chapter XXII, Pages 389-383)
[869] Raider, A. Sarna, J. Zweig (Ed) (1977, 33-45), Abba Hillel Silver and American Zionism (an essay by Shapira, A, *A Comparative Study of Zionist leadership*
[870] Palestine Royal Commission: (Cmd. 5479, 1937, Appendix 9)

In May 1939 both the House of Commons and House of Lords debated the UK Government's now infamous White Paper. At a time of most need, Jews were to be condemned to remain within the clutches of their Nazi persecutors. HM Government acceded to Arab demands and imposed savage restrictions on Jewish immigration. In the face of raging opposition to its latest policy twist, the Conservative Government finally won the day. With WWII just months away, all pretence that Britain would help Zionists establish a Jewish state was quashed. Within five years, millions of Jewish people were murdered. Britain's White Paper had left Zionists' ambitions for a Jewish state temporarily paralysed.

On the 1st of September 1939 the Third Reich invaded Poland and two days later, Britain and France declared war against Germany. The Soviet Union invaded Poland from the East on the 17th of September. Britain, preoccupied with war, turned its back on the Balfour promise. With means of escape barred, only the most prophetic could have imagined that for European Jews, there was worse to come. The industrial elimination of Jews gathered pace over several years and was nearing its full throes by the time Jewish representatives convened at the Biltmore Hotel in New York in May 1942. Although Britain's 1939 White Paper was a setback, committed Zionists were determined to find a way forward. While Weizmann remained optimistic that Britain would fulfil its promise, the resolute Ben-Gurion was convinced that it was vital to garner United States support. Opinions were mixed, but Ben-Gurion argued that while a gradualist approach towards Statehood may have been appropriate pre-war, the present suffering of European Jews demanded a radical solution. Unless Jewish immigration levels into Palestine drastically increased, the whole concept of Zionism was pointless. Other than revisionists who claimed that all of Palestine was rightfully Jewish, the majority accepted Ben-Gurion's view that Partition was a realistic starting point. A secure Jewish state offered protection from the persecution that Jews had suffered for centuries with the Holocaust representing the most extreme manifestation of anti-Semitism. Peel's 'step too far' was that the impasse between Arabs and Jews necessitated a population exchange. Indeed, there is evidence that, were it not for the

immigration issue, it was not unusual to find ordinary Jewish and Palestinian-Arab people cooperating on every-day issues. Ben-Gurion looked ahead to a Jewish state where up to a million Arabs lived alongside Jews and shared civil, political and religious equality but he acknowledged the depth of Arab resentment. In an address to the Jewish Agency in 1936, Ben-Gurion proposed that Zionists should "*see things with Arab eyes ... they see emigration on a giant scale ... they see the lands passing into our hands. They see England identifying with Zionism*".[871] Nonetheless while bi-nationalism had advantages, Ben-Gurion dismissed the notion because Arabs were overwhelmingly and unrelentingly opposed to Jewish immigration. Immigration, he urged, was "*the only way of salvation and survival*". Although there were rifts in the ranks of the attendees, Conference resolved that "*Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth*".[872] At Biltmore it was Ben-Gurion, the younger statesman, who emerged as the preferred leader rather than Weizmann. Again, it was Ben-Gurion at his most persuasive who seized the moment and gained the support of Conference. He correctly predicted that, post-war, the United States would replace Britain as the final decider over the Palestine question.

Jewish 'Home/Homeland and Commonwealth' were always metaphors for Jewish '*State*'. The charade ended in May 1945 when the Jewish Agency presented its full set of demands to the British Government. *"Palestine",* the document reads, *"[would be established] as a full Jewish State*", free to set its own settlement policy. The document was issued in the same month that the war in Europe finally ended.[873] After WWII, Zionist resolve had hardened. To Zionists, the Balfour Declaration was interpreted as implying that Britain and the League of Nations, by way of the British Mandate, officially recognised the Jewish historical and religious connection to Palestine. To Zionists, this represented an unequivocal commitment to world Jewry. They were on a mission to

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[871] Shlomo Ben-Ami (2006, 1): <u>Scars of War, Wounds of Peace – The Israeli-Arab Tragedy</u>.
[872] Stein, K (2011): '<u>The Biltmore Program, David Ben-Gurion.</u> See also, Brady, Colleen, 2010: <u>American Zionism and the Biltmore Conference</u>: Readings on the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Prof. R. Hudson.
[873] On the 8th May 1945 Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies and on the following day (9th May) Germany also surrendered to the Soviet Union. The war in the East continued until 14th August 1945 when Japan surrendered unconditionally.

encourage any number of Jewish immigrants to migrate to a Jewish State in all or part of Palestine. It was the unknown dimension of immigration that Arabs resisted.

WWII had left Europe devastated. Cities lay in ruins. Food was scarce. Family members by the million were dead or displaced. Hundreds of thousands of refugees roamed across Europe. Jewish people had been decimated. Holocaust survivors languished in holding camps often within touching distance of the homes of former enemies. A state in Palestine offered Jewish men, women and children the one avenue of salvation. Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, was caught in this whirlwind of change. He was reluctant to agree with Truman's willingness to accept the need for increased Jewish immigration into Palestine. He was inclined to share the US State Department's fears over the likely negative Arab reaction and its conjecture that this would lead to Soviet influence creeping ever deeper into Middle East affairs. Any sympathy Bevin had for Holocaust survivors quickly evaporated when he was confronted by the large number of British casualties at the hands of Jewish radical groups. He refused to submit to the Jewish Agency's appeal that the sheer scale of the refugee crisis demanded an immediate abandonment of the immigration quotas. The different approaches adopted by the British and US Governments fostered chilled relations between Bevin and Truman. The State of Israel became a reality largely due to Truman's resolve to see its establishment through to the end.

On 2nd April 1947, after thirty years of unsuccessful struggle over the Palestine Mandate, Britain finally accepted defeat and surrendered its bleak task to the United Nations. In turn, the latter established an eleven-member United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to visit the region, seek answers and recommend a plausible solution. From the start, Zionist leaders had the advantage. They demonstrated a willingness to co-operate and presented a cogent argument. Conversely, the severe disservice Palestinian leaders did their constituents by boycotting proceedings was only partially rectified by statesmen from Palestine's Arab neighbours presenting their case to UNSCOP.

Armed with evidence gathered from interested parties, UNSCOP members journeyed to Geneva to consider their decision. Up to this point, a bi-national state had been effectively ruled out. A mixed federal state with disgruntled Arabs in close proximity to equally resistant Jews would be equally unsatisfactory. Now that Mandatory Palestine excluded Transjordan, an all-encompassing Jewish State extending over the remaining area would deprive Palestinian Arabs of a state of their own. This was an intolerable situation to Palestinian Arabs and was quickly ruled out. Thus, it remained, from Balfour onwards, that the separation of two conflicted parties was the only credible option. Consequently, on the 3rd September 1947, by a majority of its eleven members, UNSCOP recommended to the General Assembly that Palestine should be partitioned into two independent states. Both would cooperate in a jointly exercised economic union. Additionally, due to its sensitive religious significance, the Committee recommended that Jerusalem should have administrative status implemented under the authority on the United Nations.

Later, on the 29th of November 1947 and following an energetic debate, the General Assembly approved a slightly modified version of UNSCOP's majority recommendations.[874] Supporters of Partition accepted the Zionist contention that the establishment of a Jewish State and unrestricted immigration were inextricably interwoven. With some reservations over demarcation lines and partially unresolved immigration concerns, Zionists were overjoyed. By contrast, Palestinian Arabs refused to bow to the inevitability of Partition and accept the fully independent Palestinian State on offer.

Taking a step back, the research has shown that Arab and Jewish interests were so diametrically opposed, particularly on the issue of Jewish immigration and the accompanying land sales, that from Balfour in 1917, Partition was always the only realistic option.[875] Although couched in terms intended to assuage both sides, the wording of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine

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[874] UNSCOP's report was referred to an Ad Hoc Committee on the United Nations before being considered by the General Assembly.
[875] Lord Balfour reportedly said that development should be gradual but an "*independent Jewish State*" lay somewhere in the future (War Cabinet Paper 261, CAB 23/24, 5). [see this thesis, Chapter 1]

Mandate evidently implies that Britain foresaw the establishment of a Jewish 'state'. Although Britain's Royal Commission anticipated that Partition would lead to peace, its recommendation for a wholesale population transfer stirred an already volatile mix. Peel's proposal was based on the supposition that Jewish immigration on any scale was intolerable to Arabs. He went even further, deducing that on balance, it was unlikely that Arabs could co-exist with Jews. However, as the evidence presented in this thesis shows, while it is unquestionably true that the deadlock over Partition was intimately connected to the question of Jewish immigration, there is no convincing evidence to indicate that Partition demanded a total separation of all Jews from all Arabs. The latter is particularly noteworthy given that the UN resolved to partition Palestine into two separate states provided that Jews and Arabs agreed to cooperate in the best interests of the overall economy.

The Arab/Israeli dispute over immigration is a recurring theme throughout the thesis. Above all, it was the resolutely immovable stance adopted by both sides on this single issue that persuaded the GA to endorse, with little enthusiasm, UNSCOP's recommendation for a two-state solution.[876] The thesis has consistently argued that the Partition of Palestine was the only realistic option, but the question remains as to why this was the case:

The final version of the Balfour Declaration can be interpreted as an assurance to Zionists that, one way or another, Britain would *"endeavour"* to facilitate a Jewish Home *in* Palestine. This pledge was later crystallised in the British Mandate. The League of Nations recognised that a Jewish historical connection with the Holy land was "*grounds for reconstituting their national home in [Palestine]*",[877] but the League of Nations went further. Not only was Britain bound to "*secure the establishment of the Jewish national home*",[878] but in cooperation with Zionists, it was also to "*facilitate Jewish immigration [so as to encourage] close settlement on the land including State lands and waste lands*".[879] Clearly, according to the League of Nations, Jews were expected to immigrate

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[876] It should be noted that, unlike the UN Security Council, the General Assembly, although it conveys considerable authority, is empowered only to make recommendations - that is, they are not legally binding.
[877] British Palestine Mandate: Text of the Mandate (24th July 1922, Para 2)
[878] (Ibid, Article 2)
[879] (Ibid, Article 6)

into and develop a Jewish national entity in Palestine. Later, though Britain obfuscated the Balfour Declaration's intentions, there is no evidence that it or any number of Commissions or Committees argued for its abandonment. However, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the reawakening of Arab nationalism, Britain sought to appease Arab resistance to the Declaration. For the next thirty years, there were stumbling blocks along the way.

First and most important, was the increasing pace of Jewish immigration. A range of Committees and Commissions struggled over the issue, with neither Zionists nor Arabs prepared to give way. Zionists argued that both Britain and particularly the International authority vested in the League of Nations had not only pledged to "*facilitate Jewish immigration*", but they had also been given the authority to settle and develop the land. On the other hand, Arabs argued that even though they were in the majority, they had been side-lined when the decision to reorganise Palestine in favour of Zionists had been made. Although both sides of this argument are undeniably true, in the context of the time in which they were framed, the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate were politically irreversible with or without the drive to resolve the post-Holocaust immigration crisis.

The second stumbling block was the perceived lack of land in which to build a viable Jewish state. By 1947, Jews had already established settlements. These were mainly centred around the coastal plain and in the northern regions that were being intensively cultivated by successive waves of Jewish immigrants. Despite the UK Government's restrictive immigration policy of 1939, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that whether by legal or illegal means, vigorous efforts by the Palestine Authority to stem the flow of Jewish settlers beyond these limits failed. The influx was particularly evident after the Holocaust. The Mandate stipulated that the "*waste lands*" could be settled. As the Negev fell into that category, it too offered scope for further development.[880]

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[880] (Ibid, Article 6)

Third, Britain and others argued that immigration levels should not exceed Palestine's *"absorptive capacity".* The thesis argues that the term is meaningless. The absorptive capacity of a state is in constant flux and a man-made creation. Arable acre for arable acre, smaller states than Palestine provide adequate living conditions for considerably larger populations. Conversely, many larger states have small populations. The thesis argues that the term 'absorptive capacity' was nothing more than a cynical ploy by Britain to partially satisfy Arab demands for a complete stoppage of Jewish immigration. Again, if irrigated, the Negev desert region presented the possibility of creating ever more absorptive economic capacity.

The fourth barrier was that Zionists had considerable economic and political influence. They deployed this to positive effect both within the embryonic Jewish state and in the corridors of power. Zionist influence (or, as Schneer argues, the *"stereotypical thinking about [the exaggerated role of Jewish influence]"[881])* was shrewdly employed in the lead-up to the Balfour Declaration and, later, within US President Truman's Administration. Zionists not only used their economic leverage to help fund the Jewish state, but they also used it to promote a successful propaganda campaign and could count on sympathetic press and media barons. In contrast, Arabs could not compete on the same terms so that their message failed to resonate within Western government circles.

The fifth obstacle was that while both sides were willing to compromise on several issues, Jewish immigration was flatly and uncompromisingly non-negotiable by both sides. Given a majority-Arab bi-national state, Arabs were prepared to allow 'legal' immigrants to remain and participate in a proportionally representative government. As Palestinian citizens, Jews would have the same status as their fellow Palestinians. However, the fate of 'illegal' immigrants was less clear cut. According to the evidence gathered in this thesis, it is likely that illegal immigrants would be expelled, and any further immigration banned. With a one-state solution ruled out, Partition was unavoidable.

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[881] Schneer, J. (2010, 344): The Balfour Declaration – the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict

The sixth issue was the fact that, generally, the General Assembly was frustrated by Palestinian Arabs' apparent snub to the Special Committee. This offered Zionists considerable freedom to influence proceedings. However, this omission was partially mitigated by measured evidence from Arab neighbours.

Finally, from the onset it was clear to Commissions, Committees and to UNSCOP that the issues of Jewish immigration and land sales were unchallengeable. The Royal Commission went further. Peel maintained that the economic, social, religious and cultural differences between Jews and Arabs were so deeply entrenched, that Arabs and Jews should lead separate lives. He proposed that under a two-state solution, there should be a mass exchange of populations such that Jews and Arabs would be partitioned into two distinct Jewish and Arab national states. While Peel had established the necessity for Partition, unsurprisingly, population exchange was roundly rejected.

While this researcher acknowledges that on immigration the differences were intractable, the divide was centred on Arab fears that Jewish immigration threatened Palestine's and the wider Middle East's demographic balance, rather than a belief that Jews and Arab could not co-exist at any level. Conversely, the evidence presented here confirms that given economic parity, Jews and Arabs could co-operate on every-day life issues. Menachem Klein writes that although Jewish-Arab identity "*was full of spurs and bumps"* it was *"a fact of life, something encountered daily by the country's natives*".[882] Bickerton and Klausner agree that, especially during the times when Jewish immigration levels dropped, *"[p]ersonal relations between Arab and Jews could be friendly*".[883] Karsh cites many instances of peaceful coexistence over matters as far ranging as joint Arab-Jewish projects over schools, trade unions and "*on non-political matters, such as taxation, agriculture. etc., [where Jews and Arabs] speak with the same voice*".[884] As far back as 1924, Palestinian Administrators reported that Arab and Jewish villages had actively collaborated in such matters of anti-malarial drainage and

[882] Klein, Menachem (2014, 19) Lives in Common, Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron,
[883] Bickerton, I.J and Klausner, C. L. (2007, 50) 'History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (7th Edition)
[884] Karsh, Efraim (2011, 14-15): Palestine Betrayed

water installation schemes.[885] In May 1936, shortly after taking office as President of the Jewish Agency, Chaim Weizmann addressed the English Zionist Federation: Despite "*venomous Arab propaganda*" directed at Jews, Arabs had gained from the Jewish presence on many measures. Zionists "*have no quarrel with the Arab people ... We have lived with them in peace. We have stretched out our hands repeatedly [to understand and remedy their grievances]*".[886] Similarly, in their evidence to the Royal Commission in 1937 and to UNSCOP in July 1947, Arab statesmen confirmed that they too enjoyed peaceful relations with Jews and that cordiality would continue, were it not for the irreparable divide over expanding Jewish settlements. After the Holocaust, Arabs protested that "*they, the one race with no anti-Semitic tradition, should [be singled out] to bear the sins of Christian Europe*".[887] Again, the deadlock over Jewish immigration was the main obstacle to a peaceful solution. It was this one factor above all others that persuaded the GA that it had no alternative but to divide Palestine into two separate states with the proviso that Jerusalem should become a separate UN administered capital.[888] To bring the two sides into closer alignment, the GA accepted UNSCOP's supposition that a system of economic unity would prove to be mutually beneficial.[889]

The General Assembly carried a considerable responsibility and was faced with a number of distinct options: It had the option of establishing an International Trusteeship System under the Administrative Authority of the UN imagining that, in time, the Palestine question would be settled peacefully or, failing that, militarily enforced by the UN Security Council. However, this option would not have resolved the contentious immigration issue. Instead, Holocaust survivors would be condemned to remain indefinitely in European refugee camps from where, after legal limits had been reached, many thousands more would have felt compelled to journey to Palestine illegally. The

[885] Report by HM Government of the Administration under Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1924
[886] Letters and papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume II, Series B, Editor: Barnet Litvinoff, (December 1931 – April 1952), Pages 93-98.
[887] Ovendale, Ritchie (2004, 105): The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars
[888] A/RES/181(II), 29 November 1947: Resolution 181 (II). Future government of Palestine, Pages 8-10
[889] (Ibid, 13-17)

likelihood of increased violence between Jews, Arabs and an Administrative Authority ruled this option out.

The GA could have prevailed on members of the International Community to accept a share of Jewish immigrants on humanitarian grounds. However, although country after country expressed sympathy, most refused to assist. A few offered sanctuaries, but to a relatively small number of displaced Jews. Countries were struggling to rebuild after WWII. Some alleged that refugees would upset an existing delicate demographic balance. Others claimed to have already arrived at saturation point. In any event, Jewish refugees had their minds fixed on a partitioned Palestine. Again, resettlement was not an option.

The UN could have replaced the Mandate by a UN administered Trusteeship. While it was possible to enforce this arrangement after WWII, in the specific case of Palestine (other than Jerusalem), the UN was unlikely to follow that path given that the British Mandate was already a proven failure. The UK Government was intending to surrender its Mandate otherwise sporadic violence threatened to explode into full-blown conflict. Yet again, this was not an option.

A one-state solution implied an Arab-imposed blanket ban on Jewish immigration. 'Illegal' immigrants were likely to be expelled, land sales banned, and Jews fated to live under the jurisdiction of an Arab-majority state. This raised the spectre of Palestine spiralling into civil war and was not considered as a credible option.

Under the Bevin Plan, separation of Arabs from Jews would have been brought about via a system of Cantons. Partition, unlike Cantons, had the advantage of providing for a defensible critical mass. That aside, Bevin's plan was rejected by both parties.

While alternative solutions have been explored, all are secondary to Zionists' resolve that the future of Judaism itself depended on Jewish immigration into the perceived security of a self-governing Jewish state. The above reinforces the hypothesis that the UN had no viable alternative other than to accept Partition.

It is arguable whether world-wide revulsion over the Holocaust put the final seal on Partition, and whether a Jewish State (in the *faraway* Middle East) was none other than a cynical measure to rid Europe of its Jewish refugee 'problem'. In an interview in the Times of Israel, Shalom Wald contends that had the Holocaust *not* happened then "*there would be no state of Israel, only a strong Jewish community in the land of Israel*". Wald asks, *what-if,* at key moments in the run-up to, and during the course of WWII, events had played out in some other way, then, he conjectures, the Holocaust may not have happened.[890] Of course it could equally be imagined that *what-if* there had *not* been a war in the first place with its consequential Holocaust then the State of Israel may have come to fruition sooner rather than later after Peel's Commission made its two-state proposal. Also, had there *not* been a run-up to war then there would have been no strategic advantage for Britain to issue its 1939 White Paper favouring Arab states over Zionists. In his 'Holocaust Averted', Gurock addresses in part the issue of counterfactual history, a speculative exploration of *what-ifs*.[891] "*Alternative scenarios of events*", he suggests, "*have their spokespeople who believe that it is not only a way of understanding the intricacies of past decisions, but also of comprehending what those 'roads not taken' mean for contemporary conditions*".[892] MacRaild and Black argue that counterfactual history *"is at the very root ... of conjecturing on what did not happen, or might have happened, in order to understand what did".[893]* Be that as it may, this thesis is not a counterfactual journey. It is not a speculative exploration of *what-ifs*. The tragedy of the Holocaust happened, as did a series of other events, most particularly Balfour's pledge to Zionists, it's acceptance by the League of Nations and pre and post WWII commissions that found no feasible alternatives to Partition.

Again, for years before formal Partition in 1947, Jewish immigrants had poured into Palestine and before long comprised a critical mass within definable notional borders. By the time Peel's Royal Commission proposed Partition in 1937, the Yishuv had acquired all of the trappings of a fully

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890 Times of Israel (2 June 2015) Article on Counter Factualism and Jewish History by Renee Ghert-Zand
891 Gurock, J. S. (2015) The Holocaust Averted, An Alternative History of American Jewry 1938 – 1967
892 Times of Israel (2 June 2015) Article on Counter Factualism and Jewish History by Renee Ghert-Zand
893 MacRaild, D. M. and Black, J. (2007, 125) Studying History

functioning state. A *de facto* Jewish state existed but, (it must be emphasised), alongside an Arab state-in-waiting which, as Halliday asserts, should comprise half of historic Palestine. Using the examples of India in regard to Pakistan or Pakistan vis-à-vis Bangladesh, he writes, *"[t]here exists a standard solution [to irreconcilable national conflict] namely Partition"*. So why, Halliday questions, is Palestine viewed so differently when 'state' itself is a manmade creation and applies to virtually all states? Answering his own central question, Halliday writes that those claiming that "*Israelis do not have the right to nationhood ... is so fundamental ... that it is rarely argued for; it is simply assumed*".[894]

This thesis has argued that from Balfour until Partition thirty years later, Palestinian Arabs were engaged in an unwinnable struggle against Zionists' resolve to set in stone a permanent Jewish state in the Holy Land. Soon after returning from Palestine, UNSCOP member, Garcia-Granados, went further: "*Partition was not a capricious invention of UNSCOP. It already existed in Palestine when we came here, we found it there; history, not UNSCOP, had begun the partition of Palestine*".[895]

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[894] Fred Halliday's words taken from: Linfield, Susie (2019, 209-210) The Lion's Den – Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky
[895] Garcia-Granados, J. (1948, 272-273): The Birth of Israel – The Drama as I saw it

Annex 1. Draft 1: Lord Rothschild Draft of the Declaration - 18ᵗʰ July 1917

1. His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people.

2. His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organisation.

Annex 2. Draft 2: Arthur Balfour Draft of the Declaration – 2nd August 1917

I am glad to be in a position
to inform you that:

His Majesty's Government
accepts the principle that
Palestine should be
reconstituted as the
national home of the Jewish
people and will use their
best endeavours to secure the
achievement of this object
and will be ready to consider
any suggestions on the
subject which the Zionist
Organisation may desire to
lay before them.

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

His Majesty's Government views
with favour the establishment
in Palestine of a national
home for the Jewish race and
will use its best endeavours to
facilitate the achievement of
this object, it being clearly
understood that nothing shall
be done which may prejudice
the civil and religious rights
of existing non-Jewish
communities in Palestine, or
the rights and political status
enjoyed in any other country
by such Jews who are fully
contented with their existing
nationality (and citizenship).

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 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
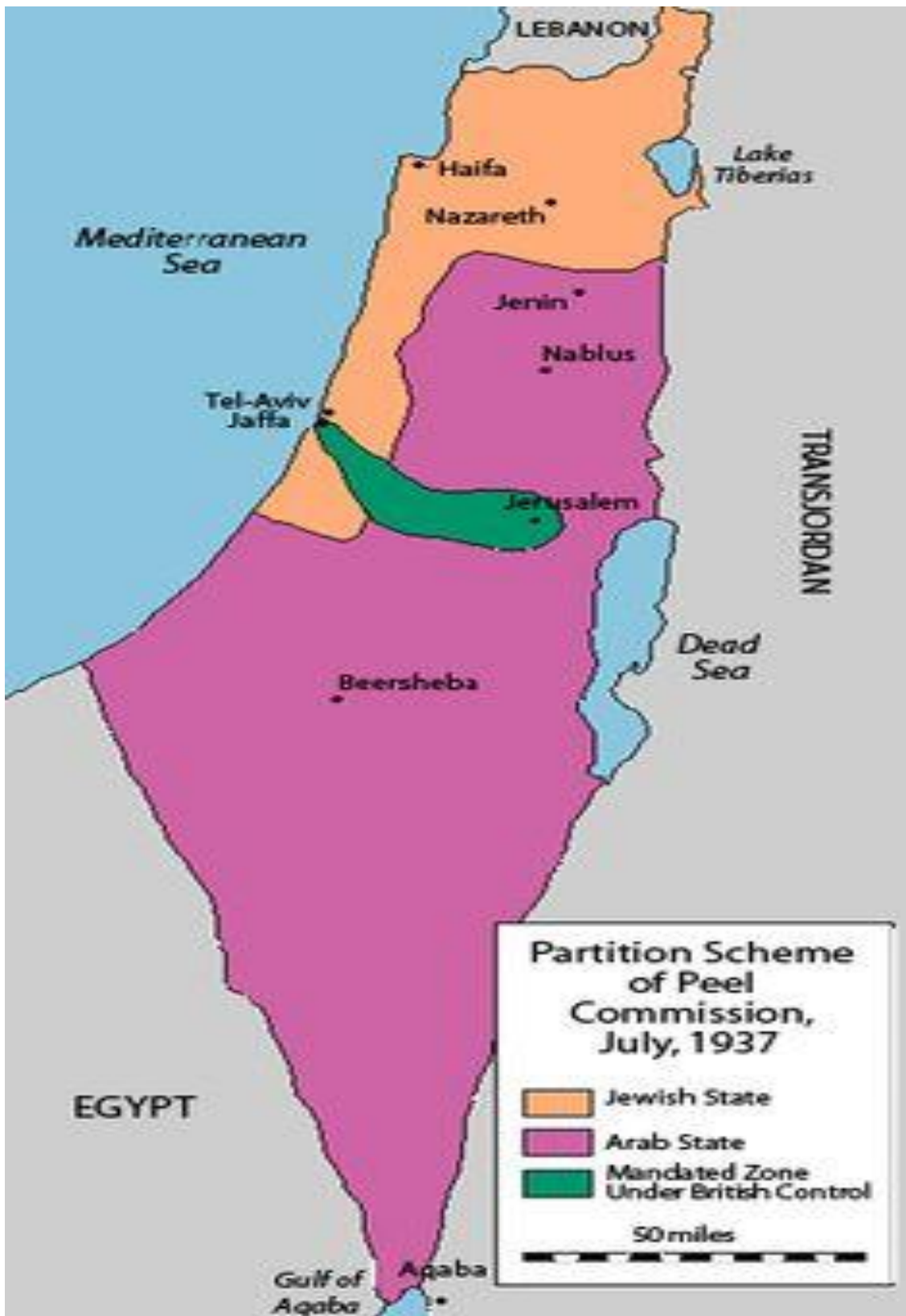
'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights 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.

[signature]

(Above five image versions of the Balfour Declaration by courtesy of Balfour 100 (www.balfour100.com/declaration))

Annex 6. Palestine Royal Commission – Plan of Partition

Partition Scheme of Peel Commission, July, 1937

- Jewish State
- Arab State
- Mandated Zone Under British Control

50 miles

Annex 7. Woodhead Partition – Plan A.

Woodhead Commission Partition, 1939 PLAN A

- Jewish State
- Arab State
- British Mandate

25 Miles
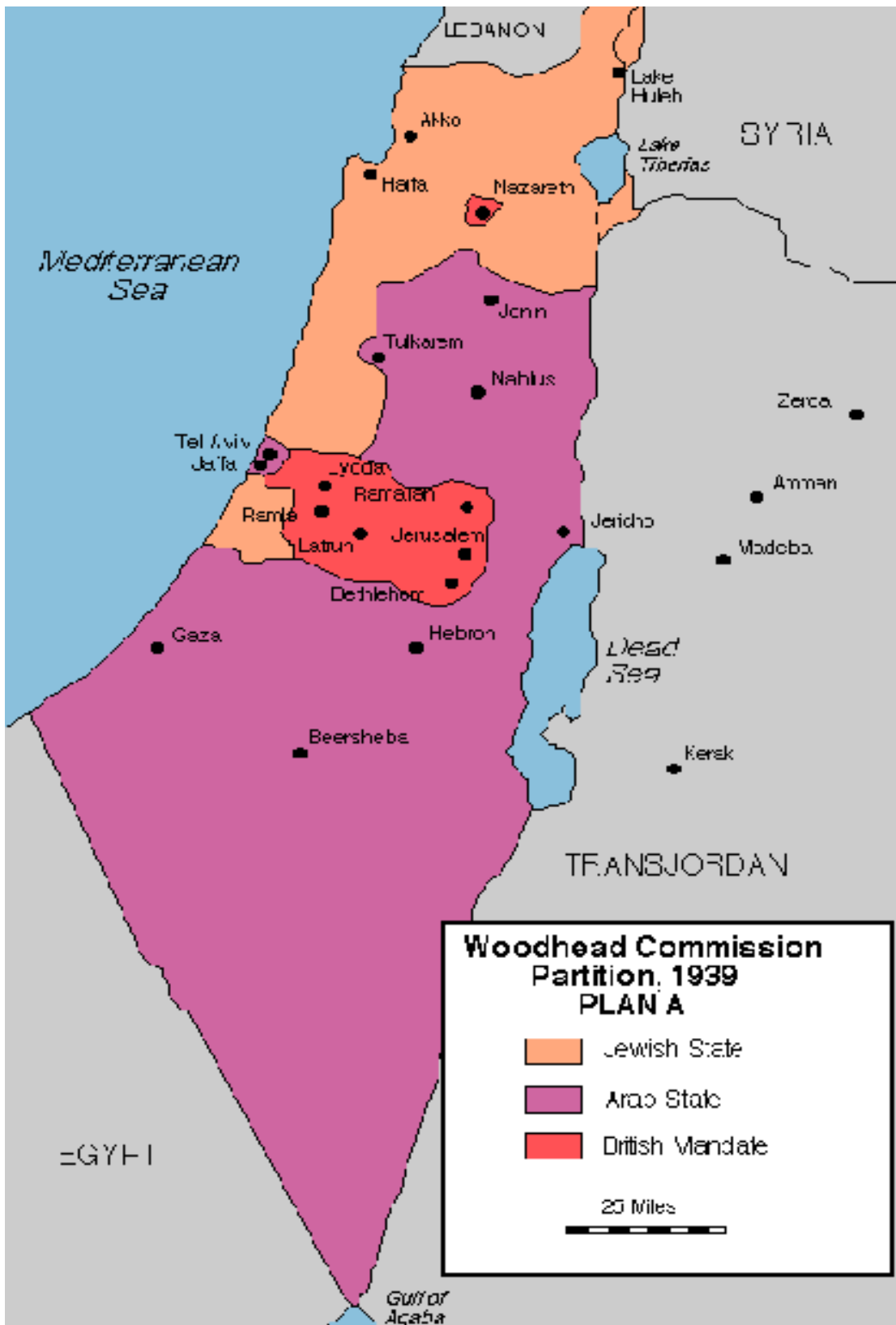
Annex 8. Woodhead Partition – Plan B.
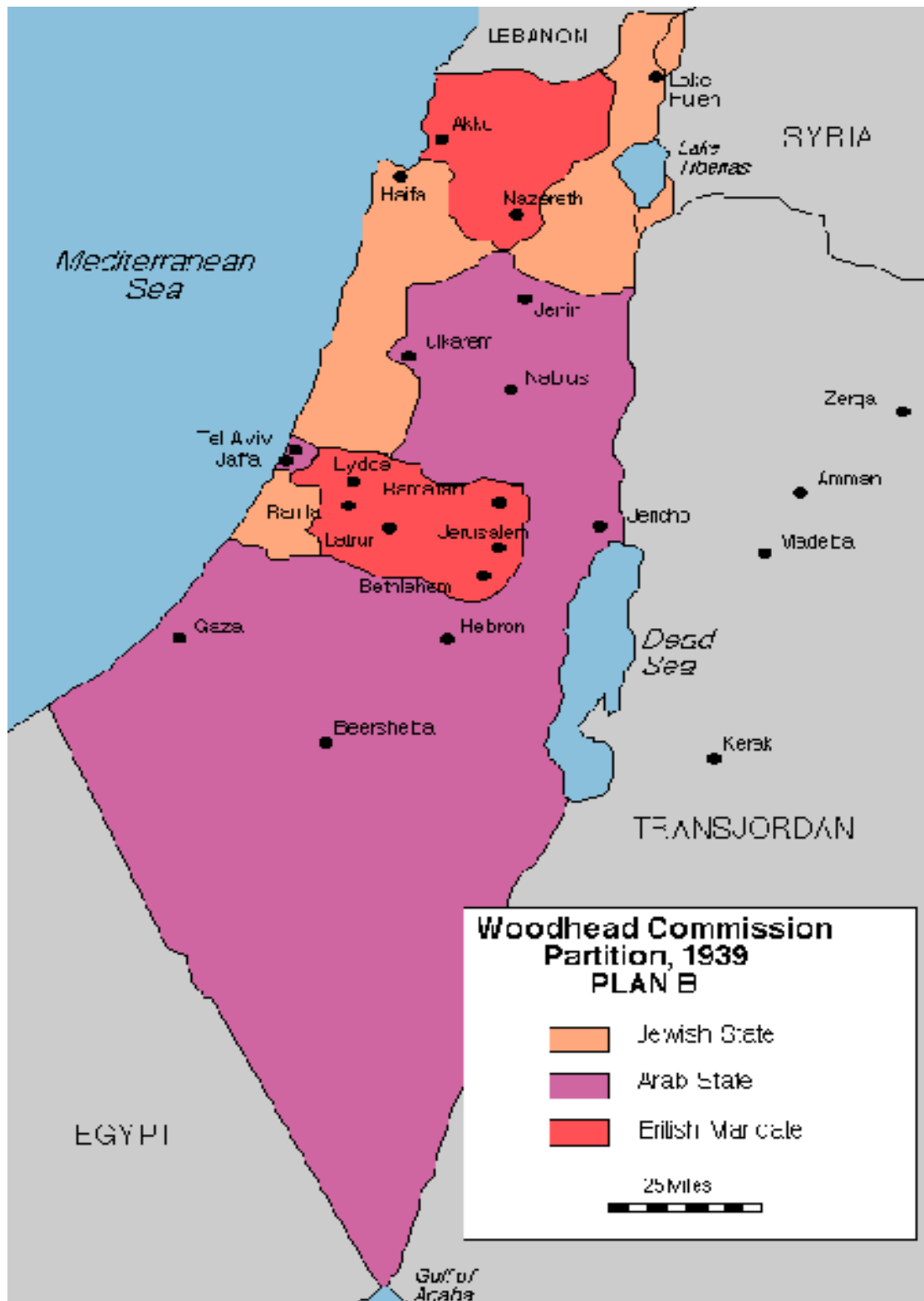
Annex 9. Woodhead Partition – Plan C.

Woodhead Commission Partition, 1939 PLAN C
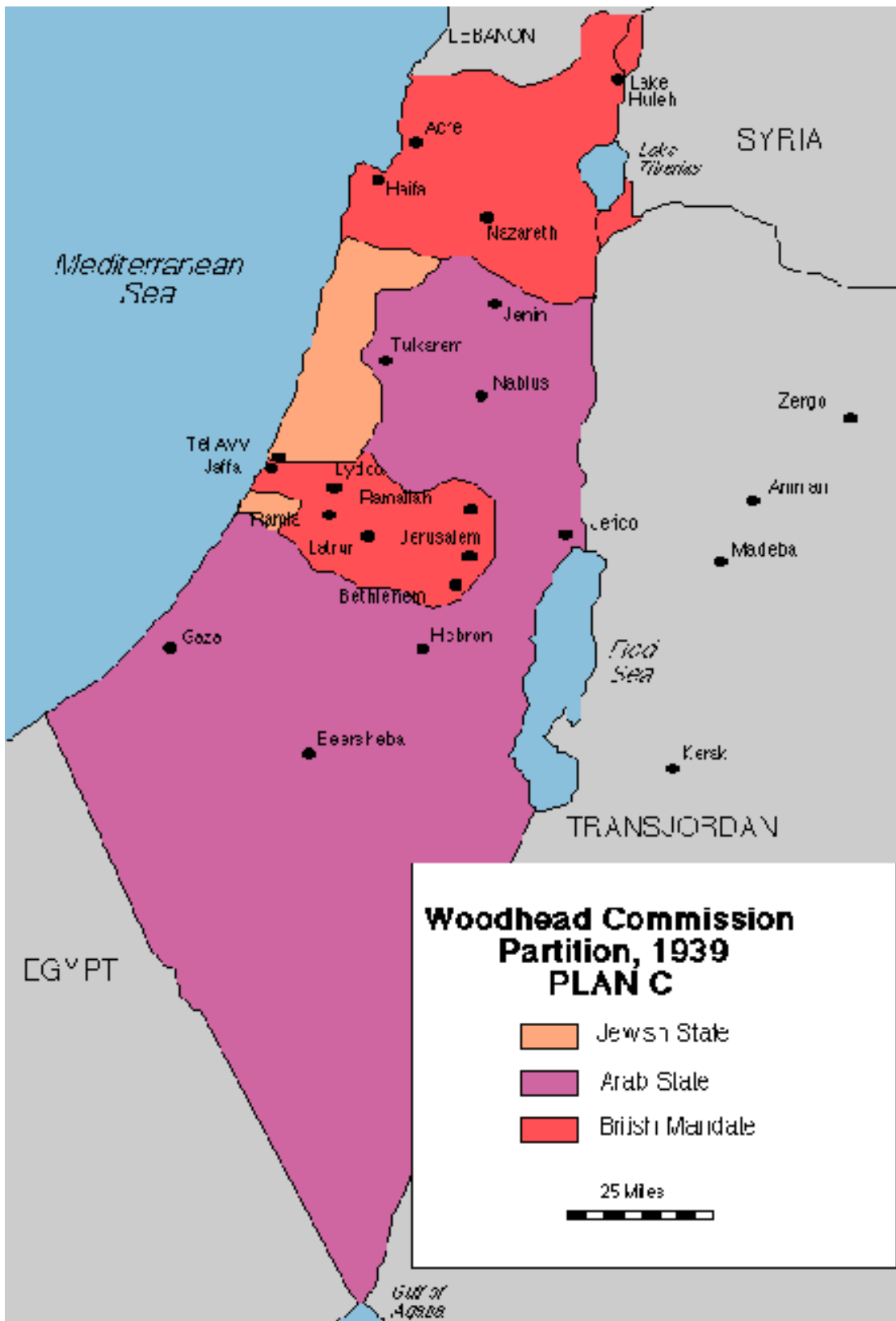
Annex 10. UNSCOP Minority Plan – Federation of Arab and Jewish States

(Above Maps (6-10) by courtesy of the Jewish Virtual Library)
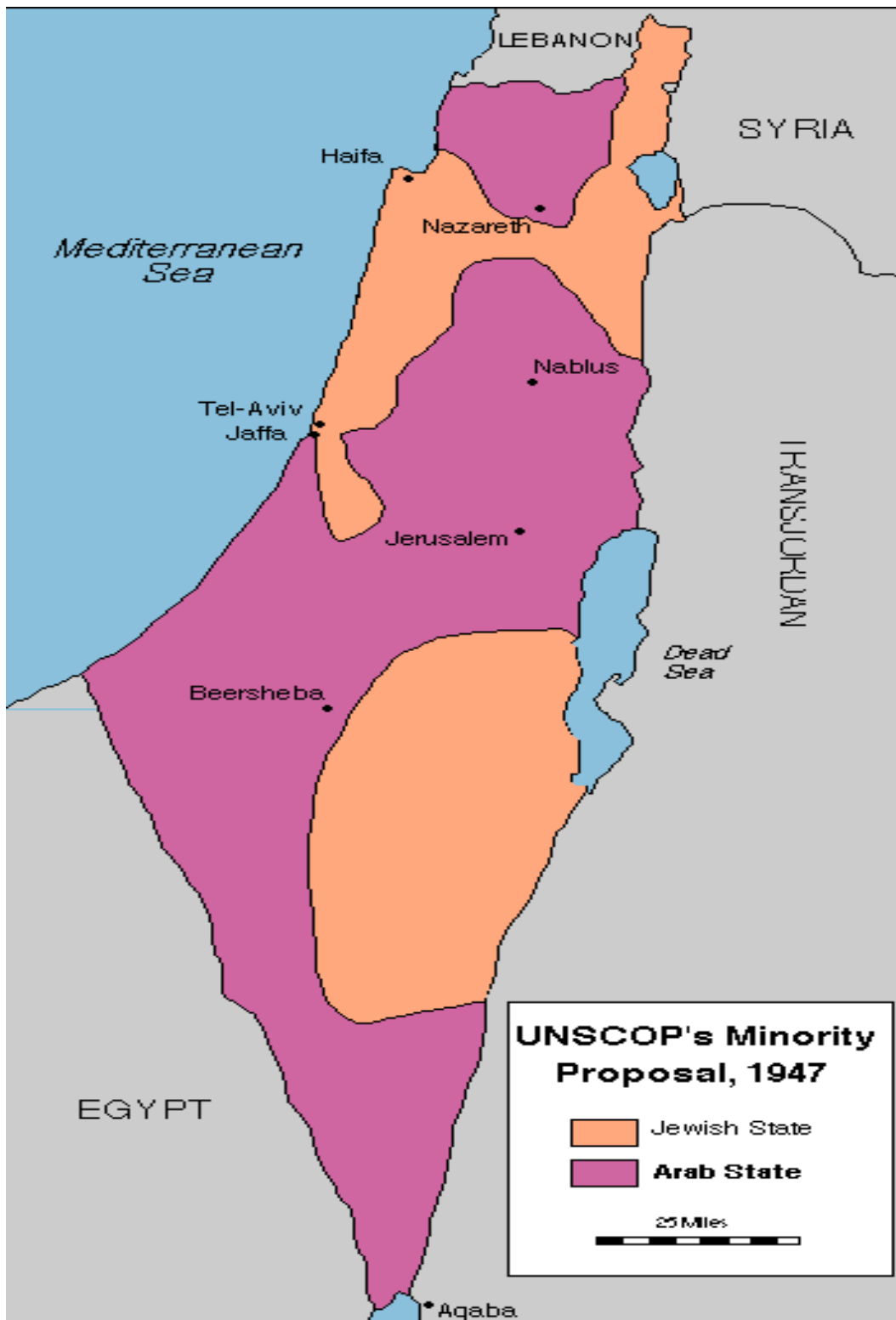
Annex 11. UN General Assembly Plan of Partition

(Map by courtesy of Koret Communications LTD)

Annex 12. The Majority Proposal: Partition with Economic Union

> *"Partition and independence—Palestine within its present borders, following a transitional period of two years from 1 September 1947, shall be constituted into an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem... "Independence shall be granted to each State upon its request only after it has adopted a constitution ... has made to the United Nations a declaration containing certain guarantees, and has signed a treaty creating the Economic Union of Palestine and establishing a system of collaboration between the two States and the City of Jerusalem. "Citizenship—Palestinian citizens, as well as Arabs and Jews who, not holding Palestinian citizenship, reside in Palestine, shall, upon the recognition of independence, become citizens of the State in which they are resident ... "Economic union—A treaty shall be entered into between the two States. ... The treaty shall be binding at once without ratification. It shall contain provisions to establish the Economic Union of Palestine... "Population — The figures given for the distribution of the settled population in the two proposed States — are approximately as follows:*

	Jews	Arabs and others	Total
Jewish State	498,000	407,000	905,000
Arab State	10,000	725,000	735,000
Jerusalem	100,000	105,000	205,000

> *"In addition, there will be in the Jewish State about 90,000 (Arab) Bedouins ... "(Jerusalem)—The City of Jerusalem shall be placed under an International Trusteeship System by means of a Trusteeship Agreement which shall designate the United Nations as the Administering Authority."*

(The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, 1917-1988, UN, 1990, 115)

Annex 13. The Minority Proposal: A federal State of Palestine

"The independent State of Palestine—the peoples of Palestine are entitled to recognition of their right to independence, and an independent federal State of Palestine shall be created following a transitional period not exceeding three years... "The independent federal State of Palestine shall comprise an Arab State and a Jewish State. "During the transitional period, a constituent assembly shall be elected by the population of Palestine and shall formulate the constitution of the independent federal State of Palestine... "The attainment of independence by the independent federal State of Palestine shall be declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations as soon as the authority administering the territory shall have certified to the General Assembly that the constituent assembly referred to in the precedent paragraph has adopted a constitution... "There shall be a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship, which shall be granted to Arabs, Jews and others. "Jerusalem, which shall be the capital of the independent federal State of Palestine, shall comprise, for purposes of local administration, two separate municipalities, one of which shall include the Arab sections of the city, including that part of the city within the walls, and the other the areas which are predominantly Jewish."

(The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, 1917-1988, United Nations, 1990, 115)

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