

The British in Mandate Palestine:

Assessment of an Intervention

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“It is all bad and I told Balfour so. They are making it a breeding place for future war.”

- Edward Mandell House, political aide to President Woodrow Wilson, remarking on what he told British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour on Britain’s and France’s plan to divide up the Middle East between them after WWI (Fromkin 2001, 257)

“Palestine for most of us was an emotion rather than a reality.”

- C.R. Ashbee, British Mandate official (Segev 2000, 5)

“British policy-makers imposed a settlement upon the Middle East in 1922 in which, for the most part, they themselves no longer believed.” (Fromkin, 2001, 563)

“The British and the French who had summoned the djinn of nationalism to their aid during the war were going to find that they could not easily send it away again.” (MacMillan 2003, 397)

Saladin: “Will you yield the city?”

Balian of Ibelin: “Before I lose it, I will burn it to the ground. Your holy places - ours. Every last thing in Jerusalem that drives men mad.”

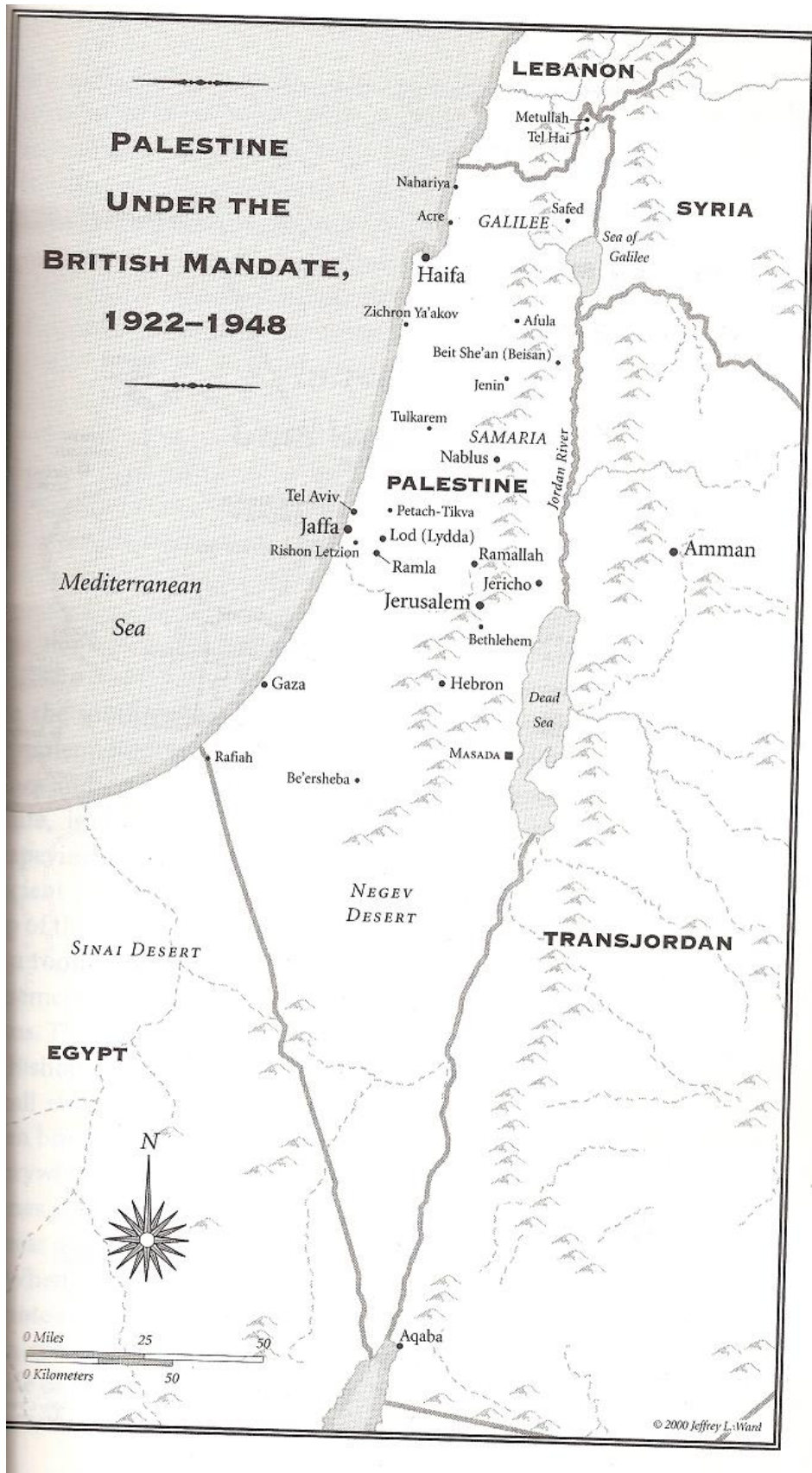
Saladin: “I wonder if it would not be better if you did.”

-Dialogue from the film *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), negotiating terms of surrender, after the Crusader Balian defended Jerusalem but finally surrendered it to the Muslim general Saladin, ending Christian rule in Jerusalem until the British Mandate over 700 years later

Balian of Ibelin: “What is Jerusalem worth?”

Saladin: “Nothing. [begins to walk away, then quickly turns around] Everything! [smiles]”

-Parting words, after the peaceful surrender was negotiated, from *Kingdom of Heaven*



(Segev 2000)

Introduction

Though this paper's focus is a narrative and analysis of the degree of success or failure of the British military interventions in Palestine during its mandate oversight of the area, based on the aims of its mission, there is a unique challenge to this topic which must be addressed. For most interventions of the twentieth century, and many others, the reasons of intervention are not horribly difficult to discern; land, power, money, some natural (or human) resource, some kinship (real or imagined) with a group of people in a region, alliances and rivalries, or trade; in the case of the British in Palestine, the reasons are more difficult to discern than most; Tom Segev (2000) notes that

Altogether, the British seemed to have lost their bearings in this adventure. They derived no economic benefit from their rule over Palestine. On the contrary, its financial cost led them from time to time to consider leaving the country. Occupying Palestine brought them no strategic benefit, either, despite their assumptions that it did. Many top Army officers maintained that Palestine contributed nothing to the imperial interest, and there were those who warned that rule over the country was likely to weaken the British. There were early signs that they were getting themselves into a political problem that had no solution. But the Holy Land elicited a special response; its status was not determined by geopolitical advantage alone. (Segev 2000, 4-5)

Therefore, an important part of this paper will be an investigation and explanation of Britain's reasons for entry into the Palestine, and is essential in order to be able to assess any degree of success or failure regarding its intervention.

Birthing Mandates, or Why Britain Wanted Palestine

South African British Gen. Jan Smuts thought he had found a way to make the world a better place, *and* serve the interests of the British Empire; using the new League of Nations and a proposed "mandate" system, Britain could counter French imperial ambitions, increase British power, and, in theory, aim to improve the lot of "peoples not yet ready to rule themselves" (MacMillan 2003, 88-91; Oren 2007, 381). Earlier, when American President Woodrow Wilson was trying to mediate a peaceful end to World War I, the Allies, at this point not including the United States, had made their intentions

regarding the Middle East clear: “[t]he liberation of the people who now live beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks, and the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which has proved itself radically alien to Western Civilization” (Fromkin 2001, 245). The British and French agreed to carve the Ottoman Empire up between themselves; yet America had played a dominant role in supporting the Allies, then in joining them and ending the war, so this would not be a solely European-devised peace, and “Wilson’s new world order called for some arrangement other than annexation or colonization” for the Ottoman Empire and German colonies; this mandate concept would become something that would explicitly favor Wilson’s ideas, while less obviously still give the Europeans a chance to dominate large parts of, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (MacMillan 2003, 98; Fromkin 2001, 253-254).

Wilson “was opposed to [the European powers’] imperialist ambitions and intended to thwart them;” yet in a diplomatic dance, Europe and America each would misread or misinterpret the moves of the other; some stepping on feet was bound to occur, as “[t]he Allies at times misinterpreted the President’s words and actions as a show put on for purposes of domestic politics, and failed to appreciate the sincerity of his desire to keep...*them* out of the new colonies they planned to establish for themselves in such areas as the Middle East;” also, and in fighting a war in support of the Allies, but not officially as one of them, against Germany but not her allies (e.g., the Ottoman Empire), “[t]he intervention of the United States was to cast a long shadow over the gains with which the Entente Powers [e.g. France, Britain, Russia, i.e. the Allies] had promised to reward one another at the end of the war, especially in the Middle East” (Fromkin 2001, 254-257; Oren 2007, 380).

The Bolsheviks’ rise to power in Russia would make this situation even more difficult; though Wilson had eventually become privy to the secret agreements dividing up Germany’s colonies and the Ottoman Empire, it was the Bolsheviks who made these agreements public when they themselves discovered them in the Tsarist archives after coming to power (Fromkin 2001, 257). Rather than let this dictate the course of events after bringing the United States into the war, “Wilson took the offensive by redefining the goals for which the war was being fought,” part of which was his announcement of the

Fourteen Points, Four Points, and Four Ends; “they represented a challenge to the Allied as well as to the enemy governments” (Ibid., 258-259). Point 12 laid out American aims for Ottoman territory: “The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development” (Fromkin 2001, 258; MacMillan 2003, 376; Oren 2007, 377).

“The British,” writes Margaret MacMillan (2003), “realizing that there was no point in antagonizing the Americans by talking of adding Germany’s territories, or anyone else’s, to their empire, supported the idea of mandates;” for Smuts, “[t]he peoples left behind by the decomposition of Russia, Austria and Turkey are mostly untrained politically; many of them are either incapable or deficient in the power of self-government; they are mostly destitute, and will require much nursing towards economic and political independence,” and MacMillan notes that “[t]he very word “mandate” had a benevolent and pleasing sound (MacMillan 2003, 99). Tom Segev (2000) notes that “[t]he mandatory system was designed to give colonialism a cleaner, more modern look” (Segev 2000, 118). Europeans freed from the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian Empires could be trusted to govern themselves, but the natives of Africa and the Pacific were incapable of this, it was thought; the former Ottoman lands would, someday, be able to govern themselves, but were not ready yet (MacMillan 2003, 99). As far as the mandate proposal, the Middle East would to be divided into a first class of mandates, or “Class A” mandates, those which would were considered the most ready for independence and self-governance, as opposed to Africa (MacMillan 2003, 103, 375; Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004, 232).

After many years and months of haggling over the Middle East between Britain and France, Wilson at Versailles still adamantly opposed a European carve-up of the Middle East, but suffered an incapacitating stroke late in September of 1919 trying to rally public support in America (Oren 2007, 376-393; MacMillan 382-408; Fromkin 2001, 266-270, 374-379, 385, 389-411). With Wilson absent from the final negotiations on the mandates, Britain ended up officially being delegated custodian of a

mandate over Palestine, with some form of self-rule and independence to be the final (at least stated) goal for it; though the mandates were in part introduced as a way to incorporate Wilson's opposition to European imperialism, they became the vehicle for European designs without Wilson present (Oren 2007, 393; Segev 2000, 118; Fromkin 2001, 283, 398, 410-411).

Why had this happened? Was Britain pursuing some national interest? British Prime Minister "Lloyd George was the only man in his government who had always wanted to acquire Palestine for Britain. He also wanted to encourage the development of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine," writes David Fromkin (2001), and as a very religious man brought up on the Bible, he was the current culmination of a trend of Anglo Christian Zionism going back centuries, in which these Christians believe that the Jews must be restored to political power in the Holy Land in order for Jesus to return as the Messiah in the Second Coming (Fromkin 2001, 267-280; 298). For Lloyd George, the idea of "Agnostic Atheistic France" taking control of the Holy Land was unbearable (Ibid., 270). Smuts in particular had advocated the idea of Palestine as "the key missing link that could join together the parts of the British Empire so that they would form a continuous chain from the Atlantic to the middle of the Pacific," and Lloyd George was in agreement (Ibid., 281-282). At a time when Russia was teetering as a major Ally and the U.S. had only just declared war on Germany, Lloyd George and others in the British government believed Jewish influence in America and Russia to be all-powerful and key to keeping the effort of the latter alive and to increasing the effort of the former, mostly because of racist and stereotypical views of the Jew being a behind the scenes manipulator of the powerful (Ibid., 295-296). The Balfour Declaration was decided upon by Lloyd George's Cabinet as the culmination of British policy to mobilize international and domestic Jewish support for the Allied war effort (Fromkin 2001, 297; Segev 2000, 72). The political logic was not altogether different from Lincoln's promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation in the midst of his own uncertain war effort. The Declaration read

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. (Fromkin 2001, 297; Morris 2008, 9)

Instead of being one man's crusade, now aiding the Jews in establishing a homeland in Palestine would become official British policy (Fromkin 2001, 300-301).

Britain's Inauspicious Beginning as Rulers in Palestine

The official language, at least, coming out of Versailles and the other "peace" conferences clearly viewed the task of the British as a structural one: Palestine only needed British help to tutor it in the ways of governance and it would be ready for self-rule; this type of "Class A" mandate "mirrored the aim of the later UN transitional authorities" (Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004, 232). Both Jews and Arabs could, from the wording of public documents and statements, reasonably expect some sort of self-rule or state; though the end goal of the mandate mission was independence, there was nothing about how that was going to be accomplished included, so the vagueness of the British mission there was extreme.

Amazingly, "Britain's leaders anticipated no adverse reaction from their Arab allies" in the wake of the Balfour Declaration (Fromkin 2001, 297). "[T]he existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine," as referenced in the Balfour Declaration, "made up about four fifths of a population of some 700,000" (MacMillan 2003, 420). They had invaded and held much of the Ottoman Empire before the end of the war, but by the summer of 1919 what had been a 1,084,000-man-army occupying Ottoman domains was only 320,000 troops spread rather thinly (Fromkin 2001, 404). The British military administration in Palestine, under the command of Gen. Ronald Storrs, at the time was not particularly enthused about the daunting prospect of facilitating the creation of a Jewish homeland in an increasingly volatile region, and feelings about Zionism were mixed, at best, among the men serving there (Ibid., 445).

Even while the borders of French and British control in the Palestine/Lebanon/Syria area were being worked out, amid a larger backdrop of unrest elsewhere, scattered clashes broke out late in 1919 in

a still disputed (between France and Britain, that is) “no-man’s land” that was part of the northern Galilee area in what would eventually be within the borders of the British Mandate; more deadly violence broke out there in March of 1920, at the Jewish farm of Tel Hai; Arabs had been battling French troops in the region, and wanted to search the farm for any French; in the ensuing confusion, a few Jews and a few Arabs would be killed (Fromkin 2001, 445-446; Segev 2000, 122-124; Morris 2008, 11). Tensions would further rise, and a Jewish veteran of a unit that had been part of the British Army’s campaign against the Ottomans in the area, Vladimir Jabotinsky formerly of the Jewish Legion, together with fellow veterans and local Jewish athletes, formed their own self-defense unit; they informed the British, and asked for assistance in arming themselves, but were told “no,” that the British would have the situation under control; the Jews had been warning the British that violence was likely during a Muslim religious festival (ironically, in honor of Moses) that April as clashes had previously occurred during the festival under the Ottomans, who typically increased security for the event (Segev 2000, 132;).

Several days of anti-Jewish rioting did occur, with a few Jewish and Arab deaths and hundreds of Jewish injuries, but none were in the areas where Jabotinsky’s unit were patrolling and casualties were only where British troops had kept Jabotinsky’s patrols from entering, in the Old City; the British response was only to punish a few Arabs, but to arrest and (initially) sentence to long prison sentences Jabotinsky and his followers for illegally distributing arms; this would prompt British government to “order a court of inquiry into how the military were conducting the administration of Palestine” (Fromkin 2001, 446-447; Segev 2000, 127-137). Before the incident, both Arabs and Jews had tried to integrate themselves into the security forces, but were denied, and, overall, writes Segev, this situation “exemplifies the conflicts, contradictions, the hesitation, and the helplessness that characterized British rule from the very beginning” (Segev 2000, 133-136). The court of inquiry said that Governor Storrs was “overconfident,” and had not properly prepared for the situation; by July, the military was removed from the governance role in Palestine, and a British civilian administration put in place after heavy lobbying by Chaim Weizmann, a leader of the Zionist Commission in Israel; this new civilian leader would be Herbert

Samuel, a British Jewish official with clear pro-Zionist leanings, and Lloyd George would leave Weizmann with the words “*You have got your start. It all depends on you;*” the British and French would make their final agreements on the Middle East, to be confirmed officially two years later by the League of Nations, and even though the military was apprehensive about the situation, Lloyd George and Balfour remained blithely confident (Segev 140-144; 447-448; MacMillan 2003, 423-424, 425-426).

Winston Churchill, “the most severe critic of the Prime Minister’s Middle Eastern policy” even though he was pro-Zionist, had “made cost cutting his top priority” when he took over the War and Air Ministries in 1919, and did the same when he became Colonial Secretary in 1921; for him much of this Middle Eastern adventure was unwise and unsustainable, and “everything else that happens in the Middle East is secondary to the reduction in expense;” from 1919 to 1922 he cut the costs of the Middle East operations by 75 percent, and focused on getting British troops home, fearing a Bolshevik revolution among Britain’s working class soldiers, as had happened in Russia, and the British public, whose eligible voting population had nearly tripled since the start of the war with major reforms, was decidedly more working class and for a quick end to expensive overseas deployments (Fromkin 2001, 499, 518-519, 384-387).

To further reduce British commitments, Churchill engineered a scheme which reduced tensions between the British and French, and further reduce British commitments and costs in the Middle East: Feisal Hussein’s brother Abdullah (both of them were non-Palestinian) could be installed as a “temporary” governor for all of the British Mandate of Palestine east of the Jordan River (now being called “Transjordan”), with an eye to British disengagement; this might eventually be the Arab self-determination promised by the Balfour declaration, and west of the Jordan River could be the Jewish state also promised therein; that spring, Abdullah agreed to Churchill’s plan (Fromkin 2001, 504-506; Segev 2000, 158). Late in 1921, Abdullah began to have different ideas about his temporary status, while at the same time Britain began seeing the idea of a more permanent rule by Abdullah as not undesirable; as all this was going on, the British Mandate of Palestine mission of creating a Jewish National Home with

respect to the rights of Arabs was formally being sent to the British Parliament for ratification, and it was decided to make Transjordan exempt from the Balfour Declaration; furthermore, stability for Abdullah could be backed up by a crack force of regular troops in Transjordan, serving Abdullah and trained and led by a British officer, whom would later be John Glubb, and the unit would become the “formidable” Arab Legion; Transjordan “gradually drifted into existence as an entity separate from the rest of Palestine” (Fromkin., 512-514).

Meanwhile, as Samuel arrived in July of 1920, the British Army itself was increasingly hostile to its very mission, even “unwilling to enforce” the British “pro-Zionist program,” from the top British general in the Middle East down to the rank-and-file; the army realized it would have to impose peace on two groups that were not at all in the post-Balfour climate disposed to getting along with each other, and that this meant “it would have to fight” both Arabs and Jews; the regular Arabs would see Samuel, not without merit, as a Jewish agent, and the regular Jews there greeted him “as if he were the Messiah” (Segev 2000, 146-148, 155; Fromkin 2001, 516). The switch from the military to High Commissioner Samuel’s civilian administration actually resulted in an era of comparatively good governance, but also in distinctly pro-Zionist measures (Segev 2000, 155).

A leader of local Muslims held an office, appointed by the government going back to Ottoman times, of Mufti, selected from among a few candidates put forth by a local “Moslem electoral college;” the British made the office of the Jerusalem Mufti the “Grand Mufti,” to be the leader of the Muslims in all of Palestine, and when it came time to appoint a new one in late March of 1921, a British official under the High Commissioner, who was a “close friend” of General Storrs and was hostile to London’s pro-Zionist stance, ignored the candidates put forward by the local Muslims and saw that Amin al-Husseini, one of the main instigators of the 1920 riots, was installed in the office (Fromkin 2001, 517-518; Segev 2000, 159-160; Oren 2007, 421). Here, then, is one of the most telling examples of Britain’s challenges in applying a policy unpopular with the majority of both the inhabitants of Palestine and of the British officials and soldiers tasked with implementing it. Still, despite his involvement in the riots, al-

Husseini helped to maintain stability that year in Jerusalem even as violence gripped other parts of Palestine, and for years after (Segev 2000, 160). This too was telling: the British treasury made it clear, also, that Samuels would have to use local taxes to pay for his civilian administration; no money from London would be forthcoming (Segev 2000, 157).

Early in his tenure, in May of 1921, he would see anti-Jewish riots in Jaffa (spurred by a Jewish communist demonstration and a fight between rival Jewish communist groups) spark violence in other settlements, killing nearly one hundred (almost equal in terms of Jews/Arabs) and wounding about 150 Jews and 75 Arabs; Samuel even called in air support to bomb the Arab rioters into submission, and when the dust settled British authorities began to further suspect the Zionists were closet Bolsheviks; Samuel put a halt to Jewish immigration in the short term as a response (Fromkin 2001, 515-516; Segev 2000, 183). This time around, though again failing to anticipate the violence, the authorities were faster to respond; apart from calling in air support, civilian authorities helped to arm Jewish militias in the wake of the initial violence, only to have them retaliate against equally defenseless non-combatant Arabs; on both sides, local police were involved, and destruction of property as well as mutilation occurred; Samuel now learned a grim lesson: his optimism had been misplaced, and this was becoming a struggle between competing nationalisms; Security was restored at a meager pace, with much of Palestine remaining tense, armed settlements, fearful of violence; not only did Arabs and Jews each have no confidence in the British authorities, but the Turks were missed because they had provided better security (Fromkin 2000, 516; Segev 2000, 176-184, 192-193).

A state of emergency was announced, military reinforcements brought in, censorship to prevent incitement implemented; Tel Aviv was officially parted from Jaffa and given its own city status, and this would become “a cornerstone of Jewish autonomy in Palestine” and further crystallize a “principle” of “separation between Jews and Arabs” (Segev 2000, 179, 183). There was an official inquiry, which confirmed the riots were spontaneous and that numerous Arab policemen had participated, partly because of poor wages, that the Arabs had legitimate fears about Zionist immigration, and that the riots were not

anti-Semitic pogroms; villages with large numbers of a participants were collectively fined and the worst offenders were tried; for some Jewish groups with their own militias, this was not enough, and “avenge attacks” did happen (Ibid., 187-189). Still, the government effectively adapted and was able to keep relative order until the end of the 1920’s, but only action through security forces was contemplated for defusing tensions, showing a focus on behaviors rather than social constructs.

Despite significant opposition and reservations, the British Parliament voted to go through with the Mandate, and on July 22nd, 1922, the League of Nations officially authorized Britain a Mandate over Palestine which allowed for the implementation of the Balfour Declaration on the west side of the Jordan River (Fromkin 2001, 526).

Palestine Transforming

A man with an effectively polite and friendly personality, Samuels was able to bring British, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim advisors together and form a consensus on a number of non-political issues during his tenure; though on paper he seemed to at least have the power of an autocrat authorized directly by the Crown, he was careful not to act like that, and still further Samuels was constrained by an uncooperative regime both in London and locally, and the constraints of the League of Nations Mandate (Segev 2000, 160). Under his leadership, the court system also became much less corrupt and had a good reputation among colonial British court systems, even as it often went along with political convenience (Ibid., 170). Furthermore, early in the Mandate, mayors were not elected, as they had been under the Turks, but were appointed; at the same time, as the administration grew (along with the population), it became the largest employer in Palestine, with 90% of its workforce being local, not British, and such contradictions make it difficult to characterize the regime as either wholly progressive or regressive; the system of roads was greatly improved upon, disease was reduced, education improved, and rail and postal systems improved as well; also, the administration also did not seek to impose British culture on the

natives, partly from a reverential attitude of the Holy Land and a tendency to see it “as a huge wax museum;” “civilizing” these natives would mainly consist in the building of infrastructure and maintaining order, and governance took on a devolved, as opposed to centralized, character (Ibid., 163-167, 171). In hindsight, this would result in the further fragmentation of a dual society that already had little incentive to work across Jewish-Arab lines.

Meanwhile, all through the 1920s, more Jews arrived in Palestine, 100,000 of them, doubling the Jewish community in just a few years, and this immigration was consistent with the aims of the Balfour Declaration; every six months, quotas would be set between the British governors in Palestine and Jewish officials; Arabs were not included in these decisions (Ibid., 225-226). While a “Zionist revolution” transformed the Jewish-inhabited parts of the country, and Jews actively sought economic deals and infrastructure projects from the British authorities, Arabs tended to stay in their local villages, not ask much from the authorities, and their lives remained much as they had been (agrarian, isolated) even though some modest improvements resulted from British policies; the Jews were modern and modernizing, and the British supported this, but refrained from imposing modernity and the “twentieth century” on Arabs and sought to preserve the traditional Arab village life (Ibid., 270-271). As immigration would continue to antagonize Arabs, Churchill assured Weizmann that the British would more or less turn a blind eye to the Jews smuggling weapons into Palestine for self-defense; he and other officials also reiterated that they would continue to support Jewish efforts at establishing a homeland, but asked that the Jews also be understanding that this was a deeply difficult and unpopular position for many in the British administration (Ibid., 194-195).

Late in the 1920’s, as the world plummeted into an economic depression, Palestine’s new High Commissioner, Lord Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer, was not Jewish, as had been Samuel; during his tenure, in part because of economic conditions, Jewish emigration “sharply declined, but both Arabs and Jews “respected” him;” local elections were instituted, seen as a necessary step towards independence

(Ibid., 289-291). Yet all during the period, the perceptions and social constructs of both Jews and Arabs received no attention from British authorities.

The Unraveling

Late in September 1928, a British policeman responded to emotional pleas by Muslims that a screen placed near the Wailing Wall (considered the last remnant of the Temple destroyed by the Romans) was evidence that the Jews wanted to take over the surrounding Muslim holy sites; he responded the next morning, Yom Kippur, with “excessive force without good judgment” and roughed-up several of the defiant Jewish worshippers who had ignored his order to remove the screen by morning; and he became a hero or a villain, depending on with which side one took (Ibid., 295-297). At this point, Palestine was in a climate where “the collision of passion and politics lit a dreadful fire,” that in the “battle for myths, religious faith, national honor, and history,” the conflict was “fought out with a primal fervor that led inevitably to violence,” where “each side failed to distinguish between reality and words and symbols...[and] preferred to believe in fictions and fantasies;” the conflict was omnipresent (Ibid., 298). Tensions also erupted occasionally between Christians and Muslims (Segev 2000, 301-303; Fieldhouse 2006, 161-162).

“Grand Mufti” al-Husseini, himself under fire with his constituents for lack of “any real progress towards Arab independence,” exploited the incident and accused the Jews of trying to tear down the Mosques there in order to “rebuild the [Jewish] Temple,” and in a classic “slippery-slope” argument, said that it was a step that was part of a plan to take over all of Palestine and kick the Arabs out, though some rhetoric coming out of the Zionist camp could be interpreted as seeking to do just that (Segev 2000, 303-304) In addition, Weizman was being challenged by David Ben-Gurion, leader of the Zionists in Palestine, and the militant Jabotinsky, who was also exploiting the incident and publicly parading around a uniformed nationalist youth movement (Ibid., 304-305). It was in this atmosphere that the new High

Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, arrived; he began by having frank and open dialogues with leaders both Arab and Jewish; adding fuel to the fire, the British government publicly defended the police officer who had overreacted to the scene at the Wailing Wall; May 1929 would see Muslims throw stones at Jews worshipping at the Wall, June an intentional musical disturbance by Muslims of a Jewish service at the Wall, which continued despite British orders to let the Jews worship free of noisy provocations; throughout the summer, this tit for tat would continue, each side vigorously protesting small actions of the other, and mindsets of mutual exclusivity set in (Ibid., 305-307).

Mid-August would see provocative Jewish demonstrations at the Wall, which violated British terms for protest by making explicitly political Zionist speeches and using explicitly political Zionist symbols on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple; the Muslims responded two days later with their own gathering commemorating Muhammad's birthday, and afterwards became violent towards Jewish worshippers near the wall; attacks again the next day prompted some Jews to organize a defense; a fight over a soccer ball killed a young Jewish boy, and his funeral (in a precursor of so many scenes to follow, even unto 2010) became a political rally (Ibid., 307-310). The British tried to keep things calm by issuing restrictions, with the same policeman who had overreacted to the scene using force at the event to stop the protests; the High Commissioner and other major British officials were on vacation (Ibid., 310). One Sir Harry Charles Luke stepped into the void, and held talks with the Grand Mufti and the senior Rabbi in Palestine, Chief Rabbi Kook; the day after the funeral, he had both Jewish and Muslims leaders over for talks; hours and hours failed to produce any meaningful agreement, and the Arabs were not even willing to publicly admit that they had met, the Jews agreeing to say that but nothing more; Luke had tried to get both parties' leaders to calm their people down, but they refused, and he sent for reinforcements (Ibid., 310-313).

It was not fast enough. That morning, Arab Muslim mobs attacked Jews near the Temple Mount; Jews responded and killed several Arabs, and violence spread throughout Jerusalem; the small police force, mostly Arabs with a few Jews and British officers, was insufficient to that task, and especially the

Arabs were afraid of having to fight their brethren; Luke cut the area phone lines and ordered a curfew, and authorities turned down Jewish requests for weapons (Ibid., 314-316). In Hebron, Jews and Arabs had lived in peace as neighbors for a very long time before the rise of Zionism and the coming of the British; the new police chief there, Raymond Cafferata, had only a few dozen officers, and when rumors that Jews were killing Arabs spread, he confronted angry Arab mobs and tried to tell Jews to stay at home; the next day he and his policeman tried to fight off Arab mobs but they could not stop them at first, though eventually they got guns and fired at the mob, and would end up storming a Jewish house to try to fight off some Arab attackers, including one Arab policeman; 67 Jews were killed in Hebron; violence erupted all over the country, with 133 Jews dead, 339 wounded total, to 116 Arabs killed and 232 injured (Ibid., 326-327).

The ensuing atmosphere exposed internal division among almost all camps, including the British military; Chancellor had trials for about 700 Arabs, and also about 160 Jews, responsible for violence, but took the easy political route of not trying to hold one side more responsible than other, but three Arabs were executed; the British attorney general was attacked and wounded, too, and the official inquiry blamed overall British policy for the violence (Ibid., 328-332). For their part, the Jews became more radicalized and organized, forming their own intelligence service, and the Arabs became more fervent and organized, as well (Ibid., 332, 350) London decided to change the Jewish immigration policy, in a move that should have been undertaken years ago, to avoid “pu[ting] Arabs out of jobs;” yet some aggressive lobbying by Weizmann undid all of this, most likely because of racist views in London that held it was good to have the Jews on your side during the Great Depression; the reversal was nothing short of amazing, and Jewish immigration was allowed to increase dramatically, to 40,000-60,000 a year in the following years; even the more radical Jabotinsky was only clamoring for 30,000 a year (Ibid., 335-338). Still, Jabotinsky was able to engineer Weizmann’s downfall within two years as by painting him as too moderate, even though Weizmann got Ben-Gurion to obtain a written memo from British Prime Minister

Ramsay MacDonald saying that the British would favor the Jews over the Arabs *with his signature* (Ibid., 338-341).

When the Ottomans still controlled Palestine at the beginning of WWI, there had been at least 60,000 (but as many as 85,000) Jews accounting for as little as 10 percent of the population (Woolf 2005, 4; Morris 2008). By 1931, there were 175,000 Jews, to grow to 460,000 in 1939, to 630,000 by 1947, or about ten times the WWI population; in contrast, the Arab population merely doubled from 650,000 in 1918 to 1.3 million in 1948 (Morris 2008, 15). The shift was remarkable, but it was the 1930's that saw Jewish immigration pick up even more dramatically; the Arabs were seething, and blamed the British for letting the Jews into Palestine, and revolted.

From the Arab Revolt until World War II

The New High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, began his service late in 1931 in an era in which small scale violence and murder was the norm, and whispers among some more extreme Zionists of throwing the British out began (Segev 2000, 342-350, 352). This era had a backdrop of high unemployment and mass Jewish immigration (over 60,000 in 1936, over ¼ of a million in the 1930s) with Jews in Palestine officially being paid higher wages than Arabs, and of other Arabs areas (e.g. Egypt, Iraq) moving towards independence; the Arabs saw where things were going for them in Palestine and did not like it (Ibid., 358-359, 362, 377). In addition, a cleric name Muhammed Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, who had become connected to Gand Mufi al-Husseini, began agitating for terrorism and attacks against both the British and the Jews, and some low level attacks began occurring; after some of his men scuffled with local police and killed a Jewish one, late in 1935, officials pursued Qassam and had him killed; this served as a focal rallying for Muslims, and even Hamas today honors him with their "Qassam rockets;" the British smelled more trouble, and rightly so (Segev 2000, 360-362; Fieldhouse 2006, 165)

So began the “Arab Revolt;” ambushes and assassinations against the British were common, especially against convoys; what we now call IEDs, just in cruder form, were used to the same effect, and, like Americans in Iraq today, far more Arabs died in these ambushes than British; strikes were also common; and the Jewish terrorists of this era were not punished with the same severity as the Arabs, further stoking more Arab rage (Segev 200, 362-367; Fieldhouse 2006, 166) Jews were also targets (Ibid., 365). The Grand Mufti “apparently without much enthusiasm,” began calling for rebellion and assumed a leadership role, but overall, the Arab effort “was somewhat lackadaisical,” without broad participation; over 200 Arabs were killed for just 28 British by October of 1936 (Segev 2000, 368; Morris 2008, 17). Common during this time were also Arab on Arab violence and infighting, and the strikes hurt the Arabs economically; still, this revolt was a wake-up call that Arab nationalism in Palestine was a force that was here and would only grow stronger (Segev, 386-371). With the British, the idea was that force would solve the problem, as London made no attempt to address the causes of the violence, which had everything to do with social constructs, only to stop the violence.

Illegal Jewish immigrants were almost never deported, and British authorities sometimes sent troops to evict Arab tenant farmers when Jews had bought land from the landlords; but when the British tried to arrange for compensation for the luckless Arab tenants, they basically allowed the Jewish community’s own government, the Jewish Agency, a veto; Wauchope, like Samuel, saw “that Zionist and British interest were allied,” but he worked even closer with the Zionist authorities (Ibid., 377-382).

In fact, the Jews and the British worked together to put down the Arab Revolt; the Haganah, the Zionists’ formerly underground self-defense force, was now being equipped by the Mandate government; furthermore, Ben-Gurion, now the political leader of the Zionists in Palestine, trumpeted a policy of restraint in an effort to curtail the bloodshed and keep a cycle from emerging that would spiral out of control; he condemned retaliatory revenge killings against innocent Arabs as morally wrong and harmful to their relationship with the British and status as a quasi-wing of the Mandate government; still, he could not stop all the revenge killing perpetrated by Jews on Arabs (Ibid., 382-383). Jobotinsky’s more radical

wing established the Etzel/Irgun/IZL, a paramilitary counterterrorist/terrorist unit that did retaliate against innocent Arabs, and Etzel would be constantly at odds with the Haganah (Ibid., 383-387).

The British had had enough of the Arab violence as well; that summer they destroyed hundreds of Arab houses in Jaffa as a form of collective punishment; when Palestine's Chief Justice Sir Michael McDonnell challenged this, it hurt the Mandate regime's standing with the Arabs; he "was soon removed from Palestine" (Ibid., 399). Still, by October the "Palestinians were exhausted" and the revolt was "suspended;" the British had even secretly asked the Mufti to call the Arabs off and he obliged (Morris 2008, 17; Karsh 2002, 17). Though Wachope had tried to create a "Jewish-Arab legislative council," neither side wanted to be in an arrangement with, or work with, the other; such an intractable situation called for another British official inquiry, this time to be known as the Peel Commission, but was better staffed with people with more relevant experience than previous such commissions (Segev, 400-401; Morris 2008, 18).

The Peel Commission released its report in July 1937; the Mandate would not work, and it was time for Britain to leave; it recommended dividing Palestine into two states, one smaller Jewish state, and one larger Arab state, and keeping Jerusalem and a strip to the coast and Jaffa under the British; the small amount of Jews in the Arab areas should be transferred to the Jewish state, while the 300,000 Arabs in the potential Jewish state should be moved to the area of the future Arab state; most of the Zionist leadership, excepting the Jabotinsky wing, endorsed the proposals, but many Jews wanted more; Grand Mufti al-Husseini, most Arabs, and the new Arab leaders of Palestine's neighbors, not feeling they had to give these newcomer Jews any land for a separate state and disgusted by the idea of transfer, came out against the recommendations (Morris 2008, 18-19; Segev 2000, 401-403). The British government said "yes!;" it was a total repudiation of Lloyd George's original rational and strategic reason for taking Palestine as well: "[b]y ceding the land link between Egypt and Iraq and leaving Haifa in the hands of the Jews, Britain for all intents and purposes had dismissed the strategic worth of Palestine;" Churchill himself "had never believed that Britain had any strategic interest in Palestine" (Segev 2000, 402, 494). Yet a second

commission on the Peel commission scrapped the recommendations with the obvious conclusion that neither Arabs nor Jews were in favor, and it would therefore be impossible to recommend this course of action, and the British government backed away from the Peel proposals; still, with the Arab rebellion, British will to stay in Palestine was gone; “they just did not know how to pull out” (Ibid., 413-414). That the commission of about eight years ago had blamed British policy for provoking the violence had not even entered British policy during the intervening period and that no serious changes were made is telling, as is the British reliance on force for their solution. Social constructs, again, were ignored.

After the Peel Commission released its report, Arabs resumed their violence, even taking over large parts of the country; the government had to flee some areas, and atrocities against Jews were common (Ibid., 414). In a response, the British sent a new High Commissioner, Harold MacMichael; at this time they also dispatched Sir Charles Tegart, a respected British counterterrorism expert, and 25,000 troops, the largest force Britain had dispatched since WWI; after the Galilee district commissioner had been assassinated, military courts were set up there; and soon after arrival, Tegart set up “security fences...dozens of police fortresses...concrete guard posts...[i.e.] pillboxes...imported Doberman dogs...and established a special center in Jerusalem to train interrogators in torture” (Ibid., 415-416). As Benny Morris (2008) remarked, “the British now took off the gloves” and moved the Army into the Arab hinterlands (Morris 2008, 19-20). Over 9,000 Arabs were detained in 1939 alone, and there was not enough space to hold all of them, with 100 sentenced to death in 1938-1939; lashes were a common punishment; so was collective punishment, with hundreds of soldiers with vehicles arriving in force, to search houses, often roughly and with much destruction, collecting fines imposed on the entire village (which could sometimes be appealed) or impose curfews; women had to show their breasts sometimes to prove they were not men hiding in disguise; villagers were put into outdoor pens, where some died (Segev, 417, 420-423; Morris 2008, 19-20). Some villages were emptied and often houses were destroyed, as many 4,000 of them between 1936-1940; anyone wanting to leave a village required a pass; and in a situation not at all unlike encounters in Iraq and Afghanistan today, villagers were caught

between foreign (in this case, British) troops and the native rebels, bound to be punished by one for aiding the other, “sometimes within a few hours of each other,” and both demanded material and intelligence help (Segev 2000, 423-424; Morris 2008, 20). In the city of Nablus, almost 5,000 men were “held in a cage for two days and interrogated one after another;” abuses were not unheard of, and even the those higher up the British chain of command “complained” of poor behavior, abuses, and murder, and courts-martial were conducted, but only resulted in “extremely light sentences” for British soldiers even when murder of Arab civilians was the crime; the theory was that such measures taken by the British would make the Arabs understand that their violent agitation “does not pay,” wrote one British official, “[t]hen they will stop” (Segev 2000, 424-425). The British also “burned the bodies’ of dead terrorists...to prevent to terrorists’ funerals from turning into mass demonstrations;” Arabs were also forced to drive ahead of British convoys to discourage rebels from planting mines (IEDs) on roads; many Arab political organizations would be banned, and Grand Mufti al-Husseini was “deposed” and fled, never to return to Palestine but staying actively engaged against the Zionists (Ibid., 425-426). That the same overall structural/force-to-deter-behaviors approach set up a longer-term recent disaster in Ireland was forgotten.

As mentioned before, cooperation between the Jews and the British intensified during this period; they split the cost of many new Jewish policemen’s maintenance and pay evenly (the Arab policeman could not be trusted anymore, it was thought), though the British would arm them, and this also went in part for security forces for the Jewish settlements; both were officially part of the Mandate government, but they would often be controlled by the Jews’ own government, the Jewish Agency; Mandate officials even saw to it that Jewish commercial property was guarded, and contracted Jewish firms to build some of the security facilities popping up all over the country, as the Jewish Agency “serv[ed] as infomer, subcontractor, and client;” it may have even commanded some British Army units at certain times (Fieldhouse 2006, Segev 2000, 426-427). The Jewish and British authorities even coordinated on plans for operations against Arabs, and for collective Arab punishment; in exchange, Jewish Agency officials

tried to reign in Jewish terrorists like the Etzel, and could sometimes talk British authorities out of arresting firebrand Jews (Ibid., 427-428).

A British intelligence officer named Orde Wingate would become an enthusiastic Zionist, and though he was thought of as both brilliant and crazy, his techniques imparted to the Hanagah are still a core of today's Israel Defense Force (IDF); he set up his own "virtually...private army" (later officially approved), 150 out of roughly 200 of whom were Jews, which "countered terrorism with terror of their own;" if, for example, Arabs had sabotaged an oil pipeline, the nearest village would, the next morning, have its men rounded up, lined up, and lashed, but Wingate and the Englishmen among them administered "the punishment because he did not want to fan the Arabs' hatred for" Jews; with time this could turn to just shooting the men dead instead of lashes; arbitrary, summary executions would be a response for massacres against Jews, and sometimes drunk British troops "tortured Arabs and looted the villages;" the Jewish Agency contributed significantly to this unit's funding, training, and provisioning (Segev 2000, 429-432; Fieldhouse 2006, 170).

Major General Bernard "Monty" Montgomery came in to command the military and its reinforcements in Palestine and did not feel that the High Commissioner and his civilian administration were doing enough, even trying to depose MacMichael at one point so he could have a more "free hand" and greater police involvement; for him this was a war against "gangs of professional bandits," and most of the Palestinian Arabs wanted the revolt to end; his mission was to kill the "bandits" (Segev 2000, 432). Arabs in many villages organized "peace bands" to keep rebels out, whose few remaining fighters fled into Syria and Lebanon; Monty declared the revolt over that summer of 1939; but the British felt hated by both Arabs and Jews in Palestine, and were "sick" of being there and eager to find a way out (Ibid., 441-443). Yet in Palestine some three to six thousand Arab leaders, activists, and young men had been killed in the "revolt," and many more "driven into exile or jailed," the political leadership "decimated" or scared away from politics; furthermore, the Palestinian Arabs were divided and harmed economically and materially, and had many weapons confiscated; their ability to unite and fight the Jews in the coming wars

was almost non-existent, as “[t]hey had prematurely expended their military power against the wrong enemy and had been dealt a mortal blow” (Morris 2008, 20-21). Order was restored, but nothing had occurred that would in any way make Jews or Arabs more likely to live in peace after the British left.

With war against Hitler’s Nazi regime looming, a major shift in policy in Palestine occurred; until this point, the Jews were more or less heavily favored, but looking at a world war, the British realized that they could not afford to antagonize and alienate the millions of Arabs and Muslims under their administration and influence; “If we must offend one side, let us offend the Jews rather than Arabs,” remarked British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain; they could not risk the Arabs siding with Germany, and immigration policies would have to change (Segev 2000, 435-437). A conference of Arab and Zionist leaders was held in London, with major British officials present as well, yet “nothing came” of a meeting between Jewish and Arab delegates; after much wrangling and many debates, in May of 1939 the British announced a new policy that would be known as the “White Paper:” within ten years, Palestine would be “an independent, binational state,” and Jewish immigration would be capped at 75,000 total over the next five years, with any increases subject to Arab approval, and with limits also put on the moving of Arab property into Jewish hands (Segev 2000., 437-440; Morris 2008, 20; Karsh 2002, 17-18).

Arabs, if not their leadership, were “overjoyed” (Morris 2008, 20-21). The Jews were outraged and felt betrayed; Etzel stepped up its activities, both against Arabs and now the British government in Palestine, conducting terrorist bombings and killing more than 130 people “[b]y its own account” in the months after the White Paper policies were announced; Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Agency vowed to defy the immigration policies, and Ben-Gurion had been given a private assurance from Chamberlain that these measures would end after the war (Segev 2000, 440-441, 449). So, from the highest British authority, it would seem the White Paper was not really a serious attempt at anything other than placating the Arabs during the coming war.

With the outbreak of WWII and the British fighting the enemy of Jews worldwide, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party, even Etzel began aiding the British (though a few splintered off from this group, led by Avraham Stern, and continued attacks), whose use of Palestine as massive military base, staging area, and depot spurred the economy back after the Arab Revolt; but the Arabs had just experienced the strong arm of the British Army, and favored the Axis powers over the Allies (Morris 2008, 21; Segev 2000, 451). Jabotinsky would recruit a “Jewish Brigade” of 5,000 volunteers, similar to the “Jewish Legion” from WWI, to fight for the Allies, and thousands of Jews volunteered for the British Army; the British also used members of various Zionist military units in operations against Vichy-French controlled Syria and Lebanon, in fighting in Iraq, and supported and worked in the establishing of an elite and sometimes unconventional subunit of the Haganah called the Palmah or Palmach, which at its peak would have 5,000 men and 1,000 women serving in it; many thousands of Jews were gaining valuable experience fighting and working for the British (Segev 2000, 450-452; Morris 2008, 23, 28-29).

Meanwhile, both Jews and Arab sellers found ways to work around the White Paper restrictions, and sell more land than allowed; a secret wing of the Haganah was formed to facilitate illegal immigration of Jews into Palestine, but this was difficult when Hitler ended up controlling most European ports; still, the British deployed the Royal Navy to intercept such attempts, and interned the Jews trying to immigrate illegally on Mauritius and then Cyprus (Segev 2000, 449).

September of 1943 saw two Haganah men receive seven and ten year sentences for stealing British Army weapons and ammunition, and this was a sign that the Haganah was increasing its illegal activities; in the wake of this trial, Cafferata was tasked with searching a Jewish settlement for weapons, with hundreds of soldiers with vehicles and airplanes backing the police, which led to violent clashes; one Jew died in the violence (Ibid., 455-456). In February of 1944, Stern was killed in “controversial circumstances” by British police, and his breakaway group intensified its terrorist activities; Etzel, under the leadership of future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, resumed its anti-British activities early that month too; Stern’s group, called Lechi/Lehi/LHI (it had even courted Nazi support against the

British during the war), tried, for the second time, to assassinate High Commissioner MacMichael in August, but was unsuccessful, but did succeed in killing Britain's top man for Egypt, which lost the Zionist movement much of Prime Minister Churchill's support; in response, the Haganah aided the British in going after Jewish terrorists (Segev, 2000 456-457; Morris 2008, 29).

For his part, High Commissioner MacMichael was as frustrated as most of his predecessors; complaining about his position to Ben-Gurion, he said that

He had no idea what the British wanted from him... No one had told him what measures they expected him to carry out. The government's policy was constantly changing, there were countless interpretations, countless commissions of inquiry, no end of white papers. For twenty-five years London had not known what it wanted. He himself had no clue what he was doing in Palestine. As far as he was concerned, everything was possible, if someone would only tell him what to do. If they wanted partition, there would be partition. If they wanted a state, there would be a state. It was all the same to him. MacMichael had no interest in politics; he did not understand it. That was not his business, and it was not his job. His job was to keep order.

At the end of this remarkable conversation, when Ben-Gurion was standing by the door ready to leave, the high commissioner said, "You have much more power than we do"...The fact that the prime minister [Churchill] opposed his own government's official policy [as a violation of promises made in the Balfour Declaration] made MacMichael's life even more difficult. (Segev 2000., 465, 460)

Somewhat ironically, after Hitler's defeat, Jewish terrorism increased (Ibid., 467).

Britain, again, was trying to deter violent behavior (which it did, temporarily successfully, in the 1920's and in terms of the Arabs in Palestine just before WWII and during the war, but then Jewish violence only increased) and build up structures, but no serious effort was made at preparing two hostile groups of people to be able to coexist, no serious attempt to change social constructs that were at the heart of the violence between Arabs and Jews. The British seemed more concerned with preventing violence against their own troops that were stationed there, as opposed to preventing future violence between Arabs and Jews once they left. This is not surprising, since the British public, government, and military had all but given up on working towards the idea of a workable solution for the Jews and Arabs under their care.

The Twilight and Nightfall of British Rule in Palestine

Almost as soon as the fighting in Europe stopped, Churchill's government fell, and Britain's new foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin was "no friend of Zionism" (Morris 2008, 30). October of 1945 would see the Haganah, Etzel, and Lechi movements unite in a common mission: to go after the British, who were no longer helping the Jews as they were prior to the Peel Commission; this helped to legitimize the last two, helped the first restrain the other two, and also ended the practice of the Haganah turning in members of the other two to the British authorities (Segev 2000, 472). Part of the reason they were able to feel so emboldened was a shift in the climate; the Holocaust seriously increased sympathy for Jews and the desire that they have their own state in Palestine and also united Jews in America into an effective force on behalf of Zionism, and President Harry Truman himself was publicly willing to speak out on Jews' behalf; over British objections, Truman in October of 1945 called on Britain to allow 100,000 Jewish European displaced persons (DPs)/refugees into Palestine (Morris 2008, 22, 24, 31).

The joint operations began when the Haganah freed over 200 detained immigrants from a British holding facility; at the beginning of November, Palmah forces exploded over 150 different parts of railway tracks throughout Palestine, and "destroyed a patrol vessel and two British coast guard stations;" the British raided Jewish settlements in response, looking for illegal immigrants, but the "panicky" British troops killed nine and wounded sixty-three people; it was a public relations disaster and inflamed Jewish sentiment in Palestine (Ibid., 31) Bombings continued, and an attempt was made on the life of Cafferata, but failed, who was then recalled; a series of Palmah bombings destroyed eleven bridges in one night in June of 1946, and the British came down hard; General Evelyn Barker was brought in and more than 100,000 soldiers surrounded Jewish areas, including the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem; harsh curfews were implemented; over several weeks, more than 3,000 Jews, including senior political members, were arrested, and many weapons were found in an operation that came to be known as "Black Sabbath;" the Kind David hotel was partly destroyed in a bombing late in July carried out by Etzel because it contained many government offices, and over ninety people were killed; Barker's response was to ban all

interaction between his men and the Jews, for which he was reprimanded by the new British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, but not recalled; the Haganah's response to the bombing was to more or less end cooperation with Etzel and Lechi (Segev 2000, 474-476, 478; Morris 2008, 35).

As attacks continued, the main political issue that served as the backdrop to the violence was immigration, and Truman's call for 100,000 Jewish DPs' entry into Palestine; from the end of WWII to the end of the British Mandate, the Jews smuggled in over 70,000 illegal immigrants (Morris 2008, 31). A ship named in honor of Orde Wingate was heading to Tel Aviv with 250 illegal Jewish immigrants, and Palmah forces stationed people all along roads with cars and trucks to block the British Army from arriving on the scene; families were ready to put up the refugees, but the Royal Navy, in a much publicized incident, stopped the ship and there was an exchange of fire between the British and the Palmah on board, killing a young female Palmah commander (Segev 2000, 470-471). Britain's response to the deteriorating situation in the summer of 1946 was to propose four sub-regional governments to emerge and let Arabs and Jews handle their own local affairs, and let the 100,000 DPs in; but both Arabs and Jews wanted their own states, and rejected the proposal, and so did Truman, who formally called for partition, and the establishment of a Jewish state (Morris 2008, 35-36). "Monty" wanted to go in and handle the Jews the same way he had handled the Arabs; at this time, the British had imposed a months-long curfew, were deporting people, did house to house searches in the city of Tel Aviv amid a "total curfew" there, used torture, and hung people; but the same degree of harshness employed against the Arabs was not brought to bear against the Jews, especially as the Jews were "Europeans," not "natives," had fought with the British against the Nazis, were a key part of Mandate government, and had suffered so much during the war (Segev 2000, 476-478).

Even though many of the British soldiers coming to Palestine started off being sympathetic to their cause, having fought Hitler and seen firsthand the horrors perpetrated on Jews, the Jewish terrorist tactics made many of them hostile to them now, and some soldiers spontaneously went out to take revenge upon Jews; yet they also hardly enjoyed having to deport Holocaust survivors; morale was low

and officers had a tough time telling their men why they were there; wrote one British officer: “Little has been achieved” (Ibid., 480-482; 486).

Early in 1947, the British government made a final effort at solving the Palestine problem; a conference was held in London, with some of the pre-revolt Arab political groups from Palestine having been reinstated; but the Zionists boycotted it; “Britain had reached the end of the road,” and announced in February of that year it they would pass responsibility for Palestine to the new United Nations (Morris 2008, 36-37). The Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote a telling note to Attlee:

The present state of affairs is not only costly to us in manpower and money, but is, as you and I agree, of no real value from the strategic point of view—you cannot in any case have a secure base on top of a wasps’ nest—and it is exposing our young men, for no good purpose, to abominable experiences and is breeding anti-Semites at a most shocking speed. (Segev 2000, 495)

Violence started to escalate alarmingly, with Jewish terrorists becoming more and more brazen in their attacks; Etzel militants killed over twenty British soldiers early in March with guns and grenades, attacked an oil refinery in Haifa at the end of the month, and in May set free a large number of prisoners from the British prison in Acre, but some of these attackers were killed and captured; three of the captured were sentenced to death, and Etzel, in response, captured two British sergeants and threatened to hang them if the sentences were carried out; the sentences were carried out, and the two Britons were hanged by Etzel, their bodies booby-trapped, which resulted in a further injured British captain; in response British soldiers and police in Tel Aviv went on a violent rampage, with several going “beserk” and opening fire, killing five Jews and injuring ten; still, despite constant attacks, apart from these incidents the British conducted themselves with “restraint and humanity in the face of Jewish excesses” (Morris 2008, 38-40). In response to the illegal immigration, Britain’s MI-6 that summer sabotaged a number of Haganah ships in European ports, and the Zionist authorities authorized their officials on one refugee ship, *Exodus*, to resist the British if encountered in the hopes of creating a public-relations bonanza; when Royal Marines tried to board, fierce resistance was offered, and three refugees were killed,

twenty-eight “seriously” injured; when they were forcibly disembarked back onto German soil, Zionist officials had made sure that notables and the press were there to witness the event (Ibid., 43-44).

The British Cabinet in September secretly voted to completely evacuate Palestine, and would not be party to creating or enforcing any sort of partition; the UN would have to take care of it, or, failing that, the Jews and Arabs would have to settle their differences on their own; after an extraordinary lobbying effort by the Zionists, and an almost as extraordinary lack of an effective effort by the Arabs, who presumed things would go their way, the United Nations General Assembly voted late in November of 1947 for a partitioning of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state and an internationally administered zone around Jerusalem, with thirty-three yes votes, thirteen no votes, and ten abstentions (including Britain, which felt the partition favored the Jews too much at the expense of the Arabs); the British were to leave “not later than 1 August 1948” (Morris 2008, 51-63; Karsh 2002, 19-21). Britain had already been withdrawing its troops, from 100,000 earlier, to 78,000 in June 1947, and down to 55,000 by December 1st 1947, and Bevin, who thought the terms of the partitioning unjust, would not make any attempt to force the UN’s decision on the Arabs; the British decided they would terminate the League of Nations’ Mandate of Palestine on May 15th, 1948, but would delay the arrival of any major UN authority until May 1st, since having UN officials exercising authority while the British were still in charge would be “intolerable” (Morris 2008, 73-74).

Violence erupted in Tel Aviv, then Jerusalem in the days after the UN vote; this was not sporadic violence, but the start of a disorganized kind of civil war; Haganah units were able to take the lead in dispersing Arab mobs in Jerusalem, while “Mandate police and troops generally looked on;” some policemen engaged in “vandalizing and looting, though others helped evacuate the Jewish wounded;” they did not realize it yet, but British forces would end up being in the unenviable position of referee in an extremely ugly contest until mid-May, 1948 (Morris 2008, 76-77). Theoretically, the British, until the final month of the Mandate, would be somewhat involved at a decreasing rate; mid-April to mid-May they would try as much as possible to remain aloof, save for safeguarding their exit routes; they were

tasked with keeping “law and order,” while maintaining a “strict impartiality, generally expressed in nonintervention in favor of either side;” just their presence greatly affected the plans of Arabs and Jews, who had to incorporate possible British responses into their planning (Ibid., 78). For the British, conflicts in their orders and mission made this difficult, because the military authorities made it clear the focus was supposed to be protecting their own forces, with a priority only for withdrawal, while the civilian authorities, especially the current High Commissioner, Alan Cunningham, still felt responsible for maintaining law and order, and protecting “the law-abiding citizen;” also, while ordered to be impartial, Britain had deep and pressing ties to the rest of the Arab world to consider, and each side accused Britain of siding with the other; “[i]n practice, British troops intervened in the fighting quite frequently from November 1947 down to March 1948, and occasionally in April as well;” all of 1947 saw British forces incur sixty killed and 189 wounded, and 114 killed with 230 wounded from the beginning of January 1948 until mid-May (Ibid., 78-79).

Since the Arabs were attacking most of the time until the middle of 1948, the British actually ended up helping to defend Jews often, even performing escort missions for Jewish convoys; at the same time, the Jews suspected that the British were favoring the Arabs, so they often held back, afraid to go on the offensive or take Arab land partly for fear of British intervention; still, the British presence also at times inhibited Arab actions, and especially of importance, no Arab state army dared to invade Palestine while the British-administered Mandate was still the official authority there, despite threats to the contrary (Morris 2008, 79-80; Karsh 2002, 23-23) The British ended up also carrying out a “policy of quietly assisting” both Jews and Arabs in taking over areas where they were the dominant group; this often meant a direct transfer of facilities like forts or utility stations, and they also would urge and assist in the evacuation of particularly threatened minority communities (Morris 2008, 79-80).

It is important to remember that throughout this period, the Etzel and Lechi extremist Jewish groups continued their terrorist attacks against the British, bringing about some incidents of retaliation from British personnel; often anti-Jewish violence on the part of British was immediately following such

attacks; at various times they disarmed certain parties, both Arab and Jewish, occasionally handing the disarmed Jews over to bloodthirsty Arab mobs, with one such act prompting a Lechi bombing of a troop train transport which killed twenty-eight troops and wounded many more; a handful of British even deserted to fight alongside the Arabs (Ibid., 80-81, 85)

As early as December 1947, the British began escorting some Jewish convoys, though in one case, the British officered Arab Legion, being loaned by the British Army from Transjordan, saw several Legionnaires fire on a Jewish convoy and inflict not insignificant casualties; during the first “organized” Arab attack, in Tel Aviv, after back-and-forth violence British officials killed two Haganah, detaining others; when hundreds of Arabs descended on the city, the British backed off but still ran patrols; when the Arabs pulled back, a British officer brought back a Jewish baby that had been abducted by Arabs; also, when Arab co-workers began attacking their Jewish colleagues after an Etzel bomb attack just outside on a group of Arabs, British forces stopped the violence, and later fired on Haganah units that indiscriminately raided the village where some of the Arab workers lived (Ibid., 101-103, 105). Up in Galilee, the British arrested a Jewish guard when he killed one of his Arab attackers in December; January 1948 saw a British armored unit support a Palmah unit defending a rural Jewish settlement, and February of 1948 saw British troops aid the Haganah in repulsing an Arab assault on Jerusalem’s Old City (Ibid., 102-103). Another incident involved the Haganah blowing up part of a hotel, whereby several dozen civilians were killed; the British responded by calling in Ben-Gurion “for a dressing down,” who then removed the officer in charge of that operation from his command (Ibid., 104-106).

February 1948 would also see a British armored column show up and ask a force of foreign Arab units to leave northern Palestine; their commander agreed to if the British fired their weapons so he could claim he had to leave because the British attacked him, and this was done; the same month would see British deserters, angry from Jewish terrorist attacks, aid in similar attacks by Arabs against Jews; Etzel and Lechi responded by gunning down British troops and carrying out the aforementioned deadly train bombing (Ibid., 106, 108). March saw a significant drawdown of British forces, evacuating as they were

through Haifa; the British, in this climate, warned a Jewish supply convoy that had left Jerusalem to supply outlying settlements to wait to return; a British colonel in an armored car even drove up to them after they began to return to warn that a huge ambush, with thousands of Arabs, was waiting for them, but they continued on straight into the ambush; the next day the British convinced the Arabs stop firing, and the surviving Jews to hand over their weapons to the British, who then evacuated them (Ibid., 109-110).

After an Etzel unit massacred over 100 Arab villagers at Deir Yassin in April, a few days later, a Haganah convoy escorting mainly medical staff and students was ambushed; the Haganah “pleaded” for British intervention, but only one British major, “possibly on his own initiative,” drove up in an armored car, trying to get some of the Jews to flee to him so he could evacuate them, but they said they wanted to wait for a Haganah rescue; many hours later, a British column arrived but nearly 80 Jews were already dead (Morris 2008, 127-129; Karsh 2002, 40). Fighting on a major road to Jerusalem in April saw the Haganah seize some villages from the Arabs; the British in one case got them to withdraw in return for assurances they would not let Arab fighters return, but a Palmah unit in another village would not comply, and the British fired on them, wounding several dozen; in another situation, British armor supported Arab attacks to drive back Jewish units, but were unsuccessful (Morris 2008 129-130, 132).

When fighting erupted in the mixed city of Tiberias, also in April, the British forces there declined to intervene, despite requests by the Arabs to do so, but eventually helped the Arab population of the city to evacuate; in the case of Haifa, Palestine’s city with the second largest Arab population and also the British Army’s main point of exit from Palestine, the British warned against a Haganah attack late in April 1948, but on April 21, they suddenly withdrew from their positions in between Arab and Jewish neighborhoods, not wanting to get caught in between the two groups with a looming battle, and fighting started right after the British pullback; a rumor that the British would protect civilians who fled to the port, “indiscriminate” Jewish mortar fire, and well as the collapse of Arab resistance, led many of the city’s Arabs to flee to the port; the British turned away an Arab column of reinforcements, maintaining that they would only prolong the fighting (Ibid.,139-144). After the battle, both British and Jewish

officials tried to convince the Arabs of Haifa to stay, but almost all of them decided to flee, either by the sea or with British convoys by land; the British also, then, convinced Arabs of some surrounding villages to evacuate with their assistance, but prevented Jewish units from taking Tira (most of the people there fled anyway) and Acre (Morris 2008, 145-147; Karsh 46-47, 50).

Jaffa, Palestine's largest Arab city, came under Etzel attack, which involved heavy mortaring of the city, and British units briefly engaged with the Jews; the Arab population began to flee en masse; the British, fearing for their general position in the Arab world, felt they needed to demonstrate, after the debacle at Haifa, that they were not siding with the Jews, so the British called in numerous reinforcements from outside Palestine to free units already in Palestine to be able to intervene more forcefully; Etzel ignored British demands to withdraw from Jaffa, and in an operation involving British tanks, attack aircraft, destroyers, and multiple units, and after threatening to bomb Tel Aviv, the Zionist leaders suspended that operation, got the Etzel units to withdraw to the outskirts and be replaced by more the professional and restrained Haganah, and the British moved in and took control of parts of the city; this did not stop the mass exodus of Arabs from Jaffa, and the British were gone in a few weeks anyway (Morris 2008, 147-152).

Early in April, more fighting along the roads to Jerusalem took place, with the Arab Legion and supporting British Armor trying to keep appropriate roads; but the Legion did not stop at that, and about a month later, it went about attacking a block of Jewish settlements, in a likely desire to pave the way for operations on behalf of Transjordan, likely to begin after the end of the Mandate in a few days; to the men of the Legion's credit, when irregular Arab militamen massacred many of the Jewish defenders during some of their attempts to surrender, the Arab Legion fought on behalf of their soon-to-be-prisoners and against the militamen, and shot some of their own men who lost discipline; their actions, and the surrender negotiated by British and Red Cross officials, saved the lives of over 350 Jewish POWs who would certainly have been killed otherwise (Ibid., 168-171). The next day, May 15th, Cunningham and most of the rest of the soldiers and staff of the Mandate were off to sea, and the Royal Navy's

blockade ended, allowing for a stream of modern weapons to flood to the Jews, including aircraft, with which they would be able to escalate their offensive; right until the end, the British forces on the ground, with little help or direction from London, had at least in some way preserved a sense of duty and mission, even if it was never clear to them what, exactly, that should be (Ibid, 177-179). The Mandate era of Palestine was officially over.

The British Mandate as an Intervention: an Assessment

An assessment of such a confused and convoluted intervention as the British Mandate in Palestine is not an easy task by any standard. Because the post-WWI settlements were so often the products of negotiations between heads of state, and not terribly involving of parliaments or other bodies because they were often done in secret and were influenced by previous secret agreements, a single individual could have a tremendous effect on the outcome, a single individual often responsible to no one, at that moment, other than himself. The twentieth century began, then, with a negotiating process which was, in many ways, thoroughly non-modern in form and spirit.

Perhaps nothing underscores this idea better than British Prime Minister Lloyd George and his obsession with Palestine. Taking possession of the Holy Land was never one of the British government's major war aims, nor was it something that Parliament or the British Military really cared about. Lloyd George may have brought the British Empire after WWI to its apogee, and made it the largest empire in the history of the world on top of that, but only a few decades later it would be a tiny shell of this apogee, and would rapidly collapse in the years before and after WWII, from Ireland to India and Palestine.

More than any single reason, Lloyd George seemed to pursue the possession of the Ottoman dominion of Palestine because of a childish, romantic notion of the honor and glory of holding such a symbolic area, and an infatuation with his of Christian Zionist religious beliefs. It is not for the author of this paper to argue for or against the validity of one's religious beliefs, in this case ones concerning

possession of the “Holy Land,” the “Second Coming,” or doing “God’s Will;” one definite conclusion is that these beliefs had no solid practical or policy reasons for a Britain exhausted by war and financially strained to take on such a potential “wasps’ nest,” let alone a justification for making a grandiose pronouncement at the end of the war of being able to create a homeland for the Jews while respecting the rights of the people who made up the vast majority of the population; the stunning, illogical and impossible contradiction that is the Balfour Declaration is the reason that, then, that British policy in Palestine from its beginning to May 15th, 1948, was itself a stunning, illogical, and impossible contradiction. Perhaps the only consistent aspects of the entire British Mandate era were the illogical, contradictory nature of the overall mission, and the fact that at all times the majority of the British officials in Palestine charged with administering it, both civil and military, either knew this or did not understand the policy at all.

If the so-called “Lawrence of Arabia” sparked modern Arab nationalism, Lloyd George and Balfour gave Jewish nationalism a promise which, once made, would rouse the dreams of millions of Jews to the point that, having been given this promise, they would accept nothing less. Especially since the vast majority of the people in Palestine at the end of WWI were Arab, it was inevitable that these two forces, wildly incompatible, would crash and clash. As in many places of the world, nothing can awaken a sense of national consciousness like having a huge influx of immigrants who are totally different than the control group come into that group’s land with the clear aim of using that group’s land to create its own political state; one group’s nationalism generally feeds and fuels another’s that is close by, and for a country that had for centuries had to deal with Irish nationalism right next door to it, to overlook the potential Arab nationalistic reaction to Zionism is a stunning oversight by Britain, and especially Lloyd George in particular, after WWI and during the process by which the Balfour declaration was made.

What might be even harder to understand is that, for all intents and purposes, the Balfour Declaration was about as developed as that policy would be for many years; virtually no direction came from above, and when reforms that made some sort of sense were initiated from below, if at all, they were

almost always derailed and sabotaged by top government officials in London, who nearly always caved into Jewish lobbying, especially the efforts of Weizmann, until the Arab revolt. But a lot happened between the end of WWI and then, mainly a huge, landscape-changing influx of Jews into Palestine that would forever change the character of the region for the majority-population of Arabs that lived there. Excepting a few ugly incidents in the nineteenth century, Jews and Arab Muslims in Palestine had more or less lived in peace under hundreds of years of Ottoman rule before Zionism; before Zionism, to the Arabs Jews were just a strange minority whose activities barely affected the lives of the Arab Muslims and Christians of Palestine. When that minority population grew by a factor of ten and brought European culture and a very strong, determined nationalistic agenda with it, it was almost impossible for the Arab, so long under the slow and simple existence of Ottoman domination, to comprehend, let alone think up some sort of coherent counterstrategy strategy to Zionism—one of the greatest, best-organized social and political movements the world had ever seen—especially when the Arab thought mainly in terms of family, village, clan and tribe.

These tensions with Zionists existed before the British had even arrived, and violence clashes had been occurring even under the Ottomans during their final years of rule. A huge problem for the British is that the very concept of a mandate is designed to deal with developing structures as a way to put a region on the path to self-sufficiency (on paper, anyway) by helping to develop institutions and infrastructure, while keeping order and being able to deter negative, disruptive behaviors. The British took a hands-off approach to both in Palestine. If the Balfour Declaration had never been issued, there is a decent chance that such an approach might have helped the Arabs to be able to develop some sort of functioning state under British tutelage. By making the issue of Palestine one of mainly dealing with Jews, rather than the Arabs who were already there, the British created a whole new set of problems. If Lloyd George had not held out Palestine as the beacon of hope for self-determination for world Jewry, the Arab mindset would probably have been much less worried about Jewish takeover and Arab dispossession; Arabs had been far better at governing substantial numbers of Jewish minorities than Christians had been for hundreds of

years, and with some help from the British, it is possible that a representative government in Palestine could have been created during the mandate period with the existing Jewish population, or a moderately increased Jewish population that would still have maintained some level of the 1918 demographic ratios. But Zionism was inherently undemocratic; Zionism only sought majority rule in Palestine when Jews were a majority and not before; it was only for a Jewish state where Jews were in charge, and it is questionable that Zionist philosophy, for all its modern undertones, would have been any less imperialistic or racist towards Arabs than Europeans in general were to any other non-Europeans (Segev 2000, 119). Like the British who came up with and adopted the Balfour declaration, which referred to what was by *far* the majority group in Palestine at the time as the “existing non-Jewish communities,” the Zionists, in general, never really looked at the Arabs as people deserving of equal dignity, equal consideration, or equal rights. Rather, the Jews emigrating to Palestine came demanding (and receiving) preferential treatment over the Arabs; they got higher wages, more economic investment, lesser sentences than Arabs if convicted of crimes, and were constantly part of the policy process at the highest levels of the British government, while the Arabs were shut out of that same process.

The anger and violence from a people being largely ignored while everything around them changed should hardly have been surprising, but it more or less was for many of the London politicians at the top and top British colonial administrators of the Mandate. Had the British recognized this and instituted a unified, whole-of-government approach to dealing with the problematic social constructs of both Jews and Arabs, perhaps some sort of a two-state or a single binational state solution could have been effected; instead, the British were extremely hands off, letting the Jews aggressively develop their own society and institutions on their own with no pushing or shaping on the British part, but an occasional helping hand, and, conversely, leaving the Arabs pretty much alone except in some basic ways, looking at them as a quaint museum piece that should not be changed or disturbed. There was never a serious attempt to help organize or modernize Palestinian Arab society, and any official should have been able to look at the comparatively much more modern society the Zionists were creating and

realize there was no way for the Arabs to compete with that, that to be part of any political entity with the Jews, they would need some assistance in “catching up” and unifying; such an effort could have created a unified structure, like the Zionists’ Jewish Agency, whereby the British authorities could have had a leader and an office besides the woefully inadequate “Grand Mufti” with whom to work who could, in some legitimate sense, be said to speak for and represent the Arab people in Palestine. Instead of trying to foster relations between Jews and Arabs, most British policy involved this two-track system of development and only active involvement when violence erupted; yet this involvement always dealt mainly with behaviors or sometimes structures, not the social constructs that were at the heart of the conflict. The Arab Revolt in the ‘30s, and the British response to it, fragmented Palestinian Arab society and destroyed any hope of political development or leadership from emerging within it. On the Zionists’ leaders’ part, rather than try to really work with their Arab neighbors, they more or less sought maximum advantage over the Arabs in every possible way, while the Arab leaders did almost nothing productive whatsoever.

The British entered into a situation that was in between confrontation and intermittent violence, put forth policies, when any policies were put forth by the administration at all, that did nothing to work towards conflict prevention or implement crisis diplomacy; when officials in Palestine tried to do so, it was generally ad hoc and spontaneously initiated by individuals, and the parties themselves were stubborn; thus, the British never exerted any serious pressure on the Jews and the Arabs to work out any kind of a deal; this was difficult when at no time whatsoever did the higher-ups in London give a remotely clear direction on how to proceed in such a matter, or any direction whatsoever, nor did the parties exhibit any real willingness to work together; the few attempts to do this, as mentioned, were usually initiated at the local level, such as Luke’s attempting at hosting negotiations; without senior-level pressure or backing, there was not much chance for success, especially when a change in social constructs was absolutely necessary for there to be any agreement. Yet this was never something the British even attempted to deal with seriously. Even when good ideas that could have reduced tensions were proposed,

Weizmann and other influential Jewish lobbyists would have better access to the top levels of British government than the colonial administrators who wanted to implement the ideas, and the proposals were ignored and not put into practice or rescinded.

MacMichael's exasperation was virtually every high commissioner's exasperation. It was clear that both developing infrastructure/institutions and keeping law and order were part of the Mandate, and this the former the British officials on the ground were good at, especially considering that they almost never got funding from London in the era of the Great Depression; building roads, security structures, and improving medical care and education were all significant achievements, some still visible today, and part of the stated aim and spirit of the original of the British Mandate for Palestine; keeping law and order was also largely accomplished for most of the 1920s. The harsh suppression of the Arab revolt, for all its man excesses, could also be said to have accomplished its mission, and the Arabs did not seriously challenge the British in Palestine ever again; but towards the end the British did not enjoy the same success with the Jews. Still, in some ways structurally and in keeping law and order, elements of the British intervention was a partial success.

At the same time, when they tried to enforce their own policies, especially when it involved harsh treatment of Holocaust survivor refugees, the negative publicity almost made it not worth enforcing; yet if they did not, the Arabs would have been even more incensed. This is symbolic of so much of what the British tried to do; with two camps so starkly divided, whatever the British did to try to appease one group was bound to outrage the other; in such an impossible situation, discretion was often left to individual officials on the ground, who would execute for one group a half-hearted measure, knowing the potential outrage from the other; the community for whom they were acting would then say "not enough," while the other would denounce them; then, in order to make something up to the other community, a different measure would be taken with the opposite effect intended, and the British, in the end, would only succeed in pleasing no one and enraging everyone. The battle in Haifa is a great example; in turning away an Arab relief column, for fear that prolonged violence would result in many more deaths in Arab

Haifa, they were accused of siding with the Jews; when they acted in support of the Arabs in Jaffa, the Arab population fled the city anyway, and the Jews were angry. Not only could the British not win any friends with their policies, but they rarely seemed to have the desired effects, either. Even if they did, they got little or no credit anyway. When the civil war erupted, brave self sacrifice on the part of the British whose casualties were not insignificant would end up helping both sides, only to result in accusations of impartiality from all sides. After the first few years of the Mandate, the window had shut; without any efforts towards changing social constructs, nothing the British did would have brought peace or satisfaction to both Arabs and Jews; but it was the contradictions inherent in their policies from the very beginning that made this a likely outcome.

The original rational interests centered around the strategic location of Palestine being key for the worldwide interests of the British Empire, and the “prestige” and status benefits of ruling the “Holy Land.” Many British officials, Churchill included, never agreed with this line of thinking. In the beginning, this was almost certainly not the case, but during WWII, if the British had not been there, the French almost certainly would have; the Vichy government would have almost certainly tried to pressure British Egypt from the east as Rommel pushed to British Egypt from the West; it would have been easier for Italy, also, to have an effect on that critical area and potential battle, even as Iraq was also revolting against the British at the same time. So, during WWII, Palestine was actually important for the British; then again, the French were poor administrators of colonies, so perhaps it would have been easy to take Palestine from them at the beginning of WWII if they had not claimed it at the end of WWI. These are mostly hypotheticals, though; what is certain is that with improving air technology and other technologies, Palestine was not as essential as a link to the eastern parts of the British Empire as initially envisioned by some, and the Suez was the far more important region, so there was not a tremendous amount of gain that was certain for Britain that made the costs associated with Palestine worth holding onto it. As far as prestige, things went so badly overall for the British that, if anything, British prestige and status were severely diminished by the crises in Palestine.

Also, the idea that doing this would gain the support of Jews worldwide was correct, but the assumed value of that, and the reason for doing so, deriving from the racist views of Jews as behind-the-scenes-grand-manipulators, were both false; their actions did not provide the benefits that were assumed would accrue to Britain since the Jews were not as mythically powerful as certain British officials ignorantly believed.

Regarding the main aim of the British, at least, as set out by Lloyd George and then honored, however unwillingly, by the senior British leaders until 1947, which was, as also understood in the Mandate, “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” and to “use their [i.e., the British] 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” was fractionally successful.

Firstly, the Mandate regime, from the very beginning *did* “prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine;” the Arabs were almost never consulted or included in the decision-making process regarding the establishment of a “national home for Jews,” Jews were blatantly given preferential treatment, and Jewish immigration was allowed to such an extent as to infringe on the economic, political, and civil lives of most Arabs in Palestine, and dramatically alter the balance of power between Arab and Jew; today, these Arabs are mostly either citizens that are unofficially second-class in Israel or surrounding states, or live in/under some combination of a refugee-camp, occupation, or siege in the region. Utter, total failure.

Secondly, “prejudicing... the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country” most certainly did occur; events in Palestine helped to bring about anti-Jewish riots in places as far away as England; all over the Middle East, Jews were persecuted in reaction to the events in Palestine, as well, with many of them losing their lives or livelihoods, or forced to flee. Utter, total failure.

Thirdly, as already explained, the British did *not* “use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object;” from the beginning, the British Army and a majority of the British officials in Palestine worked against the establishment of the Jewish homeland; the British who had worked with the Arabs for so long felt they had betrayed them and that the Jews were ungrateful; apart from some infrastructure and institution building and generous immigration policies, the Jews generally built their state from scratch themselves; they may have been given loans and general fully preferential treatment, but a huge, and possibly the most important, part of “us[ing] their best endeavours to facilitate” the creation of a Jewish homeland, working out some sort of deal, accommodation, and understanding with the Palestinian Arabs, was not only never part of the plan, it practically never occurred; if it did, it was usually a ground-up idea that was ignored or vetoed by London; to be fair, the world economy was in ruins, and WWII was looming, but objectively, “best endeavours” were not employed. To best make the Zionists’ dream a reality, dealing with both Jewish treatment of Arabs and their imperialist, racist outlook on Arabs, and also their sense of entitlement while wholly ignoring the Arab perspective, should have been a serious part of Mandate policy, engaged by all aspects of government, as should have been dealing with the ignorance, disunity, tribalism, religious hysteria, bigotry, and economic and political conditions of the Arabs, as should also have been “facilitating” positive, mutually beneficial interaction between them; this would greatly have increased the chances of some sort of Jewish homeland being established peacefully, or at least without it being as much of a disaster that it was for so many. Only a (tiny) partial success.

Finally, “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people” was a qualified success; it is at least somewhat admirable that the top-level administration, until the government of Clement Attlee, did not renege on their promise to the Jews, especially considering how deeply unpopular, vague, and naïve the original “policy” (if it can be called that) was. Even though the Attlee government did not think that the Jews would survive, by committing to a gradual and orderly withdrawal, the British unintentionally gave the Zionists the space to be able to set up the foundation for

their own success; the British presence kept the Arab state armies at bay while giving the Haganah time to prepare and rally international support, and British actions saved many lives, both Arab and Jewish, while keeping the conflict from rapidly becoming much worse than could have without their operations; also unintentionally, the British Army operations during the Arab Revolt ensured that the Palestinians Arabs on their own would stand little chance of beating the Jews. The immigration policies ensured there would also be enough Jews to win and build a state, and the training and experience they received with the British ensured they could outfight all their opponents, save for the Arab Legion.

Overall, though, the policy was doomed to be a failure; the Balfour Declaration itself amplified incompatible social constructs to be that much more incompatible with each other; the structures that the British did build or facilitate helped the Arabs, but helped the Jews so much more that it contributed to the vast gulf of inequality that separated both peoples and made it, along with other factors, so hard for them to work together; ignoring, and never intending to deal with social constructs made fulfilling the Balfour Declaration impossible; and the total lack of any unified policy, and the discord between civil and military authorities, and within the civilian authority structure, regarding how to bring about behavioral change resulted in a wholly improvised, ad-hoc approach that led to wildly unique, wildly inconsistent, wildly incompatible, and wildly counterproductive policies, especially considering the total lack of direction and resources from above; finally, if a policy worked for one group, it tended to not work for, or against, the other. Also, from a behavioral approach, the lack of direction and agreement meant that British authorities were reacting to, instead of controlling, events; the British, in a sense, were constantly on the defensive, and failed to anticipate problems that they should have. This destroyed morale and confidence in the intervention, and fostered a general desire among the British in Palestine of just wanting the Mandate to end. Entering a conflict in between confrontation and intermittent violence between two parties that saw themselves with wholly incompatible interests, and failing to address that very issue, saw British policies push the parties to sustained violence and all out civil and inter-state war; even in 2010, the Arabs and Jews in Palestine go back and forth between confrontation, intermittent violence, sustained

violence, and war, with no end in sight; and this is a legacy of the British Mandate era for Palestine: the social constructs are still at the heart of this conflict, and that is why peace remains so elusive.

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