

PALESTINE

At the Crossroads

by

ERNEST MAIN, M.A.

Πρῶτα μὲν εἰρεσίη, μετὰπειτα δὲ κάλλιμος οὖρος.
—*Odyssey.*

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IRAQ

FROM MANDATE TO INDEPENDENCE

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P R E F A C E

MOST of the polemical literature on the subject of Palestine has been written by Jews and Arabs, maintaining their respective points of view. A good deal has been published by English and American writers, neither Jew nor Arab, and the English writers in particular have tended to be pro-Arab and anti-Jewish. The Arab is likeable if not logical, but many Europeans fail to find the Jew likeable—perhaps because he is too logical.

It is always impossible to estimate the imponderables in a man's mind, and there is no reason to doubt the *bona fides* of these writers. But how many of them have taken the trouble to go and see what the Jews are actually doing in Palestine? The Jews, indeed, have done more in and for Palestine in a decade than the Arabs could do in a century, but one has to admit that the Palestine problem may not be capable of any logical solution.

I am not a Jew. Brought up in a Presbyterian home in the north of Scotland, I did not know what a Jew was until I was, I suppose, eighteen or nineteen, since when, of course, I have seen many. I know the Arabs, too, having lived among them for a number of years. In Palestine I have therefore gone about, seeing what is happening, hearing both sides, and remembering that the Palestine problem is wider than Palestine itself. It is possible that had it not been for the Jewish National Home, certain policies in Europe might not have taken shape as they have done, but things being as they are, Palestine must now be considered in terms of Jewry as a whole, just as the Palestinian Arabs maintain that it must be considered in terms of Pan-Arabism.

PALESTINE AT THE CROSSROADS

There is, moreover, the British imperial point of view, which is of the utmost importance to the world, to Britain, and to Palestine. An Englishman is always tempted to solve problems with one eye on British interests. Many have wondered, indeed, which policy would do the greater harm to Britain—to upset the Arabs or to upset the Jews—assuming that it is impossible to satisfy both.

In trying to present a fair statement of the case, I should like to thank the many friends in Jerusalem and elsewhere who have helped by information, opportunity, and criticism.

JERUSALEM

February 1937

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INTRODUCTION

THE late Lord Allenby was the first and only front-rank Englishman who has tried to bring the Jew and Arab together in Palestine. He it was who arranged that Faisal and Weizmann should meet; since that time British policy appears to have assumed that Jew and Arab are as oil and water. To that extent Britain is responsible for what has happened in Palestine during the last decade and a half. As things are to-day, the Jews say that the British policy is pro-Arab, the Arabs say it is pro-Jewish; neither trust the British. This will doubtless be taken as an argument that British policy in the country is reasonably even-handed, but is even-handed passivity a virtue? Both Arab and Jew are awakening to consciousness: the one because of the national impetus which the war brought about in the Arab lands, the other because, for the first time in two thousand years, he sees the opportunity of regaining his national self-respect and vindicating his long-lost right to self-expression.

To what extent are the hopes and desires of these two peoples complementary to each other in Palestine? Does the success of the one mean the obliteration of the other? Or is there any common objective to which they might jointly direct their energies?

The Arabs claim that the Jews are invaders trying to push out the established inhabitants and that the riots and disturbances that have from time to time marked the administration of the Mandate are the expression of the Arab masses' determination to save their heritage. It is the fashionable thing, in certain British official circles in Palestine, to be pro-Arab and, apparently forgetting or ignoring the

Mandate, to argue that Palestine was "a good country until the Jew came into it." But it was never the British officials who set the pace of development in Palestine; many of them, as was the case in Iraq, were war survivals; few of them reached the standards, grade for grade, reached by the British Civil Service in Egypt or the Sudan. Jews have tried to persuade me that the sport-loving British officials in Palestine have resented Jewish energy in general and the recent influx of Jewish brains in particular. I do not think this charge is justified, but there is no doubt that since 1933 the tempo of the country has been quickened, and anybody who has been in Palestine knows that it is the Jews who have been responsible for this.

It is argued that certain European policies, as they have been developed since 1933, are irrelevant to the Palestine problem; that the Mandate should not be stretched and stretched in order to make Palestine a mere refuge. But it is equally logical to argue that if the Palestine problem is to be regarded as being confined to Palestine, the opinions of Arabs outside Palestine are irrelevant, and Britain's preoccupation with Moslem opinion outside Palestine is irrelevant, and Britain's strategic interest in Palestine is irrelevant.

Clearly the Palestine problem is to-day wider than Palestine. I have tried to show in these pages how the problem has grown more and more complex since the Mandate was given to Britain, and how new factors have been imported into it. If left on the Arab-versus-Jew basis the problem of Palestine is at present insoluble.

As I have tried to show, there is no social or cultural cohesion among the Arabs, and it is all too easy to whip up the fanaticism of the vast illiterate majority by making

appeals to their religious fervour, appeals which, as things are, appear to be little other than dishonest, for there is, in fact, no real religious issue. What would be the position of the Arab masses had the Jewish immigrants not come to Palestine? The answer obviously is that the Arab masses would be in the same position as the Arab masses in other parts of the Peninsula. They would be living in a state of poverty and debt, there being a tendency all the while for the accumulations of land in the possession of the wealthy minority to increase. Cultivation would remain primitive and uneconomic; one has only to glance at the work done in the Jewish colonies in Palestine to realize how the Arabs have failed to utilize the land to the best advantage. The Jews have without question proved that Palestine can carry a population very much bigger than the population it has been carrying. It is obvious that any further increase in population must depend on scientific methods of intensive agricultural production. This prerequisite would rule out at once any development of Palestine on purely Arab lines.

If the Arabs are to remain in Palestine in the permanent ratio of ten or eleven Arabs to one Jew—the proportion which the Mufti of Jerusalem described as the minimum acceptable to the Arabs in a signed statement handed by him to me in Jerusalem last November—there is no hope of seeing any development of Palestine, either agricultural or industrial, for five hundred years. Can the world afford this? The Arab's religion appears to prevent his making any effort to improve his lot. Perhaps for the same reason the wealthy minority, as is obvious from the social development in the Arab countries generally, has failed to make any effort to improve the lot of the poorer people, and there

seems no reason to expect any reversal of this way of thinking.

In Palestine it is clear that Arab methods will never populate the country as it might be populated. The official Arab paper *Palestine and Transjordan*, of December 19, 1936 (page 5), stated that "on unirrigated land in Palestine with Arab methods of cultivation about 30 or 40 acres are required as the minimum holding necessary to support a family." The Jews, however, have proved that Dr. Soskin's colonists north of Haifa can not only support a family on a plot as small as an acre and a quarter, but that such a family can make a profit of a few pounds a month by the sale of its surplus produce by co-operative distribution. It is a constant surprise in Palestine, when driving round the country with Arab or pro-Arab friends, to hear them say, as they point to the landscape, "Look at the country; what can you do with it?" They forget that the terrace system of agriculture employed by the ancients enabled Palestine to support a much bigger population than is the case to-day. Many supporters of the Arabs also will not take the trouble to go and see what the Jewish settlers are doing in the way of making the land productive and so able to carry more people. A tour of impartial inspection of the Arab and the Jewish areas of Palestine admits of only one conclusion.

The Arabs, however, say that the economic argument is not the sole argument and is by no means the best one; and they add that the Jews are emphasizing the economic argument in order to speed up immigration. Apart from the formal claims they make to Palestine, based on the MacMahon correspondence and their suggestion that the Mandate itself is invalid, the Arabs add further claims based on simple possession. The end of the war, they say, found

them in possession of the country, their overlords, the Ottomans, having been driven out and the conqueror having already promised freedom and autonomy to the Arab lands. The Arabs were the effective occupiers and they had leaders eager for power and in some cases having the capacity to exercise it; no doubt the Arabs of Palestine and Trans-jordan could produce a Cabinet as good as any that Iraq or Syria could produce.

But they fear Jewish domination and they do not believe the Jewish statements that no domination is intended, even by a Jewish majority. The Arab has a very strong "majority sense." For four centuries this sense developed passively; since the war the Arabs in the Arab countries have, in fact, become "majorities" (although in Iraq the ruling Arab oligarchy is Sunni and is therefore in a minority among Iraqi Arabs), and they have developed a very strong national consciousness and with it a hard core of resolution, which has taken on a strong political bias and which must not be under-estimated. The Arab has always disliked and despised the Jew, even when he has ignored him; and given a free hand, the Arab has always had a quick way with any minority that shows signs of becoming dangerous.

The Arab leaders in Palestine fear the Jewish immigrant for two reasons. The first is that they do not want to be outnumbered, for that would mean that in any future legislative body they would be out-voted by the Jews, which, they feel, would be abhorrent and intolerable. The second is that the Arab leaders dislike Westernism. It suits them to keep the illiterate majority where it is, and they see already coming into Palestine Jewish professional men to whom they are afraid they may, on the merits of man and man, have to give way. Add to this the religious ambitions of the Mufti

of Jerusalem, who combines with the control of the Arab political purse a desire to move Islam's centre of gravity from Mecca to Jerusalem with himself as the supreme Leader of the Faithful.

Here, then, is ample opposition for the Jews—and the British. Arabs have told me that they understand conqueror's rights and would have understood a British conquest made and maintained. But they cannot understand, as they put it, "Britain conquering the country and giving it to somebody else." The Jewish reply to this is the obvious one: that it is no accident that has brought the Jews to Palestine, and that the Mandate established once and for all the world's consent that the Jews are in Palestine by right and not on sufferance. Recent policies in Europe, say the Jews, have made it peculiarly necessary for them to find some outlet to freedom, and if the question, "Why Palestine?" is asked, one cogent answer is that the Jewish immigration into Palestine has justified itself by the economic results it has obtained. In other words, a survey of Palestine at the present day makes it clear to any unbiassed observer that the country is still far from the limits of its economic development, that the Arab masses stand to gain rather than lose from a joint partnership in the country, and that the Arab ruling classes in such a partnership would have the opportunity of achieving more lucrative positions than would be possible in a purely Arab country. It has even been put to me that a swift increase in the number of Jews in the country might be the best preventive of any recurrence of the attacks by the Arabs which have marked the past decade, the argument being that the Arabs would accept the *fait accompli*.

The disturbances of 1929 cost £1,700,000 over and above

Palestine's normal financial requirements; those of 1936, £2,250,000. These totals, given before the Royal Commission in public session by Sir Laurie Hammond, do not include loss of trade, damage done by saboteurs, and the like, but only the cost of the special measures taken by the Government.

The Royal Commission may recommend a new interpretation of the conditions concerning the immigration of Jews, as they are fully entitled to interpret the Mandate for themselves. But the existing interpretation, adopted by the British Government in 1922, and renewed in the MacDonald letter of 1931—namely, that immigration is to be “facilitated” up to the “absorptive *economic* capacity of the country”—cannot lightly be thrown aside, unless, of course, *political* considerations are to be given play. The country has not by any means reached the point at which it can absorb no more immigrants. The Jews estimate that the country, including the desert districts of Beersheba, can carry a population approximating in all five millions, and no one, in the light of their existing achievements, will have the hardihood to say that this estimate is wrong. It is true that the world problem confronting the Jews has altered to such an enormous extent since the end of the war that they are now pushing immigration into Palestine to the permissible limit. But with this immigration has gone a boom. It has been accompanied by great imports of capital, machinery, and plant that should make a basis for a formidable industrial structure in the country. It already has an agricultural basis that, as every eye-witness must agree, is sound and capable of great expansion.

The Commissions of Inquiry, Shaw and Hope-Simpson, found uniformly that Palestine six years ago was “full.”

But events have emphatically proved that this conclusion was wrong, and that the sustained Jewish immigration has, in fact, made it possible to bring in more and more immigrants. The Arabs argue that the country is "out of breath"; one reply to that might well be that as soon as it gets "into training" it will find its second wind. On the purely economic facts there seems no reason to stop Jewish immigration into Palestine, and we live in an economic age. If, on the other hand, British policy is to be based on other considerations, it will mean a reversal of the policy followed for the past fourteen years, a reversal that would have been forced by the Arab resistance. If it is sound policy in Palestine now to limit the Jewish sections of the population to a given ratio, it means that the British Government and the Permanent Mandates Commission wish to see Palestine's racial dichotomy perpetuated for all time. In any event, the Arabs, and the East in general, will once again be persuaded that the only way to get anything out of Britain is to set up a clamour for it.

Britain's own interest in the matter is discussed fully in Chapter 3. It must inevitably be considered in any reshaping of policy that may be decided upon.

CONCLUSION

THE Jews have a ritual phrase "Next Year in Jerusalem." The phrase bears a peculiar significance to-day. It will be seen from the foregoing pages how deep-seated is the unrest that has been endemic in Palestine since the end of the war. These lines are written before the report of the Royal Commission, but to an observer on the spot it is far from clear what solution, if any, can be found that will be acceptable to Arab and Jew in equal measure and will at the same time be duly mindful of British imperial interests. As has been shown in the earlier chapters, the causes of the unrest in Palestine are deep-seated and fundamental, and a compromise report designed to ask each of the two sides to make sacrifices will merely exacerbate both, and the greater the prominence given to British imperial interests the more convinced will Arab and Jew become that Britain is determined to remain in Palestine for her own ends.

The Arabs have in the past thought it to their interest to complicate the issue, already difficult enough, by trying to make it a religious issue. It cannot be made too clear that there is not the slightest likelihood, whoever ultimately obtains control of Palestine, that any of the holy places of any of the three great faiths will be endangered. Should there at any time be a return to Moslem political control, there is no reason whatever to assume that the Christian and Jewish minorities will not, as in the past, and as in other Moslem countries to-day, be allowed to maintain their forms of worship. The only Christian domination that seems possible at the moment would be a British domination, in which case the freedom accorded to different religions

would amount to an almost positive indifference. In the event of a future Jewish control of the country, no one has adduced any reason for assuming that the Jewish leaders would not stand by the promises and declarations they have so clearly and categorically made, regarding the holy places of the other Faiths. It is probable, indeed, that by the time a Jewish state came into existence, the rationally minded Jews would have so much outnumbered believers of the old school that the question of religious intolerance would be scarcely likely to arise.

The question of "political rights" is not so easy to answer. Does the phrase mean votes for all irrespective of race or religion? Does it mean local autonomy in municipal or rural councils? Does it mean a legislative council elected by the votes of those qualified by education, or merely by residence or property? Or does it simply resolve itself into the question: What political rights, as the word is known in the West, can exist in a country where the great majority of the Moslem population have no political consciousness at all? Since February 1931 British policy has been based on the letter of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. He then declared that the Mandate laid upon Britain "the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land . . . without prejudice to the rights and position of other sections of the population of Palestine." The problem has been complicated by a growth of Arab nationalism—in some part an inevitable development, in some part artificially stimulated—during the past twenty years. In this period the Jew has come more and more into the picture and the Arab feels that political Zionism has, to an extent dangerous for him, taken the place of the old spiritual and moral Zionism, of which the

Moslems have been aware for centuries and to which they paid little or no attention. It is true that for centuries Zionism was a pious ideal, but it need not surprise anyone that the Jews should have come under the rising influence of nationalism which has characterized world history during the past half-century. It has become a truism in Europe that nationalism breeds counter-nationalism, and in every country where they form a minority, particularly a persecuted minority, Jewish nationalism has of late tended to become more and more political. The result in Palestine has been that while the old-fashioned Jews used to believe that Zion would be restored miraculously, in God's due time, with the coming of the Messiah, the modern Zionist movement is rebuilding Zion, deliberately and of set policy, by human agency, by pioneering in the same way as the new countries of the West were developed.

To the Zionist to-day "the National Home" is no mere pious aspiration. It means to him a place where Jews can live and work and express themselves and build up their national civilization in their own way. This is the sense in which the Jews read the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. The issue at the moment turns upon the interpretation of the Mandate. The Arabs, who do not wish to see any more Jews coming into Palestine, say that the "National Home" is already in being, that there is already an essentially Jewish community in Palestine, living its own national life, and strong enough in number to hold its own. This Arab argument says that the Jewish National Home cannot be made any more nationally Jewish than it is to-day, however many more Jews enter the country; and, that being so, that immigration must be stopped at once in order that the other obligation laid down by the Mandate

should be made capable of fulfilment: namely, that the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities of Palestine should not be prejudiced, as the Arabs fear they will be if the Jews become a majority in the country.

Here, then, is the dilemma which confronts Britain and the world. Much is made, as has been shown in the preceding pages, of the supposed contradiction in Britain's war promises. On the merits of the case, the Arab charges of a breach of faith on the part of Britain over the post-war disposal of Palestine cannot be substantiated. And in any case the fundamental question has shifted so far since then that these war-time polemics have become little more than academic.

The fundamental position to-day is that the Jews, still a minority, have clearly shown that they can do far more with Palestine than the Arabs have done, or are likely to be able to do with it, within any reasonable period of time. The Arabs argue that they could do as much with the land as the Jews have done, provided they had the money. There is no lack of money on the Arab side, which can always raise funds for fighting. It is, however, almost impossible to raise Arab funds for any constructive proposition—apart, of course, from commerce. And in any event the Arabs in Palestine have been in the country long enough to have put agricultural schemes into operation in anticipation of what the Jews have done. But the moneyed classes among the Arabs have for various reasons preferred not to spend their money in developing the productive capacity of the country. The essential point is that as between Arab and Jew it is not the possession of money that has made the difference, but the possession of energy and driving-force, of which the Arab is completely devoid. The Jew also, in

large part, has developed as a consequence of his history a sense of cohesion and a power of co-operation of which the Arab has not even the first glimmering. There lies the essential difference between Jew and Arab, a difference of which the Western technique acquired by the Jew in his wanderings is a further and important accentuation. What the Jews have done in Palestine is out of all proportion to their number in the country or to the area which they own.

The Arab leaders realize this to the full, and there are many who hold that it is this driving-force of the Jew that is to be feared, much more than the growth of the Jewish population in Palestine from 55,000 in 1918 to 400,000 in 1936.

Like the Jew and everybody else, the Arab has felt the urge of nationalism, particularly during the last generation. It is true that the Arabian desert has been one and indivisible, without frontiers and with one common language and religion. It is but natural, therefore, that the Palestine Arabs have looked for aid to their kinsmen in the Peninsula. But the feeling of unity that exists among Arabs is political only in so far as it is religious—except in the case of the Palestine Christians of Arab race who are anti-Jewish for other reasons. There is, however, too much political rivalry between the Arab kingdoms and their leaders to expect them to give decisive support to the Palestine Moslems. Iraq, indeed, appears to have been warned by Britain that she must respect the Anglo-Iraqi Alliance, and in any event the *coup d'état* of October 1936, which put into power in Baghdad an administration controlled by a Turkish Prime Minister and a Kurdish Generalissimo, appeared quite definitely to swing Iraq into a nationalist orbit and away from pan-Arabism.

So far as Britain's imperial interests are concerned, Palestine, as has been shown in these pages, offers a bastion for the defence of the Suez Canal and a base that covers the existing harbour at Haifa on the Mediterranean and the potential harbour at Akaba, at the head of the Red Sea. Some substitute will have to be found by Britain to replace Egypt as a base and yet near enough to provide a defence for Egypt in case of necessity. Palestine is the only base that meets these requirements. It would appear to be Britain's policy to cultivate the moderates both among the Jews and among the Arabs. There is a Jewish minority known as the Revisionists, composed in large part of young men who demand the creation of a Jewish state at the earliest possible moment, based on military power. The Moslems have a counterpart in the more extreme nationalists among their young men, many of them trained in the strongly nationalist atmosphere of the American University at Beyrouth. Fortunately, Jewish policy is in the hands of older and wiser men and Revisionism is not at the moment practical politics. But unless something is done to ensure the co-operation of the younger elements in both races, the present division is bound to continue. In the Government services, such as the Post Office, in the banks, in business houses—Arab, Jew, and Christian alike work amicably on day-to-day routine. Is it not possible to develop this spirit in other spheres instead of encouraging (by not trying to prevent) a cleavage that is splitting Palestine from top to bottom?

It is the declared Zionist policy that the Jews and the Arabs should co-operate together in the development of Palestine without the domination of either by the other at any time now or in the future. Not only do the Arabs not

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believe this, but it is their declared policy that they must remain in the majority and that this majority must be expressed in any Legislative Council that may at any time in the future come into existence. Both sides are moved by strong spiritual impulses, each side believes that it is in the right. The trouble about the Arab is that his ruling classes, moved by interest or nationalist feeling, can easily inflame the Moslem masses, who add to a religious fanaticism an inborn if latent hatred of the Jew. This conflict between Jacob and Esau is as old as history: it is still splitting Palestine to-day.

APPENDICES

I

THE FEISAL-WEIZMANN AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 3RD, 1919

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE EMIR FEISAL, representing and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, representing and acting on behalf of the Zionist Organization, mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and realizing that the surest means of working out the consummation of their national aspirations, is through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine, and being desirous further of confirming the good understanding which exists between them, have agreed upon the following Articles:

Article I

The Arab State and Palestine in all their relations and undertakings shall be controlled by the most cordial goodwill and understanding, and to this end Arab and Jewish duly accredited agents shall be established and maintained in the respective territories.

Article II

Immediately following the completion of the deliberations of the Peace Conference, the definite boundaries between the Arab State and Palestine shall be determined by a Commission to be agreed upon by the parties hereto.

Article III

In the establishment of the Constitution and Administration of Palestine all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government's Declaration of November 2nd, 1917.

Article IV

All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale, and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants upon the land through closer settlement and intensive cultivation of the soil. In taking such measures the Arab peasant and tenant farmers shall be protected in their rights, and shall be assisted in forwarding their economic development.

Article V

No regulation nor law shall be made prohibiting or interfering in any way with the free exercise of religion; and further the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall ever be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.

Article VI

The Mohammedan Holy Places shall be under Mohammedan control.

Article VII

The Zionist Organization proposes to send to Palestine a Commission of experts to make a survey of the economic possibilities of the country, and to report upon the best means for its development. The Zionist Organization will place the aforementioned Commission at the disposal of the Arab State for the purpose of a survey of the economic possibilities of the Arab State and to report upon the best means for its development. The Zionist Organization will use its best efforts to assist the Arab State in providing the means for developing the natural resources and economic possibilities thereof.

Article VIII

The parties hereto agree to act in complete accord and harmony on all matters embraced herein before the Peace Congress.

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Article IX

Any matters of dispute which may arise between the contracting parties shall be referred to the British Government for arbitration.

Given under our hand at London,
England, the Third day of January,
One Thousand Nine Hundred and
Nineteen.

CHAIM WEIZMANN,
FEISAL IBN HUSSEIN.

(Translation from the Arabic.)

Reservation by the Emir Feisal:

If the Arabs are established as I have asked in my manifesto of January 4th, addressed to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I will carry out what is written in this agreement.

If changes are made, I cannot be answerable for failing to carry out this agreement.

[*Author's Note.*—The interpreter during the negotiations was Colonel Lawrence, who was also responsible for the “reservation” made by Faisal. The Arabs have complained that this “reservation” was badly translated into English by Colonel Lawrence, but this clearly is Dr. Weizmann’s grievance, not the Arabs’.]

II

LETTER OF THE EMIR FEJSUL

PARIS,
March 1, 1919

DEAR MR. FRANKFURTER,

I want to take this opportunity of my first contact with American Zionists to tell you what I have often been able to say to Dr. Weizmann in Arabia and Europe.

We feel that the Arabs and Jews are cousins in race, have suffered similar oppressions at the hands of Powers stronger than themselves, and by a happy coincidence have been able to take the first step towards the attainment of their national ideals together.

The Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. Our deputation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted yesterday by the Zionist Organization to the Peace Conference, and we regard them as moderate and proper. We will do our best, so far as we are concerned, to help them through; we will wish the Jews a hearty welcome home.

With the chiefs of your Movement, especially with Dr. Weizmann, we have had, and continue to have, the closest relations. He has been a great helper of our cause, and I hope the Arabs may soon be in a position to make the Jews some return for their kindness. We are working together for a reformed and revived Near East, and our two Movements complete one another. The Jewish Movement is national and not imperialist. Our Movement is national and not imperialist, and there is room in Syria for us both. Indeed, I think that neither can be a real success without the other.

People less informed and less responsible than our leaders and yours, ignoring the need for co-operation of the Arabs and the Zionists, have been trying to exploit the local differences that must necessarily arise in Palestine in the early stages of our Movement. Some of them have, I am afraid, misrepresented your aims to the Arab peasantry, and our aims to the Jewish

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peasantry, with the result that interested parties have been enabled to make capital out of what they call our differences.

I wish to give you my firm conviction that these differences are not on questions of principle, but on matters of detail, such as must inevitably occur in every contact with neighbouring peoples, and are easily dissipated by mutual goodwill. Indeed, nearly all of them will disappear with fuller knowledge.

I look forward, and my people with me look forward to a future in which we will help you and you will help us, so that the countries in which we are mutually interested may once again take their place in the community of civilized peoples of the world.

Yours sincerely,

FEISUL

III

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

FOREIGN OFFICE

November 2, 1917

DEAR LORD ROTHSCHILD,

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

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best 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."

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

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

V

EVIDENCE OF HAJ AMIN AL HUSSEINI BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON JANUARY 12, 1937

PART I

LORD PEEL: I am not sure which of you gentlemen is going to give evidence.

TRANSLATOR*: His Eminence, the President of the Moslem Supreme Council, and of the Arab Higher Committee.

LORD PEEL: Will Your Eminence kindly tell us just what the Arab Committee is and how it is constituted?

MUFTI: The Supreme Arab Committee is formed of representatives of all Arab parties in the country, and as such it can well represent the Arabs of Palestine.

LORD PEEL: How long has it been constituted?

MUFTI: About nine months.

LORD PEEL: Does Your Eminence appear in the capacity of Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee?

MUFTI: Yes, My Lord.

LORD PEEL: Do you also appear here as President of the Supreme Moslem Council? Or not?

MUFTI: No, only as spokesman on behalf of the Arab Supreme Committee. The Arab case in Palestine is one which aims at national independence. In a sense it does not differ from similar movements amongst the Arabs in all other Arab countries. This movement is not new. In fact it is a movement since long before the Great War. Under the Ottoman regime the Arabs formed an important part of the structure of the Ottoman Empire. It is wrong to say that the Arabs were under the yoke of the Turks, and that the assistance which was rendered to the Arabs during the war was merely intended to relieve them from such a yoke. The fact is that under the Ottoman Constitution the Arabs enjoyed all rights and privileges, political and otherwise, on an equal basis with the Turks. The Ottoman Constitution provided

* In some cases the Commissioners put their questions to the Mufti in the third person; they are then addressing the translator.

PALESTINE
AT THE
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