The Implementation of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate in Palestine: problems of conquest and colonisation at the nadir of British Imperialism (1917–1936)

The Implementation of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate in Palestine: problems of conquest and colonisation at the nadir of British Imperialism (1917–1936)

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Summary

The objective of this thesis is to analyse the British Mandate in Palestine with a view to developing a new understanding of the interconnections and dissonances between the principal agencies. Through a critical examination of British government papers the thesis argues that the moment of the British Mandate in Palestine signalled a new phase in the development of British imperialism constituting a rupture with the colonialist past and the advent of a new type of imperialist relationship. The encounter between this *new*-imperialism which developed from the end of the nineteenth century and a Palestinian society which was in the process of transformation between a predominantly pre-capitalist agricultural society into a commodity producing capitalist one engendered a conflictual environment dislocating the economic, social and political structures that existed.

The Balfour Declaration constituted an agreement between British imperialism and organised Zionism which was the establishment of a symbiotic relationship emerging from the coalescence of two interdependent political goals. The British, intent on preserving their position as an imperial hegemon perceived the occupation of Palestine as a critical component of their strategy and a vital adjunct of their objective of remaining the dominant force in the region of the Near East. The combined aspects of this strategy cannot be reduced to but may be expressed as: a desire to retain untrammelled communications through the Suez Canal with the Empire at large; a pre-occupation with seeking to establish a dominant position in respect of the exploitation and marketisation of oil and the implantation of a colonising surrogate to act as the agency through which its objectives might be mediated.

The Zionist objective, to create a National Home for the Jews, constituted a nationalist endeavour premised on the acquisition of an imperialist sponsor.
The British course of action through the implementation of the Mandate constituted an intervention which distorted and gravely damaged the evolution of the economic, social and political life of the indigenous Palestinians.

The thesis in analysing these events in a new way argues for a fresh appreciation of the origin and character of the British Mandate in Palestine.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers an innovative explanation and evaluation of the nature of the British occupation and Mandate in Palestine from 1917 to 1936. Examining the process by which British imperialism was implemented in Palestine through a policy of settler-colonialism I argue that this form of colonial intervention constituted a new phase in the development of British imperialism. The war for plunder and the looting of goods characteristic of earlier forms of imperialism was, from the end of the nineteenth century, increasingly augmented, and to some degree supplanted, by competition for raw materials and control over markets. This led to a continuous predatory activity by imperial powers such as Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and others, seeking to acquire lands and their raw materials coupled with the subjugation of rivals and the brutal repression of the rights of peoples of the lands conquered.[1]

The thesis makes the case that the British occupation of Palestine and the implementation of the Mandate constituted a break in the nature and practice of British imperialism with that of the nineteenth century. I argue that the method of colonisation employed by the British in respect of the Zionist project differed from that of the preceding period. Furthermore the thesis contends that the Balfour Declaration which was innately contradictory was an expression of the coalescence of the strategic objectives of British imperialism with the aspirations of the Zionist movement. Lastly, I argue that the British implementation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate in Palestine had a fundamentally disruptive impact on the ability of Palestinian society to achieve sovereignty. By utilising the methodological approach outlined in Chapter One I demonstrate how the attempts by the indigenous Palestinian people to respond politically to the intervention of British imperialism and Zionist colonisation were continuously thwarted, disrupting what might otherwise have been a relatively untrammelled progress towards self-determination. Whilst addressing the contradictions, dissonances and convergences produced by the interplay of global and local factors the chapters of the thesis seek to remain within an overall chronological framework.

[1] See for example Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (Oxford: MacMillan, 1999), for a graphic description of the role of Belgium imperialism in the Congo region.

The originality of the thesis lies in the approach which has been adopted which emphasises the importance of analysing the global, regional and local context within which British imperialism implemented the Mandate. Palestinian society which had already experienced challenges as a result of longer-term developments within the Ottoman Empire was confronted by the seismic disruption caused by the First World War and the British occupation of the country to which were added the challenges created by Zionist settlement. The characteristics of Palestinian society were compromised, adversely affecting the development of the endeavour for self-determination. From a methodological perspective therefore the thesis will examine how the asymmetrical pressures exerted on Palestinian society by changes in the character of the Ottoman Empire coupled with the immediacy of the British occupation and the imposition of the Zionist project affected the growth and development of Palestinian society and its political response.

The thesis interrogates the specificities of the *new*-imperialism emerging in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century, which was defined by four key features: the move towards control over sources of raw materials; the emergence of finance capital producing a new unity of industrial and commercial enterprises; the desire to hegemonise global markets and the abandonment of more traditional colonialist practice to be replaced by the development of a neo-colonialist strategy. The British occupation of Palestine constituted the first major encounter of this *new*-imperialism with a country and a people it sought to dominate. I argue that re-examining British imperialism from within a framework that foregrounds these four elements provides an original insight into the operations of the Mandate and the policies adopted by the British.

British disdain for the aspirations of the indigenous peoples of lands they colonised was a constant. The history of colonisation was one which cannot be written without due recognition of the consequences of occupation, military subjugation, displacement and genocide of indigenous peoples. A superiority, at times articulated in quite explicitly racial terms placed all those whom the British

ruled into subordinate categories of human beings.[2] From the outset the project of the creation of a homeland for the Jews was based on the denial of the rights of the indigenous peoples.

Unlike past scholarship on this subject which has tended to concentrate on a chronological account of the period this thesis presents a multi-faceted interpretive model that engages with four critical areas. The thesis contends that by utilising an awareness of these elements it is possible to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the British occupation and its consequences on the development of Palestinian nationalism. The first is a recognition of the specific character of British imperialism and the changes which it had undergone since the end of the nineteenth century. The second is an acknowledgment of the impact on the Ottoman Empire, and specifically Palestine, from its encounter with western European imperialism. The third is an awareness of the economic, political and military context that Britain found itself in at the beginning of the twentieth century as a consequence of global pressures and structural economic and political changes. The fourth element is an appreciation of the context in which Palestinian society found itself as a result of both longer and shorter term processes maturing within the Ottoman Empire, the convulsions of the war, occupation and subsequently Zionist colonisation.

Whilst attention will be paid to the uniqueness of each of these elements it is the recognition of the complex interaction between them and their social, political and economic dimensions which constitutes the distinctive nature of the approach that I have taken. I will argue that it is only through an appreciation of the asymmetrical and differential rhythm of development of these components that it is possible to develop an understanding of the conditions under which Palestinian society sought to address the problems it faced. I will explain further below the approach I have used in order to explore how these components interacted and the degree to which they shaped British imperialism in Palestine and consequently Palestinian society.

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[2] See for example Winston Churchill's statement to the 1937 Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) that: "I do not admit … that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians [*sic*] of America, or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to those people by the fact that a stronger race [*sic*], a higher grade race, or, at any rate, a more worldly-wise race, to put it that way, has come and taken their place." Quoted in Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews* (London: Simon and Shuster, 2007), 120.

British imperialism was radically challenged by rival imperialisms and its occupation and colonisation of Palestine took place in a unique context prescribed by a global conflict. The rivalry displayed by the contending imperialist world powers in the war from 1914–1918 was the manifestation of the inter-imperial competition which had been evident across the globe over a period of decades. On a number of occasions there had been attempts by the dominant imperial powers to achieve an agreed division of spoils, most notably at the 1884 West Africa Conference held in Berlin.[3] Despite attempts by diplomatic means to resolve these rivalries, localised skirmishes appeared periodically which were redolent of the greater contest which followed.[4] Responding to this context the British occupation and Mandate constituted a break with previous imperialist practices and embodied both the apotheosis and the nadir of British imperialism. During the period of the First World War the British sought to assert their hegemony over the Near East, as they had done over other parts of the world.[5] They did so because, for economic, political and military reasons, they regarded the region as essential to the maintenance of their Empire.

The thesis will analyse the development of Palestinian society consequent on the interaction of processes which were initiated during the course of the Ottoman Empire and the huge convulsions evident in the First World War. The changes wrought on British perspectives by the advent of the *new*-imperialism shaped the conduct of the Mandate and the intervention of British imperialism in a neo-colonialism of a special type. As a consequence of British intervention, Palestinian society was prevented from developing in an organic manner, transitioning from a predominantly pre-capitalist agricultural society producing principally for consumption into a capitalist market-oriented and commodity producing economy.

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[3] Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (London: Abacus, 1991, Reprinted 2003), 239. Prince Otto von Bismarck opened the Conference by declaring that its objectives were to advance the goals of commerce, Christianity and civilisation.

[4] Ibid., 456.

[5] Nomenclature is an important consideration when writing about this subject. Whilst recognising that these are disputed questions I have sought to use terms which reflect the most common usage. In the main the Arab peoples of the Palestine Mandate area considered themselves at this time to be part of Greater Syria. I will use the term "Palestine" to refer to what became the occupied Mandate territory and "Arab Palestinian" to refer to both the Muslim and Christian people who lived in it.
Although the term "Near East" has been used throughout this text, the United Nations and bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development use the term "West Asia". The terms "Western Asia", "Southwest Asia" and "Southwestern Asia" are also used by other authors to describe the same geographical area. The use of "Near East" should not therefore be read as an indicator of any form of perspective or predisposition from which my work should be read.

Critical to the functioning of British imperialism in Palestine was its relationship with Zionism. At the end of the nineteenth century political Zionism emerged as a nationalist movement largely as a response to the growing anti-Semitism that had developed into pogroms across Eastern Europe and Russia in particular. Beginning in 1881, these attacks took place mainly in cities in southern Russia spreading in 1883 and 1884 to Rostov, Yekaterinoslav and Odessa.[6] Twenty years later a new wave of pogroms occurred and led to increased attempts by Jews in these areas to leave for Western Europe and the United States of America. As a secular organisation influenced by the nationalist movements of the period Zionist leaders recognised that in order to achieve the objective of establishing a homeland for the Jews in Palestine it required an imperialist sponsor. The aspirations of Zionism coalesced with the goals of British imperialist policy and were co-opted by them. I will argue that this constituted a different form of colonial enterprise from those which had preceded it.

In this thesis I have concentrated on 1917–1936 as the period prior to the proposal for the partition of Palestine and before the eruption of the armed uprising against the Mandate authority. I have done so because I would contend that it was during this period that the major fault lines of Palestinian politics were formed which shaped the way in which the events of 1948 unfolded. Both economically and politically British imperialism simultaneously prevented the Palestinian peoples progression to nationhood whilst at the same time empowering the Zionist settler colonialists.

A further originality of the approach that I have used in this thesis lies in the consideration that there is an interrelationship between the political, economic and social characteristics of society which constitute the framework within which the British Mandate operated in Palestine. Society is the product of multi-faceted relationships and the nature and contradictions of these relationships are manifested through many forms including for example the political, social, philosophical, religious, cultural and ideological. The forms of expression and contestation however

[6] Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003 [Third Edition]), 58.

are themselves constrained in the last analysis by the material nature of the economic character of the society in which they function. This is a tradition of analysis which has been summarised as one which argues that "the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life".[7] Palestinian society under the Mandate was confronted by specific challenges in the social, economic and political fields which were not only the consequence of developments within that society itself but were the product of developments in British and Ottoman societies. The approach adopted will acknowledge and examine the complex dialectics created by the combinations and the disjunctures of economic, social and political energies on Palestinian society.

Whilst acknowledging the role and importance played by social agents, individuals and political organisations, I argue that these agencies were themselves the products of and to a certain extent the casualties of a process which was not of their making and over which they had limited control. The methodology adopted however rejects any notion of inevitability or economic determinism. It situates itself within an approach which argues for a recognition that the more local combination of elements already mentioned above were interrelated with and influenced by developments on the wider regional and global scale such as the permeation of capitalist economic relations into non-capitalist societies. The division of the world into imperialist spheres of influence following the First World War and the immediacy of changes locally evident through the emergence of new social and political forces critically affected the circumstances within which the attainment of Palestinian self-determination was sought.

The theoretical and conceptual framework I have used in this thesis is influenced by the writings of Karl Marx, Ellen Meiksins Wood, David Harvey, E. H. Carr, Christopher Hill and others in analysing afresh the way in which British policies were influenced by the characteristics of the *new*-imperialism.[8] This thesis has argued

[7] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 692. See also in the same work Karl Marx, *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy,* 182.
[8] Inter alia: Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (London: Allen Kane, 1973); Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2002); David Harvey, *Limits to Capital* (London: Verso, New Edition 2006), *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 1961); Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

that the period within which the British government established the Mandate in Palestine constituted a moment in which the nature of imperialism was undergoing profound changes moving from a time in which it was typified by the use of colonisation as its defining characteristic to one in which the expansion of overseas investment was beginning to become the dominant form of its operation. The last quarter of the nineteenth century had seen the rapid escalation of inter-imperialist rivalry resulting from the aggressive competition for dominance over increasingly important raw materials. The attempts by the rival imperial powers through initiatives such as the Berlin Conference of 1884 to reach accommodations about existing points of contention and to anticipate future areas of disagreement failed to resolve the underlying problem at the centre of the changes taking place within the economies of the contestants.

The approach that I have adopted in this thesis differs from that of other historians on the subject of the British Mandate in Palestine. Whilst I acknowledge the contribution of historians on this topic such as Bernard Wasserstein, Jonathan Schneer and Tom Segev for their capacity to integrate a breadth of information welding together a chronological account, the political decision-making process and illuminating their work by reference to the contributions of individuals I have reservations about their overall approach to the subject.[9] Wasserstein argues that Palestinian nationalism first appeared just prior to World War One and was characterised "more than anything else by [its] opposition to Zionism". He ascribes to it a determined anti-Semitism especially fuelled by Arab Christians, Ottoman officials and conservative Muslims. He conflates Zionism and Judaism and asserts that it was through the schools that Arab Christians acted as the principal conduit for the anti-Semitism on which the Palestinian nationalism was based. His somewhat partisan position in relation to Zionism is coupled with a seeming acceptance of the role of the British in Palestine as a neutral entity arguing that under the Mandate the "Government of Palestine became little more than an umpire: real authority increasingly resided in the Arab and Jewish institutions which commanded the

[9] Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict 1917–1929* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 16. Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); Tom Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (London: Abacus, 2000).

primary loyalty of their respective communities".[10] I regard this position as in part an inversion of the relationships that existed and to be based on a presumption of the irreconcilability of those he labels Arabs and Jews and crediting the British government with a seeming impartiality. Wasserstein largely regards the developments within Palestine as taking place within an hermetically sealed society, the product of a subjectivist dynamic, and that even the responses from the British were a product of countervailing perspectives within its political strata. I would argue that it is necessary to insist upon an appreciation of global developments which contributed to shaping the political responses of the British, the Arab Palestinians and the Zionist settlers. This is not in the interests of "painting some broader picture" but rather an insistence on the interconnectedness of the dynamics operating in the general sphere and the specific. I argue that the focus I have adopted seeks to situate the political process in the context of developments which lay beyond Britain and Palestine which impacted on both in an asymmetrical fashion in which the role of British imperialism was dominant.

Whilst much more tightly focused on the political processes and the role of individuals that led to the production of the Balfour Declaration, Jonathan Schneer adopts a methodological approach which has similarities to that of Wasserstein. Although providing important insights into the method of the formulation of the Declaration he views the process as the product of individual interventions the results of which were governed by the personal attributes of those concerned rather than being the product of political choices related to the specific situation facing Britain during the war and international developments such as the transitions taking place within imperialism which recalibrated the priorities for the British. Furthermore his definition of imperialism focuses on territorial acquisition and makes no significant recognition of the changes that were taking place on a global scale that contributed to redefining the nature of the Zionist project. In contrast I argue that the *new*-imperialism which had evolved especially at the end of the nineteenth century was a break with the earlier territorially-based imperialism bringing a new impetus which oriented towards hegemonising markets and raw materials rather than control over land surfaces.

[10] Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine*, 16.

In a similar vein to both Wasserstein and Schneer, Segev develops a more personalised narrative-based account of the British Mandate interweaving anecdotes and stories of those he deems the main characters. Whilst this is interesting from a biographical perspective his approach however reinforces the concept of the history of the British Mandate being the aggregation of the personal narratives of individuals emanating from the different groupings, the British, the Arab Palestinians and the Zionists. It is an account based on the assemblage of connections but it fails to develop the nature of the connectedness between these groupings nor the dynamic produced with which they inter-reacted. In none of the three authors mentioned do we find an appreciation of the multi-layered nature of the British occupation and Mandate administration rooted in imperialist practices, encountering an evolving society in transition from essentially *pre-capitalist* social relations and confronting the shock therapy of the *new*-imperialism

I have drawn attention to these more global phenomena in order to argue the case that an appreciation of the context of the British Mandate in Palestine requires an understanding of the connections between different components and an appreciation of the ways in which these connections are articulated. I remain acutely aware that an understanding of the processes which combined to shape social, historical and political developments has to be based on an acknowledgment of the diverse forms in which contestations took place including the roles played by individuals. Whilst Karl Marx and Frederick Engels have frequently been accused of an economic determinist interpretation of history they repudiated this accusation. Engels explained in a letter to J. Bloch (21st September 1890), that:

> The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure – political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions, established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their **form**.

> There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amidst all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary.[11]

I argue in this thesis that those "actual struggles" which shaped the development of the Balfour Declaration and the British administration during the Mandate period have to be situated within an appreciation of internationally significant transformative processes which had appeared before World War One and continued to mature throughout the period I am analysing.

The brief summary of my theoretical approach should not be taken as an adoption or endorsement of a crude economic determinism to explain historical developments and the course of events during the period I am addressing. The struggle in Palestine between British imperialism, the Palestinian people and the Zionist colonisers took place in a number of different spheres and was expressed in a variety of forms of contestation including political, legal, philosophical, ideological and religious. There was no direct correspondence between the dominant forms in which the discourse was conducted, in what Engels has referred to as the "superstructure", and the economic process or "basis" but there were points at which they intersected and the determinant influence of the economic factors asserted themselves.[12] I will argue that this manifested itself for example in the manner in which Palestinian social layers, which were already in the process of evolution during the time of the Ottoman empire were further affected in the period of the Mandate under the pressures of British imperialism and the actions of Zionism. The consequence of this concatenation was likewise to impact on the political development of Palestinian nationalism disadvantageously distorting the process of self-determination. This thesis recognises the interconnection and interaction of the social, economic and political agencies without succumbing to a crude economic reductionism. I will deal in greater detail with the question of the methodological approach I have adopted and the

[11] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, 692. Letter to J. Bloch (21st September 1890). [Emphasis in original].
[12] Ibid.

manner in which the components of social, political and economic phenomena respond to and impact on each other in chapter one. Together with the sources I have used, it is the employment of this methodological approach, in providing an account of the British Mandate in Palestine that makes this thesis original and contributes significantly to our understanding of British imperialism in the twentieth century.

Sources

In focussing on the policy decisions of the British Cabinet I have paid particular attention to sources which demonstrate the considerations that pre-occupied the political leadership and reveal the increasing influence of the changing nature of its imperialism on its decision-making. In order to demonstrate that British imperialism made a series of choices at the governmental level in respect of their policies concerning Palestine, particular attention has been paid to government papers and records. The aim of using these sources is to demonstrate that the decisions taken by the British government and that alternative options available were considered in the most important decision-making bodies of the government. These papers reveal that the British decisions about Palestine and the implementation of the Mandate took into consideration the wider interests of British imperialism from both a strategic perspective and short-term expediency. Particular attention has been paid to the discussions within the British Cabinets of the period because these bodies were ultimately responsible for the policy decisions of their respective governments. The High Commissioners charged with administering the Mandate were responsible to the ministers who were in turn answerable to the Cabinet. I have for these reasons examined Cabinet Minutes, White Papers, government correspondence, reports, debates and discussions of the British government on both the development of policies and actions relating to Palestine and tracking the development of the debate and implementation of the project for the creation of a homeland for the Jews. Sources from contemporary newspaper reports and the papers of prominent figures of the day have also been examined and used when appropriate.

A central consideration in utilising government Cabinet papers has been to illustrate the context within which decisions were made by the government and the mandatory authority. Successive British governments faced different scenarios as a

result of changing international and domestic challenges, such as those presented by World War One, which affected their decision-making. These papers reveal that despite the absence of significant resources or raw materials to be exploited by the British in Palestine, nevertheless the country was perceived as playing a strategic role in the maintenance of the Empire. However because of Palestine's relationship to the strategic defence of Britain's empire, especially India, and the increasing significance of oil, which was in the process of becoming an essential commodity I argue that, in order to understand the context of British government policies, it is necessary to conduct a wider reading of Cabinet papers beyond those related to Palestine. By so doing it is possible to gain a broader understanding of British policies and demonstrate that the Balfour Declaration was a fundamentally contradictory document which had a defining influence on their conduct as the Mandatory authority resulting in an asymmetrical relationship with the Arab Palestinian population.

Reading chronologically and thematically through the Cabinet papers covering the period under consideration held by the National Archives has also enabled me to evaluate the British decision-making in its wider context examining the critical domestic and international influences on governments. The discussions around Palestine went through a series of stages from the debates around the text of the Balfour Declaration, through the period of the British occupation of Jerusalem, the discussions leading up to and at the Paris Peace Conference. Following through these discussions facilitates an appreciation of the relationship between the wider imperial concerns, the changing situation inside Palestine and how the development of policies relating to the country itself developed. This provides a unique and new approach to the understanding of the operation of the Mandate and the challenges facing the Palestinian people.

The thesis has drawn on the public records of the British government including Gazettes, commission and inquiry committee reports and the Hansard record of discussions in the British parliament. I have examined additional primary sources including correspondence and personal diaries held in archive collections at the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford; the Liddell Hart Military Archives and the Private Letters and Diaries of Sir Ronald Storrs, held at Pembroke College, Cambridge. These have helped by contributing to an appreciation of the approach of

those implementing the Mandate for example. I have drawn on the online archives of bodies such as the King–Crane Commission (Oberlin College Archives) paying attention to the submissions by the indigenous peoples to that body. The views expressed to the Commission include those which emanate from a wide variety of contemporary local Arab sources and reveal the character of the understanding of the political situation by wider sections of the Arab population than those whose views have been formally recorded.

In this thesis there is a significant lacuna in the primary sources utilised: although I have used and do include Arabic language primary sources on occasion, there is no sustained discussion of such sources. Whilst I have benefitted from the help of a number of academic colleagues in translating material from the Arabic it is difficult without a competence in the language I do not possess to identify possible relevant sources. In light of my lack of the Arabic language, I have taken several measures to compensate for this placing particular emphasis on utilising Arabic material that is already available in translation into English drawing on material for example from sources such as the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs and online archives of Mohamed Ali Eltaher now held at the Library of Congress.[13] In addition I have extensively used secondary source work by Arab and Palestinian authors in order to draw on the knowledge and experience of historians who have access to a wider range of Arabic primary and secondary sources. In my opinion the works of Arab and Palestinian historians such as W.F.Abboushi, George Antonius, Abdul Wahhab Al-Kayyali, Rachid Khalidi, Walid Khalidi, Philip S. Khoury, Nur Masalha, Muhammad Y. Muslih and Salim Tamari, to name but a few, are essential sources alongside historians such as Simha Flapan, Ilan Pappe, Benny Morris and Avi Shlaim for example, whose work has received special attention in Britain in recent years.[14]

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[13] PASSIA. http://www.passia.org/index.htm (accessed 18/01/2016), Mohamed Ali Eltaher Archives http://eltaher.org/index_en.html (accessed 18/01/2016). PASSIA (Palestine Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs).

[14] Inter alia: W. F. Abboushi, *The Unmaking of Palestine* (Vermont: Amana Books, 1990); George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Phoenix: Simon Publications, originally published 1939, 2001); A. W. Kayyali, *Palestine a Modern History* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., Undated); Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The struggle for Palestinian Statehood,* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2007); Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948* (Washington: The Institute for Palestine Studies, Third Printing 2005); Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The politics of Damascus*

The history of the British Empire, the Mandate Period, the struggle for Palestinian self-determination and the desire to create a national home for the Jews is historiographically a challenging period because in essence the evidence upon which to formulate an analysis is contested and the interpretation of that evidence is open to dispute.[15] All histories are authored and of necessity involve interpretation and the selection and organisation of evidence and sources. It is impossible for any history to be comprehensive or complete, there is an inevitable partiality in all history. The task must be to attempt to retain a sense of integrity with regard to the evidence, an assiduous commitment to acknowledge the absences in evidence and a consciousness of one's own dispositions in respect of the evidence and the subject matter. The second consideration is an acknowledgement of the purpose for which a text may have been produced and the recognition that all texts are edited. The third is an acknowledgement that the very identification and use of sources is a process of editorship. I would argue that whilst I strongly believe in the importance of drawing on sources in Arabic there nevertheless remains the important question of the analysis and interpretation of the significances of sources which has to be addressed. There are, for example, authors who do have access to primary material in Hebrew and Arabic whose selectivity and analysis of material may nevertheless produce a narrative of events from a particular political perspective. In the works of Yehoshua Porath which are an invaluable resource there appears to be no acknowledgement of the potential problems arising from an extensive use of Hebrew and Arabic archival sources from the Jewish Agency's Joint (later Arab) Bureau.[16] There is no obvious qualification by the author that texts produced by "bureau recruited well-placed Arabs to supply it with very rich information about the internal political discussions and decisions of the

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1860–1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Salim Tamari, *Mountains against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009); Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities* (London: Croom Helm, 1987); Ilan Pappe, *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict 1947–51* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1994); Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestine Refugee Problem* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Avi Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists and Palestine, 1921–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[15] Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1929* (Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2015).

[16] Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian–Arab National Movement: 1918–1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, From Riots to Rebellion, Volume Two 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1977). xi.

various Arab bodies" is at all problematic. There is no detailed account of who the sources were produced by and for what purpose although it should be acknowledged that there is an effort to produce corroborative evidence to substantiate the arguments developed in his various works. However these too are not analysed and evaluated sufficiently in my opinion.

Chapter Overview

The aim of the first chapter is to establish the conceptual framework of the thesis. I will argue that the term imperialism covered very different economic and political practices in different periods. I distinguish between the *pre-capitalist* or *traditional* imperialism exemplified by the Roman Empire and to a degree the Ottoman Empire in which agricultural production dominated; the *capitalist* imperialism of the Dutch and English Empires commencing in the sixteenth century which saw the expansion of trading, industrialisation and the opening of markets for the purchase of commodities and the *new*-imperialism which arose at the end of the nineteenth century based on the emergence of finance capital as a consequence of the fusion of banking and manufacturing capital. From the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, this *new*-imperialism, which constituted a break with the earlier imperialism, underwent further significant changes leading to the emergence of sharp inter-imperialist rivalry. These developments had repercussions on the establishment and operation of the British Mandate in Palestine. The chapter considers the nature of the ideological discourse on imperialism and draws attention to the overlap between the forms of secular political and religious apologetics invoked to legitimise the colonialism of both the capitalist era imperialism and the *new*-imperialism.

Furthermore the chapter explains the distinction between colonisation, based on the creation of settler colonies generally composed of migrants from the imperial power, and colonialism, in which conquered territories were not colonised but were subordinated to the political and economic imperatives of the mother-country. The British-sponsored Zionist project in Palestine further differed from previous forms of colonisation in that the settlers, who overwhelmingly came from the countries of eastern Europe, did not consider themselves beholden to any mother-country politically nor were they dependent on Britain as an exclusive source of capital for

investment. The chapter concludes by demonstrating that British support for the Zionist project of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine constituted a further shift towards a new form of neo-colonialism which sought to establish its hegemony without employing settler colonialisation based on migrants from the imperial power nor continuous occupation by the imperial power itself. In what was a relatively unique initiative the British, asserting their own strategic aims, were able to co-opt the aspiration of Zionism for a homeland for the Jews into their overarching imperialist goals.

In the second chapter of the thesis, a close reading of Cabinet papers demonstrates how the British preoccupation with Palestine was heightened as a consequence of World War One. I argue that the British focus on Palestine and the Near East was a direct product of *new*-imperialism and was a break with previous practice. Surveying the domestic and international challenges confronting the British government, the chapter explores the priorities attached by the British to the region as a whole. Whilst the British were in military conflict with imperialist rivals, the pre-war diplomatic manoeuvring and the post-war settlement negotiations relating to the conquered provinces of the Ottoman Empire were also shaped by inter-ally rivalry. Drawing on the theoretical framework that I have argued for the chapter analyses the importance to Britain of the Suez Canal for the preservation of the empire and their focus on access to and control over oil as an increasingly essential raw material. Against this backdrop the chapter briefly looks at the way in which Germany sought to orientate to the Near East, and briefly reflect on the impact of the Russian Revolution on developments in the Near East. The chapter concludes with a review of the emergence of the Arab revolt and an examination of the nature of the British relationship to the Arab leaders of the anti-Ottoman forces.

Against the context outlined in the preceding chapter, Chapter Three narrows the focus and investigates the origins and nature of the British government's commitment to the Zionist project of the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine in the context of its imperialist ambitions in the region. The chapter will analyse how the ambitions of Zionism were contested both by Jews and non-Jews. The chapter demonstrates how the Balfour Declaration was an inherently contradictory statement appearing to make a commitment to the Zionist settlers whilst notionally

expressing a parallel responsibility to the indigenous Palestinian people. The ambiguity of the Declaration was utilised by the British to justify the objectives they wished to pursue in the region twinned inevitably with its corollary, the denial of the right to self-determination of the Arab Palestinian people. The chapter further demonstrates how the imperial powers, including the United States of America were complicit in supporting the British opposition to the increasing demand for self-determination despite the evidence gathered by the King-Crane Commission. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the relationship between the growing support for self-determination and the responses of the Arab opposition to the League of Nations' Mandate which, authored by the British government, replicated the ambiguity of the Balfour Declaration.

From the last half of the nineteenth century onwards the Ottoman Empire's changes to laws governing land ownership and their implementation had begun to change traditional relationships within Palestinian society between the landowners and the *fellahin* (peasants) who worked the land. In Chapter Four I will analyse how these laws laid the basis for the dislocation of the existing feudal land relations in Palestine by which the *fellahin* were obliged to work for the landowner and provide a share of the surplus produce.[17] Acknowledging how these changes facilitated the expansion of Zionist colonial settlement the chapter will analyse the growing contest between the Arab Palestinian society and the imperial rulers' methods which coincided with a moment of social transformation and the emergence of new social forces onto the political stage. At the same time British imperialism continued to face challenges consequent upon the attempts by Arab peoples in other regions of the Near East to assert their rights to national sovereignty.

[17] Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation: 1856–1882: Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, Reprinted 2006). See especially Chapter 5 for a discussion of the use of the term "feudal" in the context of Palestine and the Ottoman Empire. I recognise that there is a debate about the appropriateness of the use of the term "feudal" but would argue that it is legitimate in the specific context of Palestine at the time of the Mandate to use it as a description of the forms of land tenure and the obligations of the *fellahin* to the landowners. Schölch provides the following definition in "abbreviated form": "Agrarian production and the "peasant economy" form the economic basis of feudalism. The means of production are effectively in the possession of the peasants who, on their own, organize the working of the land. The "feudal lord" on whom they depend, appropriates the surplus of their labor in the form of rents – labor, in-kind, and money – by means of "extra-economic coercion" (relations of coercion and dependence being based not just on economic but on politico-legal factors). This rent tends to be used for consumption purposes. As for the rest of the land over which he exercises control, he either cultivates it himself or has it worked directly for his own account". 174.
I would also wish to clarify that I do not use the term "feudal" in any judgmental sense.

The social changes that were happening resulted in the engagement of new social groups in opposition to the Zionist project and the actions of the British being manifested through large scale and increasingly militant expressions of resentment against the trajectory of the Mandate. This struggle was further exacerbated by the steps taken by the British in the political and economic sphere whilst seeking to lay the foundations for a homeland for the Jews through the displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people. The strength of the Arab Palestinian response to the British Mandate was reflected in the growing breadth and depth of those who engaged in articulating opposition to the steps that were being taken to implement the logic of the Balfour Declaration. The chapter will incorporate an analysis of the developing formal politics of the Arab Palestinian society from forms more associative of *pre-capitalist* social relations to party structures and organisations of *capitalist* social formations.

The fifth chapter will investigate how the British utilised the Mandate to forward the aim of fulfilling the ambitions of the Zionist Organisation and the developing opposition by the Arab Palestinian community to this process. Whilst narrowly prescribing the political rights of the indigenous community the British protected and gave succour to the developing proto-state structures of the Zionists whilst simultaneously denying the Arab Palestinians the right to any degree of autonomy. The British intervention in favour of economic enterprises promoted by the Zionists within Palestine dramatically shaped the social and political formation of the Arab Palestinian society. In quick succession the Arab Palestinian peoples convened a number of Congresses which defined a political perspective leading toward self-determination which was consistently ignored or suppressed by the British in contrast to their general tolerance towards the Zionist Organisation's demands.

Further in Chapter Five I will analyse how the British Mandate administration's embrace and utilisation of the Ottoman Land Laws shaped social developments within Palestinian society and influenced the politics of the emerging of nationalist endeavour for self-determination. During this period the *a'yan* (notables), as the dominant traditional hereditary leaderships within society, were incapable of asserting their demands for self-determination confronted as they were in 1917 by a

determined imperial power with overwhelming military superiority. The Palestinian bourgeoisie and the working class were relatively new entities whose organic growth was hampered by the twin interventions of imperialism and Zionism. I analyse how these developments involving new social forces, the growth of the media, new political parties and new organisations were in turn affected. The first decade of the Mandate saw the emergence and re-emergence of younger generations, the growth of the Palestinian trade union movement and the increasing involvement of women as a political force. This chapter identifies the discriminatory practices by the British authorities against Arab Palestinian capitalists and in favour of Zionist entrepreneurs as a significant factor disadvantageously prescribing and distorting the growth of the Palestinian economy and its attendant features.

In the final chapter I argue that the evidence supports the proposition that British imperialism as implemented in Palestine was of a specific neo-colonial character influenced by the outcome of the war, the growth of the *new*-imperialism and the relationship with the Zionist movement. To fully understand the impact of the British occupation on the capacity of the Palestinian people to assert their right to self-determination, it is necessary to appreciate that Palestinian efforts to achieve this goal were affected by the specific character of British imperialism at the time, the distinctive context within which it sought to maintain its imperial influence and the special circumstances within which the Palestinian people were confronted by this global power. The imperialism confronting Palestinian society at the beginning of the twentieth century was one which had changed significantly from that of the first half of the nineteenth century. The combined consequences of imperialist occupation coupled with Zionist settler-colonisation impacted on the economic and demographic development of Palestine in a unique manner dislocating a pre-existing social entity and rupturing its organic development. It was in this context of on-going contestation with both British imperialism and an increasingly confident Zionist settler colonisation that the Palestinian people faced the challenge of establishing and advancing their goals of self-determination whilst being shackled by the constraints imposed by British imperialism.

Given the particularly charged nature of the British occupation of Palestine in the context of current Palestinian-Israeli relations it seems pertinent to reflect on my

own interest in the subject. My own interest was probably first stimulated around 1969 through a meeting with two critics of the Six-Day War of 1967 who had left Israel and were living in London. One was of Jewish heritage, the other an Arab Palestinian. Both were of Israeli nationality and were socialists. Their insightful views stimulated an interest in me which has continued ever since then and led me to reading and studying the whole question although it is only now since retiring that I have had the time to try to write about it. Needless to say in writing about Mandate Palestine more questions have been raised than I started with. I intend to try to follow those up in the future.

CHAPTER ONE

Imperialism, Colonialism and Settlers: The Problem Reconsidered

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish the theoretical framework for the thesis, identifying the key concepts that I will use to analyse the nature of the British Mandate in Palestine. The objective will be to substantiate the argument that the constitution of British imperialism encountered by the Palestinians differed significantly from the form of imperialism which existed prior to the last decade of the nineteenth century and the changes which had taken place in turn impacted on the character of the British administration of the Mandate.

I am conscious of the wide variety of literature to be found on the subject of imperialism, the contentious nature of the term and that this debate is on-going.[1] There are features common to all imperialisms but I will argue that there are significant differences between the imperialisms of distinct historical era and indeed between the imperialisms of the same period. These differences I will argue had a bearing on the way in which British imperialism acted in Palestine and it is necessary to have an understanding of its specific character prior to and during the period of the Mandate. It is also essential to recognise that Palestinian society itself existed prior to British intervention with its own unique characteristics and life that were in part shaped by the imperialism of the Ottoman Empire.

Underpinning the concept of imperialism that I employ is the viewpoint that it was the economic aspects of British imperialism and the asymmetrical relations

[1] J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011, First published 1902); Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital. A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development*. ed. Tom Bottomore (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, first published 1910); V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, Twentieth Printing 1986, First published 1917); Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism, Part Two of "The Origins of Totalitarianism"* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1967); P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, *1688-1914* (London: Longman, 1993), *Crisis and Deconstruction 1914–1990* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1993); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994); Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Empire of Capital* (London: Verso, 2003); David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2004); Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Richard Gott, *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011).

imposed by the imperial power on the subaltern country which ultimately determined the character and evolution of the relationships between them. This relationship additionally affected the development of Palestinian society. However, in this thesis I argue that the political process itself, encompassing the totality of these interconnections, was not simply the product of economic factors.[2] The concept of imperialism that I make use of is not limited to exclusively economic relationships between countries but is intended to recognise the multi-faceted nature of imperial rule affecting diverse areas of social, cultural and political life.[3] The British occupation of Palestine and the implementation of the Mandate administration impacted on the indigenous society in multiple ways beyond the confines of the economic. The contest between the occupier and the occupied took place on diverse terrain including at least the social, cultural, legal, educational, religious and political, in addition to the economic.[4]

As I will outline below the term imperialism has been used to describe phenomena in vastly different epochs, in different parts of the world operating under radically different conditions. The imperialism of Rome in the first three to four centuries of the Common Era differed significantly from that of the British, Dutch, French or Spanish imperialisms which developed after the sixteenth century. In turn the imperialism of these nations differed from each other and went through phases of development, which produced further divergences.[5] These differences were not just spatio-temporal but differences created, influenced and determined by the specific

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[2] Hobson *Imperialism*. 99. J. A. Hobson, writing in *Imperialism* in 1902 identified the driving force behind Rome's imperialist expansionism as economic. When turning to the nineteenth century, he explains how the "new imperialism" of the United States of America is not "a mere wild freak of spread-eaglism, a burst of political ambition on the part of a nation coming to a sudden realisation of its destiny…Not at all. The Spirit of adventure, the American 'mission of civilisation', were, as forces …subordinate to the driving force of the economic factor".

[3] There is a wide range of literature on the impact of imperialism on the wider social, cultural and political aspects of society including for example: Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Edition, 1994); Rumina Sethi, *The Politics of Postcolonialism: Empire, Nation and Resistance* (London: Pluto Press, 2011); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (London: Routledge, Reprinted 2010); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, Reprinted 2001).

[4] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*. 692.

[5] Wood, *Empire of Capital,* 91. Wood explains that the imperial powers of the capitalist era had different attitudes towards the indigenous peoples of the conquered lands dependent on their primary objectives and the degree of dependence of the imperial power on those they conquered to achieve their goals. French reliance on the indigenous people in Canada to trap animals for the fur trade differed from the British who wished to remove the indigenous peoples from the lands they wished to occupy and cultivate. Spanish imperialism which encountered sedentary populations with well-organised societies utilised their skills to mine gold and silver.

relationships within each of these states, their rivalry during the process of imperial expansion and the effect on them of the existing social relations within the societies they conquered. I argue that the forms of imperialism differed in the first instance as a consequence of the distinct domestic political and economic character of the imperial power itself. In order to analyse the specific nature of British imperialism during the period of the Mandate in Palestine in the first section of this chapter I will briefly examine preceding imperialist regimes in order to clarify what was distinctive about it. Using predominantly the example of western European imperialisms I will explain how the imperialism of Ancient Rome in the *pre-capitalist* period differed from that of England/Britain in the *capitalist* era and from the *new*-imperialism that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in Britain.[6]

Having established the distinctions between the imperialisms of different historical eras I will analyse the nature of the historical moment in which the British Mandate in Palestine was established. World War One, as it is most commonly referred to, was the first war in history which had a direct or indirect effect on every continent and, arguably, almost every area of the world. It was perhaps the most significant war that had taken place in the world to date in terms of its consequences for millions of people. It constituted the culmination of a period of expansionism generated by the *new*-imperialism and heralded a sea change in the development of many aspects of social, economic and political life. From the end of the war onwards the economic and political influence of British imperial power began to decline even at the very moment when it appeared, militarily, to be at its most successful. Driven primarily by its colossal economic capacities the United States of America began to overtake Britain, becoming a world power. Simultaneously the British, and indeed other powers, were faced with developing anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles.[7] These seismic events directly shaped the nature of the British Mandate in Palestine.

[6] I use the term the "British Empire" for the period after the Treaty of Union in 1706 and the Acts of Union in 1707. The unification took place following the collapse of the 1690 Darién Scheme by which the ruling class in Scotland intended to make the country an imperial power in its own right but failed. For an account see Niall Ferguson, *Empire,* 40.

[7] Indicative of this process was the founding of the Indian National Congress (1885) and the African National Congress in 1912. Anti-imperialist struggles erupted onto the global stage such as the Cuban War of Independence against the Spanish (1895–98). During and after World War One anti-imperialist struggles emerged, for example, in Egypt and Iraq.

Unlike earlier *pre-capitalist* and *capitalist* era imperialisms, *new*-imperialism generated an intense rivalry between nation states which, amongst western European countries, assumed profound dimensions.[8] A central feature of the *new*-imperialism was the emergence within countries of finance capital melding together industrial and commercial interests which sought to establish monopolies in the domestic and international markets. The nation states were critical to the protection of the interests of the expansionist finance capitalism seeking to gain and retain control over valuable raw materials in order to hegemonise international markets.[9] As I will demonstrate further in Chapter Four this resulted in specific repercussions for the Near East region and for Palestine.[10] I argue that the establishment and maintenance of the Mandate by the British was influenced by political and economic factors the product of Britain's broader imperial interests. This thesis will situate the colonisation of Palestine in that context of imperial and capitalist developments. Specifically I want to investigate those components which were the product of *new*-imperialism that contributed to shaping the development of Palestine and to explore their articulation and the dialectic of their relationships.

Furthermore this chapter will demonstrate that the form of colonisation employed during the British occupation of Palestine and the implementation of the Mandate constituted a break in the nature and practice with that prior to the 1890s. The process of migration which was a highly significant phenomenon in the nineteenth century was conducted within an imperialist framework driven by economic and political factors, pragmatism, racist perspectives and notions associated with the

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[8] David Harvey, Ellen Meiksins Wood and Robert Brenner, use the term "new" imperialism to refer to the United States of America from the end of World War Two onwards. I use the term "new" imperialism here to refer to the period after 1890. David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble* (London: Verso, 2002); Ellen Meiksins Wood, "Democracy as Ideology of Empire" in *The New Imperialists: Ideologies of Empire,* ed. Colin Mooers, (Oxford: One World, 2006).

[9] Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1991).

[10] Nomenclature is an important consideration when writing about this subject. Whilst recognising that these are disputed questions I have sought to use terms which reflect the most common usage. In the main the Arab peoples of the Palestine Mandate area considered themselves at this time to be part of Greater Syria. I will use the terms "Palestine" and "Arab Palestinian" to refer to what became the occupied Mandate territory and to the people who lived in it.
Although the term "Near East" has been used throughout this text, the United Nations and bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development use the term "West Asia". The terms "Western Asia", "Southwest Asia" and "Southwestern Asia" are also used by other authors to describe the same geographical area. The use of "Near East" should not therefore be read as an indicator of any form of perspective or predisposition from which my work should be read.

concept of promoting a civilising mission. Whilst previous justifications for emigration were often couched in Malthusian terms the project of the Zionists was from the outset aimed at achieving a nationalist objective. This chapter will also illustrate that the nature of the settlement by Zionism differed from that of previous practices. The alliance between British imperialism and Zionism represented a new form of colonisation and colonial rule, the product of a convergence of interests between the two parties. This break in the form of colonisation constituted a radically different form of obstacle for any Palestinian endeavour to establish national sovereignty. The second section of this chapter will analyse the different forms of colonial settlement to distinguish the Zionist project from that of other colonising enterprises.

The chapter will conclude by examining the roots of the justifications used by the British to legitimise their actions in pursuing the aim of establishing a homeland for the Jews on the territory of the Palestinian people. Imperialism has always sought to legitimate its actions by invoking ideological justifications seeking to represent single national interests as the application of universalist goals. Typically this has been presented as the imperial power bestowing benefits on the subaltern whether they be religious beliefs promising reward through conversion or the bringing of "civilisation". In the case of Palestine this chapter will argue that in addition to the use by both British politicians and Zionist political leaders of religious notions of "choseness" originating from Christian and Jewish exegesis, the ideological roots of Zionism were interwoven with more secular justifications for conquest. In turn the secular apologetics of Thomas More, Hugo Grotius, John Locke and others were augmented by the pseudo-scientific concepts of racial superiority and hierarchised civilisations. I will demonstrate how the forms of justifications used to support the actions of British imperialism originated from both religious and secular traditions which had their roots in the apologetics utilised to defend *capitalist* imperialism from its inception.[11]

[11] C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, Hobbes to Locke* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962). Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993).

Imperialism

The term imperialism has been used to describe phenomena which occurred centuries apart which although having some common features were in reality significantly different. Those features which can be viewed as evident, to varying degrees, in all or most imperial regimes, whatever the historical period are: the invasion and conquest of other lands, the subjugation of the peoples of those territories, the extraction and extortion of wealth, the imposition of exogenous rule, the colonisation of the conquered lands, the generation of an ideological justification for the conquests and an attempt, through coercion or persuasion, to gain the collaboration of all or some of the indigenous peoples to maintain the imperial project.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of the literature on the subject of imperialism recognises that there are significant distinctions between, for example, the Greek and Roman Empires, the empire of China in the third century BCE and empires which emerged in later centuries, it is important to try to identify what those distinctions are. In the first place I will differentiate between three types of imperialism. Those imperialisms which existed prior to the advent of capitalism, such as the Roman Empire or the Chinese Empire I have called the *pre-capitalist* empires. I use this term to cover not only those empires such as the Roman Empire but also those which existed in the feudal era.[12] The second type of imperialism is that formed during the capitalist period after the sixteenth century in countries such as Holland and England and for which I will use the term *capitalist* imperialism. Those powers which emerged at end of the nineteenth century, like Germany and Britain, I will describe as indicative of the *new*-imperialism.

These terms, which I will explain further below, are not intended to be judgemental but are used to distinguish between different historical periods with their own discrete features.[13] These different forms of imperialism did not develop simultaneously across the world and neither did all the features associated for example

[12] I have used the term *pre-capitalist* to refer to societies both in the ancient world as well as those of the feudal era although I am aware that there were significant differences between the two. There were also differences between *pre-capitalist* feudal and *capitalist* empires which impacted on the development of those societies however an investigation of those differentiations is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[13] I am conscious that I have not dealt with the concept of imperialism as it relates to feudal societies. See Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: Verso, 1996 Edition).

with *pre-capitalist* imperialism disappear at the advent of *capitalist* imperialism. The totality of relationships present in one form of imperialism was not replaced with a completely pristine set of relationships. This has a direct bearing on the durability of social and political relationships even when the economic character of a society has changed. Social groups which are influential in one period may retain their influence even when their real economic status in society is in decline.

Pre-capitalist Imperialism

The society of *pre-capitalist* imperialism was agricultural in character. The city-state of Rome was based on an agricultural economy, governed by a hereditary landowning class increasingly dependent on slave labour to produce the surplus products necessary to ensure its survival. The slaves themselves were the property of the landowner. The labour required to farm the land might be provided by slaves or sometimes by a workforce tied to the land who were also compelled to transfer the whole or a portion of their crops to the landowner in addition to that which they produced for their own survival. The amount transferred was fixed by the landowner only varying marginally on the basis of crop yield. This taxation in kind, not varying irrespective of crop yields, had the potential to generate indebtedness. To ensure the provision of an adequate surplus the city-state expanded territorially, utilising military force to achieve its objective.[14] The goods which the *pre-capitalist* imperial powers seized or traded in the conquered territories were predominantly, if not exclusively, for the privileged members of society and were not for sale in any market place. They were not commodities as such but booty which were consumed or hoarded by the conquerors.

In *pre-capitalist* societies land was inalienable in almost all instances and its transformation into a commodity, as distinct from war-booty, was to be a seminal component differentiating the economies of earlier societies from those of capitalist ones. Those who worked on the land, in both ancient and feudal societies, were permanently attached to it and required to produce a surplus, which was expropriated by the landowner, in addition to sufficient crops for their own survival. The form of ownership and control of the land was the major defining characteristic of these

[14] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Empire of Capital* (London: Verso, 2003). J. A. Hobson in his book *Imperialism* makes a similar analysis, describing Rome as the "capital of an agricultural State", utilising slave labour which led to the ousting of sections of the peasantry. Hobson *Imperialism,* 227

societies shaping their economic, social and political relationships. The change brought about by capitalism, rendering land a commodity turned the peasantry into landless labourers and constituted the most significant transformation between the *pre-capitalist* and the *capitalist* imperial era. As I will explore in further detail in Chapters Four and Five, the sale of land which began during the *pre-capitalist* Ottoman Empire created landless workers and was to have an increasingly important impact on the lives of Palestinians. It affected both the landowning strata of society as well as the *fellahin* or peasantry who worked the land. This hugely disruptive process was to be a major point of conflict in Palestine both with the British Mandate authorities and the Zionist settlers. These later chapters will also explain how this affected the development of social forces in the country and had consequences for the political development of Palestinian society.

In the conquered territories the *pre-capitalist* imperial power might seek to build a system of alliances with an existing hereditary landowning social layer or in the event of their refusal to co-operate, through the creation of a surrogate through colonisation.[15] Where co-operation or at least acquiescence could not be obtained then the imperial power resorted to the use of military means which was invariably necessary since the relationship between the city-state and the colony was based on a system of direct extraction and extortion carried out through an exploitative in-kind tax system. The nature of this relationship, based on direct in-kind levying, required the imperial power to have large standing armies in order to enforce their system.[16] As a consequence the political, social and economic relationships between the imperial power and the conquered peoples were transparent.[17] There was no distinction between the economic, the political and the military roles employed by the imperial power. These roles were fused into a whole. As this chapter will demonstrate this was to change with later forms of imperialism.

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[15] Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 28.

[16] Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, 28. "Classical civilization was in consequence inherently *colonial* in character: the cellular city-state invariably reproduced itself, in phases of ascent, by settlement and war. Plunder, tribute and slaves were the central objects of aggrandizement, both means and ends to colonial expansion. Military power was more closely locked to economic growth than in perhaps any other mode of production, before or since, because the main origin of slave-labour was normally captured prisoners of war, while the raising of free urban troops depended on the maintenance of production at home by slaves; battle-fields provided the manpower for corn-fields and *vice versa*, captive labourers permitted the creation of citizen armies". [Emphasis in original].

[17] It is important to note that this does not imply a value judgment on Wood's part.

In the area of economic activity in *pre-capitalist* societies the transactions that were made were based on the physical separation of markets: one in which the imperial power acquired goods cheaply and the other in which it traded for gain. The value of an item transacted in one market did not have a direct influence on its cost in another. Under capitalism this separation was replaced by the establishment of an integrated expanding market which imposed "certain common conditions of competitive production" thus reducing the need for overt forms of domination.[18] The ability of purchasers of goods to seek out their desired commodities from other competing less-expensive markets affected the economic development of societies. The Palestinian soap industry, for example, was severely damaged by the production of less expensive alternatives by Zionist owned industries. The growth of industry in one part of the capitalist world directly impacted on its potential for development in another. As we shall see in Chapter Five this had both economic and political implications for Palestinian society and demonstrates the value of situating the Mandate within a wider framework of economic developments.

Capitalist Imperialism

On a global scale the change from *pre-capitalist* to *capitalist* imperialism, which accelerated from the sixteenth century onwards, was the result of tectonic shifts in land ownership, the expansions of trade and commerce which led to a growing rivalry between the states involved and technological developments. The following economic facets can be said to be characteristic of *capitalist* imperialism: the alienation of land; the commodification of labour; the growth of generalised commodity production; the subjugation by the imperial power of the existing economic relations and priorities of conquered countries; the emergence of a world market for commodities; the growth and expansion of social classes and new means of production and the transference of the costs and responsibility for ensuring the operation of the enterprises created under this process to the indigenous peoples conquered or to a colonial peoples settled for this purpose.[19] Not all of these aspects

[18] Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 54.
[19] David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (London: Verso, 2006). See especially Chapter 11, "The Theory of Rent". Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-

came into operation at the same time nor did they always follow the same pattern. Each encounter between the imperial power and the non-imperial countries followed its own particular path. As I will argue these changes, severally and collectively, had severe effects on the Palestinian economy, buttressed as they were by an administration which implemented economic and political policies asymmetrically discriminating against the indigenous population.

There is a further important distinction to be made between *pre-capitalist* imperialism and *capitalist* imperialism. "The economic power of non-capitalist classes could extend only as far as their extra-economic force, only as far as their political, military, or judicial powers; and, no matter how much surplus was actually produced, accumulation by exploiting classes was limited by what their extra-economic power was able to extract from direct producers".[20] In contrast from the sixteenth century onwards, the very beginning of *capitalist* imperialism, the English Empire's exercise of domination combined physical intervention with political and economic coercion.[21] It was equally true of other imperial powers such as Holland, Spain, Germany, France and Belgium.[22] In the capitalist era, imperialism's use of "extra-economic force" was augmented by "manipulating the forces of the market, including the weapon of debt".[23]

Of course the conquered people might enter into some form of alliance or accept a compliant relationship with the imperial power but, in any case, such an accommodation was more than likely to be disrupted at some stage in the association. From the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards the establishment in conquered lands of totally subservient pseudo-governmental structures came to the fore tying the metropolis and the colonies together. The hegemony of consent seeming to change into the hegemony of coercion when the indigenous peoples, refusing to be compliant, were physically subjugated or as happened in a number of instances became the

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Industrial Europe", in *The Brenner Debate,* ed. T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[20] Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 12.
[21] Gott, *Britain's Empire*. This is evident from the histories of British involvement in India, Africa and Australasia, not to mention Ireland, Egypt and of course Palestine.
[22] David Olugosa and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010). Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*.
[23] Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 12.

victims of genocidal policies and were supplanted by settler colonists. Of course periodically privileged sections of the indigenous communities might enter into compliant associations with the imperial power. Whatever path was followed extra-economic force remained as an option to be employed at any time the rule of the imperial power came under challenge.[24]

Stimulated by the desire to acquire commodities for domestic consumption, gain control over raw materials and expand the potential for markets in which to sell goods, the English empire's physical expansion coincided with and contributed to the growth of capitalism through its differing phases from the mercantilism of the sixteenth century onwards. The English empire's accumulation of wealth and the acquisition of raw materials was based on maritime power, the control of the seas, the establishment of garrisons and the securing of a chain of fortified harbours for the provision of fuel, foods and stores.[25] The acquisition of overseas colonies was accompanied domestically by the growth and strengthening of state institutions. The 1653 Instrument of Government called for the establishment of a standing army of 30,000 and by 1688 James II could mobilise 40,000 men.[26] Systematic colonisation in Ireland originated with the establishment during the sixteenth and seventeenth century of plantations of settlers loyal to the crown, to suppress political opposition to the English rule emanating especially from Gaelic–speaking Ulster and was the forerunner of colonialism more generally.[27]

Though the initiative may have been driven by military and political considerations, particularly that of suppressing a rebellious people, the scheme was also promoted as an opportunity for the new settlers who supplanted the displaced communities to live profitably and their sponsors to profit likewise.[28] The creation of the plantations, forcibly removing and dispossessing the indigenous Irish, transporting some to North American plantations and the Caribbean as slaves, significantly

[24] In the cases of Ireland and India the use of "extra-economic force" was a constant through the history of both countries.
[25] Michael J. Braddick, "The English Government, War, Trade, and Settlement, 1625–1688", in *The Origins of Empire: An Introduction* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume I,* ed. Nicholas Canny, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 296
[26] Ibid, 287.
[27] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).
[28] Nicolas Canny, "The Origins of Empire: An Introduction," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume I,* ed. Nicholas Canny, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9.

contributed to the destruction of existing social and economic relationships. This pattern was of course repeated in the colonies established in North America where the lives of the indigenous first Americans were transformed as successive waves of settlers occupied the lands from which they had drawn the means to live.

The colonisation initiated in both Ireland and North America, involved the creation of settler colonialism, subjugating and subsequently displacing existing inhabitants. Although *pre-capitalist* empires, such as Rome, also displaced indigenous peoples, invariably they sought to retain them as cheap labour or slaves to produce the crops and goods which the imperium wished to garner. In *pre-capitalist* empires there was, with qualification, a necessity, if not a desire to maintain the indigenous peoples on their lands, albeit in a subservient role, to meet the demands of the imperial power not least in the example of Rome in order to provide a supply of slaves.[29] This contrasts sharply with the pattern of settlement witnessed in the north of America, Australia and New Zealand. The objective in these cases was the expulsion of the indigenous peoples. As we shall see later the earliest Zionist colonists did employ some Palestinians in their settlements but this diminished considerably as the numbers of settlers going to Palestine increased.

New-Imperialism

Whilst the nature of the *new*-imperialism of the last quarter of the nineteenth century differed from that of *pre-capitalist* and *capitalist* imperialism, it faced challenges in attempting to impose its will on the development of the societies which it encountered. Frequently these peoples whose lands were invaded had developed societies with long-established social, political and economic relations predating the arrival of the imperial power. In almost all cases their social structures and economic relations were totally different from that which the imperialist powers themselves operated under and they could not be changed swiftly or easily. The *new*-imperialism had to contend with the reality that in certain areas of social and economic relations the already existing associations continued to survive. In many instances this was manifest, for example, in the differences between the kind of relationships, both

[29] Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism,* 22.

economic and political, established in coastal regions from those with peoples living in the hinterlands of those countries. In this next section I will look at some examples of such occurrences and how this is relevant to the subject of this thesis.

Whilst each example of imperialism cited from the earliest recorded periods to the modern day may have a number of features in common the focus on an individual state's powers to expand into other territories with the objective of gaining military, political and economic advantage is not an adequate taxonomy with which to classify phenomena with radically divergent characteristics. The *new*-imperialism from the end of the nineteenth century through to the twentieth constitutes a new phase of political and economic development representing the beginning of a process which impacted increasingly on the development of all countries.

In identifying this time frame I am drawing on the approach of a number of authors, who whilst differing in their methodological perspectives agree that the latter quarter of the nineteenth century through to the end of World War One witnessed a significant change in the nature of imperialism. Hannah Arendt in *Imperialism: Part Two of the Origins of Totalitarianism* identifies the period between 1884–1914, whilst J.A. Hobson in *Imperialism* cites 1870 as "the beginning of a conscious policy of Imperialism" although he qualifies this by adding that "the movement did not attain its full impetus until the middle of the eighties".[30] Lenin, in his work *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, placed the significant point of change as taking place from the second half of the 1890s onwards.[31] Drawing radically different conclusions to the other authors cited about the consequences of imperialism, Niall Ferguson in his work *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World* nevertheless also singles out the end of the nineteenth century as signalling a departure from earlier times. Alongside Lenin, he pinpoints the vast expansion of overseas investment from Britain as being the distinguishing feature of the changes that were taking place.[32] These variations in dating the moment at which the transformation commenced can be attributed to the differing focal points of each of the authors but the relative coincidence of their dates is indicative of agreement on the historical significance of the changes taking place

[30] Hannah Arendt: *Imperialism: Part Two of the Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harvest Book, 1948) 3; Hobson *Imperialism*, 57.
[31] Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 16.
[32] Ferguson, *Empire,* 244.

during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I will outline below some of the critical components of these changes.

A major factor of the reshaping of imperialism that was taking place was the rapid territorial expansion by a number of state powers which led to a real division of the world economically and politically into areas over which they held sway.[33] The West Africa Conference, held in Berlin in November 1884, was an expression of an already advanced struggle for control of the whole continent of Africa and its peoples.[34] This expansionary process was accompanied by the subjugation of millions of people throughout the whole continent transforming and frequently destroying their existing patterns of life. As I shall point out later in this chapter this impacted not only on those countries which were directly occupied by the imperial powers but also on those which encountered it initially through trade. As we will observe later the impact of imperialist expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean obliged those countries encountered to make changes to their existing economic and commercial structures challenging for example patterns of land ownership with their attendant social relationships.

In addition to this rapid expansion in territorial control and influence the period saw an acceleration in economic expansion driven by the changes which were taking place as a result of the fusion between finance and industry. In Germany for example there was a rapid growth of companies fuelled by the fusion between the banking and industrial sectors. "From 1871 to 1913 capital investment in industry grew from just under 10 billion Marks to over 85 billion".[35] It was this swift economic development which made Germany the "world's second strongest industrial power, rivalling Britain".[36] This process paralleled developments in a number of other countries during the same period. In France and the United Kingdom the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) doubled in size, in Germany it tripled, whilst in the United States of America in quintupled.[37]

[33] Packenham, *The Scramble for Africa*.
[34] Packenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 239.
[35] James Retallack, *Imperial Germany 1871–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 74.
[36] Ibid., 73.
[37] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2003), 49 and 84-85.

When examined in a world context these increases in GDP were not mirrored by a corresponding proportionate increase in their respective share of world GDP. France and the United Kingdom's GDP declined as a proportion of the world GDP by approximately one percentage point each whilst Germany's increased by around 2% and that of the United States of America by around 9%.[38] The cumulative impact of this expansionism and especially the economic growth was to redefine what was meant by imperialism and how it functioned moving away from imperialism as conquest and occupation to a less overt, more pervasive form of economic and political domination.

A driving factor behind these rapidly developing economic phenomena was the expansion of new forms of financial organisation which brought together two important components whose impact was more than the sum of its parts. Finance capital was an original combination which helped drive the technological changes which contributed to the expansion of the *new*-imperialism.

Finance Capital

A central feature of the emergence of the *new*-imperialism was the growth of finance capital which was an entirely new phenomenon. The term "finance capital" has been used to describe the coalescence of finance and industry, two hitherto relatively distinct components of the economy, which when fused produced an oligarchy whose control extended over the large parts of the economy laying the basis for the growth of monopolies and imperialist expansion. This led to the global articulation of the whole capitalist economic process on a qualitatively different level.[39]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a huge industrial and technological expansion which contributed domestically to an accelerating growth of the economy and pressure to seek new markets. Industrial and financial institutions which united in commercial enterprises became powerful bodies seeking to exercise monopoly control over their respective markets driving them to gain access to and

[38] Ibid., 261.
[39] Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 45.

control over sources of raw materials abroad.[40] British companies sought to gain a monopoly of the control of oil in Persia but their efforts went beyond that. "As the industrialised world scrambled for oil, Britain hastened to secure exclusive rights to approve concessionaries in other Gulf sheikhdoms, where oil might be found – notably in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the Nejd, where a preferential treaty had been signed with Abdul Azziz ibn Saud in 1915".[41] The growth of oil companies seeking to gain control over the exploitation of sources of the product in countries like Persia is perhaps the most vivid demonstration of this *new*-imperialism. The government of Britain sought to establish political relations with those countries in which the raw materials were situated or, in the absence of accommodative partners, the establishment or maintenance of regimes which would ensure their untrammelled access to them.

As a result of the emergence of finance capital, huge companies with international interests began to appear in Germany and Britain and in other imperialist countries. The creation of international divisions of spheres of interest was driven by monopolies and marks out this phase of imperialism. This process led to each of the respective imperial state powers championing the endeavours of the companies within their respective nation states. Governments directly intervened against their rivals to ensure the most favourable conditions for their own companies. In the case of Britain, monopolisation was encouraged by the government which took the view that the "economic resources were intertwined with strategic priorities, and … the Foreign Office … accepted the need to reinforce private firms in areas of political sensitivity. … the government supported the creation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1909 and acquired a controlling interest in it in 1914".[42] This pattern of development ineluctably led to intense rivalry between companies and therefore between their respective national patrons.

Banks played a critical role influencing the development of finance and trade across the Near East. "Some 500 different London institutions were involved in British foreign investment, with long term ventures and securities handled by such

[40] Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,* 116
[41] Glen Balfour-Paul, "Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, eds. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). 493. See also Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild* for an account of the links between banks and extractive industries. 355.
[42] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, *1688–1914*, 409.

powerful issuing houses as Barings, Rothschilds, Brown Shipley, Glyn Mills and Currie, and short-term financing being underwritten by smaller banks and investment companies".[43] Lloyds, Barclays and the Rothschilds were linked to the expansion of British economic interests across world. Barclays Bank, through its Jerusalem Branch, was the issuing centre of the currency established by the British during the Mandate occupation.[44] Similarly the Palestine Currency Board, whose headquarters were in London "were appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and included a representative of the Crown Agents as chairman, an official from the Colonial Office, the general manager of the Bank of British West Africa, and an honorary member from the Treasury".[45] By establishing the Board the British maintained a degree of control over the currency and the flow of capital governing the nature and the levels of investment.[46] This acted as a dominating influence on the development of the Palestinian economy which was also a matter of contention with the Zionists in Palestine who complained that it restricted their capacity to invest and develop.[47] The composition of the Currency Board graphically illustrates the different constituencies that constituted the leadership of just such a finance capital oligarchy. The whole institutional oversight of the currency in Mandate Palestine was within the framework of a monetary system tied to Britain. The discussions about which currency to use and what to peg that currency to, were critical discussions which had a bearing on the way the economy of Palestine was to develop.[48] Following World War One the British replaced the Turkish pound which had lost 90% of its pre-war value with the Egyptian pound which was directly tied to Sterling.

In order to gain advantage in their economic competition, imperial powers have occasionally sacrificed immediate profitability in order to gain control over a specific market. Competition involved not simply gaining advantage but also disadvantaging the competitor. Imperialism sought "to reach out for every kind of territory … the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much

[43] Roger Adelson, *London and the Invention of the Middle East: Money, Power and War 1902–1922* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 72.
[44] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine, British Economic Policy 1920–1929* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 29.
[45] Ibid., 28.
[46] Ibid., 30.
[47] Ibid., 31.
[48] Ibid., 25.

directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* [*sic*] hegemony".[49] The gains to imperialism cannot be assessed by an analysis of the balance sheets of trade relations between an imperial power and one of its colonies, but rather they have to be appreciated within the overarching context of the pursuit by the imperial power of its own specific goals within the development of capitalism as a whole. This was the case in respect of the British concern for Palestine which did not itself constitute a particularly profitable endeavour. "It is generally accepted that one of the foremost reasons for the adoption of the Jewish National Home policy was strategic because Palestine formed a buffer state to protect Egypt, helped provide secure air routes to the East, and became important as the terminal of the Mesopotamian oil pipeline".[50] Although Palestine did possess valuable raw materials this was not, at this time, the dominant reason for British interest in the country.

Whilst imperialist governments were capable of maintaining a strategic view of their goals this did not prevent individual countries, like Britain, also assessing the specific balance sheet of trade relations between them and any of their colonies. The notion that a colony should "pay its own way" was a frequent theme in the discussions on the costs of maintaining the British occupation of Palestine. "The colonial requirement that a self-supporting colony have recourse to the home economy as seldom as possible was applied to mandated territories as well and in the case of Palestine rigidly enforced by the Colonial Office".[51] The objective always was to make the occupied pay for the occupation and control of the currency offered one means by which this might be achieved.

In the British economy, the characteristics of the *new*-imperialism developed rapidly through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century prior to the Mandate occupation. The economies of the imperial powers expanded exponentially, especially in the latter period of the nineteenth century. Between 1840 and 1870 British GDP grew by 88% whilst between 1870 and 1913 it expanded by 124%.[52] The comparable figures for France are 45% and 100% whilst that for Germany between 1870 and 1913

[49] Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. 86 [Emphasis in the original].
[50] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 47.
[51] Ibid., 47.
[52] Calculations based on statistics in Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*, 32

was 229%.[53] Although the population of Germany was 32% larger than the United Kingdom, the GDP of both countries was roughly equivalent to each other in size in 1913 but the per capita GDP, which generally is accepted as an indicator of standard of living, was 35% higher in the United Kingdom.[54] This rapid economic expansion, concentration of capital, creation of monopolies and trusts gave rise to international rivalry and competition for territory, markets and raw materials.

This expansion was both an expression of and a catalyst for the growth of overseas investment. The export of capital accelerated rapidly through the last three decades of the nineteenth century into the twentieth. "By 1914 the gross nominal value of Britain's stock of capital invested abroad was £3.8 billion, between two-fifths and a half of all foreign owned assets. That was more than double French overseas investment and more than three times the German figure".[55] Investment in the colonies and the neo-colonies offered, in general, a higher rate of return on capital than could be achieved in the mother country itself. Capital investment in Palestine was largely directed towards companies whose owners supported the Zionist project thus having a major impact on the formation and growth of social classes. In Chapter Five I will return to the issue of the impact of the inflow of capital into Palestine and how it affected the social formation of Palestinian society and the political consequences that brought about.

The British focus on Palestine was a consequence of a variety of factors intrinsic to *new*-imperialism including the simple insistence on denying its acquisition to anyone else.[56] The strengthening of British imperialism would be a blow to the ambitions of German imperialism but also place it in an advantageous position in the region in respect of all other imperialisms, including the French. Although Palestine itself may not have been as important a source of raw materials, in comparison to the gold of the Witwatersrand mines in the Cape Colony for example, nevertheless the production of oil in the north of Mesopotamia was important to the British and a

[53] Calculations based on statistics in Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics,* 47-48
[54] GDP for the United States in 1913 was more than twice the size of the United Kingdom. Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics,* 85.
[55] Ferguson, *Empire,* 244.
[56] Exports from Palestine, especially agricultural produce, expanded in the period 1880–1913. See Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800–1914,* (London: I. B. Taurus, Reprinted 2009), 264.

Mediterranean outlet for it was essential.[57] The cost of British imports of oil products increased eleven fold between 1900 and 1920.[58] Furthermore it is worth noting that although Palestine was not a major trading partner for Britain, throughout the first decade of the Mandate the British had an increasing monopoly of imports and exports and used this to their economic advantage.[59]

Building a British controlled terminal at Haifa would cut the length of the supply line from Mosul and provide a place to refuel their Mediterranean fleet. Palestine also provided a convenient refuelling stop for aircraft flying from India and other parts of the British Empire to the East. When the Lloyd George Cabinet were attempting to draft the map of Palestine the expert invited to assist them was the managing director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.[60] Economic, political and military interests were interwoven. It is unsurprising that the negotiations between the French, the British and later the USA over access to and control over the extraction, exploitation and use of the oil in the whole area were conducted between the representatives of major petroleum companies, governments and banks. The way in which this question was dealt with epitomised the functioning of finance capital and demonstrates how the advent of the *new*-imperialism influenced British policies in regard to Palestine.

This view was expressed very forcefully by the Petroleum Executive, under the chairmanship of Sir John Cadman, in December 1918. Cadman was concerned that Britain should retain an independent oil supply and not become reliant on supplies from the United States. The Executive body he chaired concluded that, "any territorial adjustments in Syria or elsewhere wayleaves for pipelines etc. from Mesopotamia and from Persia to the Mediterranean should be secured for British interests".[61] The British wanted a port outlet for the oil from Mosul. This concern for Britain's oil independence from the United States involved Cadman in extensive negotiations both with them and with the French over the exploitation of potential resources in the north

[57] CAB 24/157 The large United States of America based company Standard Oil did however conduct "a geological survey of the Dead Sea area and areas west and south-west of it". British Empire Report No. 73. 5th July 1922.
[58] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics,* p.478-9.
[59] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 20-25.
[60] Ibid., 90.
[61] James Barr, *A Line in the Sand* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 154

of Mesopotamia and the creation of a terminal point at the Mediterranean Sea. These negotiations ran on for at least two decades before they were finally concluded and the pipeline built. *Time* magazine, of 21st April 1941, concluded that the importance of the pipeline merited calling it the "carotid artery of the British Empire".[62]

Implementing New-Imperialism

The nature and mode of the displacement of existing structures of social and economic relationships as a consequence of occupation by an invading power with a different set of relationships is a complex one. All imperialist interventions including the British Mandate-occupation of Palestine are multi-faceted.[63] The changes imposed by the British on Mandate Palestine did not remove every vestige of pre-existing social and economic relationships which had developed during the Ottoman Empire over many years. In Palestine the British encountered Ottoman laws and practices governing the ownership and control of the land as well as traditions and customs shaping social and political bonds that had been in place for many centuries. These pre-existing practices relating to land ownership could not be terminated immediately by the occupying power and were in fact one of the central questions at the heart of the conduct of the occupation and the colonisation of Palestine. In Chapter Four we will look at how these contradictions impacted on social and political developments.

In a number of instances exogenous economic factors had a significant impact on the domestic economies of sovereign countries as well as colonised societies. In the nineteenth century the development of the economy of the Ottoman Empire, for example, was influenced by those with whom it was trading even though no occupation occurred.[64] The Civil War in the United States of America reduced the production and export of cotton to Europe as a result of which Mediterranean agriculturalists switched their production to take advantage of the potential profits to be made thereby reducing the amount of land available to produce the staple crops for domestic consumption. The pre-capitalist forms of landholding which had prevailed until that time then came under pressure from those who wished to exploit the

[62] Ibid., 163.
[63] Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, 96. See Anderson's discussion of the differing development between the western and the Eastern Roman Empire.
[64] Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800–1914*, 57. Ferguson and Lenin both instance Argentina as an example of a non-occupied country which imperialism exercised control over without ever having invaded it.

advantages presented by expanding the area of land that they could cultivate to grow the cotton. This switch to take advantage of the greater profitability of cotton impacted upon ownership structures.[65] This profit-driven approach to production contrasted with what had happened previously when the goal was domestic consumption by those who worked the land and the production of a surplus for those who owned it. Prior to this change the surplus, as I have explained above, had not been transformed into commodities to be sold in competition with other producers on a world market.

Social, economic and political relations seldom if ever change at the same rate. There is no mechanical correspondence between developments in one sphere with those of the other. It is arguable that social relations and social customs are slower to change than the formalised economic and political changes which might be imposed by the use of "extra-economic force". Imperialism, whether *pre-capitalist* or *capitalist*, does not immediately eradicate pre-existing relations and replace them with pristine alternatives.[66] The nature of the new social, economic and political relationships will be an expression and a consequence of a variety of contestations including in this case most noticeably between the capacity of the occupier to impose and the occupied to resist. Whilst this may result, for example in one sphere, in a variety of accommodations, in another it may well be a very destructive experience. The ramifications of the alterations occurring in one area however reverberate in others. Marx explained how British rule in India had major consequences for the development of the latter's economy not simply by having reverberations on specific individual commodities but in terms of the consequences for all the associated and subsidiary processes and their relations of production.

> It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel. England began with depriving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindostan [*sic*] and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons. From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1 to

[65] See Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: the nineteenth century* (New York: SUNY Press, 1988). It is also worthwhile comparing these comments to those of Irfan Habib in *Indian Economy 1858–1914* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2007) on the impact of British colonialism on the development of industry and agriculture in India.
[66] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (London: Allen Kane, 1973), 105-106. Marx made a similar point that capitalist society did not eradicate overnight pre-existing social and economic relationships.

> 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 1,000,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 of yards. But at the same time the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindostan [*sic*], the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry.[67]

Although aspects of the *new*-imperialism were present in the interstices of the existing empires it was the truly worldwide expansion of capitalism incorporating the economies of all countries into the capitalist system which signalled the most dramatic change. Between 1860 and 1909 the British Empire expanded from an area covering 9.5 million square miles to one of 12.7 million square miles representing around 25% of the surface of the world.[68] This process came about largely as a result of the expansion of finance capital coupled with the export of capital to create new companies and new markets. Even where *pre-capitalist* relations existed they became subservient to the imperatives of the market economy. The direct interventionist imperialism typical of the *pre-capitalist* and the *capitalist* period was supplanted by a *new*-imperialism which, as a global system, reached every corner of the world compelling changes to the existing social formations. The products of Palestine were in competition with those elsewhere and as we shall see later with new methods of production which were brought to the country by those who were colonists. Later in this chapter we will examine the notion of finance capital more closely and offer some examples of its operation in the area of the Near East.

As an example of the nature of the *new*-imperialism the intervention by the British in Palestine was multi-layered. The transformations which it wrought, in a certain sense created and in another sense accelerated, the process of displacing existing social relations which contributed to the undermining of the capacity of the indigenous people to resist. The accelerating impact of the imperial economies on land ownership in the Ottoman Empire through the nineteenth century resulting in the

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[67] Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India", June 10th 1853 in *Marx Engels on Britain* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 394.
[68] Ferguson, *Imperialism,* 240.

alienation and then the commodification of land led to a dislocation and then progressively a break with the already existing relations.[69] In drawing attention to this process my intention is not to adduce that changes in the forms of landownership determined the capacity of the Zionists to acquire land nor that it defined the character of British rule but to suggest that global economic changes contributed in part to the destabilisation of well established social, economic and political set of relations. In an overwhelmingly agricultural economy alterations to the existing forms of landownership have consequences for the social and political relationships. In later chapters we will examine this process more closely.

Uneven Development

From an economic perspective the rise of England as a leading imperial power can be ascribed to a variety of factors. The initial process has been described as "organised crime" conducted by buccaneers or pirates. Witnessing their successes the government of the day authorised privateers whose actions were legalised "in return for a share of the proceeds".[70] The establishment of the English Empire was based on theft, from the Spanish in particular.[71] The economist John Maynard Keynes summed up the process as one in which "the booty brought back by Drake in the Golden Hind may fairly be considered the fountain and origin of British Foreign Investment".[72] This phase of transition from a *pre-capitalist* imperialism to an imperialism based on capitalist economic and social relations was stimulated not only by the systematic robbery of contending powers but additionally by plundering lands which had not previously been under the dominion of any of the emerging empires. In order to become a capitalist power England had to accumulate capital and it achieved this in

[69] Sevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 106.
[70] Ferguson, *Empire*, 2. See also Janice E Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).
[71] See Richard Gott, *Cuba, A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 26-36, for examples of the variety of forms of piracy carried out ranging from those who were simply taking the money for themselves to those who were acting under direct license from the monarch, receiving a portion of the bounties they captured.
[72] John Maynard Keynes, "A Treatise on Money" (1930) quoted in Andre Gunder Frank, *World Accumulation 1492–1789* (London: MacMillan Press, 1978), 6. Ferguson in *Empire,* appraising the transition in the British economy and the growth of imperialism as a consequence that rivals were displaced and that the British "had robbed the Spanish, copied the Dutch, beaten the French and plundered the Indians [*sic*]".

large measure by taking the capital of others. In Chapter Two I will explain how British policy in respect of Palestine was underpinned by imperial preoccupations of expansionism, the protection of gains already made and the desire to protect markets and acquire control over essential raw materials simultaneously denying others access to them. The occupation of Palestine was the epitome of the *new*-imperialism.

As has been argued above, in all forms of imperialism there is a connectedness between the social, economic and political development of the imperial nation itself with the manner in which it seeks to establish and then to operate its power internationally. Whilst there is a debate about the factors which led to increase in population and the demographic changes produced by technological advances and developments in industrial production which most notably resulted in the population moving away from the land, it is not my intention to enter into this debate here.[73] Population displacement took place which coincided with social and economic changes that had an impact on the capacity of Britain to begin its imperialist expansionism. I will however return to the issue of the association of colonialism with population growth below and will specifically comment on the availability of human resources available to undertake colonisation as a factor influencing the choice of Zionist settlers as candidates to undertake this role in Palestine. As I argue in this thesis the nature of the Zionist project constituted a distinct form of colonisation.

There exists, in my judgement, a substantial body of empirical evidence which has been analysed in academic literature sufficient to justify the view that imperialism's imposition of its own priorities negatively distorted the economic, social and political relations of those dominated.[74] In its most extreme form there are many instances where imperialist intervention led to the development of monoculture and monoproduction with the economy of the colony being dominated by agriculture, frequently based on a single crop, and the production of raw materials.[75] Perhaps one of the most graphic cases to illustrate the effect of the imperial domination on the economic development of a conquered people is India, geographically the largest and

[73] T.H. Ashton and C.H.E. Philpin, eds. *The Brenner Debate, Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[74] See Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History* (London: Anthem Press, 2002); Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 110. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle L'Ouverture, 1988); Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory* (London: The Merlin Press, 1962).
[75] Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, 461.

most populated country of the British Empire. It was first subjugated not by the forces of the British state but by the Honourable East India Company, a joint stock company. Under the rule of the British East India Company, "from 1757 to 1857, Indian per capita income fell, but British gains were substantial".[76] It was, to some extent, as a result of the desire to hold onto these gains and to India the source of that wealth that the British Empire was concerned about guaranteeing safe passage for its goods through the Suez Canal. India as we shall see in later chapters was a significant factor influencing not only the future of Palestine but also that of the whole region surrounding it.

It is important to note too that the British pre-occupation with Palestine was not just a matter of economics but was connected to questions of political control and management of the Empire, and to the religious significances of Jerusalem for example to the Muslim population of India. The profound interest shown by successive holders of senior posts in the British India Office in the developments in Palestine and the Near East generally are testament to that. This further demonstrates the value of situating the British policy towards Palestine in this wider context of imperial concern.

Colonialism, Colonisation and Neo-colonialism

Imperialism and Migration

The shift from *pre-capitalist* to *capitalist* imperialism is best exemplified by the emergence of the Dutch and English Empires. A key transitional component of the change to capitalist imperialism was, in the case of the Dutch Republic, the commercialisation of trade. In England this process of transformation in the domestic economy, it has been argued, emerged from the changing forms of landownership which produced a "surplus" population in the rural areas.[77] The numbers evicted from their lands and the changes in the nature of the use of land amongst other things contributed over many years to a reduction in the need for agricultural labour

[76] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001), 21.
[77] There is a debate about the whole question of the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist economic formations amongst a number of authors including Robert Brenner and others. See T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, eds, *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Reprinted 1993).

producing a consequential growth in the urban population.[78] According to one authority, more than 22 million people left the British Isles between 1815 and 1914. Motivation for emigration in part stemmed from coercion in the form of penal transportation and famine, and in part, resulted from voluntary encouragement through a variety of means including subsidised transportation.[79] Agents and societies, who received payments for each individual successfully processed, were employed to seek out potential emigrants with employable skills for the colonies.[80] Children were sent from orphanages; famines in Ireland impelled others; both male and female convicts were transported; displaced Highlanders; paupers sent by aristocrats from landed estates and many more made up the numbers.[81] In 1845 the population of Ireland was more than 8 million but by 1914 it had fallen to just over 4 million.[82] There appeared in society numbers of people for whom emigration became, if not a desirable option, then at least a plausible route for survival, notwithstanding the horrendous consequences for large numbers of them.

Anxiety about the impact of an ever increasing population was perhaps most typified by the writing of Thomas Malthus in his work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, printed in 1798 which, amongst other arguments, advanced the thesis that whilst population expansion was exponential the means of subsistence on the other hand was growing arithmetically.[83] His ideas continued to have an influence throughout the rest of nineteenth century. Emigration allied to the expansion of the empire and the building of colonial settlements albeit under a variety of circumstances, was a significant contributing component to colonialism. In the view of some politicians it was a matter of exporting a problem which if left unattended might have severe domestic social consequences. As an example Lenin recounted the alleged comment of the British imperialist Cecil Rhodes:

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[78] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, Reprinted 1970), 233

[79] Marjory Harper, "British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75. Of course there were many reasons for emigration from Britain and even the concept "voluntary" should be treated with caution.

[80] Marjory Harper, "British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire", 84.

[81] Ibid., 81. See also Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics,* (Paris: OECD, 2003) for population statistics on Ireland.

[82] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics,*13. In the same period the population of England and Wales had more than doubled.

[83] Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Reissued 2008).

> I was in the East End of London (a working class quarter) yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread! bread!' and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism … My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen, must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists.[84]

The idea in Britain of turning "surplus" populations into settlers ran throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Organisations were established to recruit large numbers of settlers taking account of their age and gender and to ensure that people were recruited with skills relevant to the work that the colonists were to be engaged in. A variety of organisations were established, for example, specifically aimed at recruiting women emigrants including, the London Female Emigration Society (1850), the Female Middle Class Emigration Society (1862–1892) and many others subsequently organised under the British Women's Emigration Association.[85] This pattern of the selective processing of potential settlers can also be found in the records of papers of PICA, the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, whose roots go back to the end of the nineteenth century and echo the methodology employed by these other agencies.[86]

Although stimulated by quite divergent reasons, within Britain the idea of emigration and settlement to other parts of the Empire was widespread within society. However emigration and colonisation within the Empire were not confined to settler colonists drawn from the British Isles. Large numbers of emigrants were drawn, by the British, from other parts of the Empire and especially from India to settle colonies in

[84] V. I. Lenin *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, Twentieth Printing,1986), 75.
[85] Marjory Harper, "British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire" " in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 81.
[86] Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild,* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 279.

other parts of the world. Many of those who migrated, voluntarily or under compulsion, did so to undertake specific work within the countries to which they went. Between the years 1834 to 1920 more than 1,258,861 or 85% of indentured immigrants were from India.[87] The net outflow of migrants from India has been estimated at over 5 million travelling to a variety of countries including Burma, Malaya, Sri Lanka and the continent of Africa and to the Caribbean.[88]

However it has been noted that "differences in economic circumstances, geography, and imperial policies were responsible for directing most European immigrants to ... temperate destinations, while African, Asian, and Pacific Islanders went largely to tropical ones".[89] Government travel subsidies and racist policies added to the discriminatory distribution of immigrants diverting white settlers to temperate climates.[90] The prospect of a Jewish homeland settled by predominantly non-British colonists played into this racialised pattern of emigration. I will return to this subject later in this chapter differentiating between colonialism and colonisation in order to analyse how the Zionist project constituted a break with previous patterns of colonialism and colonisation. The substantial point that I wish to underline here is that colonisation was an integral part of imperialism facilitated by the availability of a population "surplus" albeit the consequence of different factors. The colonisation undertaken by Zionism was distinct but reflected a common pattern of migration that was evident in the nineteenth century. Colonisation was part and parcel of the *capitalist* imperial project but its significance diminished with the arrival of the *new*-imperialism.

Forms of Imperial Rule

The British used diverse forms of rule in different parts of their Empire at different times but in general these could be divided into the two broad categories of

[87] David Northrup, "Migration from Africa, Asia and the South Pacific" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 88. Indentured labourers were those who were tied to specific employers in the countries to which they migrated by long-term contract and /or indebtedness.
[88] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001), 98
[89] Northrup, "Migration from Africa, Asia and the South Pacific", 96.
[90] Ibid., 97.

direct and indirect rule.[91] The form of regime adopted at any particular moment was based on a pragmatic response to each specific situation and ranged from direct rule, at the outset of a colonial enterprise, through to a relatively high degree of autonomy, invariably granted only after the indigenous peoples had been subjugated or incorporated into the imperialist project. The nature of the rule imposed might change from the direct to the indirect as the balance of power between the indigenous peoples and the colonists shifted. The nature of the rule applied might also be dependent on the outcome of inter-imperialist rivalries.

The judgement about the degree of autonomy to be granted was based on a variety of economic, military and political considerations. The greater the degree of compliance with the imperialist power and the less the need for military intervention then the greater the degree of independence bestowed. A more substantial level of independence and even self-government was granted when the colonists themselves, or in alliance with compliant sections of the indigenous peoples, were able to take on the role previously played by the imperial power.[92] When self-government was granted it was generally confined to control over domestic issues operating within a free trade system which privileged the British over the notionally independent country.[93] In Chapter Five I will analyse the contradictions which confronted the British in Palestine as a consequence of the Balfour Declaration which acted as an obstacle to the creation of any affiliations between the British and the indigenous Arab Palestinian people.

Even in the stage of direct control exercised from London the forms of rule might vary. In nineteenth century India for example, the British imperialist domination was initially exercised by the private East India Company, a joint stock

[91] Peter Burroughs, "Imperial Institutions and the Government of Empire" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 185.
[92] Thomas Bartlett, " 'This famous island set in a Virginian sea': Ireland and the British Empire, 1690–1801" in The *Eighteenth Century: The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume II,* ed. P. J. Marshall, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 263. Contrasts degree of autonomy granted to Ireland and that given to certain other colonies.
[93] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, *1688–1914*, 234.

company and only later did the British government take over responsibility.[94] The cost of administration born by the entrepreneurial capitalists of the East India Company was, at least in part, relocated to the British state. This was a consequence of the fact that this single commercial enterprise no matter how large was unable to maintain domination over the country and state intervention was necessary. Furthermore, it was an indication of the competitive economic forces within Britain which opposed the company establishing a monopoly of the Indian market and potentially excluding them from the marketplace. Irfan Habib, in his *Essays in Indian History*, has described the period between 1800 and 1850, when this process of transformation in the form of imperial rule was taking place, as corresponding to a change "from seizing Indian commodities to seizing the Indian market".[95] The form of rule had a correspondence to the changes taking place which foreshadowed the monopoly economics of the *new*-imperialist era.

The intention behind the British endeavour to impose their political and military rule in India was in order to achieve an economic hegemony giving exclusive advantages to companies from Britain. Even under any devolved government, the British insisted on freedom of trade for its merchants whilst simultaneously imposing tariffs and constraints on goods and raw materials imported from those colonies.[96] This process was accompanied by the introduction of taxation systems on the indigenous peoples and the colonists to make them pay the cost of the administration of the imperial rule under which they lived.[97] The break by the thirteen American colonies from the Empire was led by colonists precisely opposing the excessive taxation imposed on them.[98] This process of making the peoples in the British colonies pay for the presence of British troops and administrators was replicated in respect of Palestine to the disadvantage of the indigenous community.

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[94] The establishment of companies under British governments' charter to sponsor colonisation, was commonplace: London Company; Plymouth Company; Hudson Bay Company; Royal African Company; Canada Company; New Zealand Company; Imperial British East Africa Company.
[95] Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 319. Habib expands on this point in his essay "Understanding 1857" in *Rethinking 1857* ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2008), 58.
[96] See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle L'Ouverture, 1988), 164.
[97] Habib, *Essays in Indian History,* 280-281. Expanding on this point Habib explains that there was both direct and indirect taxation. For example "India was compelled to export 2 to 3 million tons of wheat in years in which her own people died in millions".
[98] This was of course a revolt by the colonists against British rule and not an uprising of the indigenous peoples although the latter also conducted struggles for the sovereignty of their own lands against the British, the colonists and, subsequently, against the United States of America as well.

India had a degree of devolved government resulting from the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 but control ultimately lay with the Viceroy and the India Office in London.[99] Other parts of the Empire were ruled directly through a variety of mechanisms involving High Commissioners who had a power of veto over any local decision-making agency. In southern Palestine the British in December 1917 established military rule run by the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (South). In October 1918 this administration was extended to the whole of Palestine and lasted until July 1920 when it was replaced by the appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel to run a civil administration which was legitimised by the League of Nations through the Mandate. Whilst the appearance of the two administrations might have seemed different they were both backed by the military capacities of the occupying force.

The decision to rule Palestine through the mechanism of a Mandate was the consequence of a number of factors. Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America, had insisted that there should be no colonial acquisitions as a result of the outcome of the war but that a system of Mandates should be set up which would place the former colonies in the hands of the victors, with the express intent of those territories becoming independent self-governing countries.[100] British acquiescence to this formula reflected the changing balance of power internationally and was an indication that they recognised that their actions needed a form of international legitimation.

Article 22 of the League of Nations which defined the role and function of the Mandate process expressed the superiority of the powerful nations against the defeated nations and the peoples over whom they had previously ruled. Those who had been subject peoples of the defeated nations were viewed as "peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world".[101] As a consequence the League proposed that "the tutelage of such peoples should be

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[99] Judith M. Brown, "India" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV eds*. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). 421.
[100] Wm. Roger Louis, "Introduction" in in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV eds*. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). 11. See Article 5 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. January 1920.
[101] Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. January 1920 quoted in Charles D Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict* [Sixth Edition](Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 108.

entrusted to advanced nations, who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League".[102] The League of Nations Covenant codified imperial rule. It differentiated between "advanced nations" and those not yet ready to take on the responsibilities of government. Of course the arbiter as to which category a country might belong was determined by the British and the victorious allies. As I will explain in Chapter Three, Woodrow Wilson initially saw his Fourteen Points as applying only to the European countries which had been part of the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empire. However this notion of transition was itself a form of redefining of imperialist relationships concomitant with the expansion of a form of covert imperialism or neo-colonialism. It might be argued that this represented a shift from the "formal" empires of past centuries to a twentieth century legitimation of the "informal" imperialism.

Colonialism and Colonisation

Imperialism has generally incorporated within it forms of colonial rule although their character have varied between the imperialisms of differing eras and even within empires. Lorenzo Veracini in *Israel and Settler Society* has drawn attention to the work of David Fieldhouse who distinguished between "colonisation" and "colonialism", differentiating between a process which sought the "successful reproduction of a European society in a colonial context" with the process of colonialism which seeks "the successful imposition of political and economic control over a colonial domain".[103] A distinction can therefore be made between colonisation which entails the physical presence of settlers and colonialism which is the establishment of political, economic and cultural forms of hegemony based on imposed norms albeit presided over by agencies of the imperial power.[104]

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2006) citing D.K. Fieldhouse, *Colonialism, 1870–1945: An Introduction* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981). See also Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism, A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010) and Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London: Cassell, 1999).

[104] There is an extensive debate on definitions of colonialism and imperialism. See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Routledge, Second Edition 2007), 33-44. *Passim*.

Colonisation in the sense that Fieldhouse has used it requires the physical act of settlement to reproduce the "European society" and is inseparable from a process which simultaneously involves the subordination if not the destruction of pre-existing social formations. The colonies of North America and Australia were premised on the wholesale transplantation of a "European society" to the colonised lands.[105] Displacement, dispossession and genocide were inflicted on the indigenous peoples of Australia in the process of the establishment of this "European society".[106] Colonialism, as defined by Fieldhouse, requires a degree of consent in order to function but what is lacking in Veracini's approach is any exploration of the nexus around which this process develops. The categories used by the latter are descriptive of identity, "consciousness", "narrative" and although referencing the imperial power as a component in these relationships, it does not, in my view, explain what propelled this process nor evaluate what roles the differing constituencies of imperial rule played within this process.

Colonisation involves the transfer of people to settle permanently in a conquered land in order to ensure that the economic spoils resulting from conquest continue to flow to the imperial power. This has been described as a means to guarantee "accumulation through dispossession" and a process by which essentially European capitalism acquired its wealth in a dual act of exclusion and expropriation.[107] Not all settlers were driven by the idea of gaining materially nor were they necessarily motivated by the idea of carrying out an imperial mission. I would distinguish between the pressures which resulted in migrants leaving their homeland, the ideologies which were used to justify that action of settling in a new land and the objective role that they came to play in those circumstances.

The famines which took place in Ireland in the nineteenth century, whatever their specific cause, crop failure or the economic policies of those who could redirect exports to domestic markets, constituted a pressure on the population to emigrate. The emigration which occurred did not result in every case in those who left becoming

[105] I will leave aside the inadequacy of the term "European society" both in its eurocentricity and its lack of specificity in the realms of the economy, social or political practices.
[106] Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*. 28.
[107] Samir Amin, *Global History: A View from the South* (Bangalore: Pambazuka Press, 2011), 164-165.

colonists: for example those who went to the United States of America.[108] Those who were transported to Australia in the nineteenth century as a result of criminalisation under the operative legal system did not go voluntarily. A quarter of those sent were from Ireland and a quarter of these were women with around one fifth of the total of Irish transported for political reasons.[109] Those who emigrated to colonies of the British Empire whether from within the Empire or from other countries in Africa, Asia or the South Pacific frequently did so under coercion and with long-term debt bondage obligations.[110] Nevertheless the net consequence of their being in Australia or elsewhere, was, in the longer run, to place them objectively in the same relationship to the indigenous peoples as those who had travelled voluntarily.[111] They became, in time, incorporated into the colonial-settler project and themselves *de facto* colonists.[112]

In contrast to colonisation, colonialism was based on minimal if not negligible transfer of people to the conquered territories and often involved the co-option of a layer of the indigenous population in an occupied territory to collaborate with the imperial power or even manage the territory on its behalf. When the East India Company went to India and established itself it lacked the capacity to provide the numbers of troops essential to rule so vast a land with so many people. In the first instance it was engaged in a series of confrontations with other imperial powers, often in the coastal regions, but its eventual success was the result of making alliances with hereditary rulers who, relative to the vast majority of indigenous people, became beneficiaries of the relationships they entered into with the Company. This social layer acted as allies and agents of the British in India. Whilst they may have gained personally, the economic development of India was itself set back by their actions as we have already noted.

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[108] There are of course a number of questions unanswered here. The colonisation of the whole country continued throughout the nineteenth century even though the United States of America was independent and not itself a colony. The spread of imperialism was not simply a matter of overseas expansion but as with Russia included contiguous territorial expansion. I am aware that this indeed raises further questions but there is not space here to explore this fully.
[109] Marjory Harper, "British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire", 78.
[110] David Northrup, "Migration from Africa, Asia and the South Pacific" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 88
[111] Marjory Harper, "British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire", 78. A similar pattern was present in New Caledonia which the French used as a penal colony.
[112] See Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*.

This issue of the interplay between the economic, social and political relationships imposed upon a pre-existing set of relationships has been touched on above. Colonist-settlers went for personal gain and to play a role to the benefit of the empire. They found themselves in lands already populated by peoples with their own social, economic and political structures. This encounter impacted on both groups but in a much more unequal and disadvantageous way on those of the occupied lands.[113] The imperial ruler was capable of imposing an asymmetrical relationship of power which they maintained even when sections of the indigenous community had been co-opted through treaties, privileged treatment or bribery.[114] In China, this resulted in the emergence of a comprador class willing to act to the benefit of the imperial rulers whilst able to gain advantage for themselves in the process.[115] From the outset this was not presented as a serious option in Palestine. Some of those who might have played this role were of course to sell their lands to the Zionist settlers thus eliminating that choice for themselves.[116]

Settler Colonisation

The process of colonisation invariably commences with an act of force subjugating and frequently physically displacing the indigenous peoples or maintaining them in a subservient position excluded from the political administration of the territory and the economic and social structures created by the imperial power. In its extreme shape this exclusion takes the form of physical separation accompanied by genocidal policies. This pattern is evidenced in the examples of the north of Ireland, in North America, Australia and New Zealand.[117] The colonists, who undertook the role of surrogates for the imperial power, broke with the protection of the imperial power only after the indigenous peoples had been displaced or militarily defeated by their sponsors and most often of course both. Whilst the imperial power

[113] Sarah Graham-Brown, "The Political Economy of the Jabal Nablus, 1920-48", in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* ed. Roger Owen (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), 89. Graham-Brown, drawing on the writings of Leon Trotsky, uses the expression "uneven and combined" development to describe this phenomena which could be applied equally to the economic, social and political fields.
[114] Karl Marx, *On Colonialism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Reprinted 2012), 45.
[115] Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing* (New York: Norton Paperback, 2000), 156-157.
[116] See Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables", in *The Modern Middle East* eds, Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury and Mary C. Wilson (London: I.B. Taurus, 1993, 2nd. Edition 2011).
[117] These patterns were also present in French, Spanish and Dutch imperialism and in other colonies of the capitalist period.

might have sought to rule through consent, it resorted to coercion especially where no significant social layer of the indigenous peoples was willing to be co-opted into the imperial project.

In the British Empire diverse forms of political control were exercised which included colonies, dominions, protectorates and mandate territories and those countries under imperial control have been referred to as constituting the "formal" empire. However the influence of the imperial powers was not limited to those countries over which they held direct control. Even before the advent of the *new*-imperialism there were counties whose economies were dominated by their economic relationships with an imperial power. The term "informal" empire has been used to describe those countries over which imperialist dominance was exercised by less direct means but especially through economic influence.[118] This became increasingly the case with the development of the *new*-imperialism when finance capital in particular sought to dominate control of the raw materials and the markets without becoming encumbered by any obligation to take on political responsibility for the management of the peoples of the lands over which they sought hegemony.

In the twentieth century Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, defined this practice as *neo-colonialism*. "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside".[119] There are numerous cases of neo-colonial rule and intervention by Britain for example in Latin America in countries which formally were sovereign entities but which were under obligations to British economic imperatives.[120] "The immense amounts of capital sunk into Latin America, for example, gave Britain so much leverage – especially in Argentina and Brazil – that it seems quite legitimate to speak of 'informal imperialism' in these countries".[121] The imperatives which

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[118] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, 7. Reference to: J. Gallagher and R. E. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade", *Economic History Review,* 2nd. Ser., VI (1953).
[119] Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism,* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), Introduction. http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/neo-colonialism/introduction.htm (accessed 13/09/2013)
[120] See Alan Knight, "Britain and Latin America", in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 122.
[121] Ferguson, *Empire,* 244.

created this relationship were the consequence of the economic relations controlling the availability of credit, the convertibility of currency, investment and financial relations generally binding together the political and economic development of these countries with the imperial power.

With the advent of *new*-imperialism, colonialism and especially *neo-colonialism* was to replace the use of colonisation as the preferred option of the *new*-imperialist powers. The British clearly aspired to create a *neo-colonialist* relationship with the newly created Arab countries by having them incorporate in their treaties clauses which committed the new countries to have their primary external trade relationships with the British. In Chapter Three I will demonstrate this through a discussion of the negotiations which took place between the Arab leaders and the British. However although a *neo-colonialist* option was available to the British, in respect of Palestine, the government decided on a different course of action. They chose the option of Zionist settler colonialism thus diverting from *neo-colonialism* by endorsing a surrogate and thereby fulfilling the USA's criteria that the post-war peace should exclude further imperialist expansion.

Ideology, Politics and Religion

Political actions are always underpinned by an ideological justification none more so than Balfour's promise to create a homeland for the Jews. Here I will examine the connections between the *new*-imperialism and its ideological justification. Perhaps more than any other imperialist venture the British undertaking to establish a homeland for the Jews in Palestine was always infused with a profound ideological character.

In seeking to establish a framework for examining the imperialist experience I am conscious that the role of ideology as a component of conquest and colonisation is itself a complex question. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* has drawn particular attention to the wider question of the cultural aspects of imperialism going beyond even the officially constructed ideologised narratives of the imperial powers.[122] For Said, imperialism was all-pervading but its struggle for power was not one simply

[122] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 8-9.

conducted around questions of economics or even politics. "The main battle of imperialism is over land, of course, but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative".[123] Each state aspiring to become an imperial power developed a self-justifying rationale for its actions, a metanarrative which sought to explain and justify its actions in terms of continuity with its own national aspirations and history.

The development of imperialist ideologies legitimating the expansionist policies of British imperialism can be traced through a skein of justifying arguments from Thomas More through Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.[124] Their opinions were frequently substantiated by reference to religious authority. The views expressed by these authors influenced the development of the language and concepts used to express the terms of the relationships between the imperial power and the conquered people. The development of universalist ideologies became an important trait of imperialists seeking, in the first instance to hegemonise the domestic political discourse, but then looking to impose or implant a belief system on the diverse conquered peoples to justify the imperialist process.

Throughout most periods, but perhaps more evidently from the commencement of modern imperialism, powers have sought, through the imposition of common legal frameworks especially in respect of trade, land ownership and political governance to create the structural underpinning by which their control, whether by coercion or consent, might be legitimated. These entirely secular actions have frequently been justified in terms of particular belief systems often, though not exclusively religious, to coax the indigenous peoples through their adoption of a notionally common narrative to enmesh themselves in their own subjugation.[125] Amongst the most crude examples

[123] Said, xiii. Despite this quote containing echoes of Engels and Marx, Said never claimed to be a Marxist or indeed an anti-Marxist. Lenin, frequently criticised for having too narrow a focus when examining imperialism, did not in fact dismiss the multi-faceted nature of the imperialism in his work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, but explained that he had chosen to exclude "the non-economic aspects of the question, however much they deserved to be dealt with" suggesting that he intended to return to a broader perspective at another time. 16.
[124] Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 68-174. passim.
[125] See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971). For a discussion on the question of hegemony see Perry Anderson, *New Left Review 1/100.*November-December 1976, 5-78.

of such a process was that of the Inquisition in Spain, which under the direct control of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, sought ruthlessly to impose religious conformity on Jews, Muslims and other Catholics both within the country and in the furthest reaches of the Spanish Empire.[126] Belief in the same gods induced the conquered peoples to adhere to the strictures laid down by those deemed who were (or are) there spokespersons on earth.

Whilst in all epochs imperial powers have sought to impose their belief systems on those they subjugated, this was never a simple or undifferentiated process.[127] Conversion to Christianity, using both coercion and consent, was a feature of European imperialism particularly that of the Spanish, Portuguese and the English. However proselytisation was certainly never a feature of the alliance between British imperialism and Zionism. The religio-ideological message of the Zionists and pro-Zionist Christian imperialists alike was, on the contrary, one of exclusion of the indigenous peoples. There was little or no attempt or indeed intention, by any of the pro-Zionist supporters, to win the indigenous Muslim and Christian Palestinians to an ideological acceptance of the Zionist narrative let alone to Judaism.[128] Although there were Christian missions in Palestine and surrounding areas, prior to the emergence of Zionism, during the late nineteenth century and through to the twentieth, there was no generalised attempt by the British to utilise them to achieve their acceptance of either a Jewish or Christian Zionism by the majority of the indigenous Palestinian people.

Whilst there may have been attempts to co-opt some sections of the population into an accommodation to British imperialism there was no systematised attempt to engage the Palestinians as a whole. Conversely there were attempts to engage members of the leading families to co-operate with the British administration but this was largely presented as a question of pragmatism and there was no success in

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[126] Cullen Murphy, *God's Jury, The Inquisition and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2013). 65-102, *passim*. It should be noted also that in empires in which the main authority held a specific set of "Christian" beliefs that there were differences between the practices of authorised religions as opposed to non-authorised sects. See for example Edward E. Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013)

[127] Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, 91.

[128] See Andrew Porter, "Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm and Empire" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume III,* ed. Andrew Porter, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 222. Whilst Judaism was not and had not been a proselytizing religion for many centuries this had not always been the case. See Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2009).

winning even a significant layer to play the role of surrogates for the colonisers. This was in contrast to other instances of occupation and colonisation such as in India where hereditary ruling layers were co-opted into or allied themselves with the imperialist framework of the Raj without converting to Christianity.[129] In a later chapter I will examine those attempts which did take place to co-opt sections of the Palestinian society and leading families into the British-Zionist agenda for the creation of a homeland for the Jews.

Secular and Religious Apologetics

At different periods and in different parts of the world debates about economic, political and social relations have been expressed in the form of religious disputes or through the development of argument reinforced by reference to religious codes or extrapolated from religious texts or practices. As I noted above the break between *pre-capitalist* imperialism and the imperialism of the capitalist era was a consequence of the break between the social relations which existed in the agriculturally-based economies ruled by landed aristocracies extracting tax and tribute in kind and the emergence of economies in which commercial trade began to play a more dominant role and, goods became commodities.

During the course of the English Civil War political and economic debate was often couched in terms of religious disputation with disagreements about property relations and the right to the appropriation of territory conducted as doctrinal debates.[130] As C.B. Macpherson explains in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, *Hobbes to Locke*, the debate which took place about ownership of lands and property rights amongst different factions of the contending forces were couched in terms of the interpretation of religious injunctions.[131] The use of religious authority to justify political practice has occurred throughout history and Zionism was not the first ideology to elaborate a political perspective drawn from a faith-based tradition

[129] There is not the space here to go into other forms of co-option employed by imperialist powers such as corruption and bribery but these were clearly used extensively in conquered countries. See Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History* (London: Anthem Press, 2002).
[130] Wood, Empire of Capital. 68, 74.
[131] C.B.Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, Hobbes to Locke* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).138. See also E.P.Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1970) especially Chapter 11.

creating a secularised practice to legitimate the assertion of one group's interests over those of another.

What constituted the uniqueness of the situation of the alliance between Zionism and elements of Christianity however was the bringing together from two apparently divergent religious traditions a syncretic amalgam. Nur Masalha summarises the way in which this occurred in respect of Zionism in the following way: "Although many early Jewish Zionists were secular, socialists and atheists, they were quick to put the 'promised land–chosen people' ideology to use for its political value, both as a means of attracting believing Jews to their cause and as a way of justifying their colonial project in European Christian eyes".[132] Later in this chapter I will look in more detail at the ideas of those secular authors I have mentioned whose authority was invoked to justify both English and British imperial expansion and draw out the connections between them and the arguments favoured by the Zionists in justifying their political aspirations. This ideological alliance was very evident in the argumentation justifying the Zionist project for the creation of homeland for the Jews in the land of Palestine.

The Dutch author Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and the English writer John Locke (1632–1704) in particular developed arguments for imperial expansionism and colonisation.[133] Grotius codified the just causes for war in *De jure belli ac pacis* and has been attributed with laying the basis for international law although this should not be misunderstood as meaning equity of treatment for conquerors and conquered. His arguments equally provided an apologia for imperialist conquest and settlement. Self-preservation is the foremost rule of nature, he maintained, and arguing in support of free trade he contended that what cannot be occupied cannot be owned, thus asserting Dutch rights to sail unhindered by rival powers, to obtain new conquests. He proposed that usable things left unused could be appropriated as property by others, that land left uncultivated, for example, could be acquired on the basis that the new "owners" would cultivate it thus adding value, a proposal present in the writings of Sir Thomas

[132] Nur Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism, Invented Traditions, Archeology and Post-Colonialism in Israel-Palestine* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007), 31.
[133] Wood, *Empire of Capital,* 68 and 96.

More in his *Utopia*.[134] Support for the notion of colonisation is also present in *Leviathan*, the work of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), though here it is a proposal which is promoted as a remedy for the problem of poverty and perceived overpopulation.[135] These arguments provided a secular justification for all imperialism and for all expansionist developments. It is possible to find these themes of uninhabited land or *res nullius* for people wishing to make it productive in the secularised biblical narrative voiced by Zionists about Palestine.[136]

In the case of both the settlement in Ireland and in North America religious and ideological concerns were intrinsic to the groups who engaged in the process. Those who were encouraged by the English monarchy to settle in Ireland were required to be Scottish or English Protestants and not Catholics. The objective of the plantation process was to disrupt and displace the indigenous community which resisted the rule of the Protestant English monarchy.[137] John Winthrop, later Governor of Massachusetts, was one amongst many prominent English figures of the seventeenth century who saw the plantations as a means to supplant Irish Catholicism with English Protestantism.[138] The rhetoric of religious salvation, rescuing the erring Catholics from their heretical disposition was an incessant accompaniment to the politico-military project of subjugation. In America the settlement project was similarly swathed in redemptive discourse overseen in part by bodies like the Council of Trade and Plantations.[139]

The idea that an occupying nation was bringing a redemptive religion to an unbelieving peoples was subsequently supplanted by alternative ideological narratives also based on the idea of bestowing superiority on the conqueror in respect of the conquered. The exclusively religious narrative of superiority was replaced by the introduction of concepts of "civilisation" and "backwardness" and the beneficence of the European power in bringing enlightenment to a deprived society. This concept of racial superiority became a generalised idea accepted across much of Europe in the

[134] Wood, *Empire of Capital*, 74.
[135] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968, first published in 1651), 387.
[136] Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 267.
[137] Nicolas Canny, "The Origins of Empire: An Introduction" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume I,* ed. Nicholas Canny, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.
[138] Nicolas Canny, "The Origins of Empire: An Introduction", 6.
[139] Ibid., 8.

nineteenth century especially. Hannah Arendt, in *Imperialism: Part Two of The Origins of Totalitarianism*, argues that "Racism has been the powerful ideology of imperialistic policies since the turn of our (i.e. 19th) century".[140]

Conclusions

The political, economic and social relations operating within Britain at the time when the colonisation of Palestine took place were the product of the emergence of a new stage of imperialism supplanting the form of capitalism dominated principally by mercantilism. The emergence and expansion of finance capital facilitated the expansion of overseas investment and laid the basis for intense international rivalry. This *new*-imperialism was manifested by the growth and expansion of monopolies, seeking to achieve pre-eminence in the international market, in part through control over important sources of raw materials such as oil. The Zionist project of creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine was in many respects an anomaly reverting back to an earlier stage of colonialist imperialism. Palestinian society and the social groups which the settlers sought to displace was itself in the process of development towards capitalist forms of social and economic relations. The British, in my view, had not encountered such a set of circumstances before.

The ambition of the British imperial power on a world scale was not confined to profiteering from the acquisition of goods for sale at home or to third parties but incorporated a process of capital investment in those countries. The objective of this relationship was to gain control over their economies, including their raw materials, and control over lines of communication such as the Suez Canal was vital. This was especially important when the British imperial operation was not carried out in isolation from rival imperial powers. Each imperial power sought to obtain and keep control of sources of goods or raw materials whilst denying their rivals access to any other potentially beneficial sources. British preoccupations with the Near East were influenced by the actions of allies such as the French and the Russians in the pre-revolutionary period. In addition British desire to control the access to oil was influenced by their desire to lessen their dependence on supplies from the United States of America. This inter-imperialist rivalry was at its most antagonistic when it

[140] Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism: Part Two of The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, Reprinted 1994), 38.

came to Germany and their ally the Ottoman Empire. Palestine was situated at a critical junction between areas which each of the rivals wished to have control over.

It is not possible to make an absolute distinction between rule by coercion or consent since both might be used at differing times in differing circumstances with different groups within a conquered people. The extent to which the British were able to achieve the consent of an indigenous peoples was not a constant and underlying any apparently consensual relationships lay the ability to utilise force as the last resort to achieve their objectives. Settlers were a component within their armoury of force in displacing the indigenous communities and the situation in Mandate Palestine replicated many of these features. In almost all cases the settlers themselves went through a process of selection to determine their suitability. Although the recruitment of potential colonists was driven by a desire to establish a population to act as surrogates, British imperialism was prepared to draw on peoples from different parts of the empire to undertake this role. In addition whilst economic ambition might be one facet of their motivation it was true that many settlers, such as those in the north of Ireland and in North America, were also motivated by religio-ideological persuasions. The politics of Zionism welded together religious belief and a nationalist narrative complimenting the imperialist agenda of the British. The Zionist project of creating a homeland for the Jews, whether in Palestine or as they had discussed, in east Africa or anywhere else, could not be achieved without the endorsement of British imperialism.[141] In doing so British imperialism simultaneously sought to achieve goals of its own.

[141] HC Deb 11 April vol 144 c1263 http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1905/apr/11/zionist-expedition-against-the-nandi#S4V0144P0_19050411_HOC_89 (accessed 27th January 2016). It should be noted that even in respect of the proposal to establish a Jewish homeland in East Africa, concern was expressed in the House of Commons that it might require the displacement of the Nandi people.

CHAPTER TWO

War, Empire And Palestine

Introduction

The war, which began in 1914, was fought between two opposing sets of allies: on the one hand the Entente Powers, consisting of Britain, France and Russia, and on the other, the Central Powers of Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Although the United States of America declared war on Germany in April 1917 its main contribution until June was supplies and financial support. During the course of the war the Entente alliance changed when, following the Revolution of 1917, Russia left the group. The war was a manifestation of deep-seated economic, political and ultimately military rivalries between the imperialist powers produced by the *new*-imperialism. In Britain itself the war had tectonic economic, social and political consequences for the country.[1]

In this chapter I will analyse how the *new*-imperialism transformed Britain from a predominantly colonialist orientation to a focus on the finance capital driven concern to ensure control over raw materials and the hegemony of markets. Military strategy was tailored to deliver economic objectives as was demonstrated by the increasing attention paid to the Near East and the Suez Canal driven by British concern to protect the links with India and the rest of the Empire. Increasingly important was access to and control over oil resources to sustain the war effort, end their dependency on supplies from the USA and contribute to the further development of the British economy.

The chapter will demonstrate the link between domestic and international policies by analysing the consequences of the war on Britain both from an imperial perspective and from the point of view of the domestic challenges arising from growing social problems and the struggle for Irish independence. I will argue that the scale of the war, a product of the expansion of the *new*-imperialism, placed increased material and financial demands on British imperialism.

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[1] Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, eds, *The Economics of World War 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 206.

A key priority for British politicians was to maintain the economic benefits of the Empire and to achieve this goal they had to defeat rival imperial powers and, when necessary, subjugate any would-be rebels in the colonies. The Near East was growing in importance because of the increasing importance of oil for British transport and production. The Suez Canal was crucial to keeping open lines of communication to the Empire and the capacity to deploy forces to any part of it under attack. In order to ensure it remained open to British shipping successive governments thought it necessary to have control over the lands surrounding the waterway. In addition the land area between the Mediterranean Sea and India was becoming more important to the British because it offered an alternative land route to India and, increasingly, a source of the vital commodity, oil. Ending Britain's dependence for oil on the USA was a prize that leading politicians considered essential to help keep Britain in a dominant global position.

Amongst the most momentous events during the war were the 1917 revolution in Russia and its withdrawal from the combat. Although Russia was a less prosperous imperial power than Britain, it had until that year been considered a major ally against the Central Powers even though the British worried about its ambitions in Asia.[2] A significant power within central Asia, Czarist Russia had sought to exercise its influence in Persia and Afghanistan, to access the Indian Ocean and obtain an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. After the Revolution, and no longer an ally of the Entente Powers, Russia became a political problem of a different kind, when it unilaterally exposed the pre-war secret negotiations and treaties between the British and the French over the Near East. This action was based on its support for the right of nations to self-determination and its adoption of an explicitly anti-imperialist stance.

In the war between the two groups the inter-imperialist rivalry between Britain and Germany was the epitome of the age of *new*-imperialism. As we will see later in this chapter opinions differed inside Germany as to how best to gain ascendancy over their chief rival. Calculating that it would be unable to overcome British maritime

[2] The 1913 per capita GDP in the United Kingdom was almost four times that of pre-revolutionary Russia. Figures taken from Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2003), 60 and 100.

superiority Germany expanded its *Drang nach Osten* policies focussing on eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, which moreover offered Berlin the potential to expand its Near East ambitions. This included the creation of a rail link between Berlin and Baghdad facilitating trade and extending German influence over the lands of the Ottoman Empire. In turn, through its ally the Ottoman Empire, the Suez Canal would become accessible to German control and thereby a threat to the functioning of the British Empire. Additionally Germany would secure its former east African colonies thus providing a base from which to dispute British dominance of the African continent and beyond to Asia. For Germany as much as Britain the Canal was the gateway to Africa and Asia and therefore key to further *new*-imperialist expansion.

To wage the war successfully Britain and Germany needed to mobilise support among their respective populations and allies. This necessitated winning countries to their respective alliances and consolidating domestic support by assuaging popular concerns about the war. Propaganda was a progressively significant weapon in the war in particular to convince the general public that it was worthwhile.[3] The ideological battle was a part of the war and religious justifications and symbolism were frequently used as persuasive ways to win that support.[4] As in many past conflicts religion was often invoked in response to actual and alleged atrocities by the opponent who was portrayed as both immoral and ungodly. Christians on both sides invoked the support of god for their respective nations. In this climate Zionism as a political ideology which influenced British politicians had its own uniqueness combining a nationalist revivalism with a religious narrative. British and German politicians responded to the growth and influence of Zionism and sought to co-opt it to their war effort from an entirely pragmatic self-interest perspective. Taking into account the economic, military and political developments, this chapter will reflect on the issue of ideology as a factor influencing British adoption of the Zionist cause and policies and the proposal to establish a homeland for the Jews.

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[3] CAB 24/3 "British Propaganda in Allied and Neutral Countries". (CAB – Cabinet Papers).

[4] There were ambiguities in respect of the role of Christianity and imperialism. See for example: Shula Marks, "Southern Africa" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 560. "The missionary heritage however, was multi-faceted. If, in a general sense missionaries can be seen as the midwives of colonialism, encouraging individualism, wage labour, and commodity production, they also fostered the growth of a class of literate and educated Christian Africans who were paradoxically to become colonialism's most effective critics".

I will examine the British government's changing attitude towards the Ottoman Empire and the proposals for the division of its territories including Palestine at the conclusion of the war. Even though they had been allies in the war against the Central Powers, Britain and France had contending aspirations in the Near East. The solution was the secret Sykes-Picot agreement to partition the areas seized from the Ottoman Empire with the assistance of Arab forces who had fought alongside the British on the basis of promises of self-determination and the establishment of independent Arab states. The British, however, treated the aspirations of the Arab leaders as entirely contingent to their own imperial objectives.

The British and World War One

The war was a concatenation of issues posed principally, though not exclusively, on the international level which threatened, in the eyes of the British governments of the day, to overthrow their world order. Germany's rapid economic expansion, coupled with its desire to gain access to markets for its products, expand its maritime and territorial influence inevitably led to confrontation with the most powerful obstacle to achieving those ends, the British Empire. The German alliance with the Ottoman Empire in particular offered the prospect of disrupting if not completely destabilising British links to its Empire in Asia and access to a region of the world in which an increasingly significant commodity, oil, was being extracted. In this endeavour, the German Government sought to develop its *Drang nach Osten* policy, in part by attempting to utilise the Ottoman Empire's place in the Muslim world as a lever to gain their support and potentially to dislocate relationships between the British and a significant section of the Indian population.

Between 1914 and 1918 Britain, the most powerful nation in the world with the largest empire was in the midst of a war involving the established and emerging great powers of the day which engulfed the whole of Europe and shape the politics of the twentieth century.[5] As theatres of conflict developed in the Near East, parts of Africa and areas of the Far East, many British colonies and dominions were embroiled in the conflict which ultimately led to a re-division of political and economic spheres of

[5] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, *1688–1914*.

influences with global and historical repercussions.[6] By 1918 an estimated 70% of the world's population lived in countries under the influence of the Entente powers and many of the remaining 30% lived in countries associated with the Central Powers.[7]

From a population of 46 million, the British government sent around 5 million troops abroad, approximately 705,000 of whom were killed and 1,700,000 wounded.[8] Across the Empire, military personnel were mobilised from the British Dominions and colonies with nearly a million recruited from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and a further one million soldiers and non-combatants from India.[9] No previous war had seen the mobilisation of human and material resources on this scale before and as I will demonstrate this war was a product of the changes resulting from the emergence of a *new*-imperialism.

On the economic front the costs of the war did not affect all countries equally. Italy for example was one of those nations which needed financial backing from the Entente to play any part in the war and this economic dependency had structural implications for the country as it did for others in a similar situation. Despite the £60 million credit which the Italian government obtained from Britain following the 26th April 1915 Treaty of London, "(t)he demands of the war meant that the original credit had to be extended over and over again, and eventually Italy, like other Allied powers, entered the US market".[10] In Britain, during the course of the war Government spending rose from a pre-war figure of 8.1% in 1913, to 38.7% of GDP in 1917.[11] Britain, along with other members of the Entente, was obliged to purchase food and munitions from the USA and to take out loans to pay for the war which they financed in part by the sales of overseas assets. Britain ended the war in debt to the USA and lost the commanding position which it had held prior to 1914.[12] In the period immediately before the war, the USA economy was in recession and on the day the

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[6] Robert Holland, "The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114.
[7] Ibid., Table 1.1, 8.
[8] Holland, "The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918", 117.
[9] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion,* 50. Ferguson, *Empire*, 303. Holland, "The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918", 117.
[10] Francesco Galassi and Mark Harrison, "Italy at War: 1915–1918", 281.
[11] Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlitt, "The United Kingdom during World War 1: business as usual?" 210.
[12] Ibid. 220.

war began the Wall Street Stock Exchange closed because of panic about the possible repercussions for the country. However, by the end of the war, its economic position was transformed.

Britain turned to the Empire to supply the personnel and to the USA to supply the material and financial resources. The war had substantial repercussions domestically as a higher fatality rate than previous conflicts increased the demand for men to replace those killed and wounded. Female employment rose by about 50% increasing the numbers of women employed in jobs from which they had been excluded. In Britain agricultural production declined in the first three years as the emphasis switched to manufacturing war material. As average prices increased during the war, the value of real wages declined.[13] Moreover, the price of a range of goods doubled in the four-year period.[14] By the end of the war, British imperial power was diminished in comparison to the nineteenth century.[15]

The war had repercussions in the political sphere. A year after the declaration of war on 4th August 1914, the Liberal Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, was forced to restructure his government, creating a coalition with the Conservatives. Then in December 1916 he was replaced by his fellow Liberal, David Lloyd George who, as the new Prime Minister, established a War Cabinet to conduct the war.[16] Lloyd George also convened an Imperial War Cabinet through which some of the countries of the Empire were consulted.[17] "The Empire, in short, was to underwrite the extended belligerency on which the Lloyd George coalition was based".[18]

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[13] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics,*168-169.
[14] Ibid.,726.
See also Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlitt, "The United Kingdom during World War 1: business as usual?" in *The Economics of World War 1,* eds, Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 207.
[15] Angus Maddison, *Phases of Capitalist Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 39. In the opinion of Maddison economic "leadership passed to the USA in 1890".
[16] CAB 23/4, 13th December 1917. As an example - the minutes list 19 additional people in attendance.
[17] CAB 23/44A. In attendance on 31st July 1918 was the British Prime Minister and the Prime Ministers or representatives of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland alongside Viscount Milner Secretary of State for War, General Sir H. H. Wilson Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Sir M.P.A. Hankey Secretary of the War Cabinet.
[18] Robert Holland, "The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 125.

The newly formed War Cabinet was chaired by the Prime Minister David Lloyd George. In December 1916 its members were Lord Curzon, President of the Council; Andrew Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; Viscount Milner; and the Leader of the Labour Party Arthur Henderson MP. The majority of members of the Cabinet had all played leading roles in the Empire and shared a common view of Britain's role in the world.[19] Curzon was a former Viceroy of India from 1895 to 1906. Bonar Law was a staunch supporter of Sir Edward Carson, the opponent of Home Rule for Ireland. Alfred, Lord Milner, was an administrator with experience of conducting colonial wars especially in South Africa. The Labour Party member acted as an important conduit for government views and in turn kept the Cabinet informed of changing opinions in the trade union movement.

The Home Front

In its day-to-day business the War Cabinet dealt with a considerable number of domestic and international concerns analysing their significance, their implications for the conduct of the war and their consequences for British war aims.[20] Having sufficient troops to fight the war was essential and the Cabinet frequently discussed recruitment and the number of men eligible by age and fitness for conscription as difficulties arose, for example, because of the necessity to exempt certain groups of employees such as those in armaments production.[21] A wide variety of domestic topics, such as the prices of staple commodities and levels of productivity, occupied the business of their meetings.[22] Industrial disputes which might directly impact on the supply of materials for the war received particular attention and meeting after meeting recorded discussions about labour problems including strikes by sheet metal workers and plane makers in Coventry; the rates of bonuses to be paid to specific groups and the settlement of industrial disputes.[23]

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[19] Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, Liberal Unionists, the Labour Party, military figures and administrators attended its meetings. The Labour Party members were Arthur Henderson and George Barnes

[20] CAB 23/4, 19th December 1917 item 1 "The Western Front".
See for example War Cabinet Minutes for 1916–17 which contained items ranging across a wide variety of issues - for example: Western Front; Arab Revolt; Ireland; industrial action by workers; Conscription; Russian revolution; influence of the Irish situation on Australia's support for the war; financial relationship with the United States; German peace soundings; coal for Italy; rifles for Rumania.

[21] CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 288, 30th November 1917.

[22] George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Paladin, Reprinted 1988), 342.

[23] CAB 23/05, WC 310, 1st January 1918. A meeting at 6.30 pm dealt solely with a discussion on the "Labour Situation" making clear that events in Russia and Italy had caused the problems.

The War Cabinet paid close attention to the mood of workers and the level of backing for the war especially amongst those involved in industrial action scrutinising the levels of productivity as a barometer of that support. They noted the reactions of workers to political developments elsewhere, especially following the 1917 Russian revolution with the establishment of the Bolshevik government and critically their decision to withdraw from the war.[24] At one stage the influence of the Bolsheviks was considered so alarming that Sir Edward Carson was charged with preventing the press statements of "Trotzki [*sic*] and Lenin" being published.[25]

These domestic items were prominent on the War Cabinet's agenda although the bulk of the items were concerned with details about the war itself, developments at the front, the availability of the means to continue fighting and crucially how to finance it.[26] From time to time developments threw up new challenges or posed old ones in new ways, resulting in the business of meetings being rearranged as newer pressing items came to the fore.[27] Discussion ranged from responsibilities on the disposition of the army at the fronts, problems of conscription, consequences of the actions of foes and allies on military developments, the availability of bread, meat and cheese, the price of milk and the provision of oats for horses racing in the winter.[28]

Irish Independence and the United States of America

Britain faced the sharpening struggle for Irish independence which had already wrought political damage on the fortunes of the Liberal Party and remained an almost unresolvable problem before, during and after the war. Troops could not be conscripted from Ireland, rebellion forced the deployment of soldiers to maintain order and the political ignominy of defeat threatened to dent British credibility as a world

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See also Albrecht Ritschl, "The pity of peace: Germany's economy at war, 1914–1918", in Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, eds, *The Economics of World War 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 57. Throughout 1918 nearly one million British workers were on strike compared to around 400,000 German workers.

[24] CAB 23 "Mr Barnes stated that when he had mentioned the name of Trotzki [*sic*] at his meetings in Scotland during the past week, it had been received with cheers."

[25] CAB 23/4

[26] CAB 23, 9th December, 1916 item 5. The Minutes note that UK spending in the USA was running at $60 million a week and that a loan of $1,500 million would be needed by March 1917.

[27] CAB 24/38, "Report from the Ministry of Labour for the Week ending 9th January, 1918."

[28] CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 297, 13th December, 1917, 2-7 passim.

power. If Ireland, then what of India, Egypt or other parts of the then imperial domain?[29] Domestically, from the perspective of the British Government, the struggle for Irish independence had threatened a parliamentary and constitutional crisis, and had exposed fissures within the military. The Easter 1916 Rising, at the outset emblematic perhaps rather than seismic in its impact, nevertheless was itself indicative of the emergence of struggles for self-determination which would develop in the aftermath of the war. The struggle by the oldest of Britain's colonies for independence was a mark of the times, the beginning of the ending of the colonialist period typical of the *capitalist* phase of imperialism.

Even though the British government regarded the issue of Irish independence as a domestic concern those fighting for self-determination in Ireland regarded it as a struggle for national independence. The gravity of its impact on Britain was evidenced by the fact that precipitated a constitutional crisis and caused an act of rebellion amongst pro-Unionists in the British Army in 1914.[30] It was in essence a struggle for self-determination the outcome of which had national and international ramifications for the British government jeopardising its credibility as a power capable of retaining control over the Empire. The Irish diaspora, as I shall demonstrate, was a material factor in Cabinet decision making about the course of the war itself.

The British government was antagonistic to Home Rule for Ireland and leading protagonists in the campaign against independence were members of the War Cabinet. Prominent in their ranks were figures like Sir Edward Carson, a Unionist leader of the parliamentary anti-Home Rule current, and one of the initiators of the paramilitary Ulster Volunteers pledged to oppose by arms attempts by any Government to grant Home Rule or to split the northern, predominantly Protestant, parts of Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom. Carson became a member of the Cabinet in December 1916 as First Lord of the Admiralty and joined the War Cabinet in July 1917.

Whilst the Home Rule Act had been passed on 18th September 1914, the government decided to postpone its implementation until the end of the "European

[29] Matthew E. Plowman, "Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War 1," *New Hibernia Review* 7/3, 2003.
[30] George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Paladin, Reprinted 1988). Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).

War", a move that angered those seeking independence.[31] Armed rebellion was a constant concern to the Cabinet as reports increased of people across Ireland openly conducting military drills in preparation for an armed revolt. According to some estimates "in August 1914, there were over a quarter of a million men enrolled in citizen militias in Ireland". [32] Even industrial disputes in Ireland, such as a railway workers strike, were viewed as having the potential to become politicised and become a focus for the general sentiment for independence.[33] In Dublin a banner hung over Liberty Hall the headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and of the Irish Citizens Army, both led by James Connolly, proclaimed "Neither King nor Kaiser". Its declaration refusing to align with either group of belligerents resonated with sentiments in Ireland which was reflected by the caution with which the British government approached the question of military conscription there. Although the 1916 Rising was suppressed the demands raised by the rebel forces resonated across Ireland and whilst a law was passed authorising conscription prompted by a crisis of manpower on the Western Front in early 1918, it was never implemented.

The government's handling of events in Ireland resonated well beyond Britain's shores. The War Cabinet was sensitive to reactions to any measures they took and were concerned about the potential influence of Irish émigré communities in the USA and Australia on those governments.[34] In the USA a negative reaction to British policy on Ireland might influence the federal government's assistance to the British war effort whilst in Australia it might hinder the recruitment of men to fight. An example of the way the Cabinet weighed these considerations could be seen at a meeting on 21st December 1916 just six months after the British suppression of the Rising when a debate took place on peace proposals to end the war in Europe drafted

[31] Deirdre McMahon "Ireland and the Empire Commonwealth, 1900–1948," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138.
The Home Rule Act or the Government of Ireland Act 1914 granted a degree of autonomy to Ireland establishing a bicameral parliament with powers to deal with most national matters. Passed in the House of Commons it was blocked on three occasions by the House of Lords.
[32] Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 28. The total population of Ireland was in the region of 4,500,000.
[33] CAB 23, 30th November 1916, 23, item 8 "Irish Railways General Strike": "organised labour had joined hands with organised political force and it was evident that the Irish Nationalist party were ready to take charge of the railway trouble and use their political power to secure a settlement at their dictation".
[34] See for example Townshend, *Easter 1916*, 32. Deirdre McMahon, "Ireland and the Empire Commonwealth, 1900–1948," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire* Volume IV, eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 141.

by President Woodrow Wilson. Also on their agenda was the fate of some 350 Irish prisoners, of the 3,000 who had been arrested following the Easter Rising, who were still held in England.[35] In the debate, Henry Duke, Chief Secretary for Ireland and a lawyer by profession, was more influenced in his judgement by political considerations than legal ones. He put to the War Cabinet that it would be more beneficial to relationships with the USA if the men were released. Indeed he stressed that it was "desirable ... to foster the impression in the United States ... that the new Government was approaching the Irish question in a generous but not timorous spirit".[36] The Cabinet was anxious to retain the material and financial backing of the USA Administration for its war efforts and adapted its policies on Ireland, as on other issues, to secure that support.[37]

This eagerness to ensure that the USA administration was not alienated by Cabinet decisions was influenced by Britain's growing economic dependency on that country and the British hope that at some point they would enter the war as combatants themselves. Politically and economically related judgements made by the British government during the course of the war were influenced by the attitudes adopted by the USA as an emerging world power. Even if the USA did not intervene militarily until 1917 its economic weight was beginning to be felt across the world.[38] Beneath the surface tectonic shifts were taking place between the rival groups of powers and importantly within them.[39] British concern for the potential economic aspects of the outcome of the war were paramount.

Kitchener, De Bunsen and the Near East

Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War in Asquith's Cabinet and a former Vice Consul in Anatolia, had earlier in his career surveyed Palestine and adjacent

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[35] CAB 23/1, War Cabinet 14, 21st December, 1916. Of course it should be remembered that one of the leading figures arrested was Eamon De Valera, a citizen of the USA, for whom the Consulate made representations concerning his fate.
[36] CAB 23/1, War Cabinet 14, 21st December, 1916, 46.
[37] CAB 23/3, War Cabinet 190, 19th July, 1917, 7. Appendix 11 note by Mr. Duke, 11th July 1917.
[38] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 362. Having faced economic recession in 1914, the USA profited greatly from the war selling more than $2 billion worth of goods to the allies.
[39] A. J. Stockwell, "Imperialism and Nationalism in South East Asia" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 466. The reality of the changed relationship was reflected in the decision by Britain to agree the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty accepting parity with the USA on capital ships.

areas. Premised on the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, his *Memorandum Alexandretta and Mesopotamia*, submitted to the Cabinet on 16th March 1915, proposed the development of a railway line connecting the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea as an alternative route to the colonies.[40] Kitchener was convinced that in the years ahead, Russia would continue to pursue its ambitions to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea and to the Persian Gulf. He viewed Russia as a threat because of its interest in Afghanistan potentially disrupting vital military and trade routes to India. He was, moreover, apprehensive about the ambitions towards Syria of a post-war revivified France. For him France, "having established herself in Syria in close proximity to the Nile Delta" would become a threat to Egypt as well.[41]

His paper focused on an analysis of the military significance of the area but went further showing an acute awareness of its economic importance. In countering the potential threat to the Suez Canal, he argued that the development of the Alexandretta-Mesopotamia link made good military and economic sense, because "(Alexandretta) … affords a natural Mediterranean terminus for the Baghdad Railway … an excellent anchorage for transports and for merchant shipping (and) it lends itself readily to defence by shore batteries".[42] These advantages provided an excellent centre he suggested, from which "to guard our interests in the Persian oil fields, and to control the land route from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, which will eventually become our most direct and quickest line of communication with India".[43]

The Cabinet however dismissed Kitchener's proposal that Alexandretta become the eastern Mediterranean terminus for British operations in favour of the more southerly port of Haifa in Palestine. They made this choice to avoid any encroachment on those areas the French aspired to control whilst still enabling them to construct a "British-owned railway from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia (because it was both) strategically necessary and commercially viable".[44] The line which the committee suggested, would be to the south of what they assessed would and indeed did become the French sphere of interest after the war through the granting to them of

[40] CAB 24/1. See also CAB 24/1/0014. Note by the Secretary M.P.A. Hankey March 17th 1915.
[41] Ibid.,1
[42] CAB 24/1. 3
[43] Ibid., 3.
[44] Ibid. Para 30. This was still under discussion in 1929. See CAB 24/205.

the Mandate for Syria. The British Government had of course identified the countries lying further south, Palestine, Transjordan and Mesopotamia, as important to focus on to guarantee a secure link from the Persian Gulf to Haifa.[45]

In April 1915, a Committee chaired by Sir Maurice De Bunsen was appointed by the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, "to consider the nature of British desiderata in Turkey in Asia in the event of a successful conclusion of the war".[46] The proposals of the De Bunsen Committee, which reported on 30th June 1915, were based on a British victory over the Ottoman Empire.[47] The composition of the Committee, which included representatives of the Foreign Office, India Office, Admiralty and the Board of Trade reflected the variety of interests that were involved. Sir Mark Sykes presented the final report to the Committee of Imperial Defence in July 1915. The report illustrated by maps, included alternative scenarios and was presented on the basis that "any attempt to formulate (British desiderata) must as far as possible be made to fit in with the known or understood aspirations of those who are our Allies to-day, but may be our competitors to-morrow".[48] The Committee summarised the wishes of the respective parties noting that the French Government, "demanded Cilicia and Syria, in which latter term they included Palestine and the Christian Holy Places".[49] Apart from this potential point of friction there was also worry about the danger of Britain overreaching itself since, "our Empire is wide enough already, and our task is to consolidate the possession we already hold, and pass on to those who come after an inheritance that stands four-square to the world".[50] These anxieties included of course disquiet about Russia's ambitions and potential threats to Mesopotamia, Afghanistan and, as a consequence and most importantly, India.

The clear focus in the report was the role of any agreement regarding "Asiatic Turkey" as it links to "one of the cardinal principles of our policy in the East, our special and supreme position in the Persian Gulf."[51] Pre-eminent amongst the

[45] CAB 24/1 In a telegram under the initials "A. H." 14th March 1915 a proposal is made that Mesopotamia come under the control of the Government of India. A further note from General Sir Edmund Barrow describes Palestine as "the connecting link between" Mesopotamia and Egypt.
[46] CAB 42/3/12 (Pages unnumbered – maps follow page 34.)
[47] CAB 42/3/12. *Committee of Imperial Defense, Asiatic Turkey,* 30th June 1915.
[48] Ibid. Para. 6.
[49] Ibid. Para. 4.
[50] Ibid. Para. 10.
[51] Ibid. Para. 11.

prerequisites that the Committee identified were economic goals which British governments repeatedly saw as central and these included "prevention of discrimination of all kinds against our trade throughout the territories now belonging to Turkey, and the maintenance of the existing important markets for British commerce" coupled to "security for the development of undertakings in which we are interested, such as oil production, river navigation, and (the) construction of irrigation works".[52] The purpose of the work on the irrigation systems was to develop the productivity of Mesopotamia which the Committee estimated could bring "back to cultivation 12,000,000 acres of fertile soil … (which) … would in time of emergency provide a British granary which should go far to relieve us of dependence on foreign harvests".[53] The document embodied the *new*-imperialist perspective to ensure British control over raw materials, the domination of markets and investment in agricultural production to benefit domestic consumption.

The Suez Canal

Whilst to some Palestine appeared to have little or no intrinsic economic significance, it did have a military, political and commercial importance because of its proximity to the Suez Canal, situation at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and as a terminal for a land link to the Persian Gulf. This view was strengthened with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 bringing increased trade between Europe, Asia, East Africa and Australia. In November 1875, without Parliamentary or Cabinet approval, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, aided by Lord Rothschild, moved swiftly to buy a major shareholding in the canal at the cost of £4 million.[54] His decision was additionally influenced by the fact that Britain was already involved in the economy of Egypt where following earlier investment, Britain had by 1876 become the main creditor for the bankrupt country.[55] Beyond Egypt, trade with the British Empire to those countries which could be accessed through the Canal, had become a priority for Disraeli.[56] In 1876, Lord Chancellor Hugh Cairns summed up the position when he wrote to the Disraeli, "It is now *the Canal and India*; there is no such thing now as

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid. Para. 46
[54] Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1981), 127.
[55] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion,* 364.
[56] Ibid., 388.

India alone. India is any number of ciphers; but the Canal is the unit that makes these ciphers valuable".[57] The Canal was to play a critical role in Britain securing a dominant trading role and thereby control over emerging markets.

The Canal was especially important to the British because control of Palestine either by Germany or its Ottoman ally, would threaten both the Canal and any land route across the near East.[58] Germany was ambitious to develop its influence in the region by building a railway link between Berlin and Baghdad and well understood the importance of the Canal to the British.[59] Like the Liberal Prime Minister Lord Palmerston in the 1830s, the coalition government of Lloyd George initially opposed a break-up of the Ottoman Empire which they regarded as a block to Russian ambitions in the Near East, Afghanistan and India. In the event that Constantinople might no longer be capable of thwarting Russian schemes Lloyd George's government considered ways in which London might maintain a secure route to India and the colonies of the East.[60] A land connection between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf would save considerable time and therefore be a benefit to trade and the deployment of troops to India if it were called for.[61] However a land link alone would not cope with the scale of trade between Britain and India.

Before 1914 Britain had complete naval superiority in the world. It was "the biggest ship builder … (and) … its ships carried 52% of the sea-borne trade of the world".[62] The scale of the exports from India can be assessed from the War Cabinet *Report for 1918* which noted that "the annual value of Indian war exports is estimated to have reached £110,000,000".[63] In certain areas the imports were directly connected to the war effort. "Sandbags and other jute goods are the largest individual item on the list of India's material contributions to the war. The total value of the jute goods

[57] Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792–1923* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1987), 226.
[58] CAB 37/123/43 Herbert Samuel expressed this view in his paper *The Future of Palestine.*
[59] Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express, The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power, 1898–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 11.
[60] Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, 73.
[61] CAB 24/1, *Alexandretta and Mesopotamia*, Memorandum by Lord Kitchener, 16th March 1915, 2. See Sykes–Picot Agreement which emphasised importance of Alexandretta and Haifa as ports for British use. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 428.
[62] Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy 1858-1914* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2006), 126.
[63] CAB 24/86. See p, 228. Current equivalent value estimated as in excess of £7.5 billion.

exported from India in 1918 was £38,000,000".[64] India was the source of a variety of other raw materials essential to the war including wheat and manganese used in the production of steel.[65] In relation to the 1914–1918 war the Canal was a vital link to India.[66] The traffic was not only one-way. India was in turn a major importer purchasing more than 67% of its goods from Britain in 1909–1910, a relationship favouring the British which they were anxious to sustain.[67] India provided much more than raw materials to the British war effort. It has been estimated that between 1914 and 1918 over 1.5 million men left India to serve with the British army including over 700,000 troops who fought in the Near East and an estimated 140,000 who fought on the Western Front in France and Belgium.[68] With a population in excess of 300 million the imperial power looked on India as an almost limitless source of recruits for the war effort. The seizure of the Canal by Germany or the Ottoman Empire would have been a major blow to Britain's economy and to its capacity to wage the war isolating India and jeopardising their ambitions for the whole of the Near East.

Palestine and Oil.

Both the Kitchener and the De Bunsen reports paid close attention to the importance of economic issues in relation to the development of British strategy on the Near East and especially access to and control over oil resources. Oil was becoming increasingly important as a commodity and although none had been discovered in Palestine, the country was well placed to act as a terminal for shipping in the eastern Mediterranean and a land link to the oilfields further east. Politicians had already begun to appreciate the much wider potential for the use of oil.[69] New forms of warfare, like the tank, the use of airplanes, the need for more flexible forms of transportation generally and of course the conversion of warships from coal to oil, accelerated the demand for the fuel. On 17th June 1914 Parliament had made the decision to purchase 51% of the stock of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in order to

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid. It is worth noting that British shipping carried the overwhelming majority of goods between Britain and India with Indian shipping, even by 1924, accounting for a mere 2%.
[67] Habib, *Indian Economy 1858–1914,* 35. Table 2.6.
[68] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, *1688–1914,* 181. See also Niall Ferguson, *Empire,* 306.
[69] CAB 24/95. Anglo-French Conference on the Turkish Settlement, 22nd December 1919. Page 26. "Like iron and coal, petroleum has assumed a vital part in the independence and "self-defense" of all the nations of the world". Appendix to Minutes of the Third Meeting. French Note.

avoid potential dependency on non-British companies, such as Royal Dutch/Shell or the USA based Standard Oil. Access to oil reserves became even more important during the war, when guaranteeing adequate supplies of it had become a major worry for all belligerents.[70] Bearing these concerns in mind and following the defeat of the Central Powers Britain began to define geographically its sphere of influence by securing Palestine as the base from which to oversee the region and move towards the creation of a Jewish homeland on its soil.[71]

Whilst the British Government took the view that individual territories were of greater or lesser political or economic weight, the Empire itself was seen as an entity, ruled from London and linked by a chain of ports in which to refuel. Palestine, the War Cabinet was advised by Amery, in the 20th May 1917 secret memorandum *The Russian situation and its consequences*, was a vital link, critical to Britain's ability to retain the East African colonies in particular but with implications for the continued security of the entire Empire from the threat of the Central Powers. Amery argued:

> Even if we retain East Africa the position will be extremely serious unless Palestine can be secured. For without the control of Palestine it will be impossible either to secure eventual railway communication between Egypt and Mesopotamia, or to prevent a Turkish reoccupation or reabsorption of Arabia, and the collapse of the whole Arab movement to which our prestige in the Moslem world is now committed. With a reorganised German-Turkish Army, as a vanguard of the Armies of Central Europe, in a position to strike effectively either at Baghdad or the Suez Canal, and with submarine bases in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea, our position both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt would he increasingly precarious, The collapse of Russia has, in fact, made Palestine, of the issues still left undecided by the war, one of the most vital for the whole future of the British Empire.[72]

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[70] Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 151.
[71] CAB 24/95. Anglo-French Conference on the Turkish Settlement, 22nd December 1919. Oil was also a matter of discussion between the British and the French. See "Arab Countries" Page 23. (File Page 261).
[72] CAB 24/14, 3 (also listed as p. 126) It is interesting to note that in a footnote to the document on the same page the author expresses anxiety that the defence of Palestine could become too expensive in which case "The alternative, … would be to neutralize it or place it under direct American protection".

A setback for the British in the Arab world might affect Britain's prestige in the "Moslem world" more generally and might encourage Muslims to become more actively engaged in the developing anti-British alliance in India.[73] Nevertheless Amery argued that the Western Allies would eventually be successful since "behind them are the almost inexhaustible reserves of America".[74] The reserves cited included both the numbers of prospective soldiers, but also the vast economic and productive resources of the USA.[75] Russia's withdrawal from the Allied Powers, it was reasoned, would make France more dependent on the "strength and security of the British Empire" than might have been the case before and as a consequence France would be obliged to back British ambitions for the region.[76] "France has now a direct interest in our retention of East Africa and of Mesopotamia, and in our securing Palestine, which she would not have had if Germany had been crushed, or if the Central European block had been broken in the Balkans or at the Dardanelles".[77] The British viewpoint was that they clearly were gaining advantage over both their German foe and their French ally.

Amery, the author of the memorandum, had Zionist sympathies and contributed to the composition of the Balfour Declaration as well as encouraging Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the Zionist politician, to form a Jewish Legion in the British army. In this document however there is no compelling evidence that his focus on Palestine was an attempt to insinuate a pretext for the creation of a Jewish homeland. For him, Palestine had a significance beyond its geographical boundaries because its loss would have implications for the "very existence of the British Empire" and the independence of Britain itself.[78] Palestine, he argued, was an integral part of the Empire's

[73] India at this time meaning all of the countries of South Asia – India, Pakistan and Bangladesh with their significant Muslim populations. For on-going concerns about the impact of the war on India see also CAB 23/14/ 0002 (Secret document dated 27th March 1918.).
Matthew E. Plowman, "Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War 1," *New Hibernia Review* 7/3, 2003, 81. The emergence of anti-British nationalist movements was a real concern. See for example links established between Indian and Irish nationalists with support from the Germans.
[74] CAB 24/14, 4 The United States of America declared war on 6th April 1917, just one month earlier.
[75] Ronald Hyam, "The British Empire in the Edwardian Era" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV,* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56.
[76] CAB 24/14, 4.
[77] Ibid. 4.
[78] CAB 24/14

comprehensive geo-maritime plan and defending was therefore both a tactical and a strategic imperative.

Like Amery, Ormsby-Gore outlined the possible implications of the changes taking place in Russia for the future of the war, explaining that, in his view, its withdrawal would benefit the Ottoman Empire. He also reaffirmed the specific significance of British interests in the outcome of the war in the Near East not only for the Empire in general but building on Kitchener's earlier memorandum, linked this quite explicitly to wider economic concerns. The author argued that "control of this area gives the controller the essential strategic and economic mastery of the communications between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, between Asia and Africa, and of the natural outlet for more than half Russia's agricultural produce besides the produce of her great undeveloped southern coalfield".[79] The British were concerned to secure their economic interests but were additionally intent on thwarting the ambitions of rival powers even when, notionally, they were allies. Amery wanted to ensure British domination of the coal resources and thereby place Britain in a dominating position in the world market for the commodity. Cheap coal from Russia could undercut the price of British coal and possibly stimulate an industrial revolution in the Near East and even India.

New-imperialist interests were evolving from a focus on territorial acquisition and the retention of colonies to the control of natural resources, restricting access to trade routes or markets and generally inhibiting the economic development of others in the region. There were growing pressures to secure oil reserves since it was four times more efficient than coal and would greatly benefit British shipping. British interests were already well established in this field. Winston Churchill MP, appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911, had ensured that by 1912 the "British navy had gone over to oil and (that) the Iranian reserves were the source of its supply".[80] He was anxious to ensure British control over the oil and consequently secured a 51% stake for the government in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company the principal producer of fuel

[79] CAB 24/143, 1 (also listed as 246).
[80] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict,* 59.

from Persia.[81] The British were heavily dependent on the USA for their oil. Having supplies which they could directly control would give them greater independence from the USA.

The importance of gaining access to and control over the supply of oil was equally reflected in the German attempt after the Russian Revolution to try to gain control of the Baku oilfields. German geologists were well aware of the availability of oil around Mosul from before the war.[82] The future of Baku was a central question during the protracted Brest-Litovsk negotiations at which Leon Trotsky for the Revolutionary government delayed signing any sort of treaty in an attempt to hold on to the region and its oil. The onslaught faced by Germany on the Western Front in the last months of the war caused it to downplay the importance of the negotiations and abandon its interests in the Caucasus. The Ottoman army briefly won a victory at Baku only to retreat following the Treaty of Mudros signed on 30th October 1918. Nevertheless the attention paid to the future of the Caucasus echoed British focus on the oil rich lands of Mesopotamia and Persia.[83] Germany, like Britain, without any of its own sources of oil had seen Baku as a potential solution.

Oil was to continue to be a priority, not only for Britain, but also for their ally France. After the war discussions with the French on 22nd December 1919 had covered a wide range of topics arising from the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. These revolved, in part, around the precise direction that the border between the French and British Mandate territories should take. Lord Curzon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs led the British side during the discussions. The British were keen to ensure in accordance with De Bunsen's suggestion that the border would be established in such a way so as to guarantee British control over any railway running from the "Mediterranean to Mesopotamia". In contrast the French sought to ensure that there would be "a satisfactory agreement regarding the oil in this area".[84] The Chief

[81] Glen Balfour-Paul, "Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 493.
[82] Barr, *A Line in the Sand,* 66. According to Barr it was the Managing Director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company who was responsible for recommending the northern border of Palestine. (See 90).
[83] McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express*, See especially Chapter 19. "Consolation Prize? The Race for Baku."
[84] CAB 24/95.

Secretary for Political and Commercial Affairs at the French Foreign Office, M. Bethelot sought to ensure that French interests in respect of oil might be secured given that its availability from Baku and Batum might be jeopardised following the revolution in Russia. [85]

The building of railways was an equally important feature of the development of the *new*-imperialism requiring huge levels of investment, opening new markets and expediting trade.[86] Britain, Germany and France each saw the possibilities that might arise from an expanded railway system in the region. The future of Mosul was an important part of the considerations and the precise line that the railway from Acre to Mosul might follow also took their attention. The French saw this as a major question given that the railway might be extended to India, Tehran and even extend into China duplicating the "Trans-Siberian Railway by a track from Constantinople to Peking" together with a Trans-Persian line running "from Moscow to Kurachi [sic] along the Indian Ocean through Vladikavkaz, Tiflis, Tabriz, Ispahan and Kerman".[87] The building and expansion of railway networks had been a material manifestation of the expansion of *new*-imperialist expansionism. It tied in with the perspective of controlling the oil in the region.

Imperialist economic rivalry of the *new*-imperialist age was not just about outperforming your competitor, it was about stopping your rival gaining any advantage and in fact as far as possible inflicting disadvantage on them. The War Cabinet were advised that: "The control of this area, gives the controller the essential strategic and economic mastery of the communications between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, between Asia and Africa, and of the natural outlet for more than half Russia's agricultural produce besides the produce of her great undeveloped southern coalfield".[88] Denying Russia an opening for the agricultural products and preventing the development of the Russian coalfield would remove a rival to British production and that of its colonies. In doing so Britain would strengthen its hand in

[85] CAB 24/95, 22.
[86] See Robert Kubicek "British Expansion, Empire, and Technological Change" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Lenin quotes statistics on the expansion of railways. V. I. Lenin *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, Twentieth Printing 1986, First published 1917).
[87] CAB 24/95, 28. Second Part of French Note of December 12, 1919.
[88] CAB 24/143,1.

the market place in these commodities limiting the flow of goods from areas where the cost of production would be lower and therefore prices likely to be below those of products the British brought to sell. Obviously the transport costs of goods from those Russian sources would also have an advantage over any which the British would bring to market.

Germany, The Russian Revolution and Palestine

In his secret war mentioned above, L.S. Amery presented an analysis of the developing situation in Russia.[89] Amery a Conservative Party Member of Parliament born in Gorakhpur, India, assessed the impact of Russian internal developments on the war and their ramifications for the balance of power between the Central Powers and the Allied Powers. He painted an even more alarming scenario than Kitchener's, forecasting the expansion of German influence and identifying Palestine specifically as their target. He argued that the global threat arising from an expansion of German interests would impact directly on the British colonies. "The outstanding result of the change in Russia's position," he explained, "is that of Germany's two main projects - the creation of a Middle-Europe extending from Hamburg to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and the displacement of the British Empire by German world domination - the former is practically made good, and, but for accidents, beyond our power to defeat".[90]

Amery argued that it was crucial to build an effective alliance to counter this offensive in the wake of any changed situation in Russia and the coming to power of a government less interested in continuing the war. He suggested that the territorial ambitions of France, Italy and Greece had to be accommodated and somewhat exaggeratedly, compared the predicament of Britain with that of the smaller and less powerful countries of Europe which had been overpowered by Germany and its allies earlier in the war. He held the view that "it is not only Belgian or Serbian liberty, but British liberty and the very existence of the British Empire which are directly threatened by the great military Empire which Germany has built up for herself in the course of the war - a Power whose hand will be simultaneously at our throat in the English Channel and the Suez Canal, unless we can still drive her out of Belgium and

[89] CAB 24/14.
[90] Ibid., 1.

Palestine."[91] The future of Britain and the defence of the British Empire, he asserted, were indivisible and Palestine was essential to maintaining their well-being.

The task, Amery concluded, was to reduce any advantage that Germany might obtain as a result of the Russian withdrawal from the war, through action by the Allied Powers to achieve "the liberation of Belgium or the conquest of Palestine and Syria".[92] The Memorandum forecast the possibility of the formation by Germany of a huge Middle European block increasing "enormously the danger which would threaten the very existence of the British Empire if Germany should be able to recover any of her Colonies (except possibly those in West Africa), or if the Turk should retain his hold over Palestine".[93] He pointed out that the numbers of people living in countries under German control would then increase from 70 to 170 million, thereby vastly increasing the human resources at their disposal. Furthermore he argued that "if East Africa should, by any chance, be restored to a Germany which, through Turkey, remains in control of, Palestine, our position in Egypt and British East Africa would become one of the utmost difficulty and danger".[94]

A few weeks after Amery's document, "E. R. B" and "J. W. H." produced the *Memorandum on German War Aims* for the War Cabinet in July 1917, examining the German views on the possible outcomes to the war and their alternative perspectives.[95] The Memorandum assessed the range of views being advanced by the major political parties in Germany and attempted to gauge support for them. The War Cabinet was advised that there were five main lines of thought about German strategy which included: the advocacy of a strategy to increase German sea power and make annexations to "the West"; the consolidation of a "Central European bloc of Allied Powers" reinforcing "Mittel-Europa"; the strengthening of the Berlin-to-Bagdad axis through the control of the Ottoman Empire; the adoption of an extensive colonisation policy to create an African Empire and lastly the acquisition of new land to the East

[91] Ibid., 6.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 3.
[94] Ibid., 3. Germany had formally held territories in East Africa but had ceded these to Britain in the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890.
[95] CAB 24/23. The document is dated 15th July 1917 with a *Postscript* dated 25th July 1917. Since the document is an exploration of opinions originally expressed in German, interpreted for the War Cabinet in the midst of the conflict it is necessary to add a caveat that it is a British document about their enemy's thinking.

through the annexation of Russian territory. The document assessed the likely success of the contending views in winning German governmental support and the consequences of those alternatives for British interests in Mesopotamia and Palestine.

If the proposal to expand German interests in east Africa were to be adopted and be successful the authors argued that it would have implications for the fate of the Suez Canal opening it up to German shipping. Such a development would have grave consequences for Britain cutting off vital trade routes and causing problems domestically for the London Government. Hans Delbrück, cited as "one of the most moderate of the 'Moderates,' one of the most emphatic opponents of annexation in the West", a supporter of the German orientation towards Mittel-Europa and the Berlin-to-Bagdad options, was reported as suggesting that, "if England loses the Canal, all the bands connecting its Empire are loosened" to the extent that even the "Central Government in London might grow insecure".[96] To Germany the winning of the Suez Canal would have a dual advantage allowing its fleet free access to the Indian Ocean whilst creating instability within Britain itself.[97]

However, by the time that the War Cabinet came to look at the document, events had already overtaken it. As the Postscript added on Thursday 19th July noted, the Reichstag had already resolved, that Germany was "not animated by lust of conquest" and that the "Reichstag stands for peace and understanding and for lasting conciliation of nations. Annexations, political, economic and financial oppressions are contradictory to such peace".[98] The Reichstag resolution represented a decisive shift in Germany's ambitions and accordingly the authors of the memorandum amended their own conclusions. They now judged that the creation of a German Empire in Africa, a "German India", had all but been abandoned.[99] The Reichstag, it appeared, had conceded that British naval superiority could not be challenged.

The subject was returned to in a further document, *Review of the Near Eastern Situation* written by another Conservative Member of Parliament, William Ormsby-

[96] Ibid.,11. and Ibid., 7.
[97] Ibid., 5. The Suez Canal is referred to as "England's neck" in the document.
[98] Ibid.,18.
[99] CAB 24/23, 9.

Gore, presented just one month later, on 14th June 1917.[100] Ormsby-Gore expressed apprehension about the consequences of Germany gaining a foothold in the region with its "vast colonisable and undeveloped lands of Asia Minor, Syria, and Mesopotamia". He feared that it would lead to "the absorption of the Ottoman Empire into German Mittel-Europa".[101] A development of such scope, he suggested, would result in Germany holding sway across the Near East constituting a dire threat to British imperial interests, menacing the Suez Canal and its defences and bringing German forces to shores of the Red Sea. Until now this had been averted because of the intervention of the Sharif of Mecca but if that had not been the case then the Baghdad Railway, he concluded, "(would have been) a German arrow pointed directly at India".[102]

As the war continued, the loss of life, the privations suffered at home and the growth of industrial discontent took their toll. The Russian Revolution, albeit from a distance, challenged the very premises of the war and suggested alternatives which resonated with masses of people both in Britain, across Europe and even further afield.[103] Confronted by this phenomenon the imperial powers were obliged to chart a new course to achieve their ambitions. Colonial expansionism was politically discredited and became progressively a military and economic problem for the British.

At the beginning of the war Russia, a less potent imperial power moving away from its predominantly *pre-capitalist* agrarian dominated economy towards a more industrialised *capitalist* one, was an established member of the Entente Alliance. The Bolshevik led revolution of 1917 ended that union, changing the configuration of the war when it withdrew from the conflict ending the combat on the Eastern Front. However its departure raised other political challenges in the international field. The Bolshevik Government exposed the secret negotiations which had taken place prior to the war between the *new*-imperialists especially relating to the lands of the former

[100] CAB 24/143.
[101] Ibid., 1.
[102] Ibid. For a lengthier exposition of this issue see also McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express*. Please note although different authors use different spellings I have standardised all spellings as "Sharif".
[103] Declarations of revolt and mass strikes by parties and organisations supportive of the Bolsheviks took place in Holland, Germany, Hungary and in a number of large cities across Europe. It should be noted that in the post-war polarisation fascism too secured a major victory in Italy with the election of Benito Mussolini a former socialist who now promoted a corporatist perspective.

Ottoman Empire laying bare their plans whilst simultaneously raising the standard of self-determination amongst peoples accustomed to being part of the Russian Empire.[104] The Russian Revolution constituted a further threat to the *new*-imperialists' goal of monopolising the world market. By championing the right of self-determination the Bolsheviks presented a political challenge which disputed the desire by Germany and Britain for example for complete control over the sources of raw material and world markets.

Ultimately the British considered the stance taken by the Bolshevik government as so threatening that in 1918 the British together with France, the USA, Italy, Japan and a host of other nations, sent troops to fight alongside the anti-Bolshevik forces who were also joined in the east at Vladivostok by Japanese troops.[105] However despite this decision the growing economic challenges facing Britain forced the government to rethink the strategy. In a House of Commons statement on 13th November 1919, on the subject of opposition to the Bolshevik Government in Russia, the Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated that, "The Government has repeatedly made it clear to the House of Commons that with the crushing financial burden already cast upon it by the Great War, it cannot contemplate the assumption of new obligations under this head".[106] Despite the importance that he had attached to Russia, because he considered that "a settlement of the Russian problem [*sic*] … essential to the reconstruction of the world", he nevertheless felt unable to go beyond the very substantial commitment of around £100,000,000, "in cash and kind" that had been provided as "assistance sent to Russia".[107] The inter-imperialist rivalry of World War One had drained the economic capacities of the country and the losses of life had induced a deep war-weariness. Even though Russia's economy lagged far behind that of Britain the Prime Minister had to concede

[104] Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans:The Great War in the Middle East 1914–1920* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 357. Trotsky published the Sykes–Picot agreement in *Izvestia* in late November which was then republished by the *Manchester Guardian* on 26th and 28th November.
[105] E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923*, *Vol. 3* (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 95.
[106] CAB 23/35. (*Conference of Ministers on Miscellaneous Matters. S. Series Volume I*). See also HC Deb 13 November 1919 vol 121 cc 469-77.
[107] Ibid. "Russia" here is a clear reference to the anti-Bolshevik forces. The French too were in a similarly weak position and were proposing to seek economic help from the United States of America. (See CAB 23/35, Notes of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and M. Loucheur, 3rd December 1919).

that there was nothing more that could be done to support their White Russian allies and in 1920 the troops were withdrawn.

War, Religion and Racism

Ormsby-Gore's War Cabinet paper raised a new question concerning the potential implications of German influence in the region on "two great world forces … *viz*., Islam and Jewry".[108] His use of the term "world forces" without elaboration suggests a shared evaluation of the two groups by members of the Cabinet though there is no analysis of the sense in which they might be called "world forces", nor in what way they might be similar or different. In numerous papers concerns had been expressed about the potential impact on the attitude of the "Moslem world" to British policies since a number of countries of the Empire had majority Muslim populations.

The potential for alienating Indian Muslims weighed on the minds of the British and numerous Cabinet papers refer to political developments that might affect attitudes amongst the Muslim population. General Sir E.G. Barrow, Military Secretary of the India Office, submitting a Memorandum to the Cabinet entitled *The Military Situation in India and the Middle East* on 24th November 1915, discussed concerns about the potential volatility in India.[109] Barrow emphasised the need to send "white soldiers" [*sic*] to counter any notions that the British were unable to supply sufficient military to handle any problems and that they might have been weakened by the war efforts. The difficulties inside India could be managed, he argued "if they [the Indian troops] remain loyal, and if the 17,000 Imperial and Nepalese troops also can be relied on, we shall be able to hold our own, but the "if" is fraught with such tremendous issues that I doubt if any Government dare take the risk".[110]

Ormsby-Gore was preoccupied with the thought that the Muslim communities would be concerned about the fate of the Islamic holy places and held the view that if Turkish forces retook Mecca then Britain's credibility in the eyes of the "100 million Moslem subjects of the King-Emperor in Asia and Africa" would be seriously damaged.[111] This sensitivity to the opinions of the Muslims also related to the

[108] Ibid., 2.
[109] CAB 24/1/0046.
[110] Ibid. 4.
[111] CAB 24/143, 2.

importance attached to India and the fear that a defeat would further stimulate the developing independence movement.[112] The German government were themselves of the opinion that anti-British propaganda might be spread by pilgrims to Mecca encouraging insurrections in the wider Muslim world.[113]

If India became independent it would threaten both the economic advantages the British had gained from the country as well as the whole structure of the Empire. The Indian nationalist movement was partially split between Muslims and Hindus but the Muslim community itself was additionally divided by "sect, region, language, and socio-economic status".[114] A development which might lead to the Muslim community becoming united around their religion could lead to a challenge to the credibility of the British rulers and potentially undermine the structures of the Empire in India. If the Ottoman forces and their allies could defeat the British then that might encourage all Indians to give even more support to the struggle for independence. It was a pragmatic politico-military consideration that lay behind Ormsby-Gore's apprehension about Muslim responses to the loss by the British of the holy places rather than a religious concern.

At the same time Ormsby-Gore expressed anxiety about divisions within Jewry which might lead some within Zionism to support Germany's aspirations. He identified the split between those he called the "Ententophil Jew" and "those who are consciously or unconsciously Pro-German" who were preoccupied "lest a Christian Power rule in Palestine".[115] Ormsby-Gore voiced concern about the ambivalence of these two strands within the Jewish community and the equally equivocal stance of non-Jews within Germany who appeared capable of appropriating Zionist aspirations to their own imperialist agenda.[116] Despite describing Germany as "the home of Anti-Semitism … the chief centre of Assimilation, and the chief enemy of growing Jewish nationalism", he acknowledged that, out of self-interest, those opinions could easily be

[112] CAB 23/36 See also point reiterated by deputation of Indian Muslims on 24th March 1921 emphasising that the "King Emperor was the largest Mohammedan ruler in the world" governing "as much as one fourth".
[113] McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*. 90.
[114] Judith M. Brown, "India", in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* eds, Judith M. Brown, and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 434.
[115] CAB 24/143.
[116] There is substantial evidence to suggest that the Germans were simultaneously developing their *Drang nach Osten* policy through an orientation to Islam. McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express.*

put to one side.[117] Germany's reaction towards Zionism and the fate of Palestine, as we shall see later, was as pragmatic as that of the British. Based on the evidence of the War Cabinet documents, discussions were taking place about a British occupation of Palestine but the arguments for it were presented more as a question of military advantage rather than arguments for the establishment of a homeland for the Jews.

Ormsby-Gore addressed the question as to what military measures should be taken to secure the region. He was anxious to advocate the "separation of Syria and Palestine from the control of a Power dominated or controlled by Germany (as) the only security that can assure our position in Bagdad and along the Red Sea".[118] In order to prevent the Ottomans holding on to Syria and Palestine and "prevent(ing) Zionism being thrown into the arms of the King of Prussia … when the Germans are at this moment making a bid to capture Zionism", he argued that the British needed to draw a clear line of defence "from Trebizond to the Gulf of Alexandretta" a line running from the Black Sea south-westwards to the Mediterranean Sea and roughly corresponding to the area of Anatolia. [119]

According to reports to the Cabinet, a section of the press in Germany were of the opinion that the British Government's concerns for the fate of the Jews and the future of Palestine hinged more on imperial self-interest than religious sensibilities. In an article published on 12th May 1918 in the *Berliner Tageblatt* and translated for the Cabinet, Georg Gothein, a member of the Reichstag, is quoted as expressing the view that the British "are only concerned to make the Indian Ocean into an English lake, and so throw a bridge from Egypt to India over Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia and Afghanistan. Palestine, as a so-called Jewish State, would be merely an English colony".[120] Gothein acknowledges that any putative state might be described as "Jewish" but that its defining characteristic would be its colonial status within the British Empire. In the view of the journalist, the British viewed the establishment of a homeland for the Jews as exactly the same as the creation of a Jewish State and no different from any other colonial enterprise. The view taken by German strategists

[117] Ibid. See also Laqueur, *The History of Zionism,* 143.
[118] Ibid. See also CAB 24/144. The British had a presence on either side of the southern end of the Red Sea. Aden was at this period a responsibility of the India Office and Somaliland was from 1905 administered by the Colonial Office.
[119] Ibid.
[120] CAB 24/148, 218

was that the British regarded Palestine as a means to an end, a *mariage de convenance*, and a bridge to the furthest reaches of the Empire rather than a land to be restored to a people because of a religious or biblical covenant.[121] Certainly some sections of German opinion still hoped for the possibility that the Zionists might align themselves with the Central Powers.[122]

There were others in the German government however, who had been taking steps to enlist the support of the Ottoman Empire in a *jihad* to get the backing of the Muslim world for the fight against the Entente Powers.[123] Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of the General Staff gave orders on 5th August 1914 "one day after Britain declared war on Germany – that the German Foreign Office began recruiting spies and agents for the jihad".[124] Religious allegiance was clearly not something that concerned German imperialism as much as the potential of Islamic communities to add to the potency of the war effort.

The views quoted in the documents, both those of Amery and Ormsby-Gore on the one hand and those attributed to Delbrück and Gothein on the other, were of course partisan, the products of analyses conducted in war time. They did not address any detailed considerations about post-conflict developments in Palestine. The focus of the authors was on the general strategies of their respective countries and how each could achieve and sustain their empires. Both Germany and Britain gave considerable thought to the role that Zionism might play in their ambitions. Endorsement for Zionism was not the exclusive property of the British and nor was Zionism committed to any particular power. In 1889, whilst visiting Constantinople, Theodor Herzl won the backing of Kaiser Wilhelm II for Zionism who afterwards sought to persuade Sultan Hamid II to support the movement.[125] The centre of international Zionism was in Berlin and the German Zionist movement was entirely patriotic at the outbreak of war, stimulated in part by justifiable concern at the anti-Semitism evident in Russia.[126] German Zionists worked with the German Foreign Ministry to establish a "Committee

[121] John Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate* (London: Cresset Press, 1959), 1.
[122] CAB 24/148, 217.
[123] McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express,* 89.
[124] Ibid.
[125] McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*, 10.
[126] Lacqueur, 172.

for the Liberation of Russian Jewry" the hope being that Germany would occupy western Russia where most of the Jews lived.[127]

Even though in the eyes of some British commentators Zionism was allied with the German war effort, the notion of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine had been a subject of discussion for some years in Britain and gained strength from the date of Allenby's entry into Jerusalem on 11th December 1917 when the aspirations of Zionism were part of the considerations of the British War Cabinet. The ambitions of Zionism to create a homeland for the Jews in Palestine readily connected with the aspirations of British imperialism in the region.[128] The support for the colonisation of Palestine by Jews was also present though perhaps to a lesser extent amongst some Christians in Germany.[129] The Zionist perspective for Palestine was much more explicitly reflected in the documents considered by the War Cabinet after the successes of Allenby.[130]

General Edmund Allenby's defeat of the Ottoman army in the campaign raised the issue of the post-war political settlement. On 14th August 1917, a very detailed account of the operations, written by General A. J. Murray General Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, was presented to the War Cabinet outlining the progress of the campaign.[131] Accompanying this report and on behalf of Allenby, Lord Derby the Secretary of State for War asked the War Cabinet in a document entitled "British Policy in Palestine", to clarify the objectives. He insisted that Allenby be clearly informed as to "the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to Palestine" and expressed the view that " the time has come when he should have this information".[132] It was in his opinion a matter of some urgency because "both the French and Italian Governments are closely interested in Syria." It is clear that in the context of this document that this was a reference to Palestine.[133]

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[127] Ibid. 174.
[128] Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism,* 91.
[129] CAB 24/148 Georg Gothein, the author of an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* paper is quoted as reporting the formation of a non-Zionist society formed mainly of Christians in Berlin called *Pro-Palaestina* [*sic*], which encouraged the colonisation of Palestine by Jews.
[130] This especially emerges in the debate and discussion around the "Balfour Declaration" and the Peace negotiations together with the drafting of the Mandate itself.
[131] CAB 24/23/0019. Murray's report is date 28th June 1917.
[132] CAB 24/23/0020.
[133] Ibid.

Anglo-French Negotiations and Sykes-Picot

In looking to advance its position in the Near East, the British government were aware of the opposition they would meet.[134] As we have noted, the Ottoman Empire, France, Russia, and Germany each had their own goals and appreciated that the war might have a variety of outcomes. Mirroring this approach, the Zionist movement, appreciating that a favourable outcome for any one of the combatants was not a foregone conclusion, solicited support from all the key figures in these countries, combining ideological single mindedness with *realpolitik*. They believed that a British victory was the best option to achieve the establishment of a Jewish homeland but they were aware of the need to explore alternatives if that was not the result.[135]

The British made considerable effort to reach agreements and understandings with the two forces they considered to be key in the region in order to safeguard Britain's interests, initially by defining the respective spheres of influence. In the first instance they set out to reach some form of accord with the French who were looking to establish their hegemony in those parts of the region they regarded as traditionally belonging to them.[136] The second goal of the British was to reach some form of alliance with Arab forces seeking independence from the Ottoman Empire. If the Arab forces could be won to an alliance with the British against the Ottoman Empire this would strengthen their military capability in the area and place them in a stronger position to achieve their objectives.

Sir Mark Sykes, a Conservative Party Member of Parliament seconded to the military service, led the negotiations for the British whilst the French diplomat François Georges-Picot represented French interests. There was an added urgency to the negotiations because a successful conclusion would obviate the need to divert additional British resources to the area away from an already over-stretched Western

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[134] Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East.* Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, 399.
[135] CAB 24/42, 13th February, *1918 Memorandum on the attitude of Enemy Governments towards Zionism* records debates in Germany about the advantage of Germany allying with Zionism and the consequences of the Balfour letter.
[136] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 69. See also Barr, *A Line in the Sand, Britain*.

Front. The intention of the Sykes-Picot negotiations was to prevent discord between the allies by agreeing defined territorial spheres of influence. In addition the document spelt out their respective economic goals and focused on British and French access to ports in the region, the development of the railway services and custom tariff provisions.[137] In the midst of the war neither side had lost sight of their commercial interests and the opportunity to establish trade domination of the region. The document encapsulated the *new*-imperialist priority of working towards economic hegemony in the region.

Sykes sought to ensure that Palestine fell within the area of Britain's designated responsibility.[138] A Palestine under British control would have many advantages, not least that of providing a base for troops who could be deployed to Egypt to suppress any hostile moves towards the Suez Canal. The British were well aware of the possible difficulties that might arise if their new Arab allies were to see documents spelling out the roles that they and the French intended to play. It would clearly mean a denial of any ambitions for independence.[139] As Sir Henry McMahon explained in a letter written to the Right Honourable Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on 25th April 1916, "there is the possibility that, when the whole truth of the Anglo-French agreement (if one has or shall be concluded) emerges, we may be faced with the Arabs preferring the Turkish offers to our own".[140]

Although there was no specific reference in the documents to the aspirations of Zionism to create a homeland for the Jews, McMahon warned that "the premature divulgence of any arrangement with France might even result in active Arab hostility, at any rate towards our Ally".[141] The Sykes-Picot Agreement was officially endorsed on 16th May 1916 and outlined how the French and British spheres of control would be

[137] John Quigley, *The Case for Palestine: An International Law Perspective* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1990), 9.
[138] Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, 289. For a more comprehensive evaluation of British influence across the area see Francis Robinson, "The British Empire and the Muslim World", in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV,* eds, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 398.
[139] Barr, *A Line in the Sand,* 29.
[140] FCO 37/2768, 248.
[141] Ibid., 248.

defined in the event of a favourable outcome to the war for the allies.[142] "Notes defining the Russian share were exchanged in Petrograd on April 26th, 1916, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (M. Sazonoff) and the French Ambassador (M. Paléologue), and in London a few weeks later between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey) and the Russian Ambassador (Count Benckendorff)."[143]

The War Cabinet discussed the strategic significance of Palestine for British ambitions on a number of occasions.[144] The Ottoman advance, with German assistance, across the Sinai Peninsular in 1915 dispelled once and for all the notion that the desert could act as a buffer against forces approaching the Canal.[145] The further the boundaries from which a potential threat to the security of the Canal could be launched, the better. The political and economic importance of Palestine had to be seen in the wider context of overall imperialist preoccupations.[146] This prioritisation of the Suez Canal in the grand imperial scheme was the essential factor determining British attitudes towards it and ultimately towards Palestine.

The Arab Revolt and the British

In the Near East the conflagration played out in its own way, raising further questions. The Ottoman Empire, viewed by the British as a long-time bulwark against Russian influence in the region, had demonstrated its fragility as the older essentially *pre-capitalist* agriculturally-focused economy was confronted by the more expansionist ambitions of the *new*-imperialism.[147] The British taking advantage of the aspirations of the Arab peoples of the Near East to assert their independence from Constantinople encouraged the Arab Revolt against their Central Power foe. Their commitment to establish states whose founding treaties would include an acceptance of military patronage and a privileged economic relationship with the British

[142] Walter Lacqueur and Barry Rubin, eds, *The Israel–Arab Reader* (London: Penguin Books, 6th Edition, 2001), 13.
[143] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 428.
[144] CAB 24/21.
[145] Ibid., 2. See also McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express,* 174.
[146] Quigley, *The Case for Palestine,* 8-9. See also Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 62-63 for references to the De Bunsen Committee 1915.
[147] Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 44.

epitomised the essence of the *neo-colonialist* agenda arising from the changes inherent in the *new*-imperialist transformations. The predominantly colonialist and colonising programme of previous centuries being supplanted by a new form of dependency relationship.

Almost simultaneously with the gambit to reach agreement with the French through the Sykes-Picot exchanges, the British were attempting to get an understanding with Sharif Hussein of Mecca who expressed a commitment to fight against the Ottoman Empire and a strong desire to cement a relationship with the British to establish an Arab state under British tutelage.[148] Between July 1915 and January 1916, Sharif Hussein corresponded with Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Cairo, with the object of verifying that a complimentary set of interests existed between the British and himself. He made it clear that in return for British support in his fight against the Ottoman forces, he would wish to create an Arab state that would be an ally to the British and provide them with a range of benefits.[149]

McMahon was anxious to gain Hussein's commitment to join the British in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. At the same time he remained ambiguous about what obligations the British might have towards the creation of Arab nations, in particular in the area surrounding Palestine.[150] McMahon used the idea that the British were anxious to retain harmonious relations with the French, in order to avoid any agreement on specific definitions as to the boundaries of any future states.[151] A Memorandum written by the Arab Bureau for McMahon and sent by him with a covering letter to Sir Edward Grey, the Conservative Foreign Secretary on 19th April 1916, conveyed the nature of the thinking behind the process. In the words of the Memorandum:

> realising that the present stage of operations in the Ottoman Empire is transitional, but daily declaring itself more and more in our favour, we have made every effort to avoid

[148] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 97. "The Sharif Husain's first note to Sir Henry McMahon" 14th July, 1915.
[149] FO37/2768, 167. Letter to Sir Ronald Storrs from Sharif of Mecca 14th July 1915 attached to papers.
[150] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 97. Sir Henry McMahon's first note to the Sharif Husain. 30th August, 1915.
[151] Ibid., 97.

> definite commitments for the future; and consequently the longer a final programme is postponed the stronger becomes our position as negotiators, and the more reasonable will the other two parties, both Turk and Arab, be likely to show themselves towards our view.[152]

He avoided any firm commitments whilst offering words of encouragement in areas which did not threaten British goals. McMahon's correspondence concluded before the detail of the Sykes-Picot Agreement was finalised but, from the British point of view, was undoubtedly an important contribution to the whole process. Any developing Arab challenge to the Ottoman Empire would be incorporated by the British into their regional scheme thus ensuring that it could not be co-opted by the French. In addition the Sykes-Picot Agreement ensured that if there were to be disputes between France and Britain they would be shelved until after the conclusion of the war with the Central Powers.[153]

Throughout 1916 the War Cabinet received reports on the "Arab Revolt" and held discussions attended by senior military staff responsible for the conduct of the war such as Admiral Jellicoe, the First Sea Lord and Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Minutes of the meetings reveal that discussions took place throughout 1916 on the progress of the revolt and that there were concerns about its fortunes. There was particular anxiety about the potential negative consequences should the revolt suffer a setback. Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, and Lord Curzon, Leader of the House of Lords, on 9th December 1916 both voiced a concern that the War Cabinet "cannot allow the Sharif to be overwhelmed. One small state after another that has willingly or unwillingly, espoused the cause of the Allies has been shattered; it is particularly important not to allow the downfall of the Sharif, as the effect on our prestige throughout the East would be disastrous".[154]

Having secured the acquiescence of the French and created an alliance with Arab forces, the task for the British was to turn their attention to defeating the Ottoman Empire. Allenby, who had been reassigned from the European military

[152] FO 37/2768, 159.
[153] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 101.
[154] CAB 23/1, War Cabinet, 3-4, item 11.

theatre to the Near East, led the Egyptian Expeditionary Force against the Ottoman forces and moved his headquarters from Cairo to Rafah to be nearer to the front lines. In keeping with the intentions expressed in the McMahon–Hussein correspondence Allenby ensured funding for the Arab forces who were carrying out operations against the Ottoman army. The Arab Revolt, which was encouraged by the British, complemented their military strategy very well. The Ottoman army, until the arrival of Allenby and his additional troops, had had some successes in defending the southern approaches to Palestine but it now had to contend with being attacked on a second front.[155] The Arab forces led by Emir Faisal the third son of Sharif Hussein, with T. E. Lawrence acting as a liaison with the British military leadership, engaged in a series of actions capturing Aqaba and attacking the Hijaz rail services which were particularly difficult to defend.[156]

Sir Archibald Murray was replaced as commander-in-chief at the end of June 1917 and Allenby inflicted a number of defeats on the Ottoman troops before going on to enter Jerusalem in December 1917. Ten months later the Ottoman Empire had been defeated and the British military goals almost entirely achieved. The next phase, the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, was to begin. The following chapter will examine the way in which the British negotiated agreements with the French and the Arab leaders in order to advance their goal of taking control of Palestine as an important part of their imperial strategy.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have demonstrated how the *new*-imperialism developing at the end of the nineteenth century began to impact on the politics and economics of British policies. New finance capital institutions emerging in Britain and in countries such as Germany fuelled a worldwide competition for the control over raw materials and markets on a much greater scale than had been the case previously. Critically oil, an

[155] See unpublished PhD Thesis: Jonathan Quentin Calvin Newell, *British Military Policy in Egypt and Palestine: August 1914–June 1917* (King's College: PhD Thesis, 1990). Newell argues that Allenby's success was a consequence of additional forces he had at his disposal as a result of a change in strategy which saw the focus of the Eastern front shift from an intended invasion via Haifa to developing the war in the Sinai.

[156] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening,* 216. Please note although different authors use different spellings I have standardised all spellings as "Faisal" and as "Hussein".

increasingly vital fuel for industrial and commercial development became a central feature of competition. Ownership and control of abundant supplies of oil granted companies and the countries in which they were based, a degree of privilege and independence in the battle with competitors. As the chapter has explained this acquisition of resources simultaneously constituted their denial to competitors. This was part of the growth of monopoly economics on a global scale. This struggle culminated in a war in which the armies of the competing imperial powers sought to gain military pre-eminence over their rivals in order to secure economic dominance. The British preoccupation with the primacy of the Empire was an expression of that desire to achieve economic dominance in the world. The concern for the preservation of control over India as the outstanding imperial possession played a central role in shaping British policies in order to achieve that end.

Throughout World War One the British Government faced a range of challenges to its power and influence on military, economic, and political fronts. The war exposed both the strengths and weaknesses of British imperialism. With the potential to draw on the vast resources of the Empire to conduct its war efforts Britain was nevertheless obliged to ensure effective operation of the links with the furthest colonies. In addition the British had to ensure that the rest of the empire was willing to respond in a manner that met their goals. In this Britain faced challenges from a number of directions. Domestically it had to retain popular support to prosecute the war particularly on the Western Front, supplying sufficient numbers of troops to fight the battles whilst sustaining a level of economic performance that met domestic consumption alongside the necessary productivity to supply the material equipment with which to fight.

Increasingly dependent on its ability to take advantage of the human and material resources it could command from its dominions and colonies, Britain was obliged to seek financial and practical support from the United States of America. This chapter has demonstrated how this raised political as well as economic questions. The post war decades would witness economic convulsions, mass unemployment and poverty, financial crashes and social turbulence across the world as a consequence of the inter-imperial battles. The war was both an expression of British power and the

means which began to undo its supremacy in the world, heralding its replacement in the longer term by the USA.

The alliances which Britain developed throughout the course of the war were themselves fraught with difficulties. Directly confronted by Germany, France was unable to defend itself without backing from Britain. Huge numbers of troops and vast amounts of equipment were absorbed in a confrontation which sapped all involved. France, like Britain had its own imperialist ambitions, including in the Near East where its goals were potentially in conflict with those of its ally. Allies in the general scheme of the war, the British and the French were also rivals but as the war continued, the latter became increasingly dependent on the former. United on the battlefields of Europe, a covert struggle ensued in the Near East over the demarcation of their respective spheres of influence especially those covered by the current states of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan and Iraq.

Almost simultaneous with Russian disengagement, the United States of America entered the war, adding new human military resources to the already indispensable financial backing they had provided the British and their allies. Their direct entry into the combat, albeit towards the end of the conflict, was symptomatic of a transition from the dominance of the British to the emergence of the USA as a global force. Throughout the war the British, increasingly indebted to their ally, were sensitive to the opinions and reactions of the USA Administration towards actions they might take as has been demonstrated in relation to both Ireland and Palestine. This changing interdependence was indicative of the fact that the outcome of the war was to reveal the changing nature of the inter-imperialist rivalry in the era of the *new*-imperialism and the actual changes in the balance of power between allies as well as foes. The scale of the conflict required the British to act in concert with other imperial powers and produced shifts in the alignments between them. Although the USA did not have a veto on British policies on these issues the level of exchange between British Prime Ministers and President Woodrow Wilson for example, illustrated the symbiotic nature of the relationship and the increasing weight of USA opinion on British decision-making.

In the next chapter I will look in more detail at the debate around the adoption of the policy expressed in the Balfour Declaration analysing the views both of its advocates and its opponents amongst the most eloquent of whom in Britain were leading political figures who were Jewish. I will analyse the context of colonisation in the Ottoman Empire and the nature of the Zionist settler colonisation in Palestine. The chapter will examine the debates around self-determination which were advanced by the main protagonists at the Peace Conference and the nature of the Mandate system which emerged from the Paris negotiations. Furthermore the chapter will examine how the British advanced their policies in the region and the way in which they sought to apply strategies to achieve their goals. The chapter will analyse the post-war situation and the implementation of the Sykes-Picot agreement and its interpretation in the context of the undertakings given to the Arab leaders.

CHAPTER THREE

The Balfour Declaration, Self-Determination and Arab Opposition

Introduction

When the British Cabinet began to discuss Palestine in detail the outcome of the World War was by no means predictable.[1] The Central Powers and the Entente Powers faced major challenges because of the shifting balance of forces between them and the questionable capacities of some of their respective allies.[2] The year 1917 threw up a host of domestic and international predicaments which sharpened the rivalry between the imperial powers and saw the entry of the United States of America into the war and the withdrawal of Russia.[3]

In the previous chapter I analysed the significance of Palestine for British imperial strategy, its location providing a base from which to oversee their interests in the Near East and control the Suez Canal. The government decision in late 1917 to support the project for the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine was motivated by a self-interest which coalesced with the ambitions of the Zionist movement. The task was to integrate this project into the goal of sustaining the British Empire without appearing to replicate imperialist expansionism and colonisation. The British government was conscious of French hopes to bring parts of the Ottoman Empire under its hegemony and consequently sought to avoid provoking a rupture with either its French allies or the anti-Ottoman Arab forces.

The chapter will explore how the British sought to advance their interests in a world in which anti-imperialism began to flourish stimulated by seismic events and the accelerating demand for self-determination in countries under imperial rule. In the midst of this maelstrom the interests of the British government found a congruence

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[1] CAB 23/35.

[2] Chris Harman, *A People's History of the War* (London: Verso, 2008), 411. "The first great eruption on the Western Front was in France in April 1917. An estimated 68 divisions, half the French army, refused to return to the front after an offensive which had cost 250,000 lives … 1917 also saw mutinies involving some 50,000 soldiers in Italy, and five days of bloody rebellion by up to 100,000 soldiers in the British base camp at Étaples, near Boulogne. The British generals ended the rebellion by making concessions and then executed its leaders, keeping the whole affair secret". See also Niall Ferguson, *Empire,* 328.

[3] The USA declared war on Germany on 6th April 1917 and Russia declared a ceasefire on 15th December 1917.

with the aspirations of Zionism. Zionist settlement provided a convenient surrogate, effectively implementing colonisation under the guise of national reconstruction. Zionism developed from being a peripheral political movement even within the Jewish community into being an important adjunct of British imperialist strategy in the Near East. The apogee of Zionist political achievement was the adoption by the British Cabinet of the Balfour Declaration proposal for the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. An analysis of the War Cabinet papers reveals the character of the discussion within the British government on the subject and the importance they attached to it.

This chapter will also examine the opposition to the proposal expressed both in Britain and by the indigenous Arab inhabitants of Palestine. Opposition to Balfour's promotion of the demands of the Zionist Organisation even came from within the Cabinet but were also present more broadly within the government and Parliament. In addition antagonism to the idea was expressed in the press and continued even after the allocation of the Mandate to the British.[4] The most significant opposition was to be found amongst the Arabs of the region who initially made some distinction between the British Mandate and the creation of a homeland for the Jews, to a certain extent tolerating the former whilst vehemently opposing the latter as a thinly veiled declaration of intent to establish a Jewish State in Palestine.[5] A large proportion of the Palestinian political leadership came to recognise that the achievement of the Zionists' goal was only possible because of the Mandate rule by the British. At the same time Arab political leaders saw that their ambitions for a Pan-Islamic, or even Pan-Arabist outcome were threatened by the countervailing imperialist forces. The hope for a Greater Syria was destroyed by the Anglo-French implementation of the Sykes-Picot agreement fracturing it into separate struggles for self-determination for Syria and for Palestine.

The war had brought added problems to the region. Daily life and the existing social and economic relationships were severely disrupted. The situation inside the country was one of great hardship for the Palestinian people because the countryside

[4] J. M. N. Jeffries, *The Palestine Deception 1915–1923: The McMahon–Hussein Correspondence, the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish National Home* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2014). The book contains articles written in 1923 for the *Daily Mail* by Jeffries.
[5] CAB 24/24

and the towns had been stripped of men and material by both the Ottoman rulers and the British army. Livestock, crops and trees had been appropriated by both armies and men taken from their work on the land. Furthermore in 1915 the land had been devastated by a swarm of locusts reducing available crops.[6] To the north in Lebanon, an estimated one third of the population died as a consequence of famine which struck during the course of the conflict and the silk industry, an important source of income, had been virtually wiped out.[7] Long term tectonic movements evident in the Ottoman period intersected with punctual upheavals caused by the war and the arrival of the Zionist settlers. These sudden changes led to the uncoupling and dislocating of the more gradual developments in society creating a dynamic with new challenges the product of the imperialist war, nascent nationalism and colonisation.

At the end of the war Great Britain, France and the United States of America presided over the Paris Peace Conference which was intended to lay the basis for the post-war settlement. The British, as one of the principal military victors in the conflict, were able to dictate to the League of Nations the terms of the Mandate for Palestine, and thereby establish their dominant position in the country and the region. The Mandate, which eventually came into effect on 26th September 1923, confirming the terms of the British occupation of Palestine, was a product of the First World War and constituted the legitimisation of what was the *de facto* situation following Allenby's entry into Jerusalem in 1917. The League of Nations Mandate gave international legitimacy to the *new*-imperialist agenda.

Zionism Before the Balfour Declaration

Long before the Balfour Declaration, a British Christian Zionist lobby existed within sections of the establishment and the Zionist Organisation had succeeded in establishing itself in Britain as a significant expression of Jewish opinion.[8] According to some, British public opinion was hostile to Jewish immigration into Britain and "felt that something should be done for east European Jewry if they were to be barred

[6] Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine* (London: John Murray, 1999), 27.
[7] Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800–1914* (London: I.B. Taurus, Reprinted 2009), p. 250. See also letter from Consul Fontana to Earl Curzon, 20th December 1920.
[8] Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 94.

from entering England".[9] In 1903 Lloyd George had participated in an attempt to draft an agreement between the Zionist Organisation and the government which was headed by the Conservative Party Prime Minister, Arthur James Balfour to allocate land for the establishment of Jewish homeland.[10] Although in 1917 their positions of seniority in the government were reversed, there is clear political continuity between this earlier attempt to meet Zionist wishes and the subsequent adoption of the Balfour Declaration.

Theodor Herzl, widely recognised as one of the most important founders of modern Zionism, advocated the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine which, to succeed, he knew, required the support of an imperial sponsor which he went to extraordinary lengths to obtain. Following the First Zionist Congress in 1897, Herzl, travelling across Europe, contacted Kaiser Wilhem II, the Ottoman Sultan, the Pope (1903) and King Victor Emmanuel III (1903). In Britain he met Joseph Chamberlain (1902), the Colonial Secretary in the Government of Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, and Lord Cromer, Consul-General of British-occupied Egypt. Evidence of the lengths to which he was prepared to go to win the support of the leading imperial powers of the day was his effort in 1902 to gain the backing of Vyacheslav von Plevhe, the anti-Semitic minister of the Interior in the Russian Czarist Government.[11] Undoubtedly Herzl took the view that in the light of the rivalry between the powers seeking the support of all might, in the end, ensure the support of at least one.

In 1903 the agreement which the Zionist Organisation and the British government had been working on aimed to establish a homeland for Jewish people in any location that could be provided and Cyprus and Uganda were actively discussed.[12] Those prepared to accept any land to create a homeland for the Jews were called "Territorialist" and as such, were not dissimilar from other persecuted religious groups who sought refuge abroad.[13] Although initially not repudiated by Theodor Herzl,

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[9] Lacqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 121.
[10] Victor Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891–1949* (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 30-31.
[11] Ibid.,97.
[12] Theodor Herzl, *The Diaries*, 367, cited in Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 120.
[13] HC Deb 20 June 1904 vol 136 cc 561-79. According to Earl Percy in a debate in the House of Commons on 20th June 1904 "… it was in the area situated between Lake Victoria and Lake Rudolf, in the Kisumu Province."

before his death in 1904, support for the scheme fell out of favour and the "Territorialist" current within the Zionist Organisation was defeated at the seventh congress in Basel in late July 1905.[14] Even though they did not at this time have support from the government for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, they had won a hearing from some of its leading members and they continued to gather support in the following years. Amongst those who participated in the 1903 debate at the Zionist Congress in Basel, were some like Chaim Weizmann who supported the case for Palestine as the only place in which the Jewish homeland might be established. In 1904 Weizmann moved to Manchester, where he took a post at the university and began promoting the call for a Jewish homeland. The discussion of this aspiration and support for it was not restricted to Jewish members of the local community as non-Jewish figures such as Winston Churchill, then a local Member of Parliament, expressed his backing for the Zionist cause.[15]

Whilst Weizmann sought out and influenced key figures, his success was undoubtedly a consequence of their political and religious pre-disposition. In addition to the meetings mentioned above, in 1906 Weizmann met Arthur Balfour, then the Leader of the Opposition following his defeat as Prime Minister. He continued his lobbying activities and in early 1914 met Sir Herbert Samuel the Liberal Member of Parliament for Cleveland, who was to become Home Secretary in Asquith's government. Weizmann showed an appreciation for British imperial sensibilities by explaining the advantages that a Jewish homeland might have for Britain's interests in the Near East. In 1914 he wrote to C. P. Scott the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* that should Palestine fall within London's sphere of interest and "should Britain encourage a Jewish settlement there … we could have in twenty to thirty years a million Jews there, perhaps more; they would develop the country, bring back civilisation to it, and form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal".[16] In November the same year, through his connections with C P Scott he met David Lloyd George, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, together with Sir Herbert Samuel.[17] Samuel's

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http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1904/jun/20/east-africa-aliex-settlement#S4V0136P0_19040620_HOC_247 (accessed 27/01/2016)

[14] Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*,131.

[15] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 15 December 1905, cited in Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*.

[16] Joan Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History* (London: Routledge, Third Edition, Revised by Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, 2002), 376.

[17] Laqueur, *The History of Zionism,* 182.

commitment to the Zionist cause was demonstrated by his submission in January 1915 of a memorandum on *The Future of Palestine* to the Cabinet outlining a proposal for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[18] " I am assured," he wrote, " that the solution of the problem of Palestine which would be much the most welcome to the leaders and supporters of the Zionist movement throughout the world would be the annexation of the country to the British Empire".[19] Samuel considered Weizmann's demands too modest.[20] Weizmann's task was not so much persuading these figures to support the Zionists objectives but rather encouraging them to consider how those goals might be achieved. Some, though not all, of this discussion took place at the highest parliamentary level and the subsequent progress of discussion as to how the government should formulate their position is recorded in the Cabinet papers. Through an analysis of these papers it is possible to gain an insight into the nature of the debate about the Declaration amongst the leading Cabinet ministers of the day and how they considered it as reconciling imperialist ambitions with Zionist colonisation.

Debating the Zionist project

Supporters of the Balfour Declaration

As I have noted above, links between highly placed government officials and the leadership of Zionism were well established. The ending of the Asquith government in December 1916 and its replacement by the Lloyd George coalition saw three strong supporters of Zionism enter the Cabinet in the form of the new Prime Minister himself, the Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour and Lord Milner. Discussions took place on 7th February 1917 between Sir Mark Sykes, "advisor to the Foreign Office on Middle Eastern affairs, … Lord Rothschild, Chaim Weizmann president of the English Zionist Federation, and other Zionist leaders, in order to arrive at some understanding on the future of Palestine".[21] The Cabinet had further discussions in April on a report by W. Ormsby-Gore on "Zionism and the suggested Jewish Battalions for Egyptian Expeditionary Force" which reflected on the growing support

[18] CAB 37/123/43. See also Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine,* 74. Jewish by heritage, Samuel himself was an atheist.
[19] CAB 37/123/43.
[20] Laqueur, *The History of Zionism,* 182
[21] Sahar Huneidi, *A Broken Trust: Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 10.

amongst Zionists for a "British Palestine or a Palestine under the United States".[22] These exchanges helped create the climate in which the formulation of the Declaration was to take place.

However between July 1917 and 31st October 1917 the document, which eventually became known as the "Balfour Declaration" was sent by Balfour to Lord Rothschild and went through a number of drafts.[23] The text developed into its final version as the result of a process of private exchanges, between Balfour and Rothschild, steering a course that would indicate support for the Zionist objective of creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, whilst seeking to avoid antagonising opponents in Britain of the Zionist Federation's proposals at the same time as averting any information about the proposal being communicated to the people of Palestine itself. As with their handling of the "untried Irish prisoners" question in 1916, those on the government side responsible for putting the statement together were influenced both by domestic and international considerations.[24] The "Balfour Declaration" was published in its final form on 4th November 1917.[25]

Balfour faced opposition within his Cabinet and Rothschild faced opposition in the Jewish community including within the Board of Deputies of British Jews.[26] Rothschild, wrote to Balfour on 18th July 1917 from his London home that "our opponents have commenced their campaign by a most reprehensible manoeuvre, namely to excite a disturbance by the cry of British Jews versus Foreign Jews, they commenced this last Sunday when at the Board of Deputies they challenged the new elected officers as to whether they were all of English birth (myself among them)".[27] Rothschild's draft clearly expected the government to discuss directly with the Zionist Organisation the "necessary methods and means" to create "the National Home of the Jewish people".[28] For his part Balfour amended Rothschild's imperative that the Government "will discuss … with the Zionist Organisation" to the more equivocal

[22] CAB 24/10.
[23] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 102-103.
[24] CAB 24/10
[25] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 103.
[26] Board of Deputies – the "parliament" of the Jewish community in Britain was founded in 1760.
[27] CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803 item 1 Copy of a letter marked "Secret" from Lord Rothschild to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 18th July, 1917 and tabled for the War Cabinet.
[28] CAB 24/24 Item II, 1 (Also listed as 12).

phrasing that the Government "will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them".[29] The number of drafts the document went through is clear testimony to the fact that all those contributing were striving to avoid formulations which were too specific and might provoke wider opposition. The ambiguities and vagueness of the document were deliberate.

What is significant in the first three known drafts: the "Zionist Draft, July 1917"[30]; the "Balfour Draft, August 1917"[31] and the "Milner Draft, August 1917"[32] is what they choose to include and what they omitted.[33] The titles given to these drafts by Charles D Smith in *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict* are indicative of their sources: the "Zionist Draft" originating with Rothschild's letter to Balfour; the "Balfour Draft" his response to the letter and the "Milner Draft" by Lord Milner, member of the War Cabinet.[34] What is common to these texts and revealing is the status given to the Zionist Organisation as the arbiter of the "methods and means" to achieve the creation of the Jewish homeland. [35] For the Zionist Organisation and for many leading British politicians the Declaration was to take on the status of a quasi-treaty fulfilling Theodor Herzl's objective, "to put it in terminology of international law, a State-creating power" which he foresaw in effect as the "creation of the State".[36]

The Declaration constituted the culmination of an important phase of the Zionist movement's strategy. The "Zionist Draft" in July 1917 had asserted the "principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people".[37] This initial text was unambiguous in its goal proposing that "His Majesty's Government (would) use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this

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[29] Ibid. III "Draft reply to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Balfour. Foreign Office August 1917".
[30] Ibid. Item II Marked "Enclosure to (1). Draft Declaration."
[31] Ibid. Item III "Draft reply to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Balfour. Foreign Office August 1917".
[32] CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803. A. "Alternative, by Lord Milner, to Draft Declaration. See II of Paper G. T. 1803."
[33] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict,* Ibid. 102-103.
[34] CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803. Item 111 Marked "Enclosure to (1). Draft Reply to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Balfour." August 1917.
[35] CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803. Item 11 Marked "Enclosure to (1). Draft Declaration."
[36] Theodor Herzl, "The Jewish State" in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society 1997), 222.
[37] CAB 24/24, item 11 Marked "Enclosure to (1). Draft Declaration."

objective".[38] Under the influence of Balfour and the government advisors subsequent drafts dropped the assertion that the creation of a "National Home for the Jewish people" was a principle in favour of the more emollient formula that the government "views with favour the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine".[39] These changes represented the drive to reconcile conflicting views within the Cabinet where Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, had pressed hard to block the Declaration or at least to amend the text further.[40] A statement which explicitly proposed the establishment of a Jewish state would undoubtedly have been used by the German government in conjunction with Constantinople to secure the loyalty of the Ottoman Arab provinces and especially Greater Syria.[41] If Britain's Arab allies had access to the Declaration it would lead some to revoke their alliance with London and turn back towards the Ottoman Empire. It was little wonder that the British delayed the release of the text in Palestine.

The "draft declaration on Zionism", as it was described by M. P. A. Hankey, Secretary to the Cabinet, was "submitted to nine – or, including Mr E. S. Montagu, ten – representative Jewish leaders". In his response to the draft the Rt. Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P. drew attention to the dangers of not proceeding with the conquest of Palestine. "If the Turks are left ostensibly in control of Palestine, the country is likely to fall, in course of time, under German influence. If Germany, or any other continental Power, is dominant there, Egypt would be exposed to constant menace. The best safeguard would be the establishment of a large Jewish population, preferably under British protection".[42] Samuel was repeating the argument he had presented in his earlier Cabinet paper of January 1915.[43] The reference to Egypt was an explicit link to the Suez Canal with its significance for the future of the Empire as a whole and the argument was infused with the *new*-imperialist agenda tying together the fate of the Empire and Palestine.

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 103 ("Final Text", 31 October 1917).
[40] CAB 24/28, Montagu set out his criticisms in detail on 9th October 1917. He listed "prominent anti-Zionists" which he said included "every Jew prominent in public life, with the exception of the present Lord Rothschild, Mr Herbert Samuel, and a few others."
[41] CAB 24/144.
[42] CAB 24/4. Appendix 1.
[43] CAB 37/123/43.

This pro-Empire line was echoed by Sir Stuart Samuel, Chairman of the Jewish Board of Deputies who worried about the growing influence of German and Austrian Jews in Palestine. He raised the question as to whether they should in fact be allowed to remain in Palestine "or if expelled … be allowed to return as Zionists?" In part answering his own question he proposed that they "should be made ineligible for 20 years".[44] His sentiments were echoed in the comments of another contributor to the debate Mr C. G. Montefiore.[45] Imperial considerations ran through the debate with those supporting the establishment of a homeland for the Jews couching their arguments in terms that would resonate with the imperialist agenda of the day.

The Anti-Zionist Opposition

Those Jewish leaders who opposed the Declaration also argued from a pro-imperialist position. Sir Philip Magnus MP, a Liberal Unionist who joined the Conservative Party in 1912, worried about the fate of Jews in Palestine should the "other Palestinian communities" become aware of the intention to make the land a homeland for the Jews. Perhaps more radically than other Jewish opponents of the Zionists he could not agree "that the Jews regard themselves as a nation".[46] Mr C. G. Montefiore, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association expressed similar criticisms of the idea that the Jews constituted a nation. He rejected Herzl's assertions that "anti-Semitism was eternal, and that it was hopeless to expect its removal" viewing such remarks as a "libel" upon both Jews and human nature. Montefiore analysed the debates in Russia and argued that the majority of Jews in Russia were in favour of autonomy inside Russia itself and not for "exile *from* Russia".[47] He was confident about the positive resolution of anti-Semitism there and feared that the desire for a national home would in fact delay if not stop altogether the developing emancipatory trends there. These views were shared by Mr L. L. Cohen, Chairman of the Jewish Board of Guardians, who thought that the Jews were not a nation and support for such ideas would strengthen the hands of those who were anti-Semitic.[48] Cohen pointed out that given the number of Jews in Europe the creation of a Jewish homeland in

[44] Ibid. Note 4.
[45] Ibid. Note 8.
[46] Ibid. Note 7.
[47] Ibid. Note 8. (Emphasis in original)
[48] Ibid. Note 9.

Palestine, only able to take a small fraction of that number, would not resolve the problem of anti-Semitism.

The most formidable Jewish opponent of the declaration was the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Samuel Montagu, who fought an on-going battle against the Zionist proposals. He placed the primacy of the Empire above all else and viewed India as a vital part of it. In his view asserting the notion of the "principle" of a "National Home" would aid the legitimation of the anti-Semitism present already in many countries of Eastern Europe where pogroms had taken place over a number of decades.[49] On 14th September 1917 he wrote underlining that the leadership of the Zionist movement came from outside England and that, "in conformity with the foreign origin of Zionism as a whole, Jews of foreign birth have played a very large part in the Zionist movement in England".[50] Montagu believed that " … Anti-Zionism is a belief held by at least half the Jews of this country".[51] He felt that there was no justification for accommodating Zionist ambitions and that the view put forward in Cabinet " … to help the Allied cause in America" was not justifiable.[52]

On 9th October 1917 Montagu wrote, "I am sorry to bother the Cabinet with another Paper on this subject but I have obtained some more information which I would like to lay before them".[53] He remained opposed to the Zionists' proposals drawing this time on evidence provided by Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell, who was "acting as Assistant Political Officer in Baghdad".[54] Bell who had spent a considerable amount of time travelling in the Near East and was a respected commentator on the region had a very definite view about the situation on the ground.

> Jewish immigration [to Palestine] has been artificially fostered by doles and subventions from millionaire co-religionists in Europe; the new colonies have now taken root and are more or less self-supporting. The pious hope that an independent Jewish state may some day be established in Palestine no doubt exists, though it may be questioned whether among local Jews there is any acute desire to see it realized, except as a means

[49] Ibid. 34-35
[50] CAB 24/27, 2.
[51] Ibid. 2.
[52] Ibid.
[53] CAB 24/28, 1.
[54] Ibid.

> of escape from Turkish oppression; it is perhaps more lively in the breasts of those who live far from the rocky Palestinian hills and have no intention of changing their domicile.[55]

Montagu, like Bell, considered the call for a Jewish state as the demand of an unrepresentative minority and certainly not those prominent Jews who Montagu felt the government should listen to. Whilst he professed admiration for Weizmann, he nevertheless regarded him as "near to being a religious fanatic".[56] He thought Palestine was not large enough for additional numbers of Jews and feared it would require the dispossession of the "existing population". He asked, "is it worthwhile jeopardizing the position of all Jews who remain in other countries for the insignificant fraction of the Jewish population that can conceivably find a home in Palestine"?[57] He was suspicious too about the real intentions of the French government and about the true motives behind some of the non-Jewish support that was being garnered by the Zionists. He reminded the Cabinet that the French were already enthusiasts for the Zionist cause and had approached the British government with a proposal to establish a Jewish "nation in El Hasa in Arabia" which, Montagu pointed out, the British had already promised to Bin Saud and his followers.[58] To his mind, "the French are anxious to establish Jews anywhere if only to have an excuse for getting rid of them, or large numbers of them".[59] The suggestion to create a Jewish state in El Hasa owing allegiance to Paris, he maintained, would jeopardise any British hopes for a land bridge between the Mediterranean Sea and India because it would be under French tutelage. As the Secretary of State for India he viewed this as an important threat to the Empire.

The final draft of the Declaration some weeks later, perhaps modified as a consequence of Montagu's intervention, affirmed that " nothing shall be done which may prejudice … the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country" as a result of the creation of a Jewish homeland. The clause was a clear attempt to counter the argument that a homeland for the Jews would encourage anti-Semitic

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 1.
[58] Ibid., 2. El Hasa [*sic*] – Al Hasa is a region of what is now Saudi Arabia bordering the Persian Gulf.
[59] Ibid., 2.

sentiments or might legitimise pressure being put on Jewish citizens across Europe to emigrate.[60] Balfour's letter to Rothschild navigated between the Scylla and Charybdis of the two sides. Its ambiguity was a deliberate attempt to satisfy the Zionist lobby whilst avoiding a formulation which would alienate Jewish anti-Zionists in Britain and anti-Ottoman Arab allies. To the authors and those to whom it was addressed, the Balfour Declaration dated 2nd November 1917 had the status of a formal treaty with all that that implied.

> 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.[61]

In the years that followed British politicians continuously used the document as the reference point in determining policies for Palestine and considered its interpretation their exclusive prerogative. Whilst the inhabitants of Palestine were ignored the War Cabinet did consult others on the text of the Declaration. Confidentially and before publication they sent copies to President Wilson, the "leaders of the Zionist Movement" and persons in "Anglo-Jewry opposed to Zionism" to solicit their views.[62] As on the issue of Irish prisoners, and for similar reasons, the British were sensitive to the reaction of the United States of America to any steps on the matter of a national home for the Jewish people. The Cabinet were anxious not to alienate the influential pro-Zionist opinion in the USA lest it adversely affect the financial and material support provided by Wilson.[63]

The Ottoman Empire and Colonisation

The path of colonisation of a part of the Ottoman Empire, which was what the British were proposing to undertake, was not without precedent. Whilst earlier British Governments had considered the preservation of the Ottoman Empire as key to

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[60] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 103 (*Final Text*, 31st October 1917).
[61] Ibid., 103 (*Final Text*, 31st October, 1917).
[62] CAB 23/4 Quoted in Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine Papers 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: Eland, 1972), 13.
[63] CAB 24/144.

protecting their strategic interests, its accelerating vulnerability, raised serious questions about its capacity to serve that purpose.[64] Facing internal challenges and surrounded by hostile neighbours it was under threat and in the wake of the setbacks in the war in France the British saw it as advantageous to switch focus from the Western Front to the Near East.[65] Given the fragility of the Ottoman Empire, the British feared that it would fall completely under the sway of Germany.[66] Their aim was to win Arab allies in the fight against the Ottoman Empire and neutralise potential problems arising from French territorial ambitions. The British, recognising a potential in the growing Arab opposition to Ottoman rule, believed that creating an alliance with them would strengthen their hand against Germany and might obviate the need to make compromises with the French over the division of conquered territories.[67]

A number of existing and nascent nation states wanted to assert their independence from the Ottoman Empire and, in some instances, to go further and take additional parts of its territory.[68] These included countries like Italy and Greece alongside peoples such as the Bulgarians, Armenians, Kurds and Egyptians, some of whom, at varying times tried to enlist the support of France or Russia.[69] For some the task necessitated the military defeat and removal of Ottoman forces from their lands whilst for others the ambition would involve some form of occupation or colonisation of the conquered territory. The colonisation of former parts of the Ottoman Empire had been taking place for some years. Following the French occupation of Algeria in 1830, some 50,000 people from France settled there in the next seventeen years. Between 1870 and 1911 the colonial population of Algeria rose further from 272,000 to 681,000.[70] The Italians followed a similar path in Tunisia and by 1911 there were 143,000 European colonists in the country. Following the Italian conquest of Ottoman-held Libya in 1912, there was an influx of 150,000 immigrants, which coupled with the genocidal policies inflicted on the indigenous peoples culminated in

[64] Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, p.277. See also Sevket Pamuk "The Ottoman Economy in World War I" in *The Economics of World War I,* eds, Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[65] Ibid., 298.
[66] See McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express* (2010) for a view of Germany's strategy towards the Ottoman Empire.
[67] Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792–1923*, 280.
[68] Ibid., 317 *passim.*
[69] Ibid., 84-85.
[70] Ibid., 246. Higher figures are quoted elsewhere: Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991) 291.

the colonists constituting roughly one fifth of the total population.[71] The colonial activities of Europeans in the former Ottoman territories had established a pattern of conquest and colonisation across the area which set a precedent for the British.

Large-scale settler colonisation combined with conquest, displacement and dispossession however was not the only method by which imperial rule was imposed. In India the British defeated some heredity rulers whilst forming alliances with others who were to act as a comprador social layer acting in compliance with the imperial rulers. In the case of the Near East, whilst the British opted for alliances with some Arab rulers in parts of the region, they chose a different path in Palestine viewing the Zionists' ambitions as an alternative option to the challenge of creating a base from which to oversee the Suez Canal.[72] Throughout the debates of the Zionist Congresses there had been a clear understanding that, to be successful, the creation of a Jewish state would require an act of colonisation through imperial patronage. This was understood equally both by Balfour and by the Zionists. By claiming that they were assisting the return of the Jews to their homeland, supporting Zionist colonisation assisted the British in deflecting any criticism of imperial expansionism especially from President Woodrow Wilson.[73]

Kitchener had spelt out the importance of the region from the perspective of British interests in India and the adjacent area but more than that he had recognised that the Near East was crucial to defining the relationship between Britain and the other European powers and between Britain and the peoples of the region.[74] As I demonstrated in the last chapter he saw Mesopotamia as providing material benefits from its agriculture and its oil fields and he even posited the idea that it be colonised by "the surplus population of India".[75] He saw a Muslim colonial settler policy as an alternative to that of Anglicisation. He proposed that Muslims from India would be used to establish a colony around Basra to form one end of the vital rail link to the

[71] Ibid., 246. Egypt too had around 250,000 foreign settlers in the country who became an increasingly significant proportion of the population especially in the cities. In Cairo the number of non-indigenous residents was 16% whilst in Port Said it reached as high as 28%.
[72] Ronald Storr, *The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storr* (New York: G.P. Putnams, 1937), 364. Storr, the first British military Governor of Jerusalem Sir Ronald Storr described Zionist ambitions for Palestine as the creation of "a little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism."
[73] Barr, *A Line in the Sand,* 34.
[74] CAB 24/1, *Alexandretta and Mesopotamia,* 1.
[75] Ibid., 3.

Mediterranean and thereby ensuring a base from which to supervise access to the Arabian or Persian Gulf. Kitchener's suggestions were not carried through in the form he proposed but the parallels between the subsequent involvement of the British in Palestine and his original idea of seizing Alexandretta and securing a loyal colony in Mesopotamia are clear. He wanted Britain to remain an "Asiatic Power". To those who accepted the argument he advanced, Palestine was an alternative to his Alexandretta scheme.

Zionism, Colonisation and Colonialism

Having inflicted a major defeat on the Ottoman forces in the southern part of Palestine in October and early November, General Allenby officially entered Jerusalem on 11th December 1917. The British established the Occupied Enemy Territories Administration (South) which governed the conquered parts of Palestine until October 1918 when its responsibilities were extended to the whole of the country. Allenby ran Palestine through military rule issuing statements that the places holy to Islam, Judaism and Christianity would be protected and instructed everyone to go about their lawful business. The administration had two major objectives: "the preservation of the *status quo,* and the prohibition of any agreement for transfer of immovable property until the land registers were established".[76]

On the 18th February 1918 Balfour announced to the House of Commons that government had agreed "to the request of the London Zionist Central Organisation to permit a Zionist Commission to proceed to Palestine at an early date".[77] Weizmann left for Palestine in April 1918 to establish the Commission with full British government approval.[78] Discussion hardly arose in the Cabinet in 1917 about what a homeland for the Jews might look like or how it might be created and despite their commitment to the idea, Lloyd George and other leading political figures had no blueprint for its creation.[79] The wording of the Declaration was deliberately ambiguous to obscure its true intent or mislead those on whose lands the homeland

[76] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 27.
[77] CAB 27/23. Zionist Commission remit.
[78] HC Deb 18th February 1918 vol 103 cc 436-7. (http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1918/feb/18/zionist-commission) (accessed 18/12/2015).
[79] Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea,* 222.

was to be established but it also revealed that the protagonists themselves were uncertain about what it might mean and how it might be achieved.

The connection between Zionism and British imperial interests was a central theme for many of the politicians who espoused the Zionist cause. Churchill expressed the view in early 1920 that "if, as it may well happen, there should be created in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish state under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three or four million of Jews, an event would have occurred in the history of the world which would, from every point of view, be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire".[80] Like many more of his fellow Cabinet members, including the Unionist Edward Carson and the South African Jan Smuts, Churchill appreciated the role colonists might play. Churchill's consistent espousal of the Zionist cause was the obverse of his promotion of the "truest interests of the British Empire".

Non-religious hierarchised notions of civilisation and secularised interpretations of religious beliefs were shaped into an imperialist discourse to validate political practice. The Balfour Declaration constituted a unique manifestation of this fusion. I argue that this interpretation contributes to identifying the Zionist movement as a part of the imperialist framework fulfilling the colonising role at the moment that colonisation was being rejected by countries across the world. The Zionist project for the creation of a homeland for the Jews fused with the British government's desire to have a land base near the Suez Canal in order to protect the route through which it communicated with much of its Empire. Zionism was a useful and timely adjunct to British imperialism's functioning.

Palestine and Self-Determination

The Arab Palestinian aspiration for self-determination expressed both before and following the defeat of the Ottoman forces in the Near East echoed developments which had taken place elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire itself as well as in other parts of the world. The ambition for nationhood not only emerged within Europe but was

[80] Winston Churchill, *The Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 8th February 1920, cited in Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 42.

beginning to develop further afield. The 1857 "Uprising" in India, constituted one example of the inception of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist movements by indigenous populations manifesting a nascent nationalism. As I have already noted this process accelerated in the early part of the twentieth century leading to the intensifying opposition to imperialist conquest, occupation and colonisation. Hitherto subaltern peoples sought to repudiate the inferior status imposed on them. The debate around self-determination developed as a counterpoint to that of the *new*-imperialist hegemony of Western European countries in particular.

Allenby, following his entry into Jerusalem, had issued a proclamation that in the East, Great Britain sought "the complete and final liberation of all peoples formerly oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of those people themselves".[81] Quite unintentionally the tone of the statement had similarities to the unequivocal declaration of the Bolshevik government in Russia.

On 3rd January 1918, prompted by the negotiations taking place between the Central Powers and the new Soviet Republic, the War Cabinet discussed its "War Aims". Soviet Russia's unilateral withdrawal from the war reverberated throughout Europe.[82] The British government were keen to keep Russia in the war if only to occupy one or more of the Central Powers in continued fighting and to prevent Russian arms falling into enemy hands. A telegram from the British military attaché in Petrograd made the assessment that "Trotzki [*sic*] and his friends had so ruined the Russian army that if he does break off negotiations the enemy will advance a few kilometres and capture his guns".[83] Although the USA had now entered the war they could not compensate for the withdrawal of Russian troops because their soldiers were not prepared, were not yet available in comparable numbers and they could not be deployed to the same battlefronts.[84]

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[81] Ingrams, 20.
[82] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States,* 361. See also reference to Harman above.
[83] CAB 23/5, 9. For a detailed appraisal of the negotiations see Chapter XI, Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky: 1879–1921*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).
[84] CAB 23/8. 19th October 1918. In a discussion on "The Conditions of an Armistice with Germany" Field Marshall Haig described the "American Army" as "disorganised, ill-equipped and ill-trained" and "at least a year before it becomes a serious fighting force".

The purpose of the Cabinet statement would be to make clear that British objectives were not open-ended, designed to conquer and appropriate all lands belonging to the Central Powers but that there were limits beyond which the Government would not go. The Cabinet's endorsement of the "principle of self-determination" was an attempt to convey this and defuse the growing war-weariness. In Europe the essence of Cabinet terms for ending the war amounted to a return to the *status quo ante* whilst demanding compensation for those countries invaded by the Central Powers. Lloyd George presented the "War Aims" statement to the "Trades Union Conference" on 5th January 1918 in the Caxton Hall, London.[85]

The Prime Minister's position on the fate of the colonial possessions of Germany and the Ottoman Empire was summed up in the War Cabinet Minutes in the following way:

> He thought that the War Cabinet were in general agreement that our proper course would be to express our willingness to accept the application of the principle of self-determination to the captured German colonies. Precisely how the principle was to be applied need not now be discussed, but there were chiefs and heads of tribes who could be consulted. The same principle was to be applied in the case of Mesopotamia – which was occupied by Arabs and not by Turks – and in the case of Palestine, which had a very mixed population.[86]

The commitment to self-determination was not absolute and unconditional. The acceptance of the "application of a principle" did not constitute a commitment to put it into practice. Before implementation might occur, further discussion would be required and the British would remain the arbiter of its operation consulting "chiefs and heads of tribes", an undertaking which was given in a quite desultory and racist fashion.[87] The imperial power would only implement such a step once it had satisfied itself that the potential candidates were capable of guaranteeing continued benefit to Britain. The War Cabinet Minutes of 3rd January 1918 offer no explanation or elaboration of the term "mixed population" in respect of Palestine nor why it was necessary to distinguish it from other countries of the Ottoman Empire.

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[85] CAB 23/5. The statement of War Aims made only passing reference to the Near East and no mention of the Balfour Declaration. See also Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 39.
[86] CAB 23/5. War Cabinet 312, 3rd January, 1918, 5 item 8.
[87] CAB 23/5. War Cabinet 312, 3rd January 1918.

Notwithstanding the description used suggesting some form of difference between Palestine and other regions, the statement, referenced the principle of self-determination to Palestine alongside other occupied Arab lands. This might have been interpreted as a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration and to remove any ambiguity the Minutes were duly amended the following day to make clear "that the passage dealing with the principle of self-determination of races [*sic*] should be modified so as to apply, not to all races indiscriminately, but merely to the settlement of the New Europe".[88] Palestine was not to be included amongst those deemed eligible for independence.

Allenby's words could be read as a straightforward confirmation that the principle of self-determination applied to the whole of the region under his military control and, since he was speaking in Jerusalem, that included the people of Palestine. He did not differentiate between Palestine and the other countries under Ottoman control. Allenby's promissory words in December 1917 were similar to those used later by the United States President Woodrow Wilson who in a speech to Congress on 8th January 1918 put forward his fourteen points which influenced the subsequent peace negotiations in Paris.[89]

Woodrow Wilson and Self-Determination

Wilson was something of a contradictory character who whilst appearing relatively liberal on some issues was in reality a colonialist holding explicitly racist views about African Americans.[90] He had supported the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1898 which endorsed the USA as a colonial power in Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines, following its victories over Spain.[91] An admirer of British colonial rule he

[88] CAB 23/5. War Cabinet 314, 4th January, 1918, 2 item 3.
[89] http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=62 (accessed 10/11/2015).
For an extensive examination of Wilson's attitude towards self-determination see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[90] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 27.
[91] Although Cuba became formally independent in reality it became a *neo-colony* of the USA as a consequence of the Platt Amendment, by which the USA, amongst other things, took control over a number of bases, including Guantanamo Bay, in the country which would only be returned to Cuban sovereignty by mutual agreement.

thought that the peoples of these newly colonised lands would only be able to achieve independence after a period of oversight by the imperial power.[92]

Wilson's speech to the US Congress stating his aims for the war was made on 8th January 1918, a few days after Lloyd George's "War Aims" statement.[93] He was undoubtedly influenced by the growing debate on imperialism and colonialism which had sharpened during the course of the war. However it was the positions adopted in Russia which were a more direct threat to imperialism. The political statements of the Bolsheviks and the 'decree on peace' which had been adopted and published by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 28th October 1917 (O.S.) constituted the polar opposite of everything that the imperial powers stood for and resonated across the globe.[94] The call for a peace without annexation or indemnities by the Bolshevik government and its declared intention to publish all secret treaties and negotiations jolted the imperialist powers into responding. In his "Fourteen Points" Wilson advanced the proposition that "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".[95]

Despite the frequent citing of United States of America President Woodrow Wilson as the author of this debate, it is arguable that as someone who already presided over imperial conquests this was a qualified accommodation to the realities of a situation which had left the USA in danger of marginalisation. There is no evidence from the Paris Peace Conference and its associated processes that Wilson significantly challenged Anglo-French priorities and conceptions of how the conquered lands might be allocated. If that challenge came from anywhere it was from the infant 1917 Russian government which espoused support for self-determination and exposed the machinations of the British and the French in respect of the Sykes-Picot negotiations.[96]

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[92] Ibid. 28.
[93] The term "self-determination" never actually appears in the statement. See Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*. 40.
[94] E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923 Vol. 3,* 22. O.S. signifies the Old Style or Julian Calendar subsequently dropped by the new government in 1918 in favour of the Gregorian Calendar.
[95] http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=62 (Accessed 10/11/2015)
[96] There was of course a reversal of this stance by the Soviet government following the death of Lenin who shared Trotsky's support for self-determination especially of the former Czarist Empire. See Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century* (London: Verso, 2005), Chapter 2.

Wilson's position was more ambiguous than has often been claimed. As Chair of the League of Nations Commission addressing questions on self-determination, Wilson rejected the Chinese demand for the restoration of the province of Shandong to their authority and agreed that it should be ceded to Japan as secretly agreed by the British and the French with the small caveat of a verbal commitment that it should at some time in the future be returned to the Chinese.[97] The outcome of the Shandong question like the future of Greater Syria was a matter that had been the subject of secret agreements between the imperial allies without any reference to the indigenous peoples. The apparent support by Wilson for the rights of peoples to assert their sovereignty was perhaps a ploy to ingratiate the USA with newly emergent nations aspiring to independence. This was the expansion of the United States of America's neo-colonialist strategy.

Despite the notional adoption of the concept of self-determination by bodies like the League of Nations as a watchword for the political development of countries it remained trapped within an imperialist methodology which prescribed its applicability. The Bolshevik government was the first to apply the concept in practice and to advocate its applicability to all nations without preconditions. Moreover their revelations of the secret agreements between Britain and France expressed in the Sykes-Picot negotiations challenged the credibility of those two countries in the realm of support for self-determination. The British implementation of the concept of self-determination was based on their own priorities and their own interests.

Declaration to the Seven and the Anglo-French Declaration

Leading figures in the Arab world began to ask questions about the real intentions of the British towards the future of the Near East and in particular towards Palestine. On 16th June 1918, under growing pressure from a variety of sources, the British issued a statement at a meeting with seven influential Arabs based in Cairo which became known as the "Declaration to the Seven" intending to reassure those concerned about the ambiguity of Britain's intentions. The declaration specifically

[97] Ibid., 184.

drew attention to Allenby's Jerusalem statement and to one made by General Sir Stanley Maude on the occasion of the fall of Baghdad on 19th March 1917.[98]

The "Declaration to the Seven" discussed four categories of territory, the fourth of which were those territories "liberated from Turkish rule by the action of the Allied armies". Palestine and Mesopotamia came within this group and the document spelt out the British government's position on the future of these two regions. The declaration affirmed, that "the policy of His Majesty's Government towards the inhabitants of those regions, … is that the future government of those territories should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed".[99] The Declaration echoed the formula used in his "War Aims" speech by Lloyd George and was designed to reassure its recipients that the British government endorsed the concept of self-determination.[100] From an Arab perspective the gaining of the right to self-determination in the manner implied by Allenby confirmed that they would receive their liberty as a *quid pro quo* for their alliance with the British against Germany's partner, the Ottoman Empire. The Anglo-French Declaration published on 7th November 1918 though brief reiterated that the establishment of "national governments and administrations … shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations".[101] The document, an official communiqué, was distributed to the press in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia and posted in towns and villages stating that "France and Great Britain agree to further and assist in the setting up of indigenous governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia which have already been liberated by the Allies, as well as in those territories which they are endeavouring to liberate, and to recognise them as soon as they are actually set up".[102]

The declaration asserted that the role of the French and the British was to offer "support" and "help" for the peoples of those countries in a process which would

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[98] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 433. He lists the seven to whom the declaration was read in English.
[99] Ibid.
[100] CAB 23/5.
See also Florida State University College of Law Archive report that the Sykes–Picot Agreement was published in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* on 23rd November 1917 and subsequently in the *Manchester Guardian* 26th November 1917–
http://archive.law.fsu.edu/library/collection/LimitsinSeas/IBS094.pdf (accessed 10/11/2015).
[101] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening,* 435.
[102] Ibid. 436.

culminate in self-determination. In the minds of those receiving both sets of statements the imperial powers, it would appear, were giving an undertaking that the future of the countries of the region would be a matter for their determination and not that of the Allies. It might reasonably be thought that whatever had been said in London at the end of 1917 in the form of the Balfour Declaration was now superseded by statements issued seven months later in Cairo and nearly a year later in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia. Of course in London the Cabinet was already discussing the establishment of colonial rule in Mesopotamia.[103] Whatever the intentions of the British and the French there could be no doubt of the effect that their public statements would have on the Arab leadership and amongst the wider population. It must have appeared as though a consensus was emerging amongst the great powers that self-determination was going to be respected as a universal principle. However this did not mean that the peoples of the region were to attain sovereignty and that the imperialist rivalry which had provoked the war would conclude to the benefit of those whose lands were coveted for their raw materials and potential markets.

Paris Peace Conference and the League of Nations

The Mandate System

From October 1918 the British extended the rule of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration to the whole of Palestine. Initially the French saw the advance on Syria and the taking of Damascus by their erstwhile partner as a repudiation of the Sykes–Picot agreement. Following the official ending of the War on 11th November, the British and French Prime Ministers David Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau met in December 1918 to resolve these issues before the Peace negotiations began. On the eve of the Paris Peace Conference Lloyd George agreed a compromise, for essentially domestic reasons, to give the French a "free-hand" in Syria and Lebanon once they had the necessary forces and *matériel* to successfully achieve their goals, thereby removing one major problem hanging over Anglo-French relations.[104] For their part the British were acting out of self-interest, placating the French in order to win the latter's acquiescence to the takeover of Palestine.[105]

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[103] CAB 24/10
[104] Charles D Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 87.
[105] Ibid. 114. The French were designated as the Mandatory power over Lebanon and Syria following the San Remo Conference of April 1920.

The Paris Conference which began on 18th January 1919 contained echoes of the 1884 Berlin Conference convened to reach an agreement between the imperialist powers over the division of Africa to avoid competition and conflict. In part the failure of that Conference was that the rivalry between the *new*-imperialist powers resulted in World War One. The British and the French viewed the Paris Conference as an opportunity to give international legitimacy to their ambitions for hegemony in the Near East and the importance of the Conference was underlined by the presence of major political figures of the Entente Powers including the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, The President of the USA Woodrow Wilson and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. The main business of the Conference resulted in a series of treaties, the first of which, the Treaty of Versailles, was concerned with Germany.

Lloyd George and Clemenceau had agreed their approach to the Conference based on the Sykes-Picot agreement and specifically the allocation of control over Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine.[106] Five months later on 28th June 1919 the Mandate system was established by the adoption of the Covenant of the League of Nations creating three sets of Mandate listed as Class A, B and C, corresponding to categories which the conquered countries were assigned based on the decisions by the imperial powers. Category A was composed of those countries deemed most ready to become independent sovereign states. Article 22 of the Covenant stated that the Mandates were held on behalf of the League of Nations by "advanced nations" as a "sacred trust of civilisation" in order to give "practical effect" to the "development of such peoples" who " are not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world". This formula was meant to differentiate between the Mandate system and traditional colonial rule though subsequent practices were hardly distinguishable from colonialism. The countries which Britain and France particularly wished to obtain the Mandate for were all categorised as Class A Mandate countries which had "reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance be a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone". Critically

[106] CAB 23/44B.

the Article added the qualification that the "wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory".[107]

King–Crane Commission

Following Balfour's visit to the USA in May 1917, President Woodrow Wilson was well aware of his intentions and commitment to formulate a declaration on Palestine favouring the creation of a homeland for the Jews.[108] However at the Conference and before allocating which powers should be assigned which Mandate countries he wanted the fourteen points he had presented to Congress relating to self-determination to be considered as well as the opinions of the peoples in the respective territories.[109]

He proposed the setting up of an inter-allied Commission to hear the evidence of the people in Greater Syria in which he included Lebanon and Palestine. Wilson's view was in line with the proposed Article 22 as well as the apparent intentions of the Cairo statement and the even more widely publicised Anglo-French Declaration. However the British or the French did not support Wilson and they, along with the Italian government, withdrew from the Commission.[110] As a result the Commission was composed exclusively of nominees of the United States of America which were the academic Dr Henry C. King, President of Oberlin College and the wealthy businessman Charles Richard Crane. Unlike any British or French politician before them, they sought the views of the people in the region including the Syrian Congress who made a submission to the Commission.[111]

Having gathered evidence in Palestine, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and at Adana from 16th June to early August 1919, the King–Crane Commission, concluded

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[107] Ibid.
[108] Frank E. Manuel, "Judge Brandeis and the Framing of the Balfour Declaration" in *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948,* ed. Walid Khalidi, (Washington: The Institute for Palestine Studies, Third Printing 2005), 168. Brandeis, whose opinions Wilson valued was being lobbied by Weizmann from whom he had already been cabled a version of the document on 19th September to indicate a favourable attitude to the proposal.
[109] Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their influence on US Middle East Policy* (London: University of California Press, 2000), 27.
[110] Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine,* 39.
[111] King–Crane Commission Digital Collection, Oberlin College Archives. http://dcollections.oberlin.edu/cdm/search/collection/kingcrane

that there should be one state of Greater Syria, to include Lebanon and Palestine, with Faisal as its king under a United States Mandate with Great Britain the second choice.[112] Having started from a position of sympathy for the Zionist project the evidence that they gathered led them to revise their views and they concluded by recommending "serious modification of the extreme Zionist position".[113] They drew a distinction between the concept of a "Jewish homeland" and the aspirations of the Zionists for a "Jewish state". "For a national home for the Jewish people is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State; nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine".[114] In general therefore the conclusions of the Commission was similar to the positions adopted in July 1919 by the Greater Syrian Congress.[115]

The King–Crane Commission report was handed to the Paris Peace Conference in August 1919 with the recommendation that the Zionist project should be curtailed. The British and the French governments opposed these findings and, in the absence of Wilson through ill-health, the report was marginalised and not published until 1922. Perhaps there is little wonder at the disinclination of the two European powers to see its publication when the evidence from the petitions to the Commission showed a clear repudiation of the Balfour Declaration and a preference to have the USA as the Mandatory power.[116] These findings were a rejection of the aspirations of the British, the French and the Zionist movement and, with certain qualifications, almost entirely in keeping with the aspirations of the Greater Syrian Congress and the representatives of the Arab peoples of the region.

League of Nations, Balfour and the Mandate

The Zionist Organisation had made a submission to the Peace Conference on 3rd February 1919 but this was not the sole route it followed to gain its objective. Whilst deliberations were taking place in Paris, the Zionist Commission was in the process of establishing itself in Palestine and cementing its privileged relationship

[112] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening,* Appendix H, 443.
[113] Ibid. 448 Section E.
[114] Ibid. 448 Section E (3).
[115] Ibid, 440 Appendix G. *Resolutions of the General Syrian Congress.*
[116] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust,* 15.

with the British Government. Chaim Weizmann was in regular contact with Winston Churchill the Secretary of State.[117] On 3rd January 1919 in London Weizmann and Emir Faisal, who was under pressure from the British, signed an agreement which proposed the adoption of "such measures … as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government's Declaration of the 2nd of November 1917" and recognised the other as being the custodians of the "national aspirations" of the Arabs and Jews respectively. [118]

The Faisal-Weizmann agreement written, like the Balfour Declaration itself, in the form of a treaty between states, contained no recognition of the Arab Palestinians as having any role to play in determining the future of the area.[119] Article IX of the agreement specified that any "matters which may arise between contracting parties shall be referred to the British Government for arbitration".[120] The document was an endorsement of Britain's hegemonic position and the neo-colonial status of whatever entities were subsequently established. Faisal subsequently added a codicil, which Weizmann co-signed, stating that "Provided the Arabs shall obtain their independence as demanded … I shall concur in the above articles. But if the slightest modification or departure were to be made, I shall not be bound by a single word of the present Agreement".[121] Faisal had in fact made a crucial concession to the British and the Zionists indicating that Palestine was not his priority and that there was not necessarily unanimity between him and other Arab leaders.

In October 1918 Faisal had established an Arab government in Damascus with himself as monarch but his credibility was damaged by the January 1919 agreement with Weizmann. In March 1920 the Syrian National Congress declared independence for Syria including Palestine. On 25th April 1920 the Supreme Council of the Allies at San Remo confirmed the assignment of the Mandate for Palestine and Mesopotamia to the British and that for Syria and Lebanon to the French. French troops were already in Greater Syria having disembarked at Beirut on 8th October 1918 and set up their base in the west of the region. On 14th July, the French gave Faisal an ultimatum to submit

[117] See Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews,* for a detailed account of Churchill's relationship with Chaim Weizmann and Zionism.
[118] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 103-105.
[119] Ibid., 103.
[120] Ibid., 105
[121] Ingrams, 55.

which he conceded to but supporters of the Syrian Congress resisted the French who defeated them and entered Damascus on 24th July 1920.[122]

The terms of all the Mandates, including the Mandate allotted to France, were contained in the Treaty of Sèvres finalised on 10th August 1920 but it was not until 24th July 1922 that the League of Nations finally ratified the final document. The Balfour Declaration was the political basis of the British Mandate for Palestine and was approved even though within the Cabinet there were dissident voices that argued against the formulations contained in it.[123] The qualification expressed in Article 22 that those to be governed under the Mandate system must have their wishes recognised as "a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory" were completely ignored.

Pre-empting both the treaties adopted following the Paris Peace Conference and the decisions of the League of Nations, the British established a structure for the implementation of the Mandate. In April 1920 Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed High Commissioner for Palestine to replace the military authority which had been in charge since Allenby's entry to Jerusalem. As I noted above, he had submitted a paper to Cabinet proposing that Palestine be made into a homeland for the Jewish people.[124] Samuel believed that in supporting such a move the British Empire would be enhancing its prestige and fulfilling "her historic part as civiliser of the backward countries".[125] Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, suggested that he reconsider his acceptance of the post whilst both Allenby and General Bols, the chief administrator of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration expressed deep concerns about Samuel because they regarded him as an inappropriate candidate.[126] Arab political figures shared Curzon's opinion that Samuel's association with Zionism made him unsuitable but notwithstanding this opposition on 1st July he took up the post.[127] Both the timing and the candidate selected were an indication of the intentions of the British government to proceed with the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. Whatever the intentions of the Covenant of the League of Nations in describing the Mandate as a

[122] Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition,* 25.
[123] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 19.
[124] CAB 37/123/43
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ingrams, 105 ff.
[127] CAB 24/1156 See also Abboushi, The *Unmaking of Palestine*, 13.

"sacred trust of civilisation" the British were determined to be in sole control of Palestine and take little heed of the views of the indigenous peoples.

Arab Opposition to the Mandate

In Palestine events did not stand still. The Arab Palestinian population, who under British military occupation had no control over immigration, became concerned at the increased numbers of Zionist colonists and what this meant for their own economic and political aspirations.[128] The First Arab Congress meeting in Damascus on 2nd July 1919 had already sounded the alarm calling for an independent Greater Syria, including Palestine and a special Congress was convened in Haifa later the same year to coordinate local committees of resistance. A second Arab Congress meeting in Damascus on 8th March 1920 repudiated the Mandate proposals for the country and proclaimed Syrian independence. Although the Balfour Declaration was not publicised in Palestine until 1920, evidence of its existence had emerged in the Egyptian press just a few days after its release to Lord Rothschild.[129] The Damascus Congress gave a clear indication that the intentions of the Zionist Commission were well known, well understood and completely rejected.

The increasing immigration from the end of the nineteenth century onwards had resulted in the doubling of the Jewish population between 1897 and 1914.[130] Colonial settlement projects such as the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association had been inaugurated in the 1880s by Baron Edmond de Rothschild.[131] The number of immigrants increased rapidly from an estimated 35,000 in the twenty-one years from 1882 to 1903, to 40,000 in the ten years from 1904 to 1914 and a further 40,000 in the five years from 1918 to 1923.[132] Events like the Kishinev pogrom of 6th and 7th April 1903 caused many Jews to leave Eastern Europe increasing the numbers of those seeking safety in Palestine, one of the options presented to them. The antagonisms that had already emerged were exacerbated as Jewish immigrants bought land to create

[128] Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 160 and note 17, 512.
[129] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 255 note 43.
[130] Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians 1876–1983* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1984), 26.
[131] Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 27
[132] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 10.

colonies displacing Arab families who were deprived of their livelihoods. Disputes arose around the purchase of land by Jewish colonies and the Jewish National Fund which invariably resulted in the displacement of the former Arab cultivators.[133] With the expansion of the influence of the Zionist Organisation successive groups of Jewish immigrants tended to have a more explicitly colonising agenda reflected in their endorsement of segregationist employment policies which rendered Arab Palestinian peasants and farmers both landless and unemployed.[134] In the context of an overwhelmingly agricultural society these developments had a major impact and were resisted by the agricultural workers and their families as land sales increased.[135]

For the Arab Palestinian population immigration lay at the root of the grievances which lead to the incidents of 1920 and 1921. Between 2nd and 4th April 1920 violent disturbances took place which resulted in nine fatalities (5 Jews and 4 Arabs) and over two hundred injured. These events became the subject of investigation by a Court of Inquiry presided over by Major General P. C. Palin of the British Army in Egypt.[136] Although its findings were never published they expressed concern about the growing presumptuousness of the newly established Zionist Commission during the military administration.[137] Palin's Court of Inquiry concluded that the population of Palestine felt "disappointment at the non-fulfilment of promises made to them by British propaganda; (an) inability to reconcile the Allies' declared policy of self-determination with the Balfour Declaration … ; Zionist indiscretion and aggression … and that the Zionist Commission and the official Zionists by their impatience, indiscretion and attempts to force the hands of the Administration, (were) largely responsible for the present crisis … ".[138] Samuel however took steps to ensure that the findings were never published.[139]

Whatever misgivings there were amongst military personnel or sections of the political leadership within Britain about implementing the Balfour Declaration were

[133] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 99-100.
[134] Ibid. 100. Khalidi draws attention to the change in the political character of the Jewish immigrants especially after the 1903 and 1905 pogroms in Russia.
[135] Kayyali, 179.
[136] Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest,* 83.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., 84.
[139] Ibid., 85. Citing FO 371/5121.

superseded in April 1920 by the San Remo Conference decisions and the actions of the Lloyd George Government. However the fundamental contradiction within the Balfour Declaration continued to surface. Samuel tried to assure the Arab community that he was committed to an "equality of obligation" based on "a full protection of the rights of the existing population" but that this was within a framework which would deliver "the satisfaction of the legitimate aspirations of the Jewish race throughout the world in relation to Palestine". He acknowledged that "to install the Jews in Palestine might mean the expulsion of the Arabs" but he regarded such an outcome as a failure to implement the terms of the Balfour Declaration.[140]

The British attitude to Arab self-determination was most graphically summed up by David Lloyd George's response to a delegation of Indian Muslims on 24th March 1921.

> As to the Arab States, some of them are absolutely free from control. I do not think however that any responsible Arab Chiefs would like to try the experiment of being absolutely without the support of a Great Western Power in Mesopotamia or Syria. They are people who have not for hundreds of years had control of these States. They are not a coherent people, they are tribal …[141]

The statement encapsulated the British imperialist perspective and the orientalist views of its politicians. He made clear that any consideration of the future of the Arab states was a matter for the British to decide and whilst he professed strong support for the religious independence of the peoples of the Empire he was intransigent with regard to the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. For Lloyd George Palestine fell completely outside any consideration of self-determination.

The Mandate, finally adopted by the Council of the League of Nations on 24th July 1922, incorporated the wording of the Balfour Declaration committing that "the Mandatory (Britain) should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should

[140] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 101-102
[141] CAB 23/35, 11. Pronouncing on the appointment of religious leaders the Prime Minister declared that "England has never interfered in these matters".

be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".[142] At the same time as reaffirming the terms of the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate left the British to determine how to implement the policy and what Zionist organisation to collaborate with. Of course this had already been decided by the British in 1917.

Conclusions

Colonising imperialism faced increasing challenges on three fronts. New anti-imperialist movements were being established and were beginning to gain ground. The first Pan-African Congress was held in Paris in 1919 and the British West Africa National Congress in 1920. Nationalist uprisings occurred in Egypt (1919) and Iraq (1920) and the Irish War for Independence took place from 1919 until 1921 whilst in China the May Fourth Movement grew. On a second front the Bolshevik Revolution challenged imperialist hegemony rejecting the notion that self-determination was a licence to be gifted by the imperialists. The third element of this challenge to the established imperial powers was the development of the United States of America as a world power. Although the USA had been economically a world power for some time, in the early twentieth century it expanded as a political and military force.[143] Despite the fact that it was Britain which had financially and militarily supported the Arab Revolt, it was to the USA that many of those in the Near East began to look as a potential Mandatory power.

I argue that the British-facilitated colonisation of Palestine by Zionist settlers following the defeat of the Ottoman forces did not constitute a complete departure from pre-existing imperial practices or indeed developments which had taken place more locally. Debate took place surrounding the use of surrogates to undertake the role that settlers from Britain might have provided in the Near East. The Zionist settlers, like the Indian Muslims suggested for the Basra area by Lord Kitchener, constituted a group that needed little or no incentivising. Casting Jews as a returning people, the British could present themselves as contributing to the fulfilment of their

[142] Charles D Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 109.
[143] CAB 24/198.

historic homecoming to Palestine rather than as imperialist expansionists. A congruent biblical narrative, linking a Jewish identity articulated by political Zionism with a fundamentally imperialist Christian millenarianism, was invoked to legitimise the denial of the rights of the Arab Palestinian people. As I argued in Chapter One this narrative was intertwined with the ideas promoted by secular ideologues arguing that *res nullius* applied permitting the occupation of notionally ownerless property by whoever asserts that claim. "A land without people for a people without land" has its roots in the philosophy of the classical liberalism of John Locke.

In the subsequent chapters I will analyse the relationship between the British and the Arab peoples of Palestine and the area of Greater Syria. I will explore how the British treated the Palestinians and those who might in other contexts have been potential partners in the elaboration of a neo-colonial agenda. I will also examine the changes taking place inside Palestinian society itself and the impact of the occupation of the country on its economic and social development. The social relations of the overwhelmingly agriculturally oriented economy in Palestine were confronted by the occupiers imposition of the norms more associated with a more industrialised capitalism. The advent of the *new*-imperialism signalled an end to the colonisation and colonialist policies which typified the era of *capitalist* imperialism and the emergence of the neo-colonialist phase of imperialist expansionism. The Zionist project for the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine constituted both a continuance of the policy of colonisation and a break with that practice and was the consequence of the contradictions inherent in the Balfour Declaration itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Mandate and Palestinian Politics

Introduction

The chapter will explore how British *new*-imperialism impacted on the political development of an Arab Palestinian society existing within the predominantly *pre-capitalist* Ottoman Empire. This society, which was shaped by the changes within the Empire during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was confronted by one of the most powerful economic and military forces in the world intent on supporting the establishment of Zionist colonial settlement in Palestine. I will argue that this process distorted the development of the Arab Palestinian society, impinging on and prejudicing the growth and coalescence of social forces critical to the construction and development of a perspective to achieve self-determination.

The chapter will demonstrate that British *new*-imperialism implemented asymmetrical economic, legal and political policies favouring Zionist colonisation and the development of industries owned by Zionists to the disadvantage of the Arab Palestinian people. The thesis further argues that the specific nature of the landownership changes introduced in the nineteenth century by the Ottoman Empire and retained by the British facilitated the purchase of land by the settlers which led to the displacement of large numbers of *fellahin* from the land.

Inward investment from abroad to Zionist owned enterprises led to a faster growth of capital in the *Yishuv* and a more rapid expansion of the social classes corresponding to this process whilst the agriculturally based economy in which the majority of Arab Palestinians worked generally had a slower rate of growth. This differential rate of economic expansion was reflected in an uneven development of social forces with both the capitalist and working classes expanding more swiftly in the *Yishuv*. Conversely the de-development of those parts of the economy in which Arab Palestinians preponderated contributed to a slower growth of these social forces within the Arab Palestinian community. This social process impacted on the development of political organisation and the articulation of a programme for self-

determination based on a repudiation of British imperialism and the Mandate administration.

I will demonstrate that the development of a Palestinian politics was not solely the consequence of the responses of a traditional hereditary political layer but saw new social forces playing a greater part in society. Women, workers and youth became engaged in the political process in both formal political structures and popular activities. A vibrant and growing press articulated some of the views of the day calling for opposition to the Balfour Declaration and demanding the right to nationhood. The chapter will conclude by indicating how the traditionalist political associations dominated by the families of the *a'yan* or notables were being replaced by the formation of new political parties and the adoption of more explicitly anti-imperialist perspectives giving rise to a more explicitly anti-British and anti-imperialist politics.

The Ottoman Empire and *New*-Imperialism

The process of change in the nature of imperialism discussed in Chapter One led to the growth of a highly competitive internationalised economic and political environment which significantly contributed to causing the world war that engulfed the principal competitors, transforming the manner in which inter-imperialist rivalry had been conducted from a largely territorial confrontation into one more typically based on economic dominance typified by control over raw materials and the monopolisation of national markets. These new features of economic, social and political transformation began to supersede direct colonisation as hegemony was progressively achieved by the incorporation of subaltern economies into a world market. This asymmetrical relationship was then frequently encapsulated in bilateral treaties confirming the dominant–subaltern status. Whilst this pattern had already begun to appear in countries like Argentina and Thailand, it became more prevalent with the ascendancy of *new*-imperialism.[1] The Arab leaders alliance with the British during World War One seeking to break from the Ottoman Empire was based on just

[1] A. J. Stockwell, "Imperialism and Nationalism in South-East Asia" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, *eds*. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 472.

such a perspective and formed the basis of the proposals by the Arab Palestinian leadership to the British as a means of progressing to self-determination.

The Ottoman Empire which had existed from 1517 until 1917 had established economic, social, legal and political structures. During the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire was undergoing change but British trade with the region expanded considerably influencing the crops grown, the forms of landownership, the emergence of new social layers, the increased secularisation of society and the development of new political forces. The previous chapter noted how sections of the Empire were already being separated off and colonised. Western European capitalism, and the British specifically, encountered in Palestine a society with established political, economic and social relations. Following World War One, the British, to achieve their own goals, proceeded to re-shape Palestine in ways which would disadvantage the indigenous population and favour the Zionist project.

From at least the early nineteenth century onwards the whole region was going through a process of integration into the world economic market which accelerated with the advent of *new*-imperialism.[2] In the second half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman rulers had established the *sanjaks* (sub-province) of Acre and Nablus, within the *vilayet* (province) of Beirut and the *mutasarrifate* (sub-province or district) of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, perhaps as a consequence of its religious importance, came under the direct rule of Constantinople. The political administrative districts also had a degree of symmetry with the economic structure of the area linking commercial centres to surrounding rural areas.[3] Coastal towns developed in response to economic expansion the outcome of increased trade and as a consequence of the Ottoman state expanding the infrastructure of the area.[4]

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[2] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688–1914*; Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples;* Martin Lynn, "British Policy, Trade and Informal Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century" in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[3] Robert Owen, *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* ed., Roger Owen (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), 2.
[4] Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37.

The restructuring of the Ottoman Empire in the *Tanzimat* period from 1838 until 1876 brought major changes in many areas including those of finance, economics, education and the communications infrastructure. The Land Law of 1858 and the Law of 1867 began to transform the longstanding forms of ownership turning land into a commodity to be bought and sold. Increased international trading encouraged the move from the production of crops for consumption to their production as commodities for market. The alienation of the land encouraged purchases by the wealthy expanding their ownership and opening it to acquisition by colonisers, including British investors, enthusiastic to establish "export-oriented farms".[5] Having a greater effect on areas within reach of the coast, which could be drawn into trading this pattern was not extended uniformly across all of the Ottoman Empire. However in Palestine, under the British Mandate, these changes to the landownership laws had a particular effect on the *fellahin* as the Zionist colonists with relatively easier access to capital were more able to use them purchasing initially from large absentee-landlords wishing to sell.

Land Ownership and Social Formation

Whilst the bulk of the population were rurally based and engaged in agriculture the economic changes taking place particularly in the field of commerce led to the creation of employment requiring new skills and hence the growth of new social layers. The British occupied a land which, unlike many of those which it had previously colonised, was already engaged with western European capitalism.[6] A developing public media existed and, albeit with a limited suffrage, there was a political structure and forms of representation. The British were seeking to hegemonise a country which had experienced one imperial rule and where there was an active debate about its future political options. This was a different environment from that which British imperialism had met in Australia for example or certain of its other colonies.

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[5] Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, investment and production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). 102. British investors sought to purchase large amounts of land around Izmir. One estimate suggests they bought around one third of cultivable land in the region and imported "substantial amounts of agricultural implements and machinery for their farms".

[6] Alexander Schölch, "European Penetration and the Economic Development of Palestine, 1856–82", in *Studies in the Economic History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* ed., Roger Owen (Oxford: MacMillan Press, 1982).

The population of Palestine in the early 1880s was an estimated 457,592 living in 672 villages, most of whom were Muslims engaged in agriculture, the larger portion, the *fellahin* or peasant, working the land.[7] The large landowners and those who held positions which were part of the structure of the Ottoman Empire tended to live in the urban areas and have come to be known as the *a'yan* or "notables".[8] This group of families held prestigious positions in society arising from posts they held, their wealth and the influence they were able to exercise over the rural population.[9] Albert Hourani has described the symbiotic relationship between the *a'yan* and the *fellahin* as a consequence of mutually sympathetic and antagonistic dependencies. "The political influence of the notables rests on two factors: on the one hand, they must possess 'access' to authority, and so be able to advise, to warn, and in general to speak for society or some part of it at the ruler's court; on the other, they must have some social power of their own, whatever its form and origin, which is not dependent on the ruler and gives them a position of accepted and 'natural' leadership".[10] These relationships often came to influence the political allegiances which people held.

Like all ruling groups the Palestinian *a'yan* were however not monolithic. Some, like the Khalidis, were religious scholars holding more or less hereditary posts in the *Sharia* courts whilst others, like the Jerusalem-based Nashashibis and Husseinis, were large landowners. The changes which had taken place under the Ottomans impacted differently on the two groups. This landowning group were the principal beneficiaries of the changes brought about by the Land Laws as they "moved quickly

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[7] Kayyali, 11. These figures exclude Bedouins. Porath records that in 1931 an estimated 63.5% of the Muslim population worked in agriculture compared to 14.6% of Christians. Porath, *Emergence*,19.

[8] See Albert Hourani "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables" in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader,* eds, Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury and Mary C. Wilson, (London: I B Tauris, Reprinted in 2011). Hourani in fact distinguishes three types of "notables" historically in the Ottoman Empire. Those whose influence derived from religious authority, the *'ulama*; the leaders of local garrisons with a degree of military autonomy; and the *a'yan* or "secular notables". The term "notables" used in this work refers principally to the third of these categories – the "secular notables".

[9] There has been a wide-ranging discussion in literature on India about the role of *zamindars* as go-betweens in respect of ruling groups and the peasantry, exploring the extent to which they became accessories to British imperial rule. See Meghnad Desai, "Vortex in India"*, New Left Review*, (May-June 1970), 1/61; Premen Addy and Ibne Azad, "Politics and Culture in Bengal"*, New Left Review*, (May-June 1973) 1/79; P. E. Roberts, *History of British India: Under the Company and the Crown* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, Fourth Impression 1980).
David Fitzpatrick, "Ireland and the Empire" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) notes the British failure to impose an English model of land ownership in Ireland influenced subsequent decisions in India. (517).

[10] Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables" in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader,* eds, Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury and Mary C. Wilson (London: I. B. Tauris, Reprinted in 2011), 87.

to amass agricultural land … (using) … available legal … illegal and extra-legal methods" to do so.[11] The durability of the influence of the *a'yan* as a whole can be seen from the frequency with which family names recurred as political leaders throughout the Mandate period.[12] Members of the *a'yan* were to play the leading formal role in Palestinian politics for the first decade of the Mandate period.

It is important to note however that not all the owners of land in Palestine lived within its boundaries. The first substantial sales of lands to the Zionist colonisers were made by absentee landlords like the Sursuq family, based in Beirut, who bought and sold land, making the *fellahin* landless and frequently indebted.[13] As a result of these sales peasant producers were transformed into sharecroppers, indebted tenants or dispossessed wage labourers, as they lost their livelihoods. The sales were governed by the *Tanzimat* Land Laws and resulted in those working the lands being evicted, first by Ottoman troops, and then from 1917 onwards by British troops enforcing court decisions. Opposition to the sale of land to the Zionists led to mass demonstrations in both 1920 and 1921 which came "shortly after the purchase in 1920 of vast amounts of property (50,000 acres), which had belonged to Sursuk [*sic*];" a transaction which led to the eviction of some 8,000 sharecroppers.[14] Those who were removed from their lands and able to find employment became part of the small Arab Palestinian working class principally based in the docks, quarries, small-scale industries and on the railways. As this process accelerated, those unable to find employment gravitated towards the cities and added to the ranks of the landless poor, something the British feared. Even those who retained a *lot viable*, an area of land which was meant to be enough to ensure self-sufficiency, were frequently obliged to abandon it in return for money to pay their debts.[15]

The *Tanzimat* Land Laws of 1858 had codified forms of ownership to extend the Empire's tax base whilst the 1867 Law had extended the heritability of land and,

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[11] Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 34.
[12] See Appendix A: Porath, *Emergence*, 383.
[13] Those selling also included German and French owners of land. By 1930 of the 1,200,000 *dunams* which had been sold to the settlers only 75,000 came from Palestinian smallholders. Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948* (London: University of California Press, 2008), 31.
[14] Nathan Weinstock, *Zionism: False Messiah* (London: Ink Links Ltd., 1979), 115.
[15] Sarah Graham-Brown, "The Political Economy of Jabal Nalus, 1920–48", 126.

with provisos, granted permission to foreigners to own land. The land tenure system was somewhat complicated with at least six forms of ownership operating in Palestine: *mulk, miri, waqf, mawat, mahlul* and *matruka*.[16] Only the *mulk* form of ownership involved the right of freehold over the land. All others forms of ownership included varying degrees of conditionality which might, under certain circumstances such as their non-cultivation over a period of time, result in the loss of the lands. The Arab Palestinian community was largely based in the rural area where "the vast majority of agricultural land … came under the category known as *miri*, land in which the usufruct, or right of use (*tasarruf*), was granted by the state".[17] In fact the law "treated the usufructuary possession of land as a personal, hereditary, and transferable right".[18] There was little difference between *miri* and outright freehold but this did not afford protection against distraint.

In Palestine, following the introduction of the Laws, the *fellahin* "fearful that land registration was the harbinger of new taxes, or military conscription … frequently preferred, or even sought, the protection of an urban notable, under whose name they consented to have their land registered."[19] Furthermore there was no cadastral survey of land in Palestine that could readily provide information to the military administration about ownership and this subsequently made it difficult for the *fellahin* to establish their inherited right to ownership or even usufruct.[20] The *fellahin* who were displaced were deprived of their livelihoods and forced to seek employment elsewhere or, if it was possible, to work in the countryside under new terms of daily or seasonal engagement. Many went to the expanding towns on the coast seeking employment as workers however there they met challenges produced by the newly arrived colonists and the exclusionary policies pursued by the Zionist organisations which I will analyse later in the chapter.

From a political point of view the implementation of the Laws which facilitated land sales, authorised by the courts and enforced by the state, subverted the

[16] Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 11.
[17] Martin Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine 1917–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Shafir, 34.
[20] Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine,* 31.

credibility of a stance which advocated reliance on the Ottoman Empire as the best defender of the interests of the agriculturally based Arab Palestinian society. Since the turn of the century reports of protests by *fellahin* facing eviction from lands purchased by the Zionist colonisers had already appeared in the Arab media.[21] There was a growing realisation that the advance of Zionist settlement was unlikely to be halted by those whose laws facilitated the purchase of land and colonisation in the first place. The war and the Arab Revolt posed an alternative perspective. Amongst those who had been advocating an Arabist political orientation against the Ottoman Empire the view grew that an alliance with those Arab leaders who were preparing to link up with the British against Constantinople would lead to a more effective way to ensure the introduction of measures to prevent land sales and help them retain their lands.[22]

The urban-based Arab Christians in Palestine numbered around 25,000 and were generally not engaged in agricultural work. Under terms established with successive rulers of the Ottoman Empire, France acted as a "protector" of Christians in "Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, while the Orthodox Christians came under Russian protection".[23] Benefitting from the protections afforded by the Capitulations or concessions "by which foreign residents were virtually outside the law" and their access to missionary schools, the Christians were well placed to take on roles in commerce working with European traders and the expanding professions.[24] Christian merchants paid lower rates of duty than Muslim merchants and benefitting from their more favourable relationship with European traders often "established themselves as the moneylenders and bankers for Muslim artisans, landowners and peasants".[25] Adding to this growing middle class some newspaper proprietors and editors could also be found amongst their ranks. Like their Muslim counterparts, the names of members of prominent Christian families reoccur as leading participants in Arab Palestinian political life.[26]

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[21] Muslih, 71-72. The earliest major dispute over land occurred in 1885 at Petah Tikva. Disturbances also occurred at Tiberias in 1901-02 and at 'Affula in 1910–11.
[22] Muslih, 67.
[23] Kayyali, 12.
[24] Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples,* 274.
[25] Philip S. Khoury, *Urban notables and Arab nationalism: The politics of Damascus 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 6.
[26] Mustafa Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929–1939* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2007), 40.

Having a population very similar in size to the Arab Christians, the Jewish community lived mainly in the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Tiberias, Safed and Hebron.[27] Whilst many Jews were religious scholars living off alms, others were engaged in artisanal work providing services to their communities.[28] In some fields, like finance, they played a role similar to other minority communities in the Ottoman Empire who facilitated trade and exchange at the point of encounter between majority communities and those outside.[29] These patterns began to change with successive *aliyah* (phases of immigration) especially from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards as Jews who arrived from Eastern Europe brought different skills and experiences with them.

In an agricultural society like Palestine the nature of the ownership of the land was a central factor influencing not only the economic development of the country but also its social and political formation.

Pre-War Politics

As I indicated above, those *a'yan* who were large landowners tended, before the War, to adopt a pro-Ottoman perspective accepting the rule of Constantinople believing that political changes should take place within the parameters of the Empire. The Porte provided the framework for their world and their principal ambition was to enjoy greater autonomy within the Empire. Although they wished to retain the *status quo*, this viewpoint came under greater challenge as Arab resentment grew towards the Turkification and the centralisation promoted by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1908.[30]

Through the second half of the nineteenth century coastal towns and cities expanded and become more influential and the landowning families who had played a

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[27] Kayyali, 11. Quoting Arthur Ruppin.
[28] Ibid. 11 See also Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917–1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979). For a more extensive comment on the nature of the artisan groups see Nathan Weinstock's "Introduction" in Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 43.
[29] Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples,* 236.
[30] Antonius analyzing the politics of the CUP identifies what he considers as a central contradiction in their politics being the adoption of a nationalist *Pan-Turanian* position promoting the Turkish element of their programme bringing them into inevitable conflict with an Ottomanist perspective. Likewise, he sees their centralizing tendency, borrowed from the French Revolution, as counter to the needs of the Empire. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 106-107.

leading role within society began to be challenged by a nascent merchant bourgeoisie. The latter benefitted from the increased integration of the economy into trade primarily with Britain but also with other countries in Western Europe.[31] The activities generated by these developments produced a middle class of technicians and professionals not formed by the traditional relationships and patronage that had shaped rural society.[32] Property developers like Uthman al-Nashashibi and Raghib al–Nashashibi, who became the Jerusalem District Engineer in 1914, were representative of these emerging groups.[33] 'Izzat Darwaza who was to become the secretary of the First Palestinian Congress in 1919 came from a family of merchants in Nablus and had worked as an administrator in the Department of Postal and Telegraphic Services.[34]

The CUP reinstated the Constitution in 1908 and adopted the Electoral Law which had eighty-three clauses detailing the nature of the suffrage, the conduct of elections, eligibility to stand for positions and the designation of electoral districts. Under this law only males over the age of 25 who paid some taxes were eligible to vote as "primary voters" who then, on the basis of one man for every 500 voters, elected the "secondary voters" who in turn would elect the deputies on the basis of one for every 50,000 male residents of a constituency.[35] Only males above the age of thirty with "ability in Turkish and enjoying civil rights could be elected deputy, unless he had accepted citizenship or employment in the service of a foreign government, was bankrupt or a domestic servant, or was stigmatized by 'notoriety for ill deeds'". [36] Women and less well-off members of society were excluded from any electoral involvement. Unsurprisingly political representation to the Ottoman political bodies was exclusively in the hands of the *a'yan* as it had been in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, by the standards of the day, the concept of elected representatives was present within Palestinian society.

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[31] Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 44. They describe the way in which the coastal cities in particular developed both economically and culturally.
[32] Salim Tamari, *Mountains against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 168.
[33] Porath, *Emergence,*14.
[34] Muslih, 147.
[35] Hasan Kayali, "Elections and the Electoral Process in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1919", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 27. No. 3 (Aug., 1995). 269. According to Kayyali the Ottoman electoral system bore a close resemblance to the French electoral laws of 1789.
[36] Ibid., 266.

Of course the voting process favoured the election of members of the *a'yan* and excluded the *fellahin*, the newer middle class and women. Those who came to prominence were often from *a'yan* families already playing prominent roles in the military, legal or administrative fields within the Empire.[37] Ruhi al Khalidi, for example, who was elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1908 was the nephew of Yusuf Diya' al Khalidi who had been a member during a previous period of parliamentary rule. In 1911, Ruhi al-Khalidi and Sa'id al Husseini, both representatives from Jerusalem spoke in the Ottoman Parliament about Zionism and the threat it posed.[38] They were joined in this intervention by Shukri al-'Asali from Damascus who as a local official had tried to block land sales in Nazareth. Despite their critiques of Zionism these Parliamentarians were loyal towards the Ottoman Empire and the Arabism that they expressed was a form of cultural nationalism rather than a separatist aspiration.[39]

Expressions of anti-Zionist opinions were not restricted to the parliamentary arena. Najib Nassar publishing *al-Karmil* in 1910 simultaneously worked to establish an organisation in Haifa to encourage a boycott of the buying and selling of land to the Zionist colonisers. The "Patriotic Ottoman Party" was set up in Jaffa in the same year and in 1913 an attempt was made to convene a conference in opposition to Zionism in Nablus.[40] This growing antagonism to Zionism pre-dated the Balfour Declaration and these views were reflected in opinions expressed by the newspapers that began to be published around the same time.[41]

In the post-war environment all existing political, economic and social formations were faced with a series of problems. The *a'yan* whose privileges rested on their capacity to act as intermediaries between the Ottoman rulers and the peoples of the area of Greater Syria were, following the war, deprived of their patron and to

[37] Muslih notes the tendency of the Sultan and the grand vizier to favour certain families, like the al-Khalidi family, when promoting people to military, legal and political, posts. He lists a number of members of families from Nablus and Jenin who were appointed because of the perceived loyalty of their families and their towns. Muslih, 50-54. Muslih also explains how Sultan Abdulhamid, despite his promotion of Islam used certain minority groups in key areas such as Maronite Christians for example. Patronage continued to be a feature of Palestinian society into the twentieth century.
[38] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 76.
[39] Ibid. 85.
[40] Porath, *Emergence,* 29. Quoting *Filastin* 12.7.13, 2.8.13.
[41] Muslih, 79.

maintain their traditional role they would need to convince the British of their indispensability. The political bodies through which they had made representation to those who ruled them in Constantinople no longer existed. The economic environment to which they had been used had already begun to change because of the laws introduced by the Ottomans turning land into a commodity for sale and purchase on the open market. The arrival of a colonising power, applying those laws and authorising their utilisation by the Zionist settlers resulted in sections of the *a'yan*, mainly those outside Palestine, selling land to profit from the increases in prices. Throughout the 1920s however they were faced by a further problem and that was the arrival of Zionist colonisers able to access capital on a larger scale than themselves.

These accumulating challenges emerged in the context of the imperial settlement which the British and the French were intent on imposing. The implementation of the Sykes–Picot agreement, mentioned in Chapter Two, imposed on the Arab Palestinian society choices about the direction of political travel they should pursue. Following its own agenda the British were to ignore the promises contained in the Hussein–McMahon correspondence which Arab leaders believed expressed an undertaking to support the right of self-determination for Arab lands.

The War, the Arab Revolt and Palestinian Nationalism.

Even though, as I have noted above, Palestinian and other Arab voices were heard in the Ottoman Parliament, discontent amongst the Arab provinces of the Empire at the path followed by the CUP between 1908 and 1912 began to spread amongst numerous groups in Greater Syria. Amongst the Arab population this political shift was reflected in the opinions expressed in the media and through new political and cultural bodies such as *al-Muntada al-Adabi* (The Literary Club) established in Constantinople in 1909 and *Hizb al-Lamarkaziya al-Idariya al-'Uthmani* (The Ottoman Decentralisation Party) founded in Cairo in 1912.[42] Whilst some of the prominent families remained pro-Ottoman, others developed a Pan-Islamist outlook and yet others gravitated towards a Pan-Arabist opinion. However the Anglo-French imposition of the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement virtually

[42] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 109. Porath makes the point that whilst there were branches of the party in Nablus, Jenin, Tul-Karm and Jaffa, there was not one in Jerusalem. He ascribes this fact to the integration of the leading Jerusalem families into the Ottoman Empire. Porath, *Emergence,* 23.

forced a shift towards Arab nationalism when Greater Syria was split into two distinct French and British zones.[43]

Amongst sections of the Arab Palestinian *a'yan* who held positions under Sultan Abdul Hamid II the tendency had been to emphasise the unity of the Empire and its status as the Caliphate.[44] This perspective, generally described as Pan-Islamist, sought decentralisation and greater autonomy within the administrative structures and its influence was to some extent reflected during the war by the absence of any revolt against the Ottoman authorities.[45] In reality the picture was perhaps more nuanced of course as "active recruiting was carried out in Palestine for the Sharifian army".[46] However over time the repressive regime imposed by the Porte coupled with the corrosive privations experienced by the mass of the population during the war progressively undermined pro-Ottoman sympathies.[47]

Following the defeat of the Ottoman forces in Palestine in 1917 a pro-Ottoman position became less sustainable and the *a'yan* turned to the British to preserve the status they had enjoyed. The *a'yan* political leaders at first looked relatively benevolently on the occupiers, seeking as little disruption to their way of life as possible but then increasingly calling on the Mandate authorities to halt the sale of land and impose limits to Jewish immigration. The Cabinet in Britain however was made aware that of the complexities of the situation. In a report to the War Cabinet in January 1918, Sir Mark Sykes complained that despite the many assets that the British had in respect of their credibility in Palestine for their defeat of the Ottoman forces, "a whole crowd of weeds are growing around us". He listed six concerns of which he placed "Arab unrest in regard to Zionism" at the top, followed by "French jealousy in regard to our position in Palestine … friction among the Arabs … Franco-Italian jealousy … (and) … Zionist … suspicion and chauvinism". He argued there was an

[43] Muslih, 132.
[44] Porath, *Emergence,* 24. This view was expressed by people like As'ad Shuqayri, the Acre representative in the Ottoman parliament from 1912–1914 and Shukri al-Husseini, a high-ranking Ottoman administrator from Jerusalem.
[45] Muslih, 89. Muslih illustrates the allegiance of many of the notables to the Ottoman regime and argues that despite the hangings of Palestinian nationalists in Syria in 1915 and 1916, this did not cause a break in their loyalty. He records the case of one Palestinian Arab who reported a planned revolt in Syria against the Ottomans to Jamal Pasha (91).
[46] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 35.
[47] Porath, *Emergence*, 24.Ibid.

urgent need for the centralisation of British administration in the area to ensure a coherent response to the challenges.[48]

The evidence given from a variety of Arab sources in Greater Syria to the King Crane Commission in 1919, mentioned in the previous chapter, reflected an awareness that the old Ottoman dispensations were no longer operative. The Commission's findings echoed the predominant Arab hope that a Mandatory power be installed which was favourable towards self-determination and the report of Sir Mark Sykes quoted above made plain the range of problems confronting the British. Although the United States of America was named as the preferred option, there remained the view that the British, having endorsed the Arab Revolt, would look favourably on their hopes.[49]

Generational Shifts and the Development of Arab Palestinian Politics

After World War One new Arab political organisations appeared shaped by a younger generation whose experiences differed from their predecessors. The older generation had been used to the customs and practices of the Ottoman rulers but the occupation of Palestine severed that link. Perhaps understandably the older generation attempted to maintain the existing state of affairs by attempting to replicate those relationships with the British. The younger generation, not having had that association with the Ottomans or having benefited from such relationships, did not have these experiences to inform their attitudes towards the new rulers.[50] This younger group was composed of people born at the end of the nineteenth century or in the early years of the twentieth. To a degree this generational break was also linked to the emergence of new social layers mentioned above. Typical of those who were, in the coming years, to play a prominent part in the initiation of a Palestinian response to the British was Yusuf al-'Isa, the editor of the newspaper *Filastin*, who like the aforementioned 'Izzat Darwaza, typified the newly emergent urban middle class.[51] Darwaza was amongst a

[48] CAB 24/37
[49] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*. Appendix H,453. Recommendations of the King–Crane Commission with Regard to Syria–Palestine and Iraq.
[50] Muslih, 157. A number of this younger generation were educated in Istanbul and subsequently held government appointments only later to be dismissed for being critical of the CUP and expressing pro-Arabist sentiments.
[51] Kayyali, 61.

group who met and discussed politics in Damascus alongside another young Jerusalemite, Haj Amin Husseini, and Aref al-Aref, the young editor of *Suriyya al-Janubiyya,* and formed *al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya* (the Palestinian Arab Society) on 31st May 1920.[52]

Whilst within the political groupings there was of course no absolute division on the basis of age it was nevertheless a recurring phenomenon that a younger generation came to the fore to take the lead in opposition to the Mandate. The attitude adopted by those groups dominated by the older generations, like the Muslim Christian Association (MCA), formally established in February 1919, was less confrontational than bodies formed and led by those who were younger like *al-Nadi al-'Arabi* (the Arab Club) and *al-Muntada al-Adabi*. British officials recognising these differences, looked upon the MCA more favourably and were even thought to have facilitated its establishment.[53] However although these age differences were evident they did not produce a complete break of those involved with their respective family allegiances.[54]

The Damascus Protocol and the First Palestinian Congress

The emergence of these younger generations was foreshadowed by earlier events. New political forces often including of members of a younger generation began to emerge oriented towards a Pan-Arabist future for the region viewing Palestine as "Southern Syria". This Greater Syrian political project was developed clandestinely by members of groups like *al-Fatat* and *al-'Ahd* who proposed an alliance between the Arab peoples seeking self-determination.[55] Having originally approached Emir Faisal in January 1915 they formally presented to him on 23rd May in Damascus their proposal with the request that it be presented to his father Sharif Husain in Mecca for his approval. Faisal, now a member of *al-Fatat*, returned to

[52] Kayyali, 79. Muslih suggests it was founded in early June 1920. (150)
[53] Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79.
[54] Muslih, 160.
[55] Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Zed Books, Edition 2015), 25. Rodinson draws attention to the influence of Jacobinism and the French Revolution as factors in the development of the political formations of the Young Turks and the state structures in the Ottoman Empire.

Mecca on 20th June 1915 and with the support of his brother, Abdullah, persuaded Husain to endorse the document.[56]

The Damascus Protocol, as the document is often referred to, has been called the "foundation document and the lodestar of the Arab Revolt".[57] The Arab leadership who were to enter into discussions with the British about an alliance against the Ottoman Empire defined their territorial expectations in a very precise manner.

> The recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers:
> North: The line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37º N. and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat (Ibn 'Umar)-Amadia to the Persian frontier;
> East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;
> South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden, whose status was to be maintained);
> West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.
> The abolition of all exceptional privileges granted to the Capitulations.
> The conclusion of a definitive alliance between Great Britain and the future independent Arab state.
> The grant of economic preference to Great Britain.[58]

Following Faisal's return to Mecca Sharif Husain's first note to Sir Henry McMahon sent on 14th July 1915 used exactly the Protocol formulations to define the geographical boundaries adding the proposition that "Great Britain will agree to the proclamation of an Arab Caliphate for Islam".[59] The letter reiterated the proposal to give the British preferential economic treatment and proposed the abolition of all capitulations in the Arab countries and the "summoning of an international congress to decree their abolition".[60] This was a proposition which was entirely congruent with the British *new*-imperialist perspective. The importance of what was happening in Syria and Palestine was reflected in a meeting with the War Cabinet on 16th December 1915 where Sir Mark Sykes expressed the view that, "With regard to the Arab

[56] Muslih, 95.
[57] Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration*, 54.
[58] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*.157.
[59] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 97. Porath, *Emergence,* 70. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 414. Muslih, 94.
[60] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 97.

question, the fire, the spiritual fire, lies in Arabia proper, the intellectual and the organising power lie in Syria and Palestine, centred particularly at Beirut".[61]

The formula of the Protocol was partially echoed in the positions adopted by the First Palestinian Congress held in Jerusalem from 27th January until 10th February 1919.[62] The Congress, presided over by 'Aref Pasha al-Dajani, president of the Jerusalem branch of the Muslim Christian Association discussed and agreed a number of proposals including the sending of a delegation to take part in the Paris Peace Conference.[63] They agreed to support the view that "this district of ours, meaning Palestine, remain undetached from the independent Arab Syrian Government that is bound by Arab unity, and free from all foreign influence or protection".[64] Expressing its desire for an Arab Palestinian State, its opposition to Zionism and its rejection of France as a mandatory authority, the Congress viewed Palestine as part of "Arab Syria" and insisted on the unity of Palestine and Syria calling upon "its friend Great Britain in case of need for improvement and development of the country provided that this will not affect its independence and Arab Unity in any way and will keep good relations with the Allied Powers".[65] This positive attitude towards the British was of course a product of the alliance that had been struck in the course of World War One against the Ottoman Empire. It was believed that what they were seeking was in fact the application of the terms contained in the McMahon–Hussein correspondence.

Adopting an explicitly anti-Zionist position the Congress nevertheless emphasised the difference between its opposition to Zionist immigrants and the Jews "who have been Arabized, who have been living in our province since before the war; they are as we are, and their loyalties are our own". There were some sections of the Sephardic Jews resident in Palestine who, in April 1920, responded to an appeal by the Muslim Christian Association to hold a meeting in a synagogue expressing support for these views.[66] In general however the focus of the opposition to the British actions and policies centred on the issues of the land sales and Jewish immigration.

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[61] CAB 24/1
[62] Porath, *Emergence,* 80.
[63] Hassassian, Manuel, *Palestine: Factionalism in the National Movement (1919–1939)* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1990), 33.
[64] Muslih, 181.
[65] Porath, *Emergence,*81.
[66] Ibid., 61. This position was also stated by the Syrian Congress of July 1919.

The question of the relationship between Palestine and Syria was not entirely resolved however and, as a consequence, delegations to Paris and to Faisal in Damascus were prepared reflecting the two wings of the Congress opinion.[67] Those who put forward the proposal for Palestinian independence did so on the basis of securing an alliance with the British rather than breaking with it. The Anglo-French coalition was beginning to exert pressure on the united position of the Congress.[68] The British prevented the delegation to Paris leaving or from publishing their views, a fate similar to that which befell the attempts by Egyptian nationalists seeking representation at the Peace talks.[69] In Egypt, faced with pro-independence protests, the British had been forced to stop the demobilisation of the army concerned that there might be further demonstrations against them.[70]

It was the call for a united Greater Syria that prompted the British to block the publication of the Congress decisions and ban the delegation leaving for the Paris Peace talks.[71] Although some smaller nations from Europe were present at the Conference, alongside a number of representatives from Latin America, the Palestinians were not given a seat.[72] Leaders of the Zionist movement were allowed to address the Conference but it was only through Emir Faisal speaking on the 6th February 1919 that the Arab Palestinian demands for self-determination were presented.[73] Faisal's statement emphasised that the Palestinian claims were based on President Woodrow Wilson's declaration in favour of the right of nations to self-determination.[74] Whatever the thoughts of those who attended the Conference the major decisions were ultimately however made by the "Big Three": Lloyd-George, Clemenceau and Wilson.[75]

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[67] Muslih, 184.
[68] In the opinion of Porath the split represented an attempt by the "older" Jerusalemite families to establish their pre-eminence in an independent Palestine in opposition to the younger participants who would have little to gain from such a decision and therefore preferred unity with Faisal and Syria.
[69] CAB 24/153
[70] CAB 28/78
[71] Ibid, 85.
[72] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment,* 58-59.
[73] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 287. See also Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment,* 59.
[74] Kayyali, 62.
[75] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment,* 59.

Imperialism Challenged

Both during and after the war the British Empire came under attack through anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles as movements in a number of countries disputed Britain's right to rule over them. The war had weakened the capacities of all the imperial powers to maintain their control over vast colonial territories.[76] This heralded a further rupture with the imperialism of the *capitalist* era revealing the limitations of colonisation as the staple hegemonising practice.[77] The sharpest of these struggles was undoubtedly in Ireland but elsewhere, in Egypt, Iraq and India, British hegemony was under question as mass nationalist movements were formed some of which took on the form of armed confrontation.

In the Near East the response of the British, as it had been during the war, was to seek to create alliances which would benefit the achievement of its longer term goals. At the beginning of January 1919, the British persuaded Emir Faisal to enter into an agreement with Cham Weizmann, in that hope that the Emir would then encourage the Arab Palestinians to endorse the Balfour Declaration.[78] The accord dated 3rd January 1919 expressed support for the proposal that Faisal and Weizmann would draw up boundaries "between the Arab State and Palestine" and that all "necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale".[79] Britain was endorsed as the sole arbiter should any disagreements arise regarding the implementation of the agreement.[80] Although little or nothing came of this, it did of course reveal to the British the extent to which Faisal was committed to pursuing the objectives of the Damascus Protocol and what his personal priorities were.[81] According to a report to the British Cabinet dated 12th June

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[76] CAB 24/37 "In the present stage of our military development, however, when the War Army has been completely demobilised and the post-war Army is in its infancy no general reserve exists, and reinforcements from one theatre could only be obtained by withdrawing troops from another". 17th June 1920.

[77] The South African Native National Congress (forerunner of the ANC) was founded in 1919. First Pan-African Congress held in Paris (1919). Vietnamese nationalists began to organize in Paris in 1919. May Fourth Movement in China protests against imperialism. In 1919 there were anti-colonialist and anti-racist riots in Jamaica, British Honduras and Trinidad.

[78] Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition*, 40.

[79] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 438. Appendix F. Antonius queries the date of the signing of the Faisal-Weizmann agreement but only by a matter of a day or more.

[80] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 437, Appendix F.

[81] Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition,* 41. Lesch, *Arab Politics* records that Faisal gave a detailed interview to the *Jewish Chronicle* (3rd October 1919) repudiating the agreement with Weizmann. Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 133.

1919, Emir Faisal had from the preceding month "begun the work of breaking down the dislike of the Arabs to the policy of the Zionist Jews" and had informed an Arab Delegation in Damascus that "he did not consider the aims of the Arabs to be incompatible with those of the Zionists".[82] Whatever the estimation of Faisal's stance on the British position and the Zionists, General Clayton, the military commander in Jerusalem, was sufficiently cautious about the response of the people in the area he controlled, to ban the distribution of a Muslim Christian Society circular affirming that Palestine was part of Syria and opposing the proposal for a "national home for the Jews".[83]

On 2nd July 1919 the General Syrian Congress opposed Faisal's position rejecting the "claims of the Zionists for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in that part of southern Syria which is known as Palestine" and, echoing the First Palestinian Congress mentioned above, asserted that: "We desire that there should be no dismemberment of Syria and no separation of Palestine … from the mother country".[84] Whilst both placed their trust in the British, Faisal and the notables who led the Muslim Christian Association were at odds with each other about the direction of travel expressed in the agreement with Weizmann. At root this disagreement was a reflection of the ambiguity of the Balfour Declaration and the policies of the British. It is little wonder that a degree of confusion reigned when, in November 1919, the British Cabinet itself was discussing the release of a statement repudiating any notion that the creation of a national home for the Jews would result in "the government of a majority by a minority".[85]

The British however faced other challenges especially in Egypt where widespread revolt, including orchestrated strikes, broke out.[86] The Home Secretary circulated monthly and sometimes weekly reports to the Cabinet on the "Progress of Revolutionary Movements" assessing political developments within the Empire and

[82] CAB 24/154.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 441, Appendix G.
[85] CAB 24/156
[86] Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples,* 317. The British faced challenges to their rule in Egypt 1919, Iraq (1920), Ireland and in India the Congress Movement established the non-co-operation movement in September 1920. Egypt of course had a different relationship to the Ottoman Empire than Palestine. (See M.E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War: A History to 1995* (London: Longman, 1997[Second Impression]), 51.

beyond. Cabinet papers reveal that the British were even more worried about the trajectory of any anti-colonialist movements since the 1917 Russian Revolution.[87] Although there was no substantial evidence of widespread Bolshevik influence the support of the Russian revolutionaries for the right to self-determination and disclosure of secret pacts, including the Sykes-Picot agreement, caused anxiety in the Cabinet.[88] These concerns contributed to the decision by the British to invade Russia in a bid to overthrow the Bolshevik government. Additionally of course the British had still not resolved, to their satisfaction, the issue of the future of Ireland and there was considerable discontent inside Britain itself.[89]

The British, having excluded any direct representation to the negotiations by the delegation nominated by the First Palestinian Congress, insisted on the incorporation of the terms of the Balfour Declaration in the Peace Conference conclusions. Furthermore the Declaration terms were incorporated in the Mandate system, which was confirmed at the San Remo Conference in April 1920, and Article 95 of the Treaty of Sèvres in August that year determined its legal framework.[90] As a result of these processes the Balfour Declaration had been endorsed by the major international powers and Palestine was separated from the rest of the areas of the Arab Revolt as defined by Emir Faisal and clearly stated in the Damascus Protocol.

The refusal by the British or the French to consider the General Syrian Congress formulation, let alone accept the recommendations of the King-Crane Commission of 1919, was the prelude to the French invasion and overthrow of the newly established kingdom of Syria in July 1920. The attack was carried out with the full support of the British who took steps to dissuade "the inhabitants of Transjordania" from giving any backing to those attempting to defeat the French.[91] The unified movement for Greater Syria faced a fundamental dilemma as a result of the British and

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[87] CAB 24/79
[88] CAB 24/95. December 1919 "A Monthly Review of Revolutionary Movements in Foreign Countries". The report on Egypt notes links between revolutionaries in Britain with Egyptian nationalists and the storing of arms in Palestine.
[89] CAB 24/95. Directorate of Intelligence Secret Report No. 34. "Report of Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom". See also CAB 24/39 which reproduces a December 6th, 1917 "manifesto" published by wireless "To all the Labouring-class Moslems of Russia and the East" which proclaimed that "the secret treaties are … are torn in pieces and destroyed."
[90] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 18-19. The Mandates were ultimately promulgated by the League of Nations on 29th September 1923 confirming that Palestine would be assigned to the British.
[91] CAB 24/156.

French occupation and division of the two zones. The choice lay between continuing to struggle against the British and the French for a united Greater Syria or accepting the division of the region and thereafter fighting for self-determination in these areas separately. Two of the most powerful nations in the world with the acquiescence of a third had resolved on a course of action and even though the Administration of the USA, through its support for the King–Crane Commission, held a different view it was either in no position to assert that alternative or chose not to.[92]

The White House position on negotiations at the Peace Conference was set out in the 26th November 1919 confidential "Memorandum on the Policy of the United States relative to the Treaty with Turkey". Directly addressing the issue of the Sykes-Picot agreements, it asserted that "No Power except the United States can prevent the carrying into effect of those notorious 'secret' agreements, which would lead certainly to war and probably to another world-war".[93] The tenor of the memorandum had much in common with the findings of the King–Crane Commission recommendations although the latter were not made public until 1922. For their part the official British position stated that their intention was to "set up the framework of a Palestinian State, of which all the inhabitants of the country would be citizens, with equal rights, irrespective of nationality or creed".[94] They further asserted that there would be proportional representation of the "Zionist Jews and the Arabs" who following training "should be able, at the earliest possible moment, to govern themselves".[95]

Following the War the British, in concert with their allies, received their backing to assert their political and military control over Palestine. The position taken by the British and the actions of the French left the Arab Palestinian people with no

[92] The King-Crane Commission based its findings on Syria on the principle enunciated by President Woodrow Wilson: "The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which might desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery" (Cited in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 449).
[93] King–Crane Commission Digital Collection, Oberlin College Archives. RG 2/6, box 128, folder 2. http://dcollections.oberlin.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/kingcrane/id/290/rec/15. (accessed 18/11/2014).
[94] Ibid. http://dcollections.oberlin.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/kingcrane/id/264/rec/1, (accessed 18/11/2014).
[95] Ibid. The view that the people of Palestine were not ready for self-determination was shared by Chaim Weizman. See report of speech CAB 24/145. 27th April 1918.

other choice than to seek to establish the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination within the boundaries established under the Mandate.

1920 The Year of Catastrophe

The proposed separation of Palestine and Syria led to protests across the land and to "several major clashes between Arab tribes and the British garrisons along the Beisan–Samakh frontier with Syria" which resulted in "heavy casualties on both sides".[96] There had already been mass demonstrations. On 27th February 1920, 1,500 Arabs demonstrated in Jerusalem, a further 2,000 in Jaffa and around 250 in Haifa against British policies.[97] On 4th April, following the Nebi Musa Pilgrimage violence broke out resulting in the deaths of 5 Jews and 4 Arabs. On 24th April the *Jam'iyyat Fata Filastin* (the Palestinian Youth Society) "organised a military attack against a British unit in Samakh by over 2,000 armed Bedouins from the Hawran and Beisan Valley".[98]

The inquiry into these events under Major General P.C. Palin, which took place in Cairo, concluded that, "the causes of the alienation and exasperation of the feelings of the population of Palestine … (included an) … inability to reconcile the Allies' declared policy of self-determination with the Balfour Declaration".[99] The report contained Palin's assessment of the general situation in which he made clear that in an operational sense "The Zionists' system of intelligence evidently knew a great deal more about the inner workings of the Administration than the corresponding department of the Administration did about the Zionists".[100] Palin's overall judgement was that the Zionists "adopted the attitude of 'We want the Jewish State and we won't wait', and they did not hesitate to avail themselves of every means open to them in this country and abroad; to force the hand of an Administration bound to respect the 'Status Quo' and to commit it, and thereby future Administrations to a policy not contemplated in the Balfour Declaration".[101] The report's conclusions focussed on the events stating that although there were a number of operational errors in the handling of the demonstration the sense of duplicity felt by the Palestinian population coupled

[96] Kayyali, 84.
[97] Porath, *Emergence,* 96.
[98] Muslih, 150.
[99] FO 371/5121
[100] FO 371/5121, 31.
[101] Ibid.

with a feeling that the British were predisposed to favour the Zionists was unjustified.[102] The judgement on the 4 days of rioting around the Nebi Musa pilgrimage by the Palin Commission, which was not released until many decades later, expressed the view that "the Zionist Commission and the official Zionists by their impatience, indiscretion and attempts to force the hands of the Administration, are largely responsible for the present crisis".[103]

In Syria tensions between Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi groups surrounding Faisal led to irreconcilable splits nullifying the prospect of a Pan-Arabist solution and hastening the adoption of distinct nationalist perspectives. Faisal intervened to stop the publication of articles on the role of Zionism in the Damascene press and prompted the formation of the Syrian National Party, composed of leading notables, to further the aim of establishing Syria as a separate entity with him as constitutional monarch.[104] Pressure built to dismiss Palestinians, and indeed Iraqis, from his government as members of the Syrian National Party, having felt marginalised by the "foreigners", sought to carve out their own niche in the administration.[105]

Faisal, under threat from the French, capitulated and abandoned the Syrian Congress programme. The French swiftly intervened and suppressed any opposition forcing Faisal to leave Damascus on 27th July 1920 seeking refuge in Haifa where he was greeted by the newly arrived British High Commissioner.[106] The British were complicit in allowing the French to occupy Syria and opposed any attempt by Arab forces to resist. In so doing they isolated the Palestinian national struggle and adopted an interpretation of the McMahon–Hussein correspondence which contradicted the understanding held by Arab leaders. The goals of the Arab Revolt embodied in the

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[102] FO 371/5121. The Palin Report goes so far as to say that "we are faced with a native population thoroughly exasperated by a sense of injustice and disappointed hopes, panic stricken as to their future and as to ninety per cent of their numbers in consequence bitterly hostile to the British Administration. They are supported and played upon by every element in the Near East of an anti-British character and are ready to throw in their lot with any leader who will rise in revolt against Allied Authority. Already it is said that elaborate plans are being discussed and dates fixed for an insurrection which may involve the whole of Islam in the Near East".
Porath offers another factor which added to the heightened atmosphere and that was a debate amongst leading British figures such as Allenby and Curzon as to whether Faisal should be recognized as having authority over Palestine and Syria in order to prevent him allying with the French. 95-96.
[103] F.O. 371/5121
[104] Philip S. Khoury, *Urban notables and Arab nationalism: The politics of Damascus 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 90.
[105] Muslih, 201.
[106] Khoury, *Urban notables and Arab nationalism*, 92.

Damascus Protocol which summarised their hopes were ignored. This represented the implementation of the Sykes–Picot Agreement, discussed in Chapter Two, as interpreted by the British and the French.

The whole region was far from stable as opposition to British rule in Iraq erupted into armed struggle resulting in thousands of Iraqi and British deaths and injuries.[107] Faced by an uprising which had inflicted significant defeats on the British and removed their control of the majority of the territory of Iraq, Churchill convened a conference in March 1921 in Cairo to assess the consequences and determine the response of the government.[108]

In a very short space of time the Palestinians had experienced a rejection of the demands expressed by the 1920 demonstration and repeated in 1921 and had witnessed the military defeat of nationalist movements in neighbouring areas by the French and then the British. In both cases there had been an armed uprising against far superior military forces which ended in victory for the imperialist power. According to George Antonius, "the year 1920 has an evil name in Arab annals: it is referred to as the Year of Catastrophe (*'Am al-Nakba*)". So widespread was the anger at what was perceived of as a betrayal that "There came a time when practically the whole of the Arab Rectangle was seething with discontent expressing itself in acts of violence".[109] Whilst the expression of Palestinian opposition to British policies did not, at this moment, take the form of a national armed struggle as it had in Iraq and to a certain extent in Egypt, it did lead to mass popular expressions of opposition to their policies and especially the increased immigration of Zionist settlers into the country.

The arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel as the first High Commissioner of Palestine, taking over from the military in July 1920, did not convince those opposed to the Zionist movement, that Whitehall intended to treat the Arab inhabitants equitably. Samuel had argued in a memorandum to the British Cabinet in January 1915 that, "(w)idespread and deep-rooted in the Protestant world is a sympathy with the idea of

[107] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 314. Antonius quotes slightly different figures from those cited above.
[108] CAB 24/126. The Palestine Political and Military Committee of 17th March 1920 and subsequent meetings discussed the numbers of troops to be stationed in Palestine and how Transjordania might be governed. Further discussion were held at Government House in Jerusalem
[109] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 312.

restoring the Hebrew people to the land which was to be their inheritance, an intense interest in the fulfilment of the prophesies which have foretold it".[110] His appointment had been the subject of debate in the House of Commons the day before he was due to leave to take up his new post. In Palestine itself, according to one account, his appointment "was greeted with enthusiasm and unrealistic, almost messianic expectations by the Jews and corresponding dismay by the Arabs of Palestine".[111]

It was perhaps in response to these demonstrations that Samuel moved to set up an Advisory Council.[112] The British sought to demonstrate their impartiality by the establishment of an institution composed of Arab Palestinian and Jewish members. The Advisory Council proposed by Sir Herbert Samuel in July 1920 was to be comprised of ten members consisting of four Muslims, three Christians and three Jews members all appointed by the High Commissioner. It was severely criticised even by British political figures like Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, on the basis of its unrepresentative character.[113] They continuously proposed the creation of administrative structures, which whilst containing Muslims, Christians and Jews were constructed in such a way that complete unanimity was required in order to effect any proposal. The Arab Palestinians or the Jewish representatives or the High Commissioner could veto any proposal. Effectively this blocked majority rule by the indigenous people and handed disproportionate power to the Zionists.

The Third Palestinian Congress – consolidating the resistance.

It was against this backdrop of mounting expressions of popular anger that, following the banning of the Second Congress, the Third Palestinian Congress took place in Haifa from 13th to 19th December 1920. This exclusively Palestinian gathering represented a more concerted effort to coordinate the process of challenging British policies. Representatives gathering from Haifa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Nablus and a number of other towns included members of the Muslim-Christian Association, the Association of Christian Youth, the Association of Muslim Youth alongside members of al-*Nadi al-'Arabi* (Arab Club) and *al-Muntada al-Adabi* (The Literary

[110] CAB 37/123
[111] A. J. Sherman, *Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 55.
[112] Ingrams, 111. Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 91.
[113] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 120.

Association). Local organisations or prominent local figures had endorsed the credentials of those attending. The Congress established the Palestinian Arab Executive Committee as the leadership of the movement and elected Musa Kazem al-Husseini as President with 'Aref Pasha al-Dajani as his Deputy.[114] This represented a real attempt to formalise the coordination of an effective national leadership.

Three items were prominent on the agenda of the meeting: "a) the establishment of a national government (*hukuma wataniyya*); b) the rejection of the idea of a Jewish National Home; c) the organisation of the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement". The Congress called for the creation of an elected body "whose members would be chosen from the Arabic-speaking people who have been inhabiting Palestine until the outbreak of the War".[115] This model, based on the form of mandate operating in Transjordan and Mesopotamia, accepted British overall control. The idea of a Greater Syria was removed from their platform although unity between Palestine and Syria re-emerging at a later date was not ruled out. The Congress marked a decisive shift towards the establishment of nationalist perspectives. The High Commissioner moved to dismiss its significance on the grounds that it was not a truly representative gathering. His attitude was rejected by a wide variety of leading people, including the representatives of various Muslim Christian Associations, village leaders, Muslim scholars and leaders of a number of professions all of whom endorsed the authority of the Congress.[116] In composition the Congress continued to reflect the dominance of the *a'yan* families and the principal officers elected to the Executive Committee, mentioned above and the Secretary, Jamal al-Husseini, were also of the same background.

Following the Third Congress the Arab Executive agreed to send a deputation to meet with Churchill in Cairo in March 1921.[117] They held a further meeting with the Colonial Secretary in Jerusalem on 28th March though as Churchill was at pains to

[114] Muslih, 163. The Executive Committee formerly played the leading role in Palestinian politics from 1920 until 1935 though its influence varied in significance throughout this period. Jamal al-Husseini, Secretary of the Executive Committee, complained about its lack of resources. Porath, *Emergence,* 110.
[115] Muslih, 207.
[116] Muslih, 207. Porath states that the Congress was preceded by efforts to emphasise Christian-Muslim unity with speakers addressing those attending mosques and churches.
[117] Porath, *Emergence,* 128.

point out it was a courtesy meeting rather than an official one.[118] Presenting the positions of the Congress to Churchill, Musa Kazem drew the distinction between Britain occupying a country and owning it and further argued that whilst the Arab Palestinians constituted a nation and a "power", the Zionists were neither.[119] The Balfour Declaration he said, was "a contact between England and a collection of history, imagination and ideals existing only in the brains of Zionists who are a company, a commission but not a nation".[120] Churchill's reply was direct re-affirming the Balfour Declaration both as a matter of British policy and his personal wish. The British government, he said, was committed to the "establishment of a National Home for Jews in Palestine, and that inevitably involves the immigration of Jews into the country".[121] Furthermore he asserted the British had a right to determine the future of the country because of the numbers of British troops killed fighting the Turkish army but the completion of the task of establishing the national home for the Jews, would take some time. "The present form of government will continue for many years, and step by step we shall develop representative institutions leading up to full self-government. All of us here to-day will have passed away from the earth and also our children and our children's children before it is fully achieved".[122]

The British Government fully understood the positions of the Congress as the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill, had met with a deputation of Palestinians in Cairo on 28th March 1921 and they had spelt out the positions that had been adopted.[123] The position of the Deputation is recorded in the Cabinet papers of the Cairo Conference. Having expounded their arguments they asked:

> For all the above reasons, we ask in the name of justice and right that—
> First: The principle of a National Home for the Jews be abolished.
> Second: A. National Government be created, which shall be responsible to a Parliament elected by the Palestinian people who existed in Palestine before the war.

[118] CAB 24/126. Appendix 23. The presentation by Musa Kazem contains numerous anti-Semitic comments and rehearses some of the arguments: that Jews wish to take over the world and that Jewish control of Palestine would be the route for Bolshevism to enter the Near East. He makes the further point that this would place the Suez Canal in jeopardy if the British were to leave Egypt in the future.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid. In his reply Churchill reiterated the commitment of the British not to turn Palestine into "*the* National Home for the Jews" but rather to create "*a* National Home for the Jews".
[122] Ibid.
[123] CAB 24/126

> Third: A stop be put to Jewish immigration until such a time as a National Government is formed.
> Fourth: Laws and regulations before the war be still carried out and all others framed after the British occupation be annulled, and no new laws be created until a National Government comes into being.
> Fifth: Palestine should not be separated from her sister States.[124]

Their views had been unequivocally presented to the Secretary of State for the Colonies who had in turn presented the report containing their demands to the Cabinet. They were easily accessible to the British and if there were any doubt the response of the first Palestinian Delegation to London in July 1921 should have clarified that. The Delegation met with Churchill on 12th August and were encouraged to meet with Chaim Weizmann whilst there. Although Musa Kazem al-Husseini made clear that they had come to speak with the British Government and that they did not recognise Weizmann as having any locus in those meetings, after much persuasion they met him on 29th November, however nothing of significance came from the meetings.[125]

The scale of the mobilisations in 1920 and 1921 demonstrated the depth of the opposition to the Mandate and the British proposal for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The Congress stance was a reflection of and a stimulant to the development of widespread popular opposition against the growing process of colonisation. Dispossessed *fellahin* and those fearing the loss of their livelihoods in the countryside and in the towns expressed their opposition to the policies they felt threatened by. The British response was to the actions of 1921 was to establish another commission, the Haycraft Commission, to investigate.

The Haycraft Report

Less than six months after the Third Palestinian Congress the opposition to the British policies became evident with an outbreak of attacks on settler colonies. In proportion to the size of the population these were on a large-scale. The outbursts were triggered by a clash on 1st May between two socialist demonstrations, one authorised Zionist and an unauthorised one. The fighting spread into nearby

[124] CAB 24/126.
[125] Porath, *Emergence,* 65.

neighbourhoods and, over the next five days, resulted in a large numbers of casualties. Following this new wave of popular mobilisations and fighting the British established a Commission under Sir Thomas Haycraft, Chief Justice of Palestine, which produced a report on the "Disturbances in May 1921". Of those killed 47 were Jews and 48 Arab Palestinians whilst those injured were 146 and 73 respectively. The Arab casualties were largely due to British police action.[126] On 9th June, before Haycraft had reported, Churchill presented to the Cabinet the account of events by Captain C. D. Brunton of the General Staff Intelligence who reported that, "We are not faced by a simple outbreak of mob violence, in spite of pillage and other signs of participation of criminals and evil elements of the population. The troubles in Jaffa and other parts of the country are only the expressions of a deep seated and widely spread popular resentment at the present British policy". He concluded his report by saying that "If that policy is not modified the outbreaks of to-day may become a revolution to-morrow".[127] In many ways Haycraft repeated the concerns voiced by the earlier Palin Report discussed above.

Presented to Parliament in October 1921, the report, according to the High Commissioner Samuel, was viewed favourably by the Arab Palestinians and adversely by the Zionist Commission.[128] Like the Palin document it focussed on trying to record the sequence of events that had taken place, the attitudes and behaviour of the participants. One proposal from the report was to remove Dr Eder, acting Chairman [sic] of the Zionist Commission, from his post because the views that he had expressed were at odds with the professed position of Weizmann and the Commission. "In his opinion there can only be one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish predominance as soon as the numbers of that race are sufficiently increased".[129] Despite the concerns expressed the proposal was dropped on the grounds that a rapprochement was being

[126] Abboushi, *The Unmaking of Palestine,*18.
[127] CAB 24/125. Brunton's report was presented to the Cabinet by Churchill who expressed some disagreements but essentially endorsed the comments which in reality pre-empted the Haycraft Report.
[128] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 135.
[129] *Palestine: Disturbances in May 1921. Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating thereto.* Cmd. 1540, 57. Hereafter *Haycraft Commission Report,* https://archive.org/stream/palestinedisturb00grearich#page/44/mode/2up (accessed 6/07/2015).

negotiated in November 1921 between the Zionists and the Arab Delegation which was in London.[130]

The "disturbances" had included an attack on the Jewish colony of Petach Tikvah, about seven miles northeast of Jaffa.[131] The report suggested that when the attack took place on 5th May the numbers involved might have been anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 people, some of who were armed and some on horseback. The following day the numbers involved declined to around 400 of whom about 20 were carrying rifles.[132] Troops and aircraft were used by the British to disperse the attackers. The Haycraft Report made clear that the sentiments recorded in the Palin Report about the previous year's demonstrations in Jerusalem were echoed at Petach Tikva. The Commission asserted that "(w)e consider that any anti-British feeling on the part of the Arabs that may have arisen in the country originates in their association of the Government with the furtherance of the policy of Zionism".[133] The report noted that one of the main Arab grievances is that the Zionist Commission is given pre-eminence by the British and is an "*imperium in imperio*" [*sic*].[134]

In dealing with the events the Haycraft report commented on Palestinian perceptions about the increasingly discriminatory way in which British rule tended to favour the Zionists. Various aspects of the administration, including specifically the Orders governing the sale of land, were viewed as advantageous to the Jewish settlers and discriminatory towards the Arab Palestinians. In some cases this was identified as a consequence of the actions by partisan individuals within the administration, on others as a result of government policies or actions. Haycraft noted the displacement of Arab workers by Jewish ones in the Public Works Department and on the railway; the tendency of a Jewish official to favour contracts being awarded to Jews; the tendency of Jewish traders to purchase only from Jewish businesses. Haycraft identified this as systemic and not an occasional phenomenon, endorsing the view that

[130] Ingrams, 136.
[131] Kayyali, 92-93. Kayyali's account of the events in Jaffa in May 1921makes clear that there had been a period in which permission for demonstrations on the occasion of the visit of the Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill had been refused leading to sharpening tensions in the city.
[132] *Haycraft Commission Report*, 44.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 51.

sectarian practices impacted on the evolution of social groups, and, in this instance the working class.

The report drew attention to social differences between the communities giving examples of contrasts in the social mores of the newly arrived Jewish settlers which caused offence to the Arab community suggesting that there was an insensitivity on the part of the "immigrants" towards the indigenous population. The report however recorded that in the view of its authors "there is no inherent anti-Semitism in the country, racial or religious".[135] The thrust of the Haycraft report was that the Palestinian attacks on the Jewish colonies were a surrogate for confronting the British.

The "riots" or "disturbances" reported on by Palin and Haycraft were presented as having a degree of spontaneity, arising out of particular incidents, but they clearly reflected underlying grievances held by large sections of the Arab Palestinian population relating principally to the sale of land and the subsequent evictions. Haycraft draws distinctions between the urban and rural populations singling out religious affiliation as constituting the closest bonds within society rather than social or class interests. His estimation of the Palestinian working class is quite blunt and infused with the imperialist and orientalist values of the day.

> The non-Jewish working people of Jaffa, while forming a compact community, differ in important respects from a European proletariat. There are a large number of boatmen, porters, artisans and labourers, who inhabit principally old Jaffa, Menshieh and "Tin Town". They are sociable, credulous, excitable, readily collecting in crowds at any moment when any cause of excitement arises; but with Moslems there is no class consciousness, as in a European proletariat, cutting through the bonds of race and religion. There are no classes in the European sense of the word.[136]

Leaving aside its tendentious character, the comment underscores the more general point that the Arab Palestinian working class was small and in the process of formation as dispossessed *fellahin* seeking employment gravitated towards the

[135] Ibid. 54.
[136] *Haycraft Commission Report*, 18.

towns.[137] The chief aspiration of many of those evicted remained to win back the lands they had worked. Initially this may have contributed to a degree of ambivalence towards severing all links with the land. Those displaced to the urban areas may not have been able to gain employment or the work on offer may have been unskilled, lowly paid with little guarantee of security of employment. The initial hope to return to working on the land may not have seemed unreasonable given, as I explained above, there were a variety of forms of land ownership available.[138] In this context it is understandable that the organisations of workers which were established were initially more concerned with social welfare than the traditional trade union concerns relating to pay and conditions of employment. This pattern however began to change through the 1920s.[139]

Mandate Politics and the Palestinian Economy

Palestine, alongside Syria and Mesopotamia, had been identified by the League of Nations as being in the "Class A" category of mandate territories and were expected to achieve their independence once the designated Mandatory power was satisfied that the country could take responsibility for itself. It was the Mandatory authority which determined whether a country might become self-governing and not the people of the country itself. Indicative of the British attitude towards Palestine was the view expressed by the pro-Zionist political advisor to the occupying forces, Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, who said in August 1919 that "The people of Palestine are not at present in a fit state to be told openly that the establishment of Zionism in Palestine is a policy to which HMG, America and France are committed." It was not until February 1920 that the British publicly acknowledged inside Palestine itself that the Balfour Declaration existed and a further two years before the League of Nations formerly confirmed Britain as the Mandatory authority.[140]

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[137] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 137.
[138] Owen, (1982), 116.
[139] Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (London: University of California Press, 1996), 71. Lockman points out that the Palestinian urban population grew at a greater rate than the overall increase in the population generally – especially in Haifa and Jaffa.
[140] Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine* (London: John Murray, 1999), 38. Sheperd quoting from Meinertzhagen's *Middle East Diary*, *1917–1956.*

The opposition to British proposals on Palestine was not only voiced by people inside the country but additionally by Britain's ally Emir Faisal. He clarified his attitude towards the proposal to establish a homeland for the Jews in a statement on the decisions of the San Remo Conference forwarded by Allenby to the Cabinet on 13th May 1920. Faisal explained that "Palestine … is an inseparable part of Syria" and invoked his letter to McMahon of 25th October 1915 to show this had been his consistent position. He explained that he wished to "safeguard the rights of the Jews in that country as much as the rights of the indigenous Arab inhabitants are safeguarded and to allow the same rights and privileges".[141] Notwithstanding this accumulating evidence of complete opposition to the Balfour Declaration the Government of Palestine, on 26th August 1920, published an Immigration Ordinance which clearly stated that "Entry into Palestine … shall be regulated by the High Commissioner".[142] The British intended to override Arab Palestinian desires to assert sovereignty over the country.

British and French imperialism with all their collective resources imposed a division on the area of *Bilad al-Sham* or Greater Syria based on the Sykes-Picot agreement. Two of the most powerful countries in the world, having defeated the Ottoman Empire and its German ally, could not be opposed by force and the aspiration for a unified *Bilad al-Sham* was defeated and to all intent and purposes ceased to be a viable perspective from an early date. The programme agreed at the First Arab Congress in Damascus in July 1919 which had called for independence of the whole region, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, the recognition of Emir Faisal as King of Syria and the designation of the USA as the mandatory power was brushed aside by the French with the complicity of the British. Syrian aspirations were crushed under the boots of French troops simultaneously wrecking the hopes of those who wanted Palestine, as "Southern Syria" to remain part of a unified Greater Syria.

Political developments in Palestine were inextricably intertwined with decisions about the economy of the country.[143] Overwhelmingly the economy was structured around the agricultural sector with the vast majority of the Arab Palestinian

[141] CAB 24/154
[142] Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hardi, ed., *Documents on Palestine, Volume 1* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007). 78.
[143] CAB 24/157. Cabinet took frequent detailed economic reports on Palestine.

population working on the land or in related employment. Even where industrialised urban production was developed it was frequently based on the utilisation of agricultural products.[144] Geared principally to domestic consumption and sustainability it was confronted with the advent of an administration which increasingly invoked Article 6 of the Mandate which stated that: "The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and positions of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish Agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes".[145] The stipulation to encourage the "close settlement by Jews on the land" and its implementation, as interpreted by the British, added to the impact of the changes introduced by the Ottoman Land Laws.

Those who owned the land, as well as those who worked on it, faced a changing scenario in which land, products and labour itself were being transformed into commodities. The expansion of production which hitherto had more often than not resulted from an increase in the amount of land cultivated was now confronted by the capitalist imperative of profitability. The Arab merchants, landowners and the *fellahin* had functioned within a longstanding set of relationships premised on the production of surplus products rather than commodities for sale. The Mandate Administration imposed economic constraints which severely disadvantaged the growth of the Palestinian capitalist class, itself largely connected to agriculture. In order to meet this changing situation agriculture required access to loans and investment but, until 1930, there was no Palestinian bank, and constant requests for investment and the creation of agricultural educational institutions were ignored by the British.[146] Produce, immoveable objects and animals were the subjects of tax and the tithe system which had operated under the Ottoman Empire remained in place. Agriculture was heavily taxed providing 60% of the revenue.

[144] Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus 1700–1900* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 187.
[145] Abdul Hadi, ed., *Documents on Palestine: Volume 1*, 75.
[146] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 30.

One of the central features of British colonialism was the insistence that the colonised should pay for the costs incurred by the coloniser.[147] Palestine was no exception and the taxes which were levied contributed towards the costs of roads, railways and communication systems. However many of the roads that were built serviced the Zionist settlements and British economic priorities rather than the population more generally. Further some of the major schemes, like the expansion of Haifa harbour, were constructed specifically for imperial purposes.[148] When cutbacks on expenditure took place they tended to fall on areas such as education, health and other social amenities.

Whilst the Arab Palestinian population had little facility to raise loans at a reasonable cost in order to invest, no obstacle was placed in the way of the import of foreign capital and investment from abroad was frequently provided interest free by Zionist supporters and on occasions the British assisted by supporting appeals from the Zionists for loans.[149] "Zionist banks, credit, and cooperative societies were encouraged by a succession of ordinances".[150] Not having had an extensive banking system this placed Arab Palestinian producers at a distinct disadvantage. One Colonial Office official summed up the situation by saying that "Palestine is as rigidly controlled as the most backward protectorate and has not the remotest vestige of sovereignty or independence".[151] It is indicative of the nature of the relationship between Mandate Palestine and imperial Britain that it was the occupied land that was placed under constant pressure to "cover its own defence bill".[152]

As the already-existing economy was forcibly integrated into the world market the commodities it produced came into competition with those of other producers, were vulnerable to price fluctuations and the periodic crisis in the world economy as became evident with the 1929-1931crash in world prices for cereal crops.[153] "The domestic price of wheat had fallen from P£40 per ton in 1929 to P£6-7 in mid-1930, while the price of olive oil had fallen from P£100 in April 1929 to P£40 per ton in

[147] CAB 23/50.
[148] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 35.
[149] CAB 24/193
[150] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine, 3*1.
[151] Ibid. 25.
[152] CAB 24/140
[153] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 15.

June 1930".[154] To a certain extent Zionist settlers were similarly affected by periodic economic crisis but the consequences for them were mitigated to some extent by changing patterns and character of immigration which rose or fell according to the changing circumstances and as a consequence of the inflow of capital investment from abroad.[155]

Arab Palestinian capitalists whose enterprises were in transition from the economic practices and relationships dominant in the Ottoman period, were at a disadvantage in comparison to the resources available to the developing bourgeoisie of the *Yishuv*. Irfan Habib in his article "Understanding 1857", speaking of India argues that during a period of colonialism it is possible to have a complex combination of "modern or quasi-modern" relationships. Refusing to put a label on the 1857 Revolt, Habib argues that "To characterise the revolt as either feudal or bourgeois would be unhistorical. The time for one was past, the time for the other had not yet come".[156] The colonialist experience of Palestine could be similarly described as one in which the indigenous society was caught in a pincer between an earlier set of economic relations including both *pre-capitalist* and *capitalist* features, albeit themselves undergoing change, and the imperatives of the *new*-imperialism world market introduced by the British.

The concessions given to Pinhas Rutenberg exemplified the preferential treatment afforded to Zionist entrepreneurs by the High Commission. Rutenberg was given exclusive rights to the use of water in the north of the country and for the creation of an electrical supply company that would provide the power for Palestine, with the exception of Jerusalem, and for Transjordan. The ownership of the Palestine Electric Corporation Ltd. was organised in 1923 in such a way as to ensure that it was always in the hands of a pro-Zionist holding company. In order to minimise opposition much of the preparation to establish the company, including discussions with the Brandeis-Mack group in the United States of America, was undertaken and

[154] Ibid. 175. P£ - Palestinian pounds.
[155] Porath , *Emergence,* 243.
[156] Irfan Habib, "Understanding 1857", in *Rethinking 1857* ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007), 64.

remained in secret and the British further proposed protecting the scheme by prohibiting local municipalities from opening up contracts for competition.[157]

In the financial sphere the Palestinian economy faced a similar monopolistic domination. According to a 1949 United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine report, "(d)uring the decade following the first world war, the presence of the foreign banks and credit co-operatives left little room for the development of local banks".[158] Banking was dominated by foreign banks such as Barclays Bank (DC&O), the Ottoman Bank and the Banco di Roma and it was not until 1930 "that the first Palestinian Arab-owned bank, Arab Bank Limited" was established.[159] The economy was completely controlled by the British Administration who centralised money regulation in 1926 through the establishment of the Palestine Currency Board. "The currency system as established in Palestine was colonial in all respects". The money used in Palestine was minted in London having been exchanged for money sent from Palestine in the first place. Initially the Egyptian pound was used but this was later changed to pounds sterling and "the monetary reserves of Palestine were held in Britain and so constituted a virtual loan to HMG".[160]

Industry based on the imported capital tended to focus on the production of consumer goods to meet the demands of the newly arrived settlers. In the mid-1920s the immigrant settlers entering Palestine were skilled workers or members of the middle classes bringing with them additional capital and an experience of industrial forms of production which facilitated the creation of new capitalist enterprises. "An example of this type of industry was the Lodzia Textile Factory, founded by immigrants from Łódź, Poland who had been previously engaged in textile production".[161] The trade which existed between the indigenous community and the newly arrived settlers was disrupted by the boycott initiated in 1929 but the increase in

[157] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 117.
[158] United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, *Note on Currency and Banking in Palestine and TransJordan.* (http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/1280A68C84F565B5852573A7004FF70B) Accessed 27/11/2014).
[159] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 30.
[160] Ibid., 29.
[161] Ibid., 177.

immigration led to the growth of the market based on Jewish consumers, eventually offsetting its impact.[162]

It is important to assert however that there were not two distinct economies developing along parallel lines but rather a single economy in which there existed competing and contradictory components owned by those aligned with the Arab Palestinian community or the *Yishuv*. The policies and actions adopted by the Mandate administration clearly favoured the one associated with the *Yishuv* against the other associated with the Arab Palestinian community. The capital imported to the *Yishuv* was invested in areas with higher rates of profitability often using more technologically developed processes with the consequence that existing indigenous production of soap for example was undercut in price. As with the *fellahin*, the Arab Palestinian land owning classes, manufacturers, merchants and other members of the nascent capitalist class were at a disadvantage which was exacerbated by the Mandate administration. This had political consequences as the components which contributed to the shaping of nationalist aspirations were distorted by a settler bourgeoisie, more familiar with the capitalist environment. This economic dislocation also contributed to the political splits within the Arab Palestinian bodies which had such a bearing on the functioning of the leaderships of the struggle for self-determination.[163]

The economic policies pursued by the British privileged the capitalists within the *Yishuv* and discriminated against the Arab Palestinian capitalist class which did not have recourse to new sources of capital with which to invest. The majority of Arab Palestinian capitalists were merchants and as such their capacity to develop was conditional on the control of trade, the exercise of controls over imports and exports and the costs of goods on the world market. The British Mandate administration essentially exercised its control over most of these features severely prescribing the ability of indigenous capital to expand.

The Arab Palestinian Working Class and the Challenge of Zionism

Those *fellahin* who were evicted from their lands gravitated towards the cities and towns to find employment. "In Jaffa, most of the street cleaners were ex-villagers;

[162] Ibid., 179.
[163] Porath, *Emergence,* 208.

the Arab Cigarette and Tobacco Company in Nazareth reported that most of its workers were also of village origin".[164] If they did find work their levels of pay were far less than Jewish women workers who themselves received less than their male counterparts. Although a relatively "new" social force the Arab Palestinian working class, as the Palin Commission report noted, from the outset began to challenge the discriminatory practices of the Zionist employers and the Mandate administration. This newly forming working class faced the considerable challenge of an economic environment shaped by the dual exigencies of British imperialism and Zionist colonialism.

The *Histadrut* (General Organisation of Workers in the Land of Israel), growing out of organisations such as the Union of Agricultural workers set up in 1911, was established by Jewish workers in 1920 in Haifa and was the main body through which debates on policies of employment took place. By early 1931 the *Histadrut* had "more than 30,000 members, 18,781 in cities (including the industrial enterprises in Nahara'im, Atlit, and the Dead Sea area), 7,783 in *moshavot*, [towns or settlements] and 3,496 in collective settlements" constituting 75% of workers as a whole.[165] The organisation was always a political project with the principal intention of incorporating Jewish workers into the national enterprise. In the view of one its founding figures David Ben Gurion, the *Histadrut* was a vehicle for achieving the objective of creating a Jewish state in Palestine and for him "(t)he building of a Jewish state requires first the creation of a Jewish majority in the country … (and) … the only person who can bring us such a majority is the Jewish worker in Eretz Israel".[166]

The *Histadrut* was a central part of the project seeking to hegemonise the political allegiance of Jewish workers to the state aspirations of the Zionist movement. It was an arm of the colonial settler endeavour which won the allegiance of Jewish workers through its increasing capacity to exclude Arab Palestinian workers from

[164] Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936–1939 Revolt in Palestine* (London: Tricontinental Society, 1980), Quoting the Collection of Arab testimonies in Palestine before the British Royal Commission. (Damascus: Al-Itidal Press,1938), 54.
[165] Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 179.
[166] Ibid. 183.

employment and through ensuring that materially, through differentiated rates of pay for example, they received preferential treatment".[167]

The *Histadrut* adopted the Zionist policy of *kibush haavoda* (conquest of labour) which had both a social and a political impact creating divisions between Jewish and Palestinian workers. Although debates took place within the Zionist movement on this issue, those political factions arguing for the exclusion of Arab Palestinian workers from the Zionist trade unions won the majority. This policy had major implications subsequently affecting the formation of both trade union and political organisations.[168] As a result, in the middle of the 1920s, having experienced the consequences of *kibush haavoda* and the corporatist Zionism of the *Histadrut*, the dispossessed *fellahin* who found work together with the rest of the Arab Palestinian working class were effectively obliged to develop a distinctly Arab Palestinian trade union movement.[169]

Jewish employers were encouraged, and in some cases coerced, into adopting the policy of only employing Jewish workers. The policy of *avoda ivrit* was pursued vigorously resulting in almost complete segregation in certain industries between Arab Palestinian and Jewish workers who were employed on more favourable terms. This policy was operated by some of the largest companies in Palestine including the Shemen Oil Company and the Société des Grand Moulins though the Nesher cement factory did not. The reason behind the difference lay in the fact that the Nesher Company wished to trade with neighbouring Arab countries and was concerned lest its discriminatory employment policies adversely affected that.[170]

When it came to matters of industrial dispute between employers and employees the Mandate Administration in 1924 viewed the issue as one to be resolved

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[167] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 156. The Mandate authorities, for example, fully cooperated in ensuring that this happened agreeing for different rates of pay for "unskilled labor: Arab rural, 120-150 mils a day; Arab urban, 140-170; Jewish non-union, 150-300; and Jewish union, 280-300".
[168] Shafir, 60. See also Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*. Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party 1919–1948* (London: Ithaca, 1979), details the influence of Zionist politics on the creation of a Palestinian Communist Party.
[169] Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel,* 178.
[170] Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 122.

within the *Yishuv* since the majority of workers likely to be affected by proposed changes to labour legislation were Jewish. The British Administration effectively refused to intervene leaving any resolution of the disputes to the *Histadrut* and the employers to resolve with the occasional intervention of the Palestine Zionist Executive.[171] Further the British succumbed to the argument that when capital for a project was provided from the settler community preference should be given to the employment of Jewish workers. Typical of this was the agreement made between the Zionist Executive and the Administration to construct a road linking settler colonies.[172]

Despite the application of the policy of *avoda ivrit* this did not mean a complete segregation between Arab Palestinian and Jewish workers. There were many instances where both groups were employed. Arab Palestinian workers were present in a variety of industries, including in the railways and in other productive sectors but were excluded from the "trade union" structures.[173] In the early 1920s there was an attempt to establish joint Arab-Jewish organisation in a number of workplaces, most notably amongst the railway workers, but this soon ended. A group of Arab Palestinian workers joined the Union of Railway, Postal and Telegraph Workers but disillusioned by the lack of support shown by their Jewish co-workers they left after a few months and began the process which led to the setting up the Palestinian Arab Workers Society (PAWS).[174] This experience was replicated elsewhere.

During a dispute with the employer that broke out during the building of the Nesher Cement Factory at Haifa, the 200 Jewish workers sought the support of the 80 Egyptian workers employed by the company. Together they won a favourable settlement but the *Histadrut* successfully pressurised its members to return to work

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[171] Barabara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 143.
[172] Ibid. 150.
[173] There were some small scale attempts to create united bodies but these were discouraged or suppressed by the *Histadrut*. Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 74. David Ben-Gurion, a leader in the *Histadrut* movement advocated a pragmatic alliance between Jewish and Arab Palestinians in certain areas of employment in order to preserve the relative privileges that Jewish workers had. The character of the split in the *Histadrut* between Ben-Gurion and the supporters of Shlomo Kaplansky appeared at the third Congress of *Ahdut Ha'avoda* in May 1924. (Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 78).
[174] Zachary Lockman, "Arab Workers and Arab Nationalism" in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, eds, James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 250. Lockman also discusses the attempts by Jewish pro-Zionists to create the Palestine Labour League as an Arab wing of the *Histadrut*.

and abandon the Egyptian workers. The traditions of trade union solidarity which informed the basis of their initial approach were not extended to the Egyptian workers.[175] Arab Palestinian workers were therefore forced to establish their own organisation because of the political character of the *Histadrut* which at the outset only permitted Jewish workers to become members even when they were working in the same workplace and some degree of cooperation was taking place.

PAWS was established in 1925 in Haifa, at the time a major industrial port, a centre of commerce and the centre of trade union activity. Whilst PAWS was an important organisational step forward the critical challenge to the Palestinian working class arose from the policies adopted by the leaders of the Jewish working class which grew as immigration increased and the newly arrived colonists gravitated towards the burgeoning coastal cities. These new groups of workers brought a range of skills which placed them in a more advantageous position for employment. Critically of course they benefitted from the discriminatory practices which gave them preferential access to employment as Jewish employers were encouraged not to employ non-Jewish staff. The political character of the Zionist colonisation impacted on the growth of the Arab Palestinian working class excluding them from employment in areas critical to economic development and pushing the, towards jobs with less effective levers of influence to express their views.

Meanwhile inside the *Histadrut* there was opposition to the growth of an independent Arab Palestinian trade union such as PAWS and steps were initiated to finance a separate Arab Palestinian organisation under Zionist influence. The dominant political current amongst the Jewish workers within the *Histadrut* was *Ahdut Ha'avoda* (Unity of Labour), which opposed cooperation between Arab Palestinian and Jewish workers. Of course this pattern of seeking to divide Arab Palestinians was a recurrent practice when organisations began to voice nationalist sentiments. However the formation of trade unions was beset not only by the problems created by the Zionists but was inhibited by the resistance of some sections of the Palestinian community. This pattern continued through to the 1930s when strong opposition was

[175] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 86. The site on which the factory was being built was sold to Michael Pollack, a Zionist from Russia, by the Sursuq family which had been involved in land sales elsewhere.

voiced against the influence of Communist Party in PAWS and supporters of the Mufti and the oppositionists "attempted to set up rival unions whose aims and activities were strictly partisan and political".[176]

The composition of the new trade union organisation continued to reflect its origins in the coastal cities and amongst certain groups such as the railway workers. However between the founding of PAWS in 1925 and the calling of the Congress in 1930 there was a period of inactivity.[177] When the Congress was convened its agenda focussed on both the traditional concerns of employment, wages and conditions and opposition to Zionism and to immigration. PAWS saw these issues as inextricably linked and in contrast to the *Histadrut* the Congress called for a proportionate distribution of jobs in the government spheres of employment based on the relative sizes of the two communities and it called for Palestinian independence. This was a clear distinguishing feature of its politics from that of the *Histadrut*.

The traditions and practices of political and trade union organisation which some of the newly arrived European Jewish socialists were familiar with, had in the early 1920s, no organic roots in the nascent Palestinian working class.[178] As we will see below the predominantly Jewish-led communist and socialist organisations that sought to win political backing from the Arab Palestinian working class faced the dual obstacles of having few Arab Palestinian members and were opposed from within the *Yishuv* by other political groups.[179]

To some extent the Jewish working class was also in the process of formation since there were not necessarily jobs available for newly arrived immigrants to walk

[176] Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party,* 41.
[177] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies,* 181. Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 64.
[178] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 8. In examining this issue I have drawn in part on the work of Zachary Lockman who has argued against the notion of a dualistic approach positing the notion of separate development of Arab and Jewish workers.
Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 23- 24 asserts that "About one-third (of Jewish immigrants) had been members of the different Zionist workers' parties while still in Europe".
[179] Haycraft makes reference to some of the splits within the Jewish "socialist" oriented organisations including *Achduth Haavodah* which was led by David Ben Gurion and in 1920 established the *Haganah* paramilitary formation. The different political positions of the neo-socialist groups within the *Yishuv* were the products of debates taking place especially within the Eastern European socialist and communist groups on the question of the Jews and the National Question. A flavor of the debate can be gleaned from *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents: 1907–1916 The Preparatory Years* (New York: Monad Press, 1984) especially the section "The Discussions in the Zimmerwald Left", 327 ff.

into. Whilst the industrial enterprises and settlements which had sprung up in the pre-occupation period had to some extent been based on employers seeking the biggest return for the smallest investment, much of the "newer" capital coming into Palestine in the post war period was both earmarked as part of the Zionist national project and under much more centralised management by the Zionist Commission.[180] The jobs created as a result of the importation of this capital led to the establishment of enterprises utilising the policy of *kibush haavoda* to recruit staff. The partisan selection process arising from this form of investment and employment policy had the concomitant effect that the job opportunities for non-Jewish Palestinians were restricted, with the inevitable consequence that it hampered the growth of the working class.[181] The ideology which informed the structures created by the Jewish workers was entirely in concert with the nationalist aspirations of Zionism. The net result was, *de facto*, one of collaboration between two major social forces of the *Yishuv,* the bourgeoisie and the working class.[182]

Prior to the Mandate there were no joint Arab-Jewish trade union or political organisations. The *Histadrut* was the dominant organisation of workers in the *Yishuv*. Over 4,000 people took part in the election of its delegates to the founding congress. By 1923 it had a sick fund, a builders' co-operative, consumers and marketing organisations and a bank. The *Histadrut* was a quasi-state institution playing a welfare role providing for the needs of newly arrived settlers and it was a large employer in the building and construction sector.[183] Additionally it founded the *Haganah,* a paramilitary organisation initially acting as guards to prevent colonies being attacked which eventually evolved into the Israeli army. Acting simultaneously as employer

[180] Metzer, 112. Metzer states that "Zionist national institutions were directly responsible for about 20% of all Jewish investment in the inter-war years , including land purchases". He also cites the *Histadrut* as a major investor.
[181] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies,* 53.
[182] Lockman and others have used the term "socialist Zionism" or "labour Zionism" to describe currents which traced their origins back to sections of the socialist movement or whose ideology has its roots in socialistic ideas. In terms of the traditions which they stemmed from however "socialism" underwent a fundamental split during the course of the First World War between the Second International and the newly formed Third International on the debate between nationalist and internationalist orientations. Mussolini split from the socialist movement whilst still utilising organizational forms derived from trade unionism and socialist bodies but imbued their organisations with radically different corporatist orientations. Hitler too used the term "national socialist". The term "socialist Zionism" is an oxymoron. "Plebian", "populist" or even "corporatist" Zionism might be more appropriate.
See also Sternhell, 217. Zeev Sternhell uses the term "Nationalist Socialism".
[183] Bernstein, 25.

and representative of employees was one characteristic differentiating it from conventional trade unions.[184]

Facing the discriminatory practices of both the imperial power and the colonial settlers, the Arab Palestinian workers faced a considerable challenge to defend their own employment let alone improve their pay and conditions of work. The growth of the young Arab Palestinian working class was inhibited from the outset and consequently took some time to become organised and to become a political force in the society. It did however begin to address the issues of trade union organisation and political empowerment.

Self-Determination and the Palestine Communist Party

Perhaps uniquely at the time, the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) adopted an orientation which sought to unify a class oriented politics with a nationalist perspective in Palestine. Led by Jewish members it sought to gain support amongst all workers, making a particular effort to recruit Arab Palestinian workers and to make links with PAWS.[185] The Party was influenced by the Bolshevik leadership of the Comintern which following its foundation after the Russian Revolution of 1917 paid a great deal of attention to the politics of the Muslim world.[186] However the success of the party was impaired by the fact that the majority of its members, who were Jewish, were more inclined to orientate to the debates within political organisations competing for the ear of Jewish workers. Despite the failure to win large numbers of Arab Palestinian workers to its ranks, the PCP gained respect and a hearing due, for example, to its intervention in support of the campaign by dispossessed *fellahin* in the Affula region whose land had been sold.[187] "In Jaffa it succeeded in setting up the Transport Workers Society, and the communists involved themselves in the struggle of

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[184] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine,* 136.
[185] Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party,* 12.
[186] E. H. Carr in *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923, Volume 1* of his work *A History of Soviet Russia* details the wide ranging discussion the Bolsheviks went through in discussing the question of self-determination in the Muslim regions of the former Tsarist Empire. Within a month of the revolution an "Appeal from the People's Commissars to the Moslems of Russia and the East" condemning the anti-Muslim attitude of Tsarist Russia. Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951). 16.
FO 371, File 117 for examples of the preoccupation of various consuls with the spread of Bolshevik influence mainly in Syria and the apprehension that a Bolshevik Division of troops was about to link up with Divisions of the Turkish army.
[187] Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies,* 89.

the Jaffa Arab Workers' Association against Zionist pickets formed to enforce the policy of "conquest of labor [*sic*]".[188] Conversely the Party lost the support of some of its Jewish members, especially those influenced by Zionism. The Party had the most radical programme of any Palestinian party for self –determination. In 1931, the PCP adopted a resolution which declared that "the only solution to the question of the peasantry lies in an insurrectionary revolutionary struggle, waged against the imperialists, the Zionists and the Arab landowners by the fundamental stratum of the peasant masses, under the direction of the working class led by their Communist Party".[189] Although it advocated a militant line against land grabs, including by armed resistance, it did not gain large numbers of members amongst the *fellahin*.

However whilst it did not recruit large numbers of members its viewpoints began to win something of an audience through its weekly journal *Haifa* and other material which argued for an anti-British perspective, criticising the leaders of the Arab national movement and championing the position of unity between Jewish and Palestinian Arab workers.[190] The Party remained very small reflecting the relatively small size of the constituency from which it tried to recruit, the Arab Palestinian working class. Coupled with this orientation towards winning workers to its ranks was a critical attitude towards those in the leadership of Palestinian politics especially criticising the role of the *a'yan* in the national movement and their periodic closeness to the Mandate authorities. Undoubtedly it was this criticism of the dominant political leadership that resulted in it playing no role in any of the Palestinian Congresses.

Women and Palestinian Politics

In general, in the nineteenth century, a majority of women within Palestinian society had played a domestic role working in the household, as carers for children and undertaking work in the home.[191] Women in poorer rural households however tended to work in the fields. The changing social situation had begun to challenge that dominant tradition and contributed to women becoming more active in the public

[188] Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party,* 41.
[189] Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Zed Books, First published in English 1979). 93.
[190] Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party,* 15-16.
[191] Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17.

political sphere. "There are reports that, as early as the late nineteenth century, women joined with men in strongly and even violently resisting Zionist settlement, participating in protests against Jewish immigration in the countryside in 1884 in Affula".[192] This evidence challenges the view that women's political activity was exclusively confined to the middle class unless a very narrow definition of what constitutes political activity is applied. Whilst it was true that the Arab Women's Committee was established in 1929 principally by women from the families of male notables involved in national politics it clearly succeeded in reaching out to women members of the middle class and through its commitment to more extensive social work to make contact with women in other social groups.[193]

From the letters pages and content of the newspapers, there is consistent evidence of women's involvement in social and political life including involvement in activities such as political fundraising.[194] There were women's organisations involved in welfare activity or education in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa in the 1920s, although often led by the wives of leaders of the political bodies. A women's society in Jerusalem for example was active in 1931 distributing "food to poor families, and (sending) nurses to help mothers learn proper sanitation methods and care for their children".[195] However bodies like the executive committee of the Women's Congress also issued more overtly political statements on "Jewish immigration, land buying, and alleged educational and economic discrimination".[196] Despite the fact that many of the women involved in these activities were the wives of members of differing political factions they nevertheless worked together in the same organisations and did not replicate the divisions found in the male-led bodies.[197]

The First Arab Women's Congress took place in Jerusalem in October 1929 and was attended by over two hundred women from both the Muslim and the Christian communities. The movement which laid the basis for the Congress "evolved from a complex matrix of charitable, reformist, feminist, and nationalist impetuses, which

[192] Ellen L. Fleischmann, *The Nation and its "New" Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement 1920–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 108.
[193] Fleischmann, *The Nation and its "New" Women,* 111.
[194] Kabha, 19.
[195] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 63
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.

overlapped and informed the nature of women's initial organisational endeavours".[198] The Congress passed three motions calling for the "abrogation of the Balfour Declaration, an assertion of Palestine's rights to a national government with representation for all communities in proportion to their numbers, and the development of Palestinian industries". Additionally they made the specific proposal that land should be only be bought from the Jews and that every other form of transaction should be prohibited. They publicised their political positions by means of a closed motorcar procession through Jerusalem although this was not repeated in 1933 when women joined protest rallies in the same city and Jaffa.[199]

In 1933 the militancy of the women was even recognised by the High Commissioner Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope, who, writing of an action in Jerusalem, expressed concern at " (a) new and disquieting feature of this demonstration was the prominent part taken by women of good family as well as others … They did not hesitate to join in assaults on the Police and were conspicuous in urging their menfolk to further efforts".[200] Wauchope was clearly shocked by these developments but they were further evidence of the broadening of political engagement within the Arab Palestinian community.

The Role of the Media

As we have already noted the population of the early part of the twentieth century was predominantly rural distributed in towns and villages across Palestine. The social changes developing in Palestine led to a progressive growth of the urban population which in turn contributed to the emergence of a lively press. Literacy rates were generally low under Ottoman rule even though across the region there were 956 "education establishments … most of which were primary and elementary schools".[201] Even though there had been an expansion of missionary schools there were not enough

[198] Fleischmann, *The Nation and its "New" Women*, 95.
[199] Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 200. Rogan, makes the assertion that the organisation that was established by the Congress, the Arab Women's Association, as a "hybrid of the politics of Palestinian nationalism and the upper-middle-class culture of British county ladies". It is worth recalling that not until 1928 did women in the United Kingdom attained electoral equality with men.
[200] Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1929 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 176. Swedenburg is citing a letter from the High Commissioner Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope. CO 733/239/5.
[201] Kayyali, 11.

schools available to the population in comparison to the needs. A government census on literacy published in 1932, indicated that literacy rates for all Arab Palestinians stood at 25% for males and 3% for females and it seems reasonable to assume that the figures for the pre-Mandate period would have been similar.[202] Amidst those who were literate there were significant differences between different social groups which to some extent were reflected in the figures for different religious communities. Amongst Christians the figures for male and female literacy were 72% and 44% respectively and amongst Jews the comparable figures were 93% and 73%.[203] Given the predominant distributions of the three communities this also probably reflected a divide between urban and rural communities.

Whilst literacy rates were relatively low, access to literature was possible through sources such as "the town café and village guesthouse (which) provided social centers where someone would read articles from newspapers and the men would discuss political affairs".[204] A number of libraries opened at the turn of the century.[205] In some factories "newspaper breaks" took place.[206] The potential readership of the press before the First World War, although still limited in numbers, had been expanding.[207] At least one publisher sent a copy of their newspaper to all the villages in their surrounding areas. The numbers of pupils in the "Arab Public System – Government Schools" increased by approximately 150% between 1920 and 1930 and the number of teachers nearly doubled to meet the needs.[208] This phenomenon alongside other informal patterns of communication undoubtedly led to the dissemination of ideas more widely than the immediate readerships.

Newspapers began to flourish in the first years of the twentieth century and in 1908, no less than fifteen newspapers were printed in Palestine. One of these papers,

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[202] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 46.
[203] Ibid., 225. Note 33.
[204] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 67. See also Salim Tamari, *Mountains against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), comments on the expansion of cafés and their role in society, 178
[205] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 43.
[206] Kabha, 18.
[207] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 126, 193.
Kabha notes that the first Arabic newspaper, *al-Waqa'l' al Misriyya* was published by Muhammad Ali in Egypt in 1828 and that the first paper published in Beirut *Majmou'at Fawa'id* can be dated at 1851. In 1876, 30 years after the first printing press arrived in Palestine, two newspapers which belonged to the Ottoman government began to be published *al-Quds al-Sharif* and *al-Ghazal.*
[208] Porath, *Emergence,* 21.

the weekly *al-Karmil*, published in Haifa by the owner and editor Najib Nassar, was very influential. Its viewpoint as expressed in a March 1909 column can be summarised as supporting "the just demands of the people … (serving) the trader, the craftsman, and the *fallah*, and all other sectors of the population".[209] Its views drew the attention of the Ottoman authorities who closed it down in 1914 because of its critical attitude towards the government.

From 1911 onwards *al-Karmil* was rivalled by the Jaffa-based *Filastin* which championed the anti-Zionist cause. Taking up the interests of the rural population threatened by eviction as a result of land purchases, the articles of both papers were reprinted in other local newspapers and in nationally distributed papers in Damascus, Beirut and Cairo.[210] *Filastin* in particular switched from a focus on the threats posed by Zionism and Jewish immigration to a concern for the plight of the *fellahin* whose families faced dispossession and displacement from the land. This sharpening of focus was matched by an increasing number of articles shifting attention from the failures of the Ottoman rulers in restricting the growing colonisation to the longer-term threat posed by the Zionist settlers.[211] Undoubtedly the newspapers published elsewhere in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Istanbul were influential in developing an understanding of the significance of Zionism not only for Palestine but also for the region.[212]

Each of the papers, as with the political formations that began to develop, to some degree reflected the social origins and priorities of their owners. In the early 1930s, for example, *Filastin* owned by the wealthy citrus industry al-Issa family, was explicitly anti-communist, opposing workers' strikes to improve wages or conditions. Whilst they supported the anti-Zionism implicit in the actions of those striking the paper was reluctant to endorse policies which, they viewed, as jeopardising the owners' income. The wider implication of the position adopted by the paper was that Arab Palestinian notables in the process of undergoing embourgeoisement were not about to sacrifice their profits for the Palestinian national cause. Individual interests

[209] Kabha, xv.
[210] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 127. Khalidi mentions Beirut based *al-Ittihad al-'Uthmani* which reprinted articles from *al-Karmil* and *Filastin,* 137.
[211] Ibid., 126.
[212] Ibid., 144.

superseded nationalist aspirations. Whilst social position was clearly a factor the opinions expressed by these newspapers on the question of Zionism were not influenced by their owners' religious allegiance as much as by their political attitudes towards the CUP government. Those opposed to the Istanbul rulers tended to be more anti-Zionist than those who favoured unity with the Empire.[213]

Evidence of the interconnections between the press and political organisations can be found throughout the British Mandate with papers promoting the standpoints of their proprietors. Some, like Boulus Shihada who owned *Mir'at al-Sharq* and 'Issa al-Issa who edited *Filastin* for example, were themselves members of important political bodies such as the Palestinian Arab Executive Committee and intervened to ensure their opinions were reflected in the pages of their papers. However these connections did not mean that political organisations were exempted from criticism. Writing in *al-Karmil* on 14th February 1926 for example, Sheifh As'ad al-Shuqari said:

> *S*ince the start of British occupation until the present day I have not been aware of the existence of a real National Movement [*Haraka wataniyya haqiqiyya*]. The prominent and less prominent members of the National Movement, Muslim, Christian and Druze, welcomed the British occupation, although, their leaders were clearly aware that this occupation carried the attendant 'gift' of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. The British military and administrative staff began their occupation with the act of every wise conqueror, by granting positions to the sons of prominent families who were infatuated with them, in order to win their sympathy, support and various services.[214]

These links were also noted by the Mandate authorities. In a report dated 8th December 1922 submitted to the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner Herbert Samuel makes the evaluation that the "Moderate Party … have considerable support in the press".[215] At other times the authorities moved to close down the press and impose censorship because the papers were clearly expressing their support for anti-Mandate viewpoints. In a Secret Intelligence Report presented to the Cabinet in November 1929 it is clear that the press is regarded as an important factor in the events that were taking place. "The Arab

[213] Ibid., 136.
[214] Kabha, 46-47. See also CAB 24/140
[215] CAB 24/140, 4.

press continues to be very inflammatory, in particular a paper which is now for the first time published in English".[216] The paper was unnamed but *al-Wihda al-'Arabiyya*, published from December 1933 in both Arabic and English was censored by the British on charges of incitement in 1935.[217] The press raised the major political issues of the day and presented the perspectives of Palestinian opinion on issues.

Sections of the press became in effect political organisers. *Al-Karmil*, sought to intervene more generally in the political process calling for the organisation of opposition to Zionism whilst others, such as *al-Mufid*, linked to *al-Fatat* the Arab nationalist secret society, were directly connected to nascent political organisations.[218] There was of course a long tradition linking the development of the press with the emergence of political bodies and indeed the whole process of political organisation. In 1905, Najib 'Azuri who had founded the *Ligue de la Patrie Arabe* in Paris, published *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe*, "which predicted a momentous conflict between Zionism and Arab nationalism".[219] In 1907 he went on to publish a monthly review entitled *l'Indépendance Arabe*.[220]

Newspapers expressing concern about Zionism could be found not only in other parts of the Arab world such as Cairo, Damascus and Beirut but even in Istanbul where *al-Hadera* was published.[221] There was an amount of direct and indirect collaboration between the sections of the media. The Haifa and Jaffa papers frequently used articles from papers published elsewhere in the Arab world. There was a sense that the decisions of the World Zionist Organisation constituted a challenge both to Palestine and to the Arab world in general.[222] Even after the imposition of the Mandate, newspapers in Damascus were still publishing stories which concerned the British Government. A letter from P. Z. Cox, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad presented by Winston Churchill to the Cabinet in October

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[216] CAB 24/207.
[217] Kabha, 72.
[218] The full name of the society, which had been founded in Paris in 1911 was *al-Jam'iyya al-arabiyya al'-fatat.* (The Young Arab Society). Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 111.
[219] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 98. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 152.
[220] Ibid., 97. Amongst other influential writers to emerge at the turn of the century, the Syrian born writer 'Abdul-Rahman Kawakebi has been noted as an important contributor to the development of a Pan-Arabist perspective distinguishing between his opinions and those of the Pan-Islamist Jamaluddin al-Afghani who advocated the unity of the whole of Islam.
[221] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 125.
[222] Ibid., 125.

1921 complained bitterly of the "anti-British propaganda … still published in Syria … (as) evidenced by the article published in 'Muqtabas' (on) 24th August 1921" and of articles in the French language monthly "L'Action Assyro-Chaldeénne" published in Beirut.[223]

The political response was not confined to the publication of newspaper articles, books were also published on the issue of Palestine, the Mandate and Zionism. Two books written by Muhammad Izzat Darwazah and Isa al-Sifri were printed in Jaffa in 1929 followed by further publications in the mid-1930s.[224] Cultural events too promoted political ideas including a January 1920 production of a play called "The Ruin of Palestine" in Nablus, staged by *al-Nadi al-'Arabi* which recounts a story of two Arabs losing their property to a "young flirtatious Jewess". These activities were complimented by initiatives setting up schools and clinics for the poor and engaging in discussion on a wide range of topics including literature.[225] This burgeoning growth of cultural activity acted as a counterweight to the atomising impact of the social changes which Palestinians experienced. Maturing at a slower pace perhaps they nevertheless constituted a more sympathetic atmosphere in which the Palestinian national identity could develop. Political, social and cultural activities were interwoven and had an effect on other areas of life such as religion.

Religion and Revolt

From the beginning of the twentieth century expressions of political ambition were interlinked with the most widespread religious allegiance in the region. The Ottoman Empire claimed its status as the Caliphate and to some degree the initial debate about political identity was couched in terms shaped by this discourse. Pan-Islamism was superseded by Pan-Arabism and subsequently by Arab nationalism but throughout the religious affiliations of the people of Greater Syria and then Palestine remained an aspect of the struggle for self-determination.

There was undoubtedly linkage between religious affiliation and the social background to which political activists belonged. Certainly the religious affiliations of leading members, both Muslim and Christian, contributed to the development of ideas

[223] CAB 24/129
[224] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 65.
[225] Muslih, 169.

about nationalism. The name of one of the foremost organisations, the Muslim Christian Association, both reflected the composition of its membership whilst simultaneously attempted to convey an aspiration for unity between the two communities.[226] Political ideas were also spread by religious figures from their pulpits and they used their positions of authority within their communities to give support to those political ideas. "In 1925 a Muslim religious authority issued, for the first time, a *fatwa* (Muslim legal ruling) forbidding land sales to Jews".[227] The ruling was published in the press.

Although this statement did not appear to have much resonance at the time it was indicative of the close connection for some between religious allegiance and political inclination.[228] Figures with religious affiliations appeared throughout the early part of the Mandate period associated with most shades of political opinion including the most radical. From the mid 1920s onwards for example this linkage was embodied in a figure like Izz al-Din al-Qassam, described as "a man of immense religious learning … an eloquent orator … an ardent Muslim and a patriot" who would come to play a critical role towards the end of the decade and into the 1930s.[229] The British were aware of the significance of religion in Palestinian society and paid attention to matters related to it. Arguably the British utilised a confessional politics to exploit divisions within the Muslim community by the judicious use of patronage. Choosing a person from one notable family above another might have the effect of elevating one group to pre-eminence. The tactic of divide and rule was not only used to advantage between different religions but at times also used to divide one group from even another group of their co-religionists.

Under Ottoman rule a number of posts for administering and running the Sharia courts were appointed by or approved by Constantinople. With the advent of the Mandate and under the terms of occupation the authority for confirming such posts was assumed by the British. They enhanced the status of the Mufti of Jerusalem by designating the position as having jurisdiction over the whole of Palestine and on 8th

[226] Ilan Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husseinis 1700–1948* (London: Saqi Books, 2010). 175.
[227] Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, 46.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Kayyali,180.

May 1921, in contravention of established practices for the elections and in preference to other candidates they appointed al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini as the Grand Mufti.[230] Al-Husseini was chosen by the British over three other candidates who, under the procedures for making such an appointment, had priority. In doing so the British made a deliberate choice both to intervene in the processes and structures of the Sharia courts and quite specifically, to select someone they had identified.

From the date of his arrival, the High Commissioner Herbert Samuel was enthusiastic to establish an authoritative body representing the Muslim community with which the British could work officially.[231] On 9th January 1922 the Supreme Muslim Council was inaugurated and granted a degree of autonomy by the Mandate authority to administer Sharia courts and choose the muftis who advised them perhaps as a response to the pressures from the May 1921 riots.[232] In its composition, leadership and formation, it replicated the existing traditional religious and social structures and the influence of the *a'yan*. The initial disputes for leading positions reflected the rivalry between the prominent families with al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini winning out over Raghib al-Nashashibi for the post of *Ra'is al-Ulama*, a position which would make the bearer the permanent President of the Supreme Muslim Council alongside four other councillors. By raising al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini to the post the British placed him in a position of esteem and one which gave him a privileged position in relation to the British administration. In so doing this enhanced his status amongst the Muslim community giving him an authority through which he too could exercise patronage and political influence. Whilst the powers to administer Sharia courts and choose the muftis who would advise them were devolved to the Council, they were paid by Mandate authority.

The British authorities faced a political challenge from the Christian community as well as the majority Muslim one. From the outset members of the Christian community were involved in the establishment of political bodies opposed to

[230] Porath, *Emergence,* 192. See also Muslih, (166ff.) for a brief account of the political background of al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Khalidi, (189). For a more detailed account of his life see Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin Al-Husseini and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
[231] CAB 24/39. See Memorandum on "The Formula of 'Self-Determination of Peoples' and the Moslem World" dated 10th January 1918.
[232] Huneidi, *A Broken Trust,* 146.

the influx of Zionist settlers and these views were reflected in the columns of the papers they owned.[233] According to one report Christian opposition to the appointment of Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner was "even more bitter than the Moslems".[234] Samuel himself expressed the view in 1922 that the attitudes of the Christian communities tended to change depending on political developments. He was of the opinion that their anti-British Government and anti-Zionist positions lessened as a consequence of their perception that there was a growth in the influence of an Islamic politics.[235] Where differences emerged between leading Christian political figures and Muslim leaders they were no greater or smaller than those within the Muslim community and reflected their respective social and economic interests rather than a confessional divide.

From Congresses to Parties

The Third Palestinian Congress was followed in May 1921 by a further Congress which called for a representative government and agreed to send a delegation to London to negotiate with the British.[236] Overtures made by Syrian political bodies to maintain unity against the challenges both countries faced initially met with support, but in reality this position soon ceased to influence the direction pursued by subsequent Arab Palestinian Congresses.[237] According to some this was a consequence of the fact that Palestinian political leaders considered that the Syrian nationalists were too close to the Zionist movement.[238] The delegation led by Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husseini met with Churchill on 22nd August 1921 in London where he confirmed to them that British were not prepared to move and clearly intended that the Mandate would be implemented on the basis of the Balfour Declaration.[239]

The White Paper by Winston Churchill published on 3rd June 1922 reiterated existing Government commitment to the Balfour Declaration but expanded on a

[233] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 109.
[234] FO. 371/5203 Cited in Ingrams, 106.
[235] CAB 24/140.
[236] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 111. Porath, *Emergence,* 116. The decision to send the Delegation may have been encouraged because there was in existence in Britain a Committee which was favourable towards the Palestinian viewpoint made up of significant public figures included newspaper proprietors. Porath, *Emergence,* 137.
[237] Porath, *Emergence,* 120-121.
[238] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 142.
[239] Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews,* 72.

number of the questions relating to it. He expressed the view that the British Government regarded the proposal that "Palestine is to become 'as Jewish as England is English' … as impracticable" and that it had "no such aim in view." He developed the idea that " the status of all citizens of Palestine in the eyes of the law shall be Palestinian … (and that) … immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals".[240] Following the rejection of the White Paper, the Fifth Palestinian Congress meeting in August turned down the proposal for a Legislative Council viewing it as an inadequate response to their call for self-government. Seeing that they were making no headway with the British, the Congress proposed that alliances should be sought with other parts of the Arab world.[241]

The breadth and depth of the opposition to the British Mandate was reflected in the decisions of the Palestinian Congresses, the demonstrations of public anger against the land purchases, in the press and in numerous other public manifestations against the Balfour Declaration and the increasing settler immigration. The decisions expressed at the Fifth Congress in August 1922 were quite specific and counter to Churchill's White paper. Agreeing eighteen resolutions the Congress called for a boycott of the elections to the Legislative Council and affirmed that it would "continue (its) endeavours for the independence of our country, and for achieving Arab unity by all legal methods, and that we shall not accept the establishing of a Jewish National Home nor Jewish immigration." The plan of action adopted went on to propose the establishment of a "Palestine Arab Bureau in London", a boycott of Jewish goods and the Rutenberg electricity scheme alongside steps to stop the sale of "immovable property to Jews". The Congress appeared to be reaching out to groups beyond their immediate circles with proposals that seemed to suggest a greater degree of awareness of the plight of the dispossessed *fellahin* and a commitment to "provide means for enlightening the *fellah* on national affairs." The seriousness of their intent was

[240] Charles D Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict,* 159.
[241] Kayyali, 111. Kayyali records that Musa Kazem al-Husseini of the Arab Delegation on its return to Haifa on 22nd August declared that he was of the opinion that negotiations were still possible. Kayyali expresses the view that this was a turning point and that the absence of a revolutionary leadership at this point was critical.

perhaps evident in the decision to establish "a 'finance scheme' for the collection of funds".[242]

The programme adopted at the Sixth Congress signalled an attempt to develop a wider political perspective introducing proposals to benefit the economy more generally. This broader approach was indicated by the holding of an Arab Economic Agricultural Conference on 1st February 1923 which called for the abolition of some taxes; the improvement of roads; the promotion of schemes to encourage the growth of tobacco; the reopening of the Agricultural Bank and a call for the establishment of an agricultural school. Additionally the Conference called for the introduction of a law forbidding the sale of land below a certain size based on the minimum requirement to sustain a family. This manifesto signalled an attempt to develop a more productive economy but it did not raise questions beyond the limits of buying and selling, such as proposing new forms of landownership or redistribution of the land to the benefit of the *fellahin*.[243] The implicit political perspective of the Agricultural Conference remained within the parameters established by the Fifth Congress.

The Arab Executive Committee prevailed over those who wished to stand for the Legislative Council and Samuel, under the weight of the campaigning, was unable to convene the body. A stoppage of work and closing of shops was called for on 12th March 1923 to celebrate the victory isolating further those who had wished to become involved in the body. On 20th June the Sixth Congress was convened in Jaffa and agreed that a new Delegation be sent to London to express opposition to the proposed Anglo-Arab Treaty.[244] From the British point of view the intention of the Treaty was to acquire Hussein's acceptance of the Balfour Declaration as the terms under which they would govern in Palestine. The Delegation sought to intervene in the Cabinet Committee discussion but was turned away whilst Hussein was treated with disdain by the British for appearing to constantly equivocate.[245] The defeat of Hussein by his rival the Sa'ud family and his loss of control of the Hejaz effectively ended the discussions on the Treaty.

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[242] Ibid., 114. Quoting Arabic and British sources.
[243] Kayyali, 116. See also Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 228-229.
[244] Kayyali (119) calls this the Anglo–Arab Treaty whilst Porath, *Emergence,* (179) refers to it as the Anglo–Hejazi or British–Hejazi Treaty. The Treaty was never ratified.
[245] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 336.

The failure of the Sixth Congress to adopt a position of tax boycott was due to a split between those who came from and supported the positions of the large landowners and those who came from the ranks of the middle classes. The wealthier landowners, some it is alleged well disposed towards the Zionists, strongly opposed the proposal even though evidence suggests that the boycott of tax payments would have had wide popular appeal.[246] The political divisions developing within both the Fifth and the Sixth Congresses were becoming sharper as those who opposed the majority positions eventually formed themselves into a political party *al-Hizb al-Watani al-Arabi al-Filastini* (the Palestinian Arab National Party) in November 1923.[247] This body was, in the main, led by members of the Nashashibi family who were opposed to the policies of the Arab Executive and the positions adopted by Congresses which were politically dominated by members and supporters of the Husseini family.

This process of political differentiation was evident too in the establishment of *Hizb al-Zurra* (Party of Farmers) which sought improvements in the agricultural sector including, for example, the ending of certain taxes, the establishment of a bank and improvements in relevant education.[248] The social base of *Hizb al-Zurra* was amongst those families in the rural areas who owned land in the villages but were not themselves *fellahin*. Their development was certainly supported and encouraged by Zionists such as Chaim Kalvarisky, who was in charge of the Arab Department of the Zionist Executive, and his superior, Frederick Kisch, a former British colonel working for the intelligence services who was head of the Zionist Executive's political department.[249] Despite the Zionist backing the existence of the Party undoubtedly owed something to an attempt to counterweight the influence of the urban areas by increasing the voice of the rural population. The Party did not adopt an anti-Zionist stand and at least one of its leading figures, Haider Tuqan, reported to Kalvarisky on

[246] Kayyali, 120.
[247] Porath, *Emergence*, 215. Porath records that the Arab Department of the Zionist Executive had in fact been working since the summer of 1921 to co-ordinate the opposition to the Arab Executive.
[248] Ibid., 229.
[249] Cohen, *Army of Shadows,* 16.

the growth of the organisation which, by the winter of 1924, he claimed had the support of around 200 villages.[250]

The process of party formation related to a number of factors not least the changing social topography of Palestinian society. Those who held the dominant positions within the Supreme Muslim Council and the Arab Executive belonged to the *a'yan* and tended to ally themselves or indeed be members of the Husseini family. It has been argued that because of the prominent religious and secular roles they held in society, it did not appear necessary to form a party to achieve hegemony for their views. The appearance of new parties challenged this *status quo* and even amongst those who belonged to the Husseini faction it began to raise questions about political relationships. An attempt was made by Jamal al-Husseini to obtain the support of the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) in the city council elections of 1927 in order to defeat the candidates backed by the Nashashibi faction.[251] This reflected a recognition that there were social and political forces beyond the confines of the traditional leaderships which had so far hegemonised political discourse in Mandate Palestine. These changes heralded the beginning of a new period in the development of the political response to the British Mandate by the Arab Palestinian people. The gradual coalescence of relatively new social layers created the potential for a reshaping of the political landscape. In the next chapter I will examine how these changes, which were incubating in the first decade of the British occupation burgeoned and led to the establishment and growth of new political parties and formations which challenged the nature of the British Mandate rule.

Conclusions

The long period of Ottoman rule underwent a transformation throughout the nineteenth century which accelerated towards the end of the century and into the twentieth. The Arab provinces of the antebellum Ottoman Empire, already experiencing the disruptions caused by the increased penetration of an expansionist European imperialism then faced the dislocations produced by war, famine, occupation, suppression, colonisation, evictions, exploitation and above all, the denial

[250] Ibid., 20.
[251] Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, 231.

of the right of self-determination which they had been led to believe would be granted in return for their support for the British against the Ottoman Empire.

Albeit with different social, economic and political characteristics, the Palestinian people experienced the rule of one imperial power, the Ottoman, being replaced by that of another, the British. Control from Whitehall took the place of governance by Constantinople. The rule of the Ottoman Empire was supplanted by the imposition of a High Commissioner issuing Ordinances decreeing the terms for the conduct of political and economic life. All major questions of government, finance, defence and public security, the law and almost every facet of politics, economics and to a certain degree religion came under British control.[252] The military defeat of the Central Powers resulted in the establishment of a new colonising regime with a new agenda.

The capital resources arriving from abroad and the profitability of the economic areas in which they were invested far outstripped the capacities for endogenous growth.[253] The land and agricultural investment which the *a'yan* undertook faced the growth of an industrialising economy, in which the Zionist investors were granted monopolies which enabled the accelerating creation of a usurping industrially oriented bourgeoisie. The dynamic of finance capital fusing finance and industry, discussed in Chapter One, displaced the overwhelmingly agricultural and mercantilist character of the indigenous economy.

Economically confronted by invasive capital, the *a'yan* oscillated between adopting a political perspective that sought to mitigate the most egregious consequences by seeking to establish an alliance with the imperial power or developing a strategy based on the assertion of national rights which inevitably would lead to a confrontation with British imperialism. The role that they had played under Ottoman rule, based on their relative economic privileges, had not prepared them for the challenges they faced. Accustomed to being recognised as holding the prerogative of go-between the majority developed a political position which reflected this custom

[252] Mahdi Abdul Hadi, ed., *Documents on Palestine: Volume 1* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007), 80.
[253] Jacob Metzer, *The divided economy of Mandatory Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See especially Chapter 1 and 4 for a comparative account of economic development.

thereby rendering them incapable of constructing a perspective for independence or the capacity to create the necessary alliances to draw together all the social forces into a united front against the British imperial power.

Decoupled from the Ottoman Empire and severed from the prospect of a Greater Syria the *a'yan* split into various currents based on contending perspectives. On the one hand this was exemplified by a tendency towards the establishment of a relationship with the British and an accommodation with Zionism in order to achieve some sort of self-governance and on the other a majority current which maintained an anti-Zionist position, seeking to pressurise the Mandate authority into abandoning the terms of the Balfour Declaration. The former congregating around what became *al-Hizb al-Watani al-Arabi al-Filastini* (the Palestinian Arab National Party) and the latter associated with the Arab Executive and the Supreme Muslim Council.

Amongst those who normally related to the traditional leadership patterns defined by the pre-eminence of one or other *a'yan* group, others, like *Hizb al-Zurra* (Party of the Farmers), sought to stake a claim to advantage their particular constituency reflecting the growing disparity between the influence of the rural and coastal communities. In all of these political developments both the British authorities and the Zionist Executive attempted with greater or lesser successes to exert an influence on the path that Palestinian politics would take.

The social convulsions which threatened the *a'yan* as a consequence of these processes simultaneously represented a traumatic moment for the *fellahin* whose livelihoods and security were endangered or in some cases destroyed. Deprived of their landholdings evicted *fellahin* were largely disbarred from entering into the newly developing industrial sector by the aggressive application of the Zionist policy of *avoda ivrit.* Urban society was increasingly dominated by the Zionist colonists. "In 1922 the Muslim urban population was twice that of the Jewish community, but by 1935 the urban Jewish sector had outstripped the total Muslim urban sector".[254]

[254] Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 56.

Imbued with the experiences of organisation in an industrial context the colonists were better equipped to bring into being forms of coordination which enabled them to monopolise employment within the newly developing industries. The body established by the Zionists to achieve this goal, the *Histadrut*, had some of the organisational features of trade unionism but more closely resembled a corporatist structure sublimating social interest to the establishment of a Zionist state. In contrast Palestinian workers and the evicted *fellahin* newly forced into a position of having to seek employment in order to survive, did not have the same degree of experience in creating structures to express their interests at the economic or political level. The forms of organisation which did emerge such as the Palestinian Arab Workers Society (PAWS) in 1925 were created initially as a benefits group seeking to support workers faced with unemployment or injustices in the workplace.[255] Political organisations, like the Palestine Communist Party, which sought to root themselves in the working class were unable to develop an authentic indigenous voice which might resonate with those whom they sought to recruit.

The boycott, mentioned above, began around the time of the Seventh Palestinian National Congress convened from 20th June until 22nd June 1928. It was this Congress which sought to unify the different constituencies of the Palestinian opposition to the policies pursued by the British Mandate and to elaborate a programme for the achievement of Palestinian self-determination. In the next chapter I will examine the political components that sought to create a united opposition to the Mandate and the social forces and political parties that coalesced to challenge the British in period from 1935–1939.

[255] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 64.

CHAPTER FIVE

Towards the Palestinian Revolt

Introduction

This chapter will analyse how the contradictory character of the Balfour Declaration ineluctably led to the continuous frustration of Arab Palestinian ambitions. The British commitment to the Zionist project resulted in the introduction of proposals for forms of administrative structures which, whilst appearing to constitute a compromise between the majority Arab Palestinian community and the Zionist led *Yishuv*, resulted in the institutionalisation of colonial rule and denial of self-determination. Moreover, successive Arab Palestinian political initiatives aimed at persuading the British government to jettison the Balfour Declaration and accept the claim for self-determination.

This chapter will also underline how British political policies were replicated in the economic field with consequential social ramifications. The social, political and economic were inextricably linked as the British themselves were to underline. These developments in their totality were to shape the context which was to result in the *thawra* or Arab Palestinian Revolt of 1936–1939 as the parameters of Palestinian politics became more sharply defined. The preferences which the British bestowed on those sections of the economy held in pro-Zionist hands, coupled with a deterioration of the agricultural sectors as a combination of crop failures and highly competitive imports intensified the disadvantages experienced by the predominantly rural Arab Palestinian community. The almost recurrent British response to the Arab Palestinian lobby for self-government was the production of reports cataloguing their plight and especially that of the landless *fellahin* without addressing the impact of a partisan administration on the economy exacerbated by the exclusionary practices of the Zionist employers and the *Histadrut*.

The British also tried to co-opt a level of comprador notables in a variety of institutions with whom they could work. In this chapter I will briefly outline Palestinian responses to ever-increasing inequality but, predominantly using the reports, will demonstrate that the British were not particularly interested in addressing

the situation. I will explore British responses to the Wailing Wall/*Buraq* demonstrations and the general unrest which ensued.

Mandate and Zionist Proto-State Structures

From the outset the British had recognised the Zionist Commission which subsequently became the Zionist Executive and then the Jewish Agency, as the voice of the *Yishuv*. Chaim Weizmann, as the leader, already had well-established relationships with the Government in London and in Palestine and the British appointed William Ormsby-Gore to act as the liaison officer to the Commission. As has already been pointed out the Balfour Declaration took the form of a quasi-treaty and formed the basis of the League of Nations Mandate adopted on 24th July 1922. Article 4 of the document stated that "an appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body … (and) … the Zionist Organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency".[1] The League of Nations document in Article 11 gave the Jewish Agency the power to "construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration".[2] There was no equivalent Arab Palestinian body with a comparable status and terms of reference and although Arab Palestinians were employed in the Administration this was a body charged with the implementation of British policy.

Whilst Samuel promoted the creation of bodies to discuss political arrangements in Palestine based on Churchill's assurances there was no intention to establish a Jewish state, he had at the same time accepted onto the Advisory Council those with that intention. One characteristic of a state is to have a standing army and the Zionists were eager to establish one or as close to one as the British would allow. Yitzhak Ben Zvi who was a member of the Advisory Council until his resignation in April 1921, was a leader of both *Ahdut Ha-Avodah* (Jewish Labour Party) and the *Haganah* (The Defence) and advocated the establishment of an armed force and the status attached to the *Haganah* by the British reflected the intrinsic ambivalence of the

[1] Lacqueur and Rubin, eds, *The Israel Arab Reader,* 31.
[2] Ibid., 32-33.

Mandate Administration on this matter. Initially it had been formed around 1918 as a successor to the pre-war *Hashomer* Jewish watchman's association. Officially it was illegal but it was tolerated by the British administration and throughout the twenties and beyond it organised as a "self-defence" force. Following the events in Jaffa in May, the *Haganah* began to organise the secret import of arms from Vienna.[3] Alongside this illegal importation of arms the *Haganah* was also given arms by the Mandate Administration despite the latter's occasional protestations about the paramilitary activities it undertook.[4] As early as July 1921 a Secret War Office report records that in anticipation of "outbreaks of violence … (t)he High Commissioner, with the assistance of the General Officer Commanding is taking steps to form a species of "Town Guards" in the Jewish villages and colonies by issuing arms to selected men".[5]

In the 1930s and especially after 1936 the units of the *Haganah* were recognised as legal. "In 1937 the *Haganah* had ten thousand men trained and armed and another forty thousand available for rapid mobilisation."[6] Added to these forces were the 5,000 strong *Notrim* or Supernumerary Police who were recruited by the British to cooperate with the Army and the Police.[7] Whilst initially they undertook defensive duties guarding oil pipelines and the like they became a force that was used in offensive duties during the course of the Arab Palestinian revolt.[8] This did not however bring all Zionist armed forces into some form of official relationship with British as the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* under the Commander-in-Chief Ze'ev Jabotinsky were determined on a course to transform Palestine and Transjordan into the Jewish state of *Eretz Israel* and would not work with the Mandate administration.

The economic protectionism afforded to Zionist enterprises by the Mandate Administration was complimented by a tolerance for and to a degree the encouragement of other forms of embryonic state institutions. Monopoly rights were

[3] Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine*, 59.
[4] Huneidi, *The Broken Trust,* 140.
[5] CAB 24/126.
[6] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 47.
[7] Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest, Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948* (Washington: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 2005), 371. Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand,* 196.
[8] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 47.

established for Jewish Enterprises through a series of Ordinances which gave protection to new industries started with settler capital. Through the imposition of import duties these new companies were shielded from competition with the existing indigenous producers. The imported capital on which they were based was more likely to use motor power in their productive process contributing to levels of productivity which exceeded the more artisanal character of existing Arab Palestinian owned industries.[9] Focussing on "Jewish industry" Deborah S. Bernstein has pointed out that "The number of establishments increased from a baseline of 100 in 1925, to 395 eighteen years later, while the number of workers, the capital invested, the output and the horsepower used, increased even more rapidly".[10] As a consequence this led to a concentration of the *Yishuv* in the urban areas which, together with the application of the policy of *avoda ivrit* contributed to Arab Palestinian workers being marginalised even though their numbers were increasing.

A contribution to this industrial expansion was undoubtedly made by changes in the character of the Zionist Organisation which had a significant effect on non-Zionist Jews in the USA. A political shift took place when the Zionist Organisation moved towards a position of encompassing non-Zionist Jews into its structures. For long periods during the 1920s Weizmann had sought to reconcile the two components of Jewish society internationally by seeking to draw non-Zionist Judaism into support for the creation of a homeland for the Jews. Within world Zionism there was a sense that it had been easier for Soviet Russia to obtain capital towards its Crimean settlement scheme from Jews in the United States than it was to obtain contributions from the same source towards the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[11]

From the outset of the Mandate and with the full endorsement of the British authorities political developments had followed a confessional path which was replicated in the social and economic life of Palestine. In what might arguably be described as the kernel of Zionist ambitions was a conscious process of separation and displacement which had long been central to the logic of its ideology. Whilst the

[9] Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 177.
[10] Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries,* 112. Horsepower usage increased by a factor of 12 between 1925 and 1937.
[11] Laqueur, *The History of Zionism,* 465. See Laqueur's account of the splits in Zionism in the United States, 456ff.

notion of transfer out of the country was not to impact directly on the majority Arab Palestinian society until the events of 1947 onwards, it was already being actively considered as one outcome of the creation of a homeland for the Jews by leaders of the Zionist movement. There had been attempts to claim Transjordan as a possible destination for Zionist settlers throughout the 1920s but this began to be promoted by Weizmann in private discussions with the British in 1929.[12] The increasingly frequent presentation of the case for Arab Palestinian population transfer by the Zionists contributed to the drift by British towards the proposals for partition which were to emerge in the 1930s.[13]

The notion of transfer, already intrinsic to the ideology of Zionism, began to be explored as a practical proposal in the late 1930s with the establishment of Transfer Committees which began to look at how to put such a policy into practice.[14] The privileging of the investments of firms approved by the Zionists alongside the implementation of the exclusive employment policy of *avoda ivrit* and the introduction of protective economic measures, discriminated definitively in favour of the Zionist colonists. This was not a process of separation of the economic spheres but rather one of taking measures which had the net result of clearly benefiting enterprises which were owned by members of the *Yishuv* in contrast to those which tended to be owned by members of the Arab Palestinian economic community.[15] These asymmetrical policies had repercussions in many spheres of life beyond the purely economic.

Fourth and Fifth Palestinian Congresses

The Arab Palestinians kept up their lobbying of the British but following the unproductive meetings with Churchill in March 1921 the Arab Executive decided to organise a further Congress for 29th May 1921 in Jerusalem. This Fourth Congress took place shortly after the violent disorder in Jaffa on 1st May which became the subject of the Haycraft Commission of Inquiry which I commented on in the previous

[12] Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 31.
[13] Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: One World, 2006). See Chapter 2. "The Drive for an Exclusively Jewish State".
[14] Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 53.
[15] Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress, Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 183.

Chapter. It decided to send another deputation to London to present its views regarding the future of Palestine but by this date the call for a united Greater Syria was no longer a demand put forward by the Congress. The central item on the Conference agenda was the organisation of the deputation which additionally demanded putting in place a leadership structure that would remain at the helm in Palestine whilst the delegation travelled to London. As a result two leading Jerusalem political figures Arif Pasha al-Dajani, and Jamal al-Husseini took over the positions of President and Secretary respectively whilst the latter's uncle Musa Kazem al-Husseini led the delegation.

On their return from London the delegation made their report to the Fifth Congress which met in Nablus from 22nd to 25th August 1922. They reported that Churchill had met the delegation but, echoing his comments in Jerusalem the previous year, he dismissed their representations on the grounds that the British were committed to their objectives of the Balfour Declaration. Having heard the report the Congress reaffirmed the general political positions of previous gatherings and discussed how to win support amongst the Arab people of other lands to intensify the campaign against the Zionist project. The agreement to reach out for support beyond Palestine represented an important political step especially when coupled with the decision to agitate for coordinated action within the country through a boycott of Samuel's proposed Legislative Council elections. Following the Congress the Executive Committee became involved in "protests and representations over land concessions to the Jews and the necessity of safeguarding the interests of the Muslim fellahin who lived on the lands".[16] This represented a change in emphasis away from a solely anti-Zionist focus towards one which began to address social and economic issues and, critically, the role of the British authority. This move took place even though there remained a strong inclination on the part of many of the *a'yan* not to take direct anti-British actions. It marked a beginning, albeit modest in scope, of popular campaigning as a compliment to a focus on lobbying of the Mandate authority.

An orientation to a more broad-based engagement of the people in opposing the Mandate was at the centre of discussion at the Sixth Congress in Jaffa which began

[16] Kayyali, 116.

on 16th June 1923.[17] The Congress called upon King Hussein not to sign the Anglo-Arab Treaty because a majority at the Congress believed to do so would amount to an endorsement of the project to establish of a homeland for the Jews. At the centre of the debate over what tactics to employ was the question of taxation and a proposal for a boycott. Jamal al-Husseini argued the position of boycott on the grounds of no taxation without representation. The proposition stemmed from a resentment against the British who were accused of distributing monies to Zionist bodies whilst withholding them from Arab Palestinians.[18] This resulted in a deep division within the Congress reflecting social divisions between the protagonists. Those who opposed the call were led by "rich *effendis* … on friendly terms with the Zionists".[19] Those supporting the demands like 'Isa al'Issa owner of the newspaper *Filastin* belonged to the emerging middle class.[20]

From a political perspective the splits which took place at the Sixth Congress reflected a fundamental line of divide between those who wished to continue to pursue a campaign of lobbying the British Government and those who increasingly were coming to the conclusion that there was a need to confront the British. The moves towards the signing of the Anglo-Arab treaty had called into question the commitment of Hussein to Palestinian independence indicating that he was prepared to acquiesce to the Zionist project and that he had ambitions about his own future role in respect of Palestine. Even some of those who had been sympathetic towards him now became sceptical suspecting that his actions might thwart their own ambitions to play a leading role in Palestine. Eventually it was agreed that a delegation should be sent to London to clarify what the draft treaty said.

The delegation left for London on 15th July 1923 spurred on by news that, following a decision on 27th June, a Cabinet Committee had been set up to look at the question of Palestine. The British Government was reflecting on the conduct of the Mandate although they were anxious not to be seen to be deviating from the Balfour Declaration. "There are some of our number who think that the Declaration was both unnecessary, and unwise, and who hold that our subsequent troubles have sprung in

[17] Porath, *Emergence,* 111.
[18] Kayyali, 119.
[19] Ibid. 120.
[20] Porath, *Emergence,* 111.

the main from its adoption." However in the view of the Committee "Whether this policy has been wise or unwise … it is well-nigh impossible for any Government to extricate itself without a substantial sacrifice of consistency and self-respect, if not of honour".[21] Despite the Committee's reflection on the whole nature of the Mandate and even consideration as to whether it should be reformulated by the League of Nations, in the end it concluded, by agreeing with the comments of Sir Gilbert Clayton, that "that there is no ground what-ever for advocating the abandonment of the Zionist policy or relinquishing the Mandate".[22] The Committee report appeared before the Cabinet on 31st July that year with an agreement that "for the present nothing should be made public in regard to the Government's policy, but that this should be announced by the High Commissioner on his return to Palestine in September".[23]

The Palestinian delegation was refused permission, on Samuel's advice, to speak to the Committee and no Government minister or official met with them.[24] The delegation returned to Palestine and they remained unaware of the Committee's views until October 1923. They did however make contact with Hussein's representative in London, Dr Naji al-Asil, whom they briefed on the Congress view of the Anglo-Arab Treaty. The delegation returned to Palestine but reflecting the continuing divisions that existed one pro-Hussein member, Amin al-Tamimi, remained behind continuing to promote to the Arab Executive a sympathetic attitude towards Hussein.[25] Ultimately however pressure from supporters of the majority positions of the Sixth Congress contributed to the Treaty not being ratified. The attacks by the Saudis and their defeat of Hussein's forces ended the negotiations rendering it irrelevant since a central aspect of the Treaty had been to seek an agreement on borders between the two contending forces.

Palestine, Syria And Iraq

The failure of the traditional Palestinian political leaderships to influence the British towards any real acknowledgement of the demands for an end to Jewish

[21] CAB 23/46. See notes of "Committee on Palestine".
[22] Ibid. Clayton worked as an intelligence officer in the army and was appointed chief secretary to the Mandate administration by Samuel in April 1923.
[23] CAB 23/46
[24] Porath, *Emergence,* 174.
[25] Ibid., 181.

immigration, the sale of lands or acceptance of any form of move towards majority self-government began to impact more profoundly on the evolution of political organisation. Neither the Congress resolutions nor the delegations to London, the meetings with the Colonial Secretary and the High Commissioner had brought any substantive change in British attitudes. The next Arab Palestinian Congress was not to take place until June 1928 nearly 5 years later. In part this reflected the impasse that the Arab Executive politics had reached but as will be examined later in this chapter it was influenced by a relative decline in Jewish immigration caused by developments in the world economy. For a period Jewish emigration actually exceeded the inward movement of settlers despite growing anti-Semitism across parts of Europe.

Political actors in Palestine were keeping a watch on the developments in Syria and Lebanon, variously described as the Great Syrian Revolt or the Great Druze Revolt, which took place between 1925–1927. During the course of the conflict which began in the area of Jebel Druze but extended to link up with nationalist forces in Damascus an estimated 6,000 people were killed.[26] For a time the French lost control of parts of Syria during the two year rebellion and ultimately felt obliged to adopt a more conciliatory attitude entering into discussions about a Constituent Assembly. The document produced as a result of negotiations between the rebels and the French "declared Syria (including Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan) to be one and indivisible".[27] The uprising however did not lead to any of the former supporters of a Greater Syria in Palestine resurrecting the demand for re-unification with Syria although money was collected in Palestine for the rebels indicating a degree of sympathy for their cause.[28] Whilst France remained in control of the country the political initiative in Syria was taken by others.

A number of those who fought against the French in 1925–1927 subsequently participated in the Palestinian Revolt of 1936–1939. Fawzi al-Kawukji who played a prominent role in the Syrian Revolt brought a group of volunteers with him in 1936 to join the uprising, declaring himself as its leader.[29] Said al-'As and Sheikh Muhammad

[26] Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 200.
[27] Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War,* 92-93.
[28] Porath, *Emergence,* 203. Porath citing *Filastin* says Amin al-Husseini in fact used the money for his own political ends. *Filastin* of course tended to support the Nashashibis.
[29] Kayyali, 198.

al-Ashmar were two other veterans of the fighting who also travelled to Palestine in the same period. Within Syria however it was the ambitions of Faisal, now King of Iraq, who was pushing forward an agenda based on creating bonds between Syria and Iraq in part as a protection against the perceived ambitions of Turkey towards northern Iraq. Faisal had of course for a brief interlude been the King of Syria in 1920. In later years these ambitions were to strengthen as in some respect they echoed those of the British mentioned in Chapter Two, to secure a safe outlet for oil from Mosul to the Mediterranean Sea.[30] Neither Faisal nor his brother Abdullah however wished to become involved in a strategy incorporating Palestine in a reunification of *Bilad al-Sham*.

The British, the *A'yan* and Comprador Politics

As has been explained an Arab Palestinian national identity had been in the process of formation over a number of decades if not centuries. Political and military resistance to invasion alongside ever more strengthening economic and social links had contributed to the formation of that identity within the Ottoman Empire. Parliamentary representatives, intellectuals and public figures contributed through a developing media to express that identity. New generations and new politically active social layers created by the driving force of changing economic relationships began to change the way the Palestinian identity was expressed.

The fundamental ambiguity and contradiction at the centre of the Balfour Declaration affected British attitudes towards the indigenous community. For their part the *a'yan* too faced a contradiction. From the British perspective the dilemma was that they were attempting to co-opt the *a'yan* to play a role in a project which was fundamentally antipathetic to their aspirations and the achievement of which meant the very negation of their significance. At the same time the British did not wish to provoke a reaction from the *a'yan* and thereby risk jeopardising the incorporation of Palestine into the empire itself. Although the *a'yan* recognised that the Balfour project was contrary to their long-term goals they nevertheless wished to retain their status by demonstrating they were effective interlocutors. The British did not wish to co-opt the *a'yan* and, as they had done elsewhere, create a comprador social layer because their

[30] Yehoshua Porath, *In search of Arab Unity, 1930–1945* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 3.

aim was to displace them and fulfil that end by building a strategic alliance with the Zionist settlers. The harsh realities of the struggle for existence which confronted increasing numbers of Palestinians forced the *a'yan* to resist the enticements of London. Arab Palestinian political leaders were made aware that the base of support that they held would disappear if they failed to challenge the sale of land, the discriminatory employment policies and immigration as the perceived source of all these problems.

The social and economic character of Palestine underwent a dramatic change from the period of the Ottoman Empire to the implementation of the Mandate which was reflected both in the forms of political organisations which arose and the political positions which they subsequently adopted. When the British occupied Palestine two groupings of notables or *a'yan* existed whose prestige was based on distinct sets of functions and relationships. As I mentioned in the previous chapter the first consisted of those families whose prestige was based on the positions they held within society emanating from the structures of the Ottoman apparatus such as the Nashashibis, one of whose members, Raghib al-Nashashibi, had been a member of the Ottoman Parliament and the chief engineer for Jerusalem.[31] This grouping who owed their status much more directly to the Ottoman apparatus was in a more vulnerable position in Mandate Palestine as the basis for their standing within society was removed. These fissures were to a degree mirrored across Palestine in other cities like Nablus and Acre.[32]

The second grouping held positions based on local structures which continued to function under the British Mandate in the spheres of urban and local religious administration. These structures remained in place and continued to function with British administration consent after the Ottoman army had been defeated and links with Constantinople were severed. Those who belonged to the second grouping included members of the Husseini and Khalidi families whose positions and therefore status remained largely intact under the British.[33] This changed circumstance influenced the political attitudes of members and supporters of the two groups of

[31] Ibid., 27.
[32] Ibid., 210.
[33] Muslih, 26. See also Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 26. Porath, *Emergence,* 208

notables' families towards the British which was reflected in the political organisations they established and held allegiance to.

Those, like the Nashashibis, whose status was linked to the Ottoman Empire, believed that Palestine should remain within the framework of a Greater Syria. They were inclined towards a positive relationship with the French believing that this would ensure the best prospect of retaining the unity of *Bilad al-Sham*. The steps taken by the British and the French to enact the Sykes–Picot agreement separating Palestine from the rest of the region swiftly led to a realisation that this was not a viable orientation. Henceforth those associated with this perspective began to base their aspirations for Palestine on a strategy of alliance with the occupiers but this path was strewn with the problems arising from the political realities of the day and most importantly by the response of the mass of Palestinians towards the British and the Zionist settlers.

Those who fell into the second category of *a'yan,* like the Husseini and Khalidi families, whose positions were based on the authority they derived from localised structures adopted a more or less independent position depending on the degree of pressure exerted on them by way of their contact with the local communities in which they were based. These groupings were never rigidly fixed as members of both joined the other group from time to time and advanced the positions of their new grouping against their erstwhile associates.

Samuel remained quite sanguine about the situation when he met the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress on 6th February 1923. The political report by Samuel to the Duke of Devonshire, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, placed before the Cabinet in January 1923 suggested that the programme of boycott agreed in August of the previous year showed little evidence of being pursued. Two subsequent events stimulated optimism amongst those aligned with the majority position at the Fifth Congress in Nablus. The one was the victory of Mustapha Kemal at the battle of Dumlupinar, which constituted the last battle of the Greco-Turkish War and almost coinciding with the dates of the Fifth Palestinian Congress. Samuel suggested that the victory gave confidence to the "Opposition" because it resurrected hope that the Treaty of Sèvres might be renegotiated placing Palestine back under Turkish influence.

The second was that with the change in government in Britain arising from the election of the Conservative Party in October 1922 there was a belief that this might provide an opportunity to change the stance of the British on the Mandate.[34] The latter not such an unreasonable expectation of course given that as mentioned in Chapter Four above the House of Lords had voted in June to refer the Mandate back to the League of Nations.

This combination of factors almost certainly strengthened the position of those amongst the Arab Palestinian population who rejected the proposal for an elected Legislative Council. The positive response to voter registration indicated an enthusiasm to engage in a democratic process. However the overwhelming political rejection of the proposal for the Council bore testimony to the unity of opposition to a measure which was regarded as disingenuous. Samuel prided himself that he had sought to win support for a more accommodating approach without recourse to coercion or bribery.[35] "Not a pound has been spent by the Government on douceurs to individuals or in subventions to newspapers".[36] Despite this disavowal of interference in the political process Samuel sought to encourage the growth of the Moderate Party in order to encourage Arab Palestinian engagement with the Mandate authority. Both he, subsequent High Commissioners and Mandate Administrations, were not averse to seeking to exercise influence in the promotion of individuals, political groupings, organisations and parties whom they thought would be favourably inclined towards a relationship with them.[37] A practice of course also pursued by a variety of Zionist organisations and individuals who tried to cultivate those whom they thought could be encouraged to take a sympathetic position on the Zionist cause and endorse the Balfour project.[38] In the eyes of at least one author "there is no doubt whatsoever – abundant evidence exists in the files of the Zionist Executive – that the majority of the prominent personalities of the opposition benefited from financial support from the Zionists, made use of their help for various personal needs, and, when they came to set up their first political organisation, enjoyed the active support of this element".[39]

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[34] CAB 24/140
[35] CAB 23/24. See FO 371/6371,44 for an Arab view in Beirut paper of British practices.
[36] CAB 24/140. See also: CAB 24/126.
[37] Kayyali, 116.
[38] Kayyali, 133.
[39] Porath, *Emergence,* 213.

After the collapse of the Legislative Council proposal, it was perhaps hardly surprising that Samuel's attempts in 1923 to establish an Advisory Council also came to nothing. In the Arab Palestinian leadership there remained on-going divisions reflected in the preparations and discussions for the Palestinian National Congresses. The splits revealed differences of perspective between two tendencies composed of social groups with divergent though not contradictory objectives. The divisions which had existed around support for the policy of a Greater Syria continued to influence the positions taken by different groups. Those who had originally wished to retain the ties to *Bilad al-Sham* were now deprived by the French of a partner and those holding more local positions not beholden to the Ottoman authorities adopted an orientation more inclined towards independence.

The structure of the Advisory and Legislative Councils which Samuel proposed during his period of office as High Commissioner were based on this fictive narrative of creating an equilibrium between the Arab Palestinian community and the Zionist settlers. The previous chapter indicated that the Arab Palestinian community had a good knowledge and understanding of the Zionist project.

One institution that was established with British endorsement in Palestine was the Supreme Muslim Council which was inaugurated on 9th January 1922 at a meeting in Government House. The Supreme Muslim Council was comprised of members from the four districts of Acre, Nablus, Jaffa and Jerusalem/Gaza, voted on by an electoral college and not selected by the Administration. It was a body which by its very nature was intended to be responsible for the conduct of Muslim affairs, the management of *awqaf* (religious endowments), the appointment of *qadis* (sharia law judges), *waqf* commissioners (office holders responsible for religious endowments), *imams* (leader of mosque) and other responsibilities in the religious field. Al Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husseini was elected its President with the support of forty of the forty-seven members of the Council and held the post from 1922 until 1937. For their part however the Council members played a role in society beyond the boundaries of Islam and acted in a political role in their own capacity sending delegations to parts of the Muslim world to raise funds, working in alliance with the Arab Executive and

attending all of the Palestinian Congresses.[40] Rashid Khalidi in *The Iron Cage* expressed the opinion that "never in the preceding several hundred years of Ottoman rule had such power over religious institutions and the resources they allocated been concentrated in local hands".[41] By legitimating its establishment Samuel had hoped to gain a degree of gratitude for his patronage and perhaps in turn use the body to assess wider community opinion.[42]

Despite the rejection of the proposal in 1923, the idea of a Legislative Council remained an option for the Mandate Administration and at varying times appeared to receive a more favourable consideration from bodies like the Arab Executive, one of whose leading figures, al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini voiced support for the idea in 1925. His backing however reflected the debate amongst members of the Arab Palestinian community further demonstrated by the divisions between the Nashashibi supporters organised in *Al-Hizb al-Watani al-'Arabi al-Filastini*, (Arab National Party) and their allies in *Hizb al-Zurra* (Peasants Party) on the one hand and those supporting the majority in the Arab Executive grouped around Musa Kazem al-Husseini. Those who supported the Nashashibi grouping were sometimes referred to as *Mu'arada* (opposition) whilst those around Husseinis and the Supreme Muslim Council were referred to as the *Majlesiyoun* (coalition).[43] These divisions can be traced back to the historic social and economic divisions between different sections of the *a'yan* groupings each with their own agenda which they used to enhance their own standing in the Arab Palestinian community and with the Mandate Administration.

An initiative to create a Legislative Council mooted in 1929 by the then High Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor came to nothing because of the political situation in Palestine. The area known as the Wailing Wall to Jews and as *Buraq* to Muslims had been contested for a number of years but beginning in 1928 the dispute took on a more serious character as the area which had profound religious significance for both groups effectively became a dispute about national rights. The view of the British Administration had been that the *status quo* should apply allowing Jewish worship at

[40] Ibid. 205.
[41] Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*,56
[42] Porath, *Emergence*, 196.
[43] Hassassian, 47 and 53. Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 86.

the site but not the construction of anything of a permanent nature.[44] The matter remained unresolved however and the area became the centre of a further dispute in 1929.

The events around the Wailing Wall or *Buraq* with Zionist and Arab Palestinian demonstrations and counter demonstrations beginning from 15th August 1929 were to constitute a watershed in the evolution of politics in the country.[45] A procession of Jews though Jerusalem led by Zionists from Tel Aviv culminated in a demonstration at the site with the singing of the Zionist anthem. By way of response around 2,000 Arab Palestinians demonstrated in Jerusalem against what was considered a provocation.[46] In the ensuing days a Jewish youth was stabbed and died a few days later. On 23rd August Muslim villagers converged on Jerusalem responding to what was perceived as an attack on the *Buraq*. The police were unable to disarm those present and news spreading to other parts of Palestine led to attacks on Jews in a number of places. In Hebron 60 Jews were killed and a further 45 in Safad. Altogether 133 Jews were killed and 116 Arab Palestinians with 339 and 232 wounded respectively. The majority of the Arab Palestinians were killed by British forces.[47]

Alongside the killings, attacks and retaliations took place on buildings, neighbourhoods and places associated with one or other of the communities. Whilst the confrontations began around an ostensibly religious focus they took on a more overtly nationalist character. In some areas the attacks by Arab Palestinians were solely against Jews whilst in other areas, predominantly those which were almost exclusively Arab Palestinian, attention had turned against the British or places associated with the administration of the Mandate. Within sections of the Arab Palestinian community a debate began on the events and within the Arab Youth movement for example this led to a split between a majority current who wished to focus the attack against the Jewish community and a minority who wanted to turn

[44] CAB 24/211 Shaw Commission Report. Cmd. 3530
[45] See Cohen, *Year Zero*, for one evaluation of the significance of the events.
[46] Kayyali, 142. Porath, *Emergence,*258. Porath's account of the pre-history surrounding the area suggests that it was venerated more by the Jews in Jerusalem than the Muslims is contentious.
[47] Kayyali, 144.

attention towards the British.[48] The response by the British Administration was sharp and effectively resolved the debate in favour of what had been the minority current.[49]

The British response was swift and, for the time being, decisive. In the following days over 1,000 Arab Palestinians were arrested of whom 26 were sentenced to death. Collective punishments were imposed on those towns and villages considered to have participated in the actions and with the introduction by the British authorities of these punitive measures sections of the *a'yan* leadership disavowed any association with the events, rejecting accusations that they had inaugurated them or played any role in them. At the same time a different dynamic was playing out amongst wider sections of the Arab Palestinian population with the creation of popular committees designed to assist the conduct of armed struggle and an estimated 400 volunteers coming forward to take part. Police reports from Haifa sub-district for 5th October describe arms "being smuggled both from Syria and Transjordan" whilst a secret memorandum from the Office Commanding the Arab Legion (Transjordan) reported meetings of Sheikhs who had discussed "the possibility of marching armed force into Palestine".[50] The report details the spread of "gangs" prepared to take action and the movement of arms to assist the anti-British forces including rifles and ammunition smuggled in via camels and hidden away in the countryside.[51] Perhaps indicating the growing seriousness of these threats is the comment that "Experienced bandits are being consulted as to the best means of carrying out guerrilla warfare, which may commence after the Commission for London arrives and completes its report".[52] The report warns that preparations are being made across Palestine of this kind.

A Secret Intelligence Report of 13th November 1929, received by the British Cabinet, identified a "Boycott Committee" which consisted of "24 members, eleven of whom are stated to be members of the Palestinian Communist Party", the objective

[48] Kayyali, 156. The reality of the developing situation in part lay behind these changes. Kayyali records the actions of the "Green Hand Gang" which began as an anti-Jewish group but then was forced to respond to the British armed forces who pursued them.
[49] Ibid. 145.
[50] CAB 24/207
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid. The Commission referred to is the Shaw Commission appointed in September 1929.

of which, it claimed, was to assassinate any Arab Palestinian who broke the boycott.[53] A further allegation in the report is that the purpose of the organisation was to undertake reprisals against Jews in the event that death sentences were carried out on Arab Palestinians. This latter suggestion seems unlikely in view of the presence of members of the Palestinian Communist Party in the Committee given that Party's opposition to attacks against Jews.

This creation of popular committees constituted a departure from the traditional forms of organising and political representation which had hitherto been the voice of Arab Palestinians. This break with previous traditional hierarchical and hereditary forms of politics was based on layers who were the product of the social differentiation mentioned in the last chapter. The emergence of a significant number of people volunteering to be part of a militant opposition to the British is suggestive of a widespread movement towards a more sharply articulated ant-imperialist perspective and away from a focus which concentrated on the Jewish settler immigrants. Additionally whilst the Palestine Communist Party did not represent a mass organisation it had a singular orientation towards the Arab Palestinian working class and its presence on the Boycott Committee signaled its intent.[54] The importance of the Communist Party should not be exaggerated but its development and the role it played was a small indication that sections of the Arab Palestinian working class felt the need to have their own voice within the struggle for self-determination.

The response of the British to the events surrounding the Wailing Wall or *Buraq* was to set up an inquiry which would examine the riots that took place and report to the Cabinet. The Commission, chaired by Sir Walter Shaw, published their report in April 1930 and found that the Arab Palestinians were the instigators of the events but recognised that, "the fundamental cause of the outbreak was the Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations, and fear for their economic

[53] CAB 24/207.
[54] Musa Budeiri outlines the debates within the Palestine Communist Party and the Comintern about the nature of the 1929 events in particular; the question of the Arabisation of the Party and the orientation it should take towards the situation. See Chapter II of *The Palestine Communist Party.*

future".[55] Whilst largely reiterating the White Paper policy of 1922 the Commission questioned whether the land could support the growing numbers of immigrants without real investment in agriculture in particular.

The upsurge which occurred in 1929 was only reversed by the British mobilisation of considerable resources to effectively impose martial law and initiate a regime of blanket repression in the country. The Officer Commanding the British troops was reported as saying: "The whole country is disaffected, practically everywhere disorder, or threat of disorder, has occurred, and demands for protection, which cannot be ignored, are still being received by me. Originally, it is true, the trouble was between Jews and Arabs, and not against the Government, yet there is clear evidence that Arabs are now becoming antagonistic to authority if only because their designs are being frustrated, and the tendency is growing".[56] Troop and police presence was increased and collective fines were imposed on villages from which those arrested originated.

Two distinct features began to emerge in the uprising. The development of groups prepared to enter into armed confrontation with the British in a systematic fashion and the appearance of popular committees organised across Palestine linked to an anti-Mandate agenda. These features which appeared during the course of the 1929 uprising were to become a characteristic of Palestinian politics from then on.[57] On 17th January 1930 Chancellor, the then High Commissioner, asked the Cabinet to consider amending the Mandate either to place both the Jewish and the Arab Palestinian community on a similar footing or else to increase the military presence in order to protect the Jews from the inevitable attacks by the Arab Palestinian population.[58] This was not something that the Labour Party Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord

[55] CAB 24/211. The Commission report was in essence a reaffirmation of standard British policy with the traditional assertion that the Mandate included a commitment to both the Jewish and the Arab Palestinian communities. Mr. H. Snell MP, a Labour Party politician dissented from the report producing a minority comment arguing that the land was capable of sustaining many more inhabitants and that there should be no limits placed on immigration.
[56] CAB 24/205 The British sent 5 warships, 3 battalions of infantry, 1 squadron of armed cars, 2½ sections of armed cars (RAF), 1 squadron and 1 Flight (RAF).
[57] Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion,* 277. The twin developments of anti-British armed struggle and mass popular campaigning were reflected for example in the July 1931 decision of the Nablus Muslim Christian Association to change its name to the Patriotic Arab Association (*al-Jam'iyyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Wataniyyah)* and to convene a national conference to discuss strategy. This took place against the express wishes of the Arab Executive Committee.
[58] CO 733/190/1.

Passfield, was prepared to agree to however.

The sharpening of political differentiation, from the politics of the *a'yan* dominated Arab Executive Committee and the Supreme Muslim Council, was evident by the appearance of new political parties which adopted a more explicit anti-British position and broke with their exclusively anti-Zionist and anti-*Yishuv* stand. Sir Arthur Wauchope replaced Chancellor in October of 1931, a period shaped by the events around the Wailing Wall which had resulted in both an International Commission of Inquiry conducted by the League of Nations and the emergence of a more explicitly anti-British politics as reflected in the positions adopted by bodies like the *Istiqlal* Party. The *Istiqlal* Party, founded on 4th August 1932, took a position of intransigent opposition to serving on any bodies established by the British and in September 1932 persuaded the Arab Executive to adopt a similar stance despite the inclinations of supporters of the Mufti and the Nashashibi faction.[59] For their part the Zionist Executive, which had already taken a decision in August 1930 that they would not participate in the Legislative Council then being floated by Chancellor, maintained their opposition.[60]

A further attempt to establish a Legislative Council took place in December 1935 but as with the previous effort in 1929 this was also in a political context with very different characteristics than that in which the initial proposals had taken place when Samuel was High Commissioner. Preliminary consideration of the proposal was aired in a "Very Secret" Memorandum written by the Conservative party politician Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Secretary of State for the Colonies on 28th March 1934.[61] He himself had wished "that the proposal had never been made" but he accepted that it was as a result of undertakings given to the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission that it had to be considered. His assessment was that based on the assumption that the High Commissioner would have the last word on any decisions he saw no real objection but he remained fairly sceptical as to the advantages of establishing it. "The Arabs are very insistent that we should carry out these undertakings while at present the Jews are opposed to the setting up of a Legislative

[59] Kayyali, 167.
[60] Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion,* 144.
[61] CAB 24/248.

Council. … I have made it plain that such a Council could have no executive authority and that the power of the High Commissioner to ensure the passage of measures which he thinks essential remain unimpaired, and that he would, of course, have the power of veto, which exists in all Colonies. Provided the High Commissioner has these powers, I do not myself attach much importance to an official majority".[62]

His discussion with "several influential Arabs" led him to believe that the Council could be established without too much aggravation although his description of the body differs so little from previous attempts that it is difficult to believe that he had any greater expectation of it being set up than any other previous initiative. According to Cunliffe-Lister's report the "Jews (were) opposed to the setting up of a Legislative Council". It was a matter of the British being obliged to go through their paces. Whatever the sincerity of the British the proposal for the Legislative Council went ahead only to be met with rebuttal from another quarter. In response to the uprisings against the British in 1936 the House of Commons, at the instigation of the pro-Zionist members of Parliament defeated the Government proposal to establish the Legislative Council.[63]

Whilst all these initiatives of course took place in differing circumstances the Arab Palestinian verdict on each occasion was a clear rebuttal of structures which they perceived as thwarting their progress towards self-determination. Sections of the leadership, principally, though not exclusively, those associated with the Nashashibi led political current, repeatedly gave their support to the proposals in the first instance. On each occasion Arab Palestinian popular opinion resulting from political events obliged the leaderships to repudiate the idea of a Legislative Council or forced them to turn away from it.

The British were capable of creating alliances with a local hereditary ruling class as they were to do in Mesopotamia and Transjordan but their objective for Palestine was the creation of a national homeland for the Jews. Palestine fitted into neither the comprador model nor did it follow a traditional pattern of colonisation. The British having decided that they wished Palestine to be a strategic component of

[62] Ibid.
[63] Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion,* 155.

the imperial architecture they did not want however to enter into a relationship with the dominant ruling class group the *a'yan* because that was in contradiction with the objectives. The fulfilment of the obligations the British had agreed in the Balfour Declaration was fundamentally antithetical to an approach which would include the indigenous ruling class in any form of privileged relationship with the imperial power. To do so would, in reality, have eliminated the Zionist project as an option.

The British intention and the trajectory of its political and economic policies was to establish a clientelistic coterie from within the Zionist Movement well disposed towards London and willing to protect British interests. Uniquely however this group did not constitute a hereditary ruling class but were settler-colonists with divergent social roots who at this stage were by no means a homogenous social entity. Some of those who arrived in Palestine did so with their own capital with which to launch enterprises and were not dependent on the British for investment in the companies they set up. The *a'yan* group for its part, having seen its own aspirations to remain within *Bilad al Sham* dismissed by the rigid implementation of the Sykes-Picot agreement, were, despite their willingness to play the role, rejected as a group suitable to and capable of fulfilling the role which the British intended.

The world economy and the development of politics in Palestine

The reasons for the apparent political hiatus between 1925 and 1928 have been ascribed to numerous causes. The decline in immigration, the effects of an economic boom in the United States of America and the difficulties being faced by the Zionist Organisation itself. In the period prior to the Wall Street crash of 24th October 1929 the stock market had doubled in value and the apparent boom in the United States economy no doubt acted as a magnet for immigrants. Paradoxically one might argue that the crash which took place in the United States economy served to further illustrate its increasingly hegemonic position in the world since its effects were global.[64]

[64] Angus Maddison has explained that the far greater proportion of investment in the USA in fields of research and development led to much higher levels of return on capital in the country in comparison with Western Europe for example. This may have contributed to the economic development of the *Yishuv*. Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001), 103.

During this period the British were also pursing their own economic goals related to their interests in oil in the Near East and the advantages afforded by their presence in Palestine to secure a port terminal for their shipping in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.[65] The *new*-imperialist ambition to gain a dominating position in the oil industry in the region remained as fervent as ever. The British and French economic rivalry remained as strong as it had been throughout the negotiations over the demarcation of spheres of influence between Syria and Palestine and the government played a key role in liaising with the Iraqi Petroleum Company throughout the discussions on this. It was a matter which was of great interest to the Cabinet, for military and commercial reasons, potentially benefitting the oil industry and companies involved in the railway industry, whilst possibly alleviating unemployment amongst certain groups of skilled workers.[66]

The period roughly coincides with the *Fourth Aliyah* (1924–1929) which saw a large increase in Jewish immigration, largely composed of small traders and middlemen driven out of Poland, especially from Warsaw and Łódż, by anti-Jewish legislation in the country. Additionally, the numbers increased because the United States of America placed tight restrictions on those allowed entry on the basis of the country of origin.[67] "Only about one-third of those who came in the middle of the 1920s were *halutzim* who wanted to become manual labourers." In the eyes of sections of the Zionist labour movement they were regarded as "capitalists without capital". They settled in the towns and the capital they had, tended to be invested in "land speculation and building, and only to a small extent into factories and the expansion of agriculture".[68] Unemployment grew in the *Yishuv* and emigration began to increase as a consequence. The crisis within the *Yishuv* resulted in 8,000 becoming unemployed and confidence in the Zionist project diminished inside Palestine.

The exacerbations arising from the intensifying international economic crisis coupled with the problems developing within the *Yishuv* contributed to a sharpening political debate within the community. Acute differences of perspective arose within

[65] CAB 24/205
[66] Ibid.
[67] Porath, *Emergence,* 18. In the three years from 1924 to 1926 the numbers of immigrants was more than double that of the preceding three years.
[68] Laqueur, *A History of Zionism,* 315.

the Zionist political movement beginning from around 1925 onwards which ultimately led to the split in 1933 when Jabotinsky left to form a new organisation. Those, like Ben Gurion, who built their political base in the more cohesive working class sectors of society were to succeed in winning the majority support in the Zionist Congress. The *Histadrut* acting as employer and provider of social support grew throughout the period developing their corporatist approach linking all strata of the *Yishuv* into a singular nationalist ideology.

The period of relative quietude of course did not mean that the issues or concerns which the Arab Palestinian Congresses had given voice to ceased. Land sales continued throughout the period with occasional fluctuations. The area sold in one year more than doubling a previous year's transactions.[69] The area of land purchased from the non-Palestinian big landowners in the years from 1920 to 1927 constituted an average of 80% of all sales compared to 16% from big Arab Palestinian landowners and just under 3% from *fellahin*. This pattern changed from 1928 onwards as sales by the last two groups increased. Sales by big Arab Palestinian landowners doubled and those by *fellahin* increased six-fold.[70] This pattern was a consequence of a combination of a severe fall in agricultural production due to a variety of plagues, the inability to compete with foreign imported crops and the growing indebtedness of the *fellahin*.[71]

Those *fellahin* displaced by the sales of lands on the coastal plains, in the Jezreel Valley and elsewhere were forced to move to the urban areas in the search for work, which, when they found it, more often than not was casual in nature. Whilst in certain areas of employment more directly under the control of the Mandate authority, like the Railways, Arab Palestinian workers could receive the same wages as their Jewish counterparts, in other areas where the employer was pro-Zionist pressures were brought to bear to discriminate in favour of Jewish workers.

The accumulative impact on the economy of the Mandate Administration's implementation of the Balfour Declaration which, initially, was more tangible in the

[69] Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion,* 82.
[70] Ibid. All figures based on calculations using statistics sourced by Porath.
[71] Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, 142.

rural communities, was now being experienced with ever increasing severity in the urban sector. The symbiotic relationship between the urban and the rural took on added significance in the social realm. The relatively recent but accelerating displacement of *fellahin* forcing them into the towns and cities added another dimension to the dynamic of that relationship which was to surface in the political sphere as will be examined later. Greater numbers of Jewish immigrants were also gravitating towards the towns which because of the segregationist employment policies coupled with a separationist practice in the sphere of workplace organisations created major obstacles in the way of developing a unified trade union movement.

Farmers and *fellahin* were vulnerable to the swings in the prices of products on the world market as a result of which indebtedness became widespread. In 1930 the "bulk of the wheat crop … was mortgaged for debt payment to moneylenders, many of whom were grain merchants".[72] In order to survive and prepare crops for the coming year they were forced into borrowing money, frequently from the large landowners who charged exorbitant interest on the money they lent. In some cases money was loaned at 30% and above and selling land may have seemed the only resort. Other Arab Palestinians acted as brokers facilitating the sale of lands. Yehoshua Porath states in *From Riots to Rebellion* that amongst those who sold land or brokered sales were, "people from varying strata: opposition members of the SMC and of the AE, party leaders representatives to the National Congress and prominent members and activists of the MCA and other nationalist organisations, Mayors, notables and the common people".[73] Those close to the Nashashibi-led oppositionists were more involved though this activity was not exclusive to them.

This fracture between the subaltern embourgeoisified landowners and their increasingly proletarianised former tenants contributed to making the creation of a united nationalist movement more difficult. In an economic sense it could be said that both groups were placed in a position of precariousness. The *a'yan* who dominated the political organisations which had developed in Palestine wished to end the sale of lands in order to preserve their privileges rather than to displace the economic and social relationships which had previously existed. In the policies adopted by the

[72] Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine,* 143.
[73] Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion,* 86.

Congresses they failed to elaborate a programme for the land which might have contributed to the formation of a national movement which could mobilise all layers of society by at least guaranteeing security of tenancy for the *fellahin*.[74]

Arab Palestinian political factionalism and Zionist sectarianism

Although there were no Palestinian National Congresses between June 1923 and June 1928 it would be an error to view this as a period of political inactivity. During this period political parties were formed which reflected different perspectives and components of society. This change marked a further transition from the hereditary politics of the *a'yan* to forms of organisation which reflected social interests albeit one which was in part abetted by the intervention of the British and the Zionists. The hierarchical social relations inherited from the Ottoman period and still to some extent preserved in Palestinian society were challenged by the changing nature of economic relations. The interpersonal relationships in the old economic forms were broken by the newer alienating ones associated with commodity production and the marketisation of society. In the absence of the Congresses, which was a consequence of an inability to reconcile the two dominant sections of the nationalist movement the *Majleyisoun* and the *Mu'arada*, debates over strategy took place within these separate groups. Perhaps the most polarised positions in this debate were evident in the discussions within the Arab Executive itself, where the failure of the lobbying strategy which had been adopted to influence the British, was now being challenged.

At the meeting on 26th October 1923, just a few months after the Sixth Congress, a debate took place in the Executive Committee on strategy and tactics. There was agreement to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with the Government and opposition to the proposal for the creation of an Arab Agency, however there was not agreement about what tactics should be adopted to resist the British. Mohamed Ali Eltaher, secretary of the Palestine Committee in Egypt, favoured a revolt but in the

[74] There is an interesting parallel here with the 1798 United Irishmen Rising against the British in which a similar division took place between social layers. One of the reasons for defeat of the movement according to D. R. O'Connor Lysaght was the "dissensions within the movement between the wealthier bourgeoisie, who were prepared to threaten, but not fight, and who were the official leaders, and the professional revolutionaries (like Wolfe Tone), the peasants and artisan who were less squeamish." D. R. O'Connor Lysaght, *The Republic of Ireland* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1970), 14.

opinion of Musa Kazem at that time such a step would be counterproductive.[75] Perhaps because he was based in Cairo, Ali Eltaher's opinions failed to carry the day but they were nevertheless indicative of developments which were to surface later.

The Sixth Palestinian Congress was divided over a number of issues. Just four months after it had taken place and one month after the Executive had debated the issue of intensifying the opposition to the British, those who supported the Nashashibi-led current took steps to establish a political party. In reality this was the culmination of a process which had been developing for a number of years.[76] *Al Hizb al-Watani al-'Arabi al-Filastini* (Palestinian Arab National Party) held its first Conference on 9th and 10th November 1923 electing an eight member Executive Committee with Sheikh Sulayman al-Taji al-Faruqi as President and Fakhri Nashashibi, playing a leading organising role. Fakhri, who was the nephew of Raghib, the Mayor of Jerusalem, sought financial backing from Zionists on the grounds that its platform would accommodate to the creation of a homeland for the Jews but he did not receive it.

A few months later *Hizb al-Zurra* (Party of Farmers) which, quite frequently, aligned itself with *Al-Hizb al-Watani al-'Arabi al-Filastini*, was established in 1924 with the support of Zionist funding. The Zionists supported such initiatives to encourage a more sympathetic approach by the Arab Palestinian leadership for the creation of a homeland for the Jews. The party was formed in Nazareth, Nablus-Jenin and Hebron regions and was based on sheikhs who were influential in their villages. The problems which rural communities were facing were becoming more difficult through the 1920s as the report of Sir John Hope-Simpson in 1930 indicated.[77] The issues of concern were not only those caused by the sale of lands to Zionist organisations but the difficulties Arab Palestinian farmers faced due to the punitive interest rates on loans to capitalise their farms and the fluctuations in the market price of their produce.[78] The increase in sales of land by owner-occupiers in the early 1930s was an indication of this growing problem.

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[75] Kayyali, 130. Mohamed Ali Eltaher was a prolific newspaper publisher in Cairo. See (http://eltaher.org/index_en.html). Records stored at the Library of Congress.
[76] Porath, *Emergence,* 215.
[77] CAB 24/215 Sir John Hope Simpson, *Palestine. Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development,* 1st October 1930, Cmd. 3686.
[78] Porath, *In search of Arab Unity, 1930–1945*, 114.

The seeming inability of the existing political leaderships to wring any significant concessions from the British led to the sharpening of divide between the two dominant trends within Palestinian nationalism and also to divisions within the majority current led by the Arab Executive. It was perhaps in response to this situation that the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) began to appear as a political force, though by definition it could not represent the whole of Arab Palestinian opinion and it too was riven by the same political problems that beset the Congress. The situation was further exacerbated by the actions of *Al-Jam'iyyah al-Islamiyya al-Wataniyyah* (National Muslim Association) which sought to discredit the Sixth Congress in its protest to the High Commissioner arguing that that it did not represent the Arab people.[79] A confessional politics would not bring about a unified perspective since Christian Palestinians would inevitably be marginalised if not alienated.[80]

Attempts were made to reconcile the two wings of the nationalist movement, including an attempt to convene a Seventh Palestinian Congress in 1924. To prepare for the Congress a joint group made up of four members of the Arab Executive and four representatives of the opposition was set up. One of the demands which proved the breaking point however was that the Nashashibi opposition dissolve its political party and unify with those who supported the Arab Executive. Their allies in *Hizb al-Zurra however* refused to endorse such a move and the proposal for the Congress was blocked. Notwithstanding these differences a unified display of opposition to British policies was possible as exemplified by the strike on 25th March 1925 in protest at the arrival of Balfour in Palestine.[81] A further attempt to convene the Congress took place in 1926 and again in 1927. Factional divisions within the opposition group provoked by an element of regionalism proved the major stumbling block as various individuals refused to collaborate in the venture.[82]

When the Seventh Palestinian Congress was eventually convened in Jerusalem in June 1928 there was a notable shift in its composition from previous congresses. Those who supported the development of a more collaborative line towards the

[79] Ibid. 214.
[80] Kayyali, 137. Porath, *Emergence,* 216.
[81] Kayyali, 134. Porath, *Emergence,* 250. In an effort to display unity to the British the President of the National Party acted as the chief spokesperson of the delegation which met the Colonial Secretary, L. S. Amery in 1925.
[82] Porath, *Emergence*. 252.

Mandate authorities were larger in number and Congress decisions, refraining from an explicit rejection of the Balfour Declaration, also reflected that view. Those in the northern regions who were more supportive of the Nashashibis and some of the Christians who had been alienated by what they viewed as hostility from some Muslims came together to support the call for the establishment of a Legislative Council. The Congress elected a new 48 member Executive Committee composed of two Muslim delegates from each of the sub-districts, one being from the camp of the SMC and one from their opponents. In addition there would be twelve Christian representatives.[83]

The positions adopted however did not meet with universal approval. Inside the Congress a group of younger delegates led by Hamdi al-Husseini from Gaza demanded that the Congress call for self-determination in the context of a Pan-Arabist orientation.[84] They took the view that the decisions of the Congress fell short of the goals that should be set and they were not alone in having this critical attitude. A few years later the position they took was echoed by the fledgling Palestinian Communist Party which characterised the Arab Executive and the Seventh Congress as "having entered on the road of traitorous competition with the Zionists in bargaining for concessions from British imperialism".[85]

The British were aware of the sharpening orientation towards an explicitly anti-British stance by increasing sections of the Arab Palestinian community. Amongst some British politicians there was a recognition that this position resulted from their adherence to the Balfour Declaration. In the memorandum "Palestine" mentioned above, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, warned the Government that "Arab hostility today is not merely hostility to the Jews, but hostility towards the British Government as the authors of immigration".[86] It was clear to him that the majority of *fellahin* displaced by land purchases in fact finished

[83] Ibid., 253.
[84] Ibid., 254.
[85] Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party,* 46.
[86] CAB 24/248. Cunliffe-Lister also observed in his Memorandum that "If the Arabs were cleverer propagandists, they could put their case against exclusive Jewish employment in a very telling way. They could say that the charge against Hitler is that he had refused Jews employment in Germany; is it reasonable that Jewish immigrants to Palestine, entering in increasing numbers, should refuse employment to the Arab population?"

up unemployed and that this could not be resolved as long as all employment vacancies were only to be filled by new settler-colonists. His view was that only by the Zionists abandoning their employment policy could a basis be found to resolve the opposition to Jewish immigration expressed by the Arab Palestinian population.

The rise of Nazism and its impact on Palestine

The demographics of Palestine were to change dramatically in the 1930s. The rise to power of the Nazis in Germany led to a dramatic increase in the numbers of Jews fleeing persecution, and the numbers of those seeking to emigrate to Palestine increased. Once again, as in 1924, the United States of America and other Western European countries imposed quotas which had the affect of limiting the numbers of Jews they would permit entry to their respective countries. Whilst the criteria used were not always explicitly anti-Jewish, nevertheless, the formulae used impacted disproportionately on Jews seeking refuge from the Nazis and anti-Semitism. Approximately 40,000 Jews fled Germany, between 1933 and 1935 and a further 110,000 fled Poland and other central European countries increasing the size of the *Yishuv* to 443,000 or 30% of the total population of Palestine.[87]

In the main the new immigrants settled in the urban areas increasing the size of cities like Tel Aviv. According to the official statistics, designating any Jewish immigrant with more than £1,000 as "capitalists", those so labelled increased as a proportion of immigrants to Palestine.[88] The amount of capital invested in Palestine almost tripled between 1930 and 1939 and the value of production increased nearly fourfold between 1930 and 1938.[89] This strengthened the bourgeoisie within the *Yishuv* and with the increasingly tight application of the policy of *avodha ivrit* this led to a growth of the Jewish working class and a rise in unemployment amongst the Palestinian working class, many of whom had lost their lands as the increased inflow of capital also contributed in part, to an expansion in the purchase of land.[90] Although initially the policy adopted by bodies like the Jewish National Fund and the Zionist

[87] Weinstock, *Zionism*, 134. See also Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1985). Appendix 7. "Jewish Legal Immigration to Palestine, 19331940.
[88] Ibid., 137.
[89] Ibid., 144-145.
[90] Ibid., 144.

settlers had favoured the purchase of large tracts of lands this pattern began to change. Initial sales of lands, as we have noted above, were carried out by absentee landlords like the Sursuqs, but with the reduction of land available from this source, purchasers turned to buying smaller areas of land owned by Palestinian small farmers who had become increasingly indebted because of the fall in the price of their crops.

This economic and social shift impacted on the Palestinians who became much more conscious of the changing demographics and the potential consequences for their political goal of achieving self-determination. The changes inevitably encouraged the Zionists to put pressure on the British in pursuit of more favourable policies and for the establishment and recognition of proto-state institutions such as the *Haganah*. These developments inevitably were to increase the anxiety of the Palestinians that their chance of achieving their goals were threatened and no doubt contributed significantly to the search for radical solutions to the problem.

Palestine and the Imperialist Rivalry re-born

Whilst the significance of inter-imperialist rivalry as a factor influencing British policy in the Near East fluctuated it did not recede entirely since some countries retained territorial ambitions which they did not feel had been resolved by the negotiating process. Some of the victors were discontented with the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference and subsequent treaties because they felt that they had not benefitted to a level commensurate with their efforts in the war. Of course in the years ahead those who were defeated, like Germany, came to take courses of action which were to impact greatly on the future of Palestine.

British desire to maintain a hegemonic position in relation to Palestine remained as determined as ever. Safe passage for British ships to India coupled with the growing importance of oil discovered in Iraq and elsewhere put pressure on the Whitehall Government to view Palestine as of continuing importance in their imperial plans. Italian ambitions to expand beyond Libya into Ethiopia and parts of Somaliland posed the kind of the threats which had in the past been forthcoming from the Ottoman-German alliance. In the early 1930s Germany had not adopted an aggressive

attitude towards the British nor exhibited any expansionist ambitions towards the colonies of East Africa. On the other hand the British were concerned about the plans of Italy in Africa.

Oil remained a major factor governing British policies towards the Arab regions. The British navy in 1930 demanded that, in order to service all vessels, a year's supply of oil should be stockpiled.[91] The discovery of reserves of oil in Iraq added importance to the building of the Baghdad–Haifa Railway which would facilitate the construction and military protection of a pipeline linked to the Mediterranean Sea. Old rivalries were viewed as a possible challenge to the operation however with France suspected of harbouring ambitions towards Haifa if the pipeline were to be built. The project was regarded as very important because it had the additional advantage that the costs of shipping incurred by travelling through the Suez Canal could be greatly reduced.[92]

The British Government faced a number of challenges arising from events in the wider world. The Italian fascist Government of Benito Mussolini had, by 1934, established itself in Libya and was in the process of expanding its colonisation, developing roads and rail links to the Egyptian border.[93] Thousands of Italian settler colonists had moved into the country and, with subsidies from the state, begun to farm. Additionally, resurrecting late nineteenth century Italian policy, Mussolini had the ambition of gaining control over Ethiopia and Somalia. The British made several attempts to negotiate an agreement between the Italian Government and Emperor Haile Selassie but these ended in failure and in late December 1935 the Italian army launched an invasion of Ethiopia.[94] The British viewed this as a further threat to the safe passage of their vessels to India since shipping passing through the Red Sea might become vulnerable to interception by the Italian forces able to close off the seaway at its southern end. Seen as a further provocation by the British the Italian government had been in some discussions with sections of the Zionists and printed anti-British

[91] CAB 24/215. The importance of oil to the navy had increased significantly since Churchill's decision in 1912 to convert all shipping from coal to oil.
[92] CAB 24/202
[93] The fascist government of Mussolini came to power in October 1922. Mussolini was expelled from the Italian Socialist Party because of his opposition to the party's neutrality during the war.
[94] The most significant was the Hoare–Laval Pact which negotiated concessions to the Italians and was universally denounced as a betrayal of the Ethiopian Government

material which was widely distributed throughout Palestine.[95] Mussolini and not Germany was seen as the threat to the British Empire at this time, since Hitler was for much of the 1930s seeking to establish an alliance with London.[96]

In Egypt in November 1935, there was mounting pressure through mass demonstrations calling for independence which led to the election of the *Wafd* party. Any move by the Egyptians, agitating for independence from the British, towards linking up with the Italian regime in Libya would have been considered another critical threat to Britain's access to and control over the Suez Canal.[97] As a consequence the British were forced into a round of negotiations on the future of the country seeking to pacify Egyptian demands for greater independence. In Syria the French were under pressure in January 1936 from a similar wave of militant demonstrations and a two month long general strike which obliged them to enter into negotiations with the rebels. The situation had another dimension from a Palestinian perspective with the proposal from King Abdullah that he become King of a unified Syria and Transjordan. The suggestion was modified to distinguish between French and British spheres of influence but nevertheless had the potential to destabilise the political situation in Mandate Palestine.[98]

In addition to these concerns about the political problems of areas surrounding Palestine the British of course were still focussed on their wider imperial objectives in the economic sphere. During World War One the British had been preoccupied by the thoughts of possible Russian ambitions towards Persia and Afghanistan and whilst that concern was altered by the advent of the 1917 Soviet Revolution it nevertheless remained a matter of importance to the British because of India. In December 1934 the British Cabinet considered a Memorandum from Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, outlining discussions which had taken place with the Government of

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[95] Weinstock, *Zionism: False Messiah*, 150. Weinstock points out that Mussolini met the Revisionist wing of Zionism and Chaim Weizmann who followed his September 1926 encounter with him by a series of further meetings. The first Revisionist Congress was held in Milan in 1932 with the approval of the fascist review *Oriente Moderno*.
[96] CAB 24/262. See also: Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question*, 72 ff. Hitler's focus was on Europe and seeing the virtual failure of British attempts to restrain Mussolini in Ethiopia encouraged him to occupy the Saar. His position replicated that adopted by the German Government during World War One and the *Drang nach Osten* policy.
[97] Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War,* 58. Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies,* 235.
[98] Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity: 1930–1946.*

Afghanistan. The document reassured the Cabinet that the Afghan Government were well-disposed towards the British and that there was "no present danger of their adopting a pro-Russian policy or entering into any unwise commitment to Russia as a result either of Soviet threats or cajolery".[99]

British Commissions and Reports

Following the events in 1929 the Government established a number of bodies to report on what had happened and to take a wider view of the situation. Sir Walter Shaw was asked to report on what had happened and why, but alongside his Commission the Government agreed that a detailed report be made on the land situation and the likely impact of continued immigration.[100] The report published in October 1930 was written by Sir John Hope Simpson and concluded that action had to be taken to address the problem of landless Arab families. A survey of "104 representative villages" concluded that 29.4% of the families having lost their lands, existed by working "in the village or outside or in other ways" and that if this percentage were extrapolated to the whole of the country it would be equivalent to around 25,572 families.[101] "The condition of the Arab *fellah* is little if at all superior to what it was under the Turkish regime".[102] Hope Simpson's report was referred to a sub-committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Philip Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the newly formed National Government, which reviewed the costing of its proposals. Snowden's group, the Committee on Policy in Palestine, endorsed much of what Hope Simpson had highlighted and, in its second report, proposed that "the Palestine Administration should take immediate steps (a) to provide by means of legislation that during the next 5 years no further parcels of land shall be acquired by Jewish organisations, in order to give time for the assimilation of the landless Arabs under the policy which we recommend, and (b) to restrict the immigration of Jews to such numbers as can be settled on the reserve lands, or can confidently be expected to be absorbed into industrial occupation". The group warned that "If this is not done,

[99] CAB 23/80.
[100] CAB 24/211, Shaw Commission Report. Cmd. 3530
[101] CAB 24/125. The average family was estimated to have 5.5 members so this figure equates to 140, 646 of a total of 478,390 people living in the rural areas.
[102] CAB 24/215, Cmd. 3686

we fear that at the end of the five years the position will be no better, and possibly even worse, than it is at present".[103]

Lord Passfield, the Colonial Secretary, produced a White Paper at the same time as the Hope Simpson report but it was in many ways a reiteration of the 1922 Churchill White Paper and the views expressed in the Haycraft Report. On 31st March 1930, a delegation led by Musa Kazem and including Hajj Amin and Ragheb Nashashibi had met with the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and Lord Passfield. Passfield's White Paper reflected the concerns that had been expressed there and was submitted to the Cabinet with the Hope Simpson report appended. The White Paper echoed too the views of the Shaw Commission arguing that it was essential to look at "the three problems of development, immigration and unemployment".[104] He sought to put forward a scheme which he believed would demonstrate that the Government intended to treat both communities equally and this was coupled with a proposal for a Legislative Council.[105]

The White Paper produced a strong reaction amongst Zionists with Chaim Weizmann, along with others, tendered their resignations from the Jewish Agency, on the grounds that Passfield was taking the view that the establishment of a homeland for the Jews was completed.[106] In January 1931 however, his recommendations were effectively repudiated by the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald in a letter to Chaim Weizmann. Even though the letter bore MacDonald's name it was the product of discussions between civil servants and members of the Jewish Agency.[107] MacDonald in what he asserted was "the authoritative interpretation of the White Paper", pointed out that the Passfield White Paper was based on Churchill's document of 1922 and that its commitment was to "the Jewish people and not only to the Jewish population of Palestine".[108] Between 1922 and 1931 Jewish immigration had increased by 110% and in the eyes of Arab Palestinians constituted a major threat to their national aspirations. The letter refused to acknowledge the political rights of the Arab Palestinians and was read by them as a further encouragement to immigrants as it

[103] CAB 24/215
[104] Ibid.
[105] Lesch, *Arab Politics,* 56.
[106] Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 492.
[107] Ibid., 493.
[108] Lacqueur and Rubin, eds, *The Israel–Arab Reader*, 37.

specified that "the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on land remains a positive obligation of the mandate and it can be fulfilled without prejudice to the rights and positions of other sections of the population of Palestine".[109] MacDonald's letter is effusive in its praise for the Jewish Agency but goes beyond that stating "His Majesty's Government also recognizes the value of the services of labor and trade union organisations in Palestine, to which they desire to give every encouragement".[110] MacDonald emphasised his endorsement of the employment strategy adopted by the Jewish Agency stating that the "principle of preferential, and indeed exclusive, employment of Jewish labor by Jewish organizations is a principle which the Jewish Agency are entitled to affirm." This constituted perhaps the most explicit declaration of support by any British Government for the policy of *avoda ivrit* and the discriminatory policies adopted by the *Histadrut*. MacDonald's letter became known by the Arab Palestinian community as the "Black Letter".[111]

The Shaw Report, the Hope Simpson Report and the Passfield White Paper had attempted to address the question of the economic problems of the Arab Palestinian population by proposing to restore some degree of compensation in respect to the rural population in particular. The "disturbances of August 1929" had prompted the government to take a detailed look at the situation in Palestine.[112] The White Paper identified "land, immigration and unemployment" as the three topics which were "interrelated, with political as well as economic aspects" and solving these questions was seen as the key to "peace and prosperity in Palestine".[113] The solutions offered by the British were continuously couched in terms of managing the flow of immigration and offering some degree of remedial action to improve the plight of landless *fellahin* and their families. There was no recognition that these intractable problems were a consequence of the contradictory terms of the Balfour Declaration and the policies introduced by the British which were destroying the economic and social relations that had been present before their arrival. The fundamental political question of what would be the post-Mandate form of government in an independent Palestine was

[109] Ibid., 39.
[110] Ibid., 38.
[111] Kayyali, 162.
[112] CAB 24/215
[113] Ibid.

seldom if ever addressed. Unemployment was also widespread in the Arab Palestinian community.[114] The reports to the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission echoed the position that there would be no change in respect of immigration which would continue to be governed by the 1922 White Paper's formula of the "economic capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals".[115]

In subsequent years there were further Commissions and reports. None of them succeeded in addressing the essential political issues nor resolving the economic ones. The contradiction that was at the centre of the Balfour Declaration had practical repercussions on the policies adopted in the development of the Palestinian economy which as the White Paper had stated were interrelated and bore political effects too. The economic plight of the Arab Palestinian community worsened between 1929–1931 as world commodity prices tumbled and farmers received less and less for their crops resulting in an increase in the numbers of landless labourers taking refuge in the towns and cities hoping to find work. At the same time there was an expansion of the Jewish population, overtaking in some urban areas the numbers of Arab Palestinian inhabitants as increasing numbers of refugees fled the growing anti-Semitism in Germany and parts of Eastern Europe. The apparent inability or reluctance of sections of the leadership of the Arab Palestinian society to challenge British policies contributed to the emergence and strengthening of currents which, having concluded that to achieve self-determination required a direct confrontation with the Mandate forces, adopted a much more explicitly anti-British stance.

This accelerating radicalisation of opposition to the British administration was not confined to the existing traditional political formations. As we have observed from the earliest period of the British occupation new social layers came into activity. In a repetition of patterns evident in the 1920s, women began to play an active role in the campaigning calling a conference in 1929 and in April 1933 a demonstration in protest at the visit of Lord Allenby. Members of the Arab Women's Association (later to be called the Arab Women's Union) built new branches moving out from Jerusalem

[114] Exact statistics on unemployment for the Arab Palestinian community are not easily available but there are accounts in the Hope Simpson Report of 2,050 unemployed Arab Palestinian workers in Haifa alone and that there were large numbers of applicants for a job in Ramleh.
[115] http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/AA1CA3C5176A0915052565D7005C1BC3 (accessed 1st October 2015)

to engage women in Nablus and elsewhere.[116] They had connections with women's movements in other parts of the world. They were not immune however from the differences experienced in other organisations which saw the rift between the *Majlesiyoun* and the *Mu'arada.*

Youth organisations began to expand. The first Congress of Arab Youth was held in Jaffa in January 1932 electing Issa al-Bandak as the President of its National Executive Committee. Youth once again came to the fore in setting up of National Committees which sought to coordinate the resistance against the British forces. In the expansion of youth organisations new bodies were established, some of which like the Youth Troops were influenced by fascist youth groups.[117] The Arab Young Men's Association, (*Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al'Arab)* was established in July 1931 at a congress in Nablus attended by over 300. Some advocated military training for the Boy Scout troops.[118] A feature of the growth of these bodies and the emergence of more youthful activists was that they were frequently from cities other than Jerusalem.[119]

The plight of landless *fellahin* and unemployed workers began to have greater significance in the development of the political discourse in Palestine. This led to the increasing involvement of those who had come from the ranks of the landless *fellahin* and the unemployed workers in political activity alongside the developing new middle class social layers.[120] It also manifested itself in the emergence of more socially conscious politics in some areas. An example of the awareness of what was taking place in Palestinian society was reflected in the views expressed by at least one of the new political formations the *Istiqlal* (Independence) party which took an explicitly militant stance. The new party considered the failure to date to be the product of the

[116] Fleischmann, *The Nation and its "New" Women.*
[117] This phenomenon of youth groups adopting some of the appearances of fascist youth organisations was replicated in the ranks of the Revisionist Zionists as well.
[118] Porath, *Riots to Rebellion,* 120.
[119] Kimmerling and Migdal, 89, 92.
[120] The composition of those who took part in the 1935 and 1936 armed revolts against the British included former railway workers, teachers, merchants, clerks at the Jerusalem Shar'i Court, labourers, porter in Haifa Harbour and members of urban notable families. (Porath, *Riots to Rebellions,* Appendix B. Officers of the Revolt).

"egocentric and self-interested political notables who were subservient to the imperialist rulers".[121]

The economic situation and the lack of any significant political change on the part of the British led increasing numbers of Arab Palestinians towards a break with the political practices of the preceding decade. It was this sharpening political and social differentiation which led to the 1936–1939 *thawra* (Arab Palestinian Revolt) and the subsequent repression unleashed by the British using the tactics of collective punishment, military repression, exile and intimidation to suppress a nationwide uprising expressing a desire for self-determination. The *thawra* went through stages but it was testimony to the depth of opposition to the Mandate that the British forces in Palestine were obliged to call on considerable reserves in order to thwart the ambitions of the Arab Palestinian people to assert their right to self-determination.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly certain dates stand out during the period of the British Mandate in Palestine as turning points in the development of the politics of the country. It is a major contention of this thesis that although these events may be used to periodise the Mandate, they have to be recognised as essentially the products of processes which preceded the occupation as well as shaping and defining the rhythm of subsequent developments.

The central problem confronting the Arab Palestinian community was that of seeking to assert its political right to self-determination against an imperialist power driven by its own priorities, and additionally, influenced by its alliance with an ideologically driven colonising movement. The capacity of the Arab Palestinian community to challenge this alliance was undermined by the social disruption caused by the policies pursued by the occupying power which escalated that turmoil within the community. In part the inability of the *a'yan* to develop a political response to the challenges of landlessness and unemployment reflected a fundamental problem. Trapped in the discourse of an earlier epoch the recurrent demand was for the restoration of the *status quo ante*. Their demand for the ending of the sales of land

[121] Kayyali, 167.

implied the maintenance of the pre-occupation forms of social relations consequent on the forms of land holding prevalent under the Ottoman rule. Arguably the demand for an end to the sales by the *fellahin* originated from the more basic desire for the maintenance of their family's livelihood.

Calling on the traditional hereditary patterns of social and political relations which had existed during the Ottoman period reflected a failure to endorse or perhaps to recognise the significance of the profound economic, social and generational changes which were beginning to surface in Palestinian society. As a consequence the move towards a more directly confrontational politics by the youth organisations frequently based outside of Jerusalem developed without the approval of the traditional leaderships and in some respects against their wishes.

Schooled in a traditional relationship of accommodation with the ruling Ottoman Empire the *a'yan* responded by seeking to recreate these political relationships with the British authorities. The agenda of the British however was distinctly different from that of Constantinople and were determined first and foremost by their all-important imperial preoccupations. Untroubled access to the Suez Canal and safe passageway to India was the on-going concern manifested in the British response to Mussolini's ambitions in Ethiopia and Libya. The importance of maintaining imperial interests was evident in their anxiety to ensure that the oil from Iraq was able to flow freely to Haifa to service the British fleet and stockpile supplies for the eventuality of war. The repression meted out by the British in response to Arab Palestinian insurrectionary actions was substantially driven by its obsessive objective to maintain its presence in the region as much as by its commitment to the Balfour Declaration.

The companies, factories and enterprises developed by the Zionist agencies and employers, committed to Zionism, constituted a form of industrial capitalism utilising investment from elsewhere which was able to develop and expand more rapidly than the predominantly mercantile capitalism of the Arab Palestinian bourgeoisie. This process accelerated from 1933 onwards with the rise of Nazism in Germany. Whilst the output of industries owned by pro-Zionist companies tended to be protected by the operation of Mandate enforced tariffs the crops and produce of

Arab Palestinian enterprises remained vulnerable to the changes in prices on the world markets and the importation of competing cheaper goods. The displaced *fellahin* were denied entry to the labour market or exploited well beyond that of their Jewish counterparts. The increased immigration from 1933 onwards saw a big increase in the working class component of the *Yishuv* and the corporatist alliances of the *Histadrut* with Zionist capital afforded a degree of protection for workers in the *Yishuv* though they too were vulnerable to the periodic crises in the world economy.

The protectionism afforded to Zionist capital resulted in a burgeoning settler economy which displaced and disadvantaged the indigenous capitalist enterprises including the agricultural sector. As a consequence a concomitant impoverishment afflicted the Arab Palestinian *fellahin* and the working class marginalised by the segregationist employment practices of Zionist enterprises and the militant corporatism of the *Histadrut*. These economic and social developments contributed to the arrest of the development of a unifying programme which could address the specific challenges which different sectors of society faced. These features arrested and distorted the development of social and political forces capable of developing a perspective which transcended these differences.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

In the opening chapter I argued for the value of reconsidering the conceptual framework for analysing the nature of the British Mandate in Palestine. Throughout the thesis the approach that I have adopted has sought to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the economic, social and political relations that impacted on the conduct of the Mandate administration and the responses of the Arab Palestinian community. I have argued that an approach which analyses the specificity of British imperialism at the time of the occupation of Palestine and throughout the Mandate period benefits from a recognition of the interplay of the combination of factors influencing its development. This approach is equally applied to the other principal agency, the Arab Palestinian people and to the initially less weighty agent, the Zionist settlers in this encounter. The thesis has argued that whilst the encounter between these agencies is expressed principally in the form of political discourse the social and economic ingredients were critical to shaping the parameters within which this dialectic developed. I argue that this synthesising approach has contributed to developing a fresh understanding of the British Mandate.

Reflecting on the forms of imperialism which have developed over the centuries I argued that the nature of the *new*-imperialism which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century had features which distinguished it significantly from earlier forms of imperialism and had an effect on the way in which the British policies were implemented and developed. In particular the territorialism and colonialism which had characterised the imperialism of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were supplanted from the end of the nineteenth century onwards by a predominantly economic construct emanating from a globalised marketisation and commodification of products including the relatively new important raw materials of oil. A characteristic and driving force of these changes was the emergence of powerful economic institutions produced through the fusion of the most aggressive and expansionist components of industrial and financial development. The functioning of these institutions especially in the realm of overseas investments was buttressed by the mobilisation of their respective nation states to achieve or enforce

their goals.[1] In some instances the establishment of clientelistic relationships with an indigenous ruling class obviated the need for a more direct intervention and colonisation.

Under the terms of the Mandate the British government was supposed to ensure that bids to invest and create new industries were dealt with equitably. The handling of the Rutenberg scheme epitomised the reality of the British partisanship in respect of projects for major capital investments which were in reality to create monopolistic companies. Although the scheme for electrification had been promised prior to the war to a Greek entrepreneur M. Mavrommatis the British intervened to award the concession to Pinhus Rutenberg. In the case of the Dead Sea concession for the development of its chemical resources the British backed the Palestine Potash Limited (PPL) company and found themselves in contest with the *Syndicat Français des Potasses de la Mer Morte* (SFPMM) which had the backing of the French government. Even though the British held the Mandate for Palestine they had to contend with on-going rivalry with their imperialist ally and the occasional intervention of foreign governments on behalf of citizens of their countries who argued that they had prior consideration in the awarding of contracts by dint of agreements that had been reached with the Ottoman rulers before the war.

The inter-imperialist rivalry that erupted in World War One continued to be present even though the conflict did not manifest itself in physical confrontation. The absence of any Arab Palestinian contender for the exploitation of the chemical rights of the Dead Sea was the consequence of their exclusion by the British. Arab Palestinian entrepreneurs fully appreciated the potential of the Dead Sea chemical resources and regarded the transfer of the lands surrounding the area to companies which were owned by members of the Jewish community as both an economic blow to the development of Palestine and an assault on their national rights. Arab Palestinian entrepreneurs were as prepared as their counterparts in the *Yishuv* and those sponsored by the Zionist movement, to identify for development those elements of the economy which would be strategic to the overall development of the country.

[1] Norris, *Land of Progress,* 184. See the detailed account of the British and French dispute over control of the chemical resources of the Dead Sea.

Previously in Britain, ideological rationalisations for imperial conquest based on the ideas of More, Grotius, Hobbes and Locke had been utilised to justify imperialist expansionism. They were now being augmented by notions of racial and cultural superiority blended with quasi-scientific rationalisations mobilised in justification of colonial political practice. The *mission civilisatrice* secularised the religious undertaking.

The imperialist conquests did not go uncontested however. In the second half of the nineteenth century new nation states were coming into being and yet more, in parts of the Ottoman Empire for example, sought to assert their right to independence from the imperial organism. At the same time less dominant powers such as Italy and France sought to establish imperial interests through the colonisation of parts of the former Ottoman Empire in North Africa. For a period both colonialism and colonisation existed side by side. Out of this maelstrom of continuing colonisation and growing nationalism the Zionist response to the horrors of the pogroms rampant in Eastern Europe emerged arguing a nationalist revivalism in response to the persecution of Jews. The Zionist concept of "choseness" employed to argue the case for the establishment of a National homeland for the Jews in Palestine melded with the racial and cultural superiority views prevalent amongst many leading non-Jewish political figures in the imperial powers. Non-Jewish adherents were won from the ranks of those who combined anti-Semitism with support for the Zionist cause in the hope that the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe would chose Palestine as an alternative to their own countries. Their hierarchical ranking of peoples placed the Arab world of the Near East below that of Western Europe and the United States of America dismissing the entitlement of those who inhabited Palestine to the right to self-determination. The imperial powers were to be the arbiters of fitness to merit the status of self-determination. In the most grotesque manifestation of the use of such concepts European imperialist powers in Australia and South West Africa of course forced the transfer of peoples utilising genocidal practices which became synonymous with imperial expansion.

I have used a conceptual framework outlined in Chapter One influenced by the writings of Karl Marx, Ellen Meiksins Wood, David Harvey, E. H. Carr and others to analyse afresh the way in which British policies were influenced by the characteristics

of this changing world. This thesis has argued that the period within which the British government established the Mandate in Palestine constituted a moment in which the nature of imperialism was undergoing profound changes moving from a time in which it was typified by the use of colonisation as its defining characteristic to one in which the expansion of overseas investment was beginning to become the dominant form of its operation. The last quarter of the nineteenth century had seen the rapid escalation of inter-imperialist rivalry resulting from the aggressive competition for dominance over increasingly important raw materials. The attempts by the rival imperial powers through initiatives such as the Berlin Conference of 1884 to reach accommodations about existing points of contention and to anticipate future areas of disagreement failed to resolve the underlying problem at the centre of the changes taking place within the economies of the contestants.

Chapter Two demonstrates how Britain and Germany, the two major contending imperial powers, sought to co-opt regional forces into their strategic perspectives. In both cases the interests of those with whom they sought to ally were in practice made subservient to the objectives of the imperial hegemon. Both Britain and Germany were capable of deploying religious and secular apologetics to support their contentions in an effort to gain advantage. The Germans and the British contested at different stages for the allegiance of both Muslims and Zionists presenting their motives in terms of the fulfilment of religious goals. The political leadership in Germany sought to invoke the concept of *jihad* with the rulers of the Ottoman Empire in order to mobilise the peoples of countries with predominantly Muslim populations behind their war effort. British politicians summoned up a Biblical narrative to justify their support for the Zionist project of creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine.

In analysing the different stages of imperialism I argued that the nature of the intervention by the imperial power was ultimately shaped by factors on the domestic front. In Chapter Two I demonstrated how the capacity of the British to act on the international level was affected by the impact of the war on the home front and the challenge presented by the struggle for independence taking place in Ireland. During the war Britain's dependency on the USA for material and financial support to prosecute the conflict increased. Whilst not deferring to USA views, the Cabinet discussions on the situation in Ireland reveal the extent of their influence on British

policies towards Ireland. The 1916 Easter Rising, like the 1857 uprising in India, was a harbinger of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist challenge which followed the war as British governments faced tests of their rule in the Near East. The thesis establishes that connectedness between the domestic and the imperial policies and the Cabinet papers reveal how the discussions which were held by the political leadership in Britain over the years reflected the changing nature of the relationships between Britain and other imperial powers and between Britain and its Empire.

As I have argued the *new*-imperialism which was rapidly emerging as a dominant international economic force was manifest in the changing priorities of British governments which viewed the acquisition of and jurisdiction over valuable raw materials as essential to their project. Where those raw materials were located materially affected their strategic thinking. I have demonstrated this through an examination of the Cabinet papers in which these questions were addressed. In the thesis I have demonstrated how in the British Cabinet the debate over the approach to be adopted in respect of the Near East welded together economic, political and military considerations which shaped the evolution of policies. Control over the Suez Canal constituted the epitome of these concerns. The Canal was the principal route through which communications were maintained between London and the British Empire and especially with India which remained amongst its most lucrative possessions. The importance of the Suez Canal was fully appreciated by German strategists and concerned British politicians. Moreover British apprehensions about the potential vulnerability of India to Russian encroachment through Afghanistan or Persia made the Near East a particular strategic concern as maintaining the capacity to deliver reinforcements to the area by the swiftest means possible was crucial. Additionally large volumes of trade passed through the Canal on British ships which composed more than half of the world's vessels. It remained vital to the supply and maintenance of Britain's capacity to defend its imperial territories both from external threats and from internal rebellion.

Through the period of imperialist territorial expansion inter-imperialist rivalries manifested themselves in periodic military confrontations but the ascent of the new forms of economic development embodied in the establishment of a globalised market created new challenges. Chapter Three demonstrated how the

British imperialist concern to maintain their hegemonic position with regard to the Empire and especially India dictated their preoccupation with the Near East. This resulted however in a clash between agencies with differing economic and political priorities. Those predominantly pre-capitalist economies, like that of Ottoman Palestine, were confronted by an ever-increasingly aggressive capitalist expansion which distorted and disfigured their economic and social evolution and concomitantly their political development. The finance capital backed enterprises that I have commented on above, like the Rutenberg scheme, had greater access to inward capital investment and grew more rapidly and became more profitable than the predominantly agriculturally oriented indigenous capitalist companies focussed on trade.

President Woodrow Wilson, as I further explained in Chapter Three, applied the concept of self-determination differentially, passively endorsing British unilateral arbitration over the appropriateness of self-determination to Palestine. Wilson's own dubious credentials as an anti-colonialist were undermined by his own practices and willingness to employ imperial prerogatives in the case of the settlements emanating from the Paris Peace Conference. The findings of the King–Crane Commission which conducted widespread consultations with people in the region came to conclusions which were clearly contrary to the intentions of the British government and indeed questioned the presumptions of the French. The views which were expressed in their canvass of opinion were both informed and consistent in the responses which they gave indicating a clear wish to break with the proposed allocation of Mandates by the Supreme Council of the Allies at San Remo on 25th April 1920.

The Arab Palestinian political leadership's response to the British occupation and imposition of the Mandate was to seek to insert themselves in the same privileged position that they had been accustomed to in the Ottoman Empire. The British continuously sought to coax the Arab Palestinians into formal or informal relationships with the Mandate Administration with the objective of reducing their opposition to the Zionist colonisation of Palestine and persuading them to become complicit in compromising their aspirations for self-determination. I have argued in Chapter Four that the pattern of social and economic development had a distorting impact on the evolution of the Palestinian society and economy. An economically less competitive capitalism disadvantaged the *a'yan* capitalists and contributed to the

creation of a landless working class confronted by discriminatory employment practices enforced by Zionist corporatism. This dislocation of a more organic evolution of Palestinian society in turn led to the social and economic differentiations being expressed in divergent political positions. The *a'yan* group themselves were obliged to come to terms with this process of change gradually dispensing with the traditionalist hereditary structures of alignment and gravitating towards the formation of political parties cohered by more explicitly programmatic expressions of view rather than kinship allegiances.

Palestinian society, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was confronted by dramatic world changing events with social, economic and political consequences. In Chapter Five I have explained how the impact of these events shaped the political response to the British Mandate rapidly metamorphosing from a society dominated by *pre-capitalist* forms of social and economic relations into a society which was attempting to deal with the forcible imposition of norms dictated by a world power itself transitioning from colonialism into a *new*-imperialist power implementing a *neo-colonialist* practice. Palestinian society was in many respects unlike any other country which the British occupied and brought within their imperial domain because it was in the process of becoming a part of the wider world economy and had the capacity to continue to develop along that path. Its economic, social and political progress was shaped by the constraints imposed upon it by British imperialism's primary concern to secure its goal of preserving its own empire. This centred around its preoccupation with the Near East and the Suez Canal. This focus was evident before the adoption of the Balfour Declaration and was to re-surface during the 1930s as the inter-imperialist rivalry reappeared. In the first instance the Zionist project was an adjunct to British imperialism's main concerns, although this was never the view held by the Zionist movement.

The thesis opened with an analysis of British imperialism and the context of the establishment of the Mandate. Elements of the social, economic and political features which had shaped the process of the British occupation and the initiation of the Mandate remained operative throughout the period. The wider world continued to impact on the development of Palestinian society as the *fellahin* suffered greater impoverishment with the devastation of their crops, the fierce competition of imported

goods and the application of partisan economic measures by the British administration favouring Zionist run enterprises. The Hope Simpson report recorded the impoverishment of the rural areas and the vulnerability of those who worked there alongside the precariousness faced by the landless workers who gravitated towards the larger towns for employment. Arab Palestinian political response to their situation initially manifested itself through a focus on opposition to Jewish immigration and the sale of lands. This was the basis of the inchoate politics which led to the periodic demonstrations and outbreaks of violence which led to the deaths and injuries of both Jews and Arab Palestinians. The founding of the *Istiqlal* Party constituted a break with this politics and a refocus on the responsibility of the British as the principal authors of the situation.

Throughout this thesis I have focused on analysing the positions of the British government through an examination of the discussions and decision-making process which took place within the respective Cabinets of the period. I coupled this with an additional focus on the White papers that were produced and the various reports commissioned by governments into the major events of the Mandate period. In so doing my intention was to demonstrate that within the British government it was clearly the case that they viewed the future of Palestine as a strategic question to the Empire as a whole. Moreover there was an awareness of the contradictory implications of the Balfour Declaration and knowledge of the reactions of both the Arab Palestinian population and the Zionist settlers to the actions of the Mandate administration. I have done so in order to challenge any notion that the British governments were unaware of the realities of the situation in Palestine or ignorant of the consequences of the policies they were promoting.

At the centre of the aims of this thesis has been the argument that situating the Mandate within that wider context of global political and economic developments affords a new perspective on the political processes unfolding in Palestine during the period. Choices by all parties did not take place in a vacuum but were influenced by a variety of factors, many though not all of which were beyond their control. The thesis has aimed to reassert the value of taking a wider view on these developments in order to enhance reflection on the detail and to contribute to a re-examination of them which will contribute to the deepening of an understanding as to how and why events

developed in Palestine following this period. The modest aim of this thesis is not to provide a comprehensive answer to the questions that arise surrounding the British Mandate in Palestine but to contribute to a fresh perspective on how that task might continue to be addressed.

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