

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS
IN PALESTINE
UNDER THE BRITISH MANDATE: 1917–1939

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the origins of the Arab-Jewish conflict and the historical evolvement of the Palestinian issue by focusing on the practices during the British mandate period. First and foremost, the factors which transformed the Jewish question into the Palestinian question are elaborated. In this context, the emergence of modern political Zionism is presented as the landmark incident in arousing the interest of the Jews dispersed all around the world in the colonization of their promised lands. Although the motive in initiating the colonizing activities in Palestine came with the advent of political Zionist thought, Jewish settlement in Palestine was materialized as a result of the development of British interests in the Middle East. The contradictory promises given to the Arabs and Jews by the British in the course of World War I are treated as the source of the conflict between them. It is stated that the Balfour Declaration, which is the manifestation of the British-Zionist alliance, is the preliminary step of the project of a Jewish state on Palestinian territories. In order to shed light on the implications of Zionist colonization on the Palestinian Arab society, first the socio-economic and socio-political circumstances in the Ottoman era are discussed. Later, the impact of the exclusivist policies of the Jews on communal relations is handled in detail. Moreover, the ways in which the pro-Zionist stance of the British mandate administration contributed to the nation-building efforts of the Jews are argued. Lastly, the causes and consequences of the sporadic Arab tensions, which broke out in 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1936 as a reaction against the British and Zionist policies, are analyzed.

Keywords: Theodor Herzl, Zionism, Balfour Declaration, Great Arab Revolt, White Paper of 1939

ÖZ

İNGİLİZ MANDASI DÖNEMİNDE FİLİSTİN’DE SOSYO-EKONOMİK VE SOSYO-POLİTİK GELİŞMELER: 1917–1939

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Bu çalışma, İngiliz mandası dönemindeki uygulamalar çerçevesinde Arap-Yahudi anlaşmazlığının kökenlerini ve Filistin sorununun tarihsel gelişimini incelemektedir. Öncelikle, Yahudi sorununun Filistin sorununa dönüşmesine sebep olan faktörler ele alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda, modern siyasi Siyonist hareketin gelişimi, dünyanın dört bir tarafına dağılmış olan Yahudilerin vaat edilmiş topraklarını sömürgeleştirmeye yönelik çabalarına ivme kazandıran bir dönüm noktası olarak ortaya konulmuştur. Filistin’de Yahudiler tarafından yürütülen sömürgeleştirme faaliyetleri Siyonist ideolojinin ortaya çıkışına bağlı olsa da, bu topraklarda Yahudi yerleşimi Orta Doğu’da İngiliz çıkarlarının gelişmesinin bir sonucu olmuştur. Araplar ve Yahudiler arasındaki çatışmanın kaynağı, I. Dünya Savaşı sırasında İngilizler tarafından onlara verilen ve birbiriyle çelişen vaatler olarak gösterilmiştir. İngilizler ile Siyonistler arasındaki ittifakın bir göstergesi olan Balfur Deklarasyonu’nun, Filistin toprakları üzerinde kurulması planlanan Yahudi devletine giden yolda atılmış olan ilk adım olduğu belirtilmiştir. Siyonist sömürgeleştirme hareketinin Filistin Arap toplumu üzerindeki etkilerinin daha iyi anlaşılması için ilk olarak Osmanlı İmparatorluğu dönemindeki sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-politik şartlar ele alınmıştır. Daha sonra ise Yahudilerin dışlayıcı politikalarının iki toplum arasındaki ilişkilere nasıl yansıdığının üzerinde durulmuştur. Ayrıca, İngilizlerin Siyonist yanlısı tutumlarının Yahudilerin ulus inşası çabalarına ne yönde katkıda bulunduğu tartışılmıştır. Son olarak da 1920, 1921, 1929 ve 1936 yıllarında İngiliz ve Siyonist politikalarına tepki olarak ortaya çıkan Arap ayaklanmalarının sebep ve sonuçları incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Theodor Herzl, Siyonizm, Balfur Deklarasyonu, Büyük Arap Ayaklanması, 1939 Beyaz Belge

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Palestine went through radical changes during the British mandate period and all that lies in the root of the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict occurred in this period. This thesis is based on the proposition that the seeds of the long-standing controversy between the Arabs and Jews were sown in the Middle East by the British mandatory government. And the aim of the thesis is to shed light on the impact of the Zionist colonization in Palestine on the social and economic structures of the Palestinian Arab society. Since the Palestinian issue was such a comprehensive and complicated one that when the origin of the problem was investigated, only the socio-economic and socio-politic aspects of the issue were undertaken. However, since limiting the topic would not be sufficient, a particular time period was specified for the properness of the thesis. The years chosen for this end were set diligently, owing to the fact that they represented fundamental transformations in the course of events. The year 1917 was a prelude for the Zionist colonization in Palestine with the issuance of the Balfour declaration while the year 1939 was the ending date of the British-Zionist collaboration on account of a reversal in British policies with the White Paper of 1939.

There exists a powerful causal link between the persecution of Jews in Europe in the late 19th century and the plight of the Palestinian Arabs that still persists in the 21st century. This causal link was tried to be put straightly by strictly adhering to the principle of objectivity. First, the discriminatory policies of the European powers against their Jewish citizens in the second half of the 1800s gave rise to the embodiment of Zionism. Next, Britain emerged as the main champion of Zionism within only a few years after the appearance of this ideology. Namely, the century-old Arab-Israeli question reaching out at the present day was implanted in the Palestinian territories by a third party who did not hold direct connection with the region before World War I. The war circumstances generated the suitable milieu for an alliance of interests between the Zionists and British in regard to Palestine. This alliance lasted for three decades and the establishment of the Israeli state was an outcome of this alliance.

During the embodiment of this study, a method that can be defined as a combination of historical review and historical interpretation was adopted. The historical review method necessitated giving a chronological record of the events during the British

mandatory government in Palestine whereas in accordance with the historical interpretation method it was attempted to provide a better understanding of the far-reaching effects of the Zionist colonization and the British policies on the Palestinian Arab community. In this context, a rational explanation was presented for all developments that followed each other and a causal link was tried to be established between these developments. This rational explanation is bias-free, embraces an impartial stance towards all the parties concerned in the creation of the Palestinian question and evaluates the circumstances according to the social context in which they occurred. A divergent perspective that reflects the view point of the suppressed party and that is distinct from the dominant perspective of the era was developed. When doing this, however, the rules of scholarship constituted the core of the study and the principle of objectivity was tried to be preserved as much as possible. This was achieved through the enrichment of the resources that were benefitted throughout the conduct of the research. In other words, not only the resources that reflect a single perspective were relied upon.

In accordance with the principle of integrity among social events, the socio-economic structure in the late Ottoman period that was thought to be interconnected with the scope of this thesis was also touched upon in the second chapter. This course was adopted since it was determined that there was a close correlation between the late Ottoman system and the practices of the British mandate rule in Palestine. The Ottoman policies affected the lives of the Palestinian Arabs in such an extensive fashion that it was impossible for the British authorities not to take into account the Ottoman legacy. They worked hard to eliminate the influence of the Ottoman code of laws and grounded their arrangements on the setting up of a whole new system for the furtherance of Zionist interests. In this context, the attributes of the land system - *masha'a* - that was applied in most of the Palestinian villages during the Ottoman times were explained. After a detailed analysis of *masha'a*, it was laid bare how this system ran counter to the ideals of the Zionists, and how and why Britain tried to abolish this system. It was deemed essential to mention the class system of the Arab community inherited from the Ottoman era not only to have a better understanding of the ways Zionist perceived the national Arab standing, but also to clarify what marks the policies of Zionism leave on the Arab population.

After shedding light on the fact that the Palestine under the Ottoman and Palestine under the British could not be handled separately as if they were parts of two unrelated periods, the origins of the Zionist ideology was explored in the third chapter. When doing this, it became clear that a community which came under the severest persecutions in different parts of the world and thus whose members should have known what it meant to be treated as inferiors turned out to be the main executive of the same oppressive policies

they were subjected to against the Arabs. They made Palestine the one and only focus of Zionist ideals and starting from Herzl, the deviser of Zionism, and continuing with Weizmann they used advanced diplomatic techniques to launch Jewish colonization in these territories. At this point, the difference between the practical and political Zionists was drawn and the approach of the Ottoman rule to the Zionist endeavors regarding Palestine was explained. The acquisitions of the Zionist movement that began in a reasonably incremental and slow fashion during the Ottoman period showed a speedy upward trend after the inauguration of the British mandate rule.

That is to say, the Zionists did not show this outstanding success on their own. The British contributed to this success by lending their assistance to them in overcoming the setbacks. As Britain realized that the position of Palestine would prove helpful in realizing her imperial plans, she developed a profound interest on the Palestinian territories. For the purpose of taking hold of Palestine, she established relations with different parties that she thought to be effective. Various assurances that contradicted with each other were given to different parts. In this vein, the McMahon-Hussein correspondence comprised the promises delivered to Arabs. However, Britain dishonored her promises and since this British failure to keep this agreement held a decisive influence on the fate of the Palestinian Arabs, meaningful reasons were sought to explain the British betrayal again in the third chapter.

On the other hand, the Balfour declaration comprised the promises delivered to the Jews. Contrary to the McMahon-Hussein correspondence, Britain adhered to this declaration for more than three decades. In the thesis, the issuance of this declaration was presented as the manifestation of the British-Jewish alliance. Also it signaled the British determination of going against its agreement with the Arabs. In order to clear up the matter, various explanations were put forth to find the driving force of the declaration.

In the same chapter, the underlying reasons of devising the mandates system by the winning sides after the end of the war and the effects of its implementation on Palestine were discussed. The nomination of Britain as the mandatory power for Palestine materialized in order to satisfy the Zionist demands and it contradicted with the terms of the covenant of League of Nations (LN). As in most cases, the wishes of Arabs were not taken into consideration and the terms of the Palestine mandate, which carried unfavorable provisions for the Arabs, was approved by the LN. One of the most distinct of these provisions was the one that envisaged the establishment of a Jewish Agency that would be able to cooperate with the British authorities in facilitating the Jewish national home. An equivalent body was not granted for the Arab community. In this way they were condemned to the yoke of Britain despite the responsibilities of a mandatory power to introduce self-government in the mandated territories. Although Britain assumed

obligations towards both Arabs and Jews according to the covenant of LN, she by and large failed to fulfill them when Arabs were at issue. Only the short-term British military administration maintained a balanced attitude towards both sides in the knowledge that favoritism towards Jews would disturb the status quo which they were accountable for safeguarding. However, this even-handed line of policy drew reaction from the Zionists. When the civil officials took over control, they started to govern the country as a colony rather than a mandate.

In the fourth chapter, the socio-economic and socio-political transformation in Palestine that was observed on account of Zionist colonization movement was elaborated. This colonization accompanied massive Jewish immigration and land purchases by the immigrants that tainted the relations between Arabs and Jews. Arabs not only began to lose their numerical advantage in the face of rapidly increasing Jews, but also were evicted from their lands as a consequence of the land sale agreements. These caused a radical change in the class structure and production methods of the Arab population. In the economic domain, the pursuance of the 'Jewish labor only' policy by the Zionists destroyed even the slightest chance of cooperation between the Jewish and Arab communities. One of the most frequently highlighted facts throughout the thesis was the distinction between conventional colonialism and Zionist colonialism. The deviant pattern of colonization methods adopted by the Zionists did not take advantage of the cheap native labor force contrary to the traditional colonial movements. The priority of the national interests for the Zionist movement during the pre-state period necessitated discussing the impact of the composition of successive Jewish immigration waves (aliyah) on the progress of Zionist colonization.

Prior to the adoption of the exclusive Jewish labor policy, the Zionists resorted to other means to compete with the Arab labor force, which proved to be temporary and ineffective in the end. Since the effort to set up a joint Jewish-Arab labor union was an unprecedented move in the history of Jewish-Arab relations under the mandate, a retrospective look was held in order to detail the way joint union emerged. However, for the sake of the continuation of the Jewish immigration, the Zionists were obliged to create employment opportunities to the Jews contemplating to immigrate to Palestine. Thus, when these efforts faltered, this time they clung to the policy of having only Jews in the Jewish workplaces more strongly. In this context, the functions of the Jewish labor union (Histadrut), which was the most ardent champion of this policy, were specified. Moreover, since the implementation of this policy had a close correlation with the espousal of the labor Zionist ideology, the origins of this ideology were explained. On the other hand, Britain contributed to the economic progress of the Jews by conceding considerable

economic privileges. In order to reflect the British favoritism shown towards Jews, some instances of these privileges were listed.

Considering that the success of the Arab national movement was tied to the effective rule of its leaders, the characteristics of the Arab leadership were analyzed. The ever-present disputes between the prominent families proved detrimental to Arab nationalism. The failure of the mandate authorities to gain any results from their attempts at setting up self-governing institutions complicated the Arab endeavors of being more efficient in the political domain. Arab political life went through several stages and throughout all these stages the Palestinian Arab politicians worked hard to find earnest solutions to the pro-Zionist British policies and Zionist colonization that confounded their lives. A detailed account of the evolution of the Arab political life, the diversities of opinion found among the different parties and the reasons of these diversities were given. It was also mentioned how the Zionists came to develop a degrading point of view about the Arab national movement and question the competence of Arabs regarding self-government in order to secure a superior position for themselves in the Palestinian administration.

In the fifth chapter, the deteriorating relations between Jews and Arabs and the instances of clashes between them as the manifestation of this deterioration were detailed. An in-depth analysis was given about the disturbances occurred in 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1936. The common point of all these disturbances was that they erupted as a result of a relatively trivial event that was not enough to explain the real causes of the anger. As a matter of fact, the underlying reasons of these disturbances were deep-rooted. Another common point was the formation of commissions of inquiry in order to investigate the causes of the unrest and to advance reasonable recommendations that was believed to be an efficient remedy. All the reports that were prepared by these commissions comprised clauses that were in favor of the Arab community by virtue of their accurate comprehension of the Arabs' popular discontent. However, every time the British officials expressed their ideas that were not conformable with the Jewish national home policy, the Zionists interfered in the British administration and proved successful in rendering these reports ineffective by means of their diplomatic techniques. The only exception to the failure of Zionism in drawing the mandate authorities under its influence happened within the circumstances following the 1936 Arab general strike. Despite the rejection of the 20th Zionist Congress, the Palestinian Zionists under the leadership of Weizmann endeavored to put the suggestion of the Royal Commission that envisaged the partition of Palestine into effect but could not achieve this goal. The worsening relations between the European states that were heralding a war necessitated the abandonment of the partition plan. The British state adopted an appeasement policy towards the Arabs which obliged her to consider the

Arab pleas first time in the history of the Palestine mandate. The efforts of the Foreign Office to strike a shift in the traditional pro-Zionist British policy and its engagement in a competition with the Colonial Office to this end played a significant role in changing the British stance on this matter.

At this juncture, the attempts of the mandatory power to establish self-governing institutions which obtained nothing played part in the ascendancy of the frustration of the Arab community. This failure partly stemmed from the Arabs' refusal to cooperate with the mandate government. Since the preference for non-cooperation had a considerable impact upon the fate of the Arab nationalist movement, the reasons that impelled the Arabs to adopt this course were examined; the advantages and disadvantages of declining the proposals of setting up a Legislative Council were compared. The imbalance in the achieved political, social and economic status of the Jews and Arabs ultimately compelled the mandate authority to grant autonomy to the Arabs at least in the religious domain. The establishment of the Supreme Muslim Council was the outcome of the British understanding that the superiority of the Jews gave rise to a rising uneasiness among Arabs that complicated the conduct of the mandate rule and endangered the Jewish national home policy. Despite entrusting only religious tasks to the Council, as a result of the personal zeal of its leader Hajj Amin, the Council assumed political roles and was associated with the outbreak of the 1929 disturbances which bore religious characteristics.

CHAPTER 2

THE PERIOD BEFORE THE BRITISH MANDATE RULE

Before plunging into the intricate and daunting Palestinian issue under the British mandate, it is of great value to deal with the background of the events that culminated in the intense encounter of the Arabs and the Jews throughout the 1920s onwards. The socio-economic conditions in Palestine during the last days of the Ottoman administration produced intractable effects on the relations between the indigenous community – Arabs – and the forthcoming actors on this territory, namely the British, who established themselves as the occupation force in 1917 and turned out to be the legal governor of the country for the next three decades, and the Jews, who stepped into Palestine for the first time in 1880s thanks to the upward trend of the Jewish immigration.

Although the colonization of Palestine by the Jews had its roots in the pro-Zionist policies of the subsequent British governments, who wielded control on Palestinian affairs since 1917, the class formation, land tenure, and legislation during the Ottoman Empire should not be considered irrelevant to this subject. When the war ended, the Ottoman Empire was a defunct state from now on and broken up into many smaller states. This does not mean, however, that we should look ahead and usher in a new era which is purged from the Ottoman traces. It is not that simple to erase our memories at once, since the remnants of the Ottoman Empire were still there to be taken into account.

In this context, I will discuss certain patterns that were found in the social, cultural and economic systems of the Ottoman Empire and try to associate them with the successive developments that took place in the Palestinian territories after the demise of the empire and the subsequent build up of the British mandate rule under the supervision of the League of Nations.

2.1 The Land System

One of the most significant characteristics of the legislative acts concerning the land distribution and registration introduced by the Ottoman Empire were their inequality-oriented structure. *The Ottoman Land Code of 1858* shall be treated as the point of origin of the sufferings of the Arab peasants in Palestine and as the exacerbating factor in the land sales to the Jewish organizations.

Prior to the issuance of the land code in 1858, private ownership of land had been limited and the land system had taken on a shape around the communal holding which was called the *masha'a*. The communal character of the *masha'a* land emanated from its corporate possession by the inhabitants of the villages. Since the lands that were parceled in the *masha'a* system changed hand at regular intervals, no one had the right to claim that the land belonged only to him. As a consequence of this, they could only plow and cultivate and were barred from doing construction on these lands¹ that would put them in a privileged position against their cooperative neighbors.

The aim of the land code of 1858 was to attenuate the prevalence of the *masha'a* system through distributing individual title deeds to the lands. In this way, the Ottoman government, which pursued the goal of establishing its authority in the lands that stood out of its domain by inducing secession within the inhabitants, assumed that communal ownership could be dismantled. As in other countries, in the Ottoman Empire the Palestinian villages, which faced the divisive policies of the central government, resisted these fragmentary actions by displaying a sense of integrity within themselves. The *masha'a* system was the expression of this integrity in the field of agriculture not particularly for economic reasons but for political and social concerns. *Masha'a* was implemented in Palestine where villages were not organized tribally, which means the villagers did not hold kinship relations with each other and thus they were more exposed to the intervenient power of the government than the tribally organized villages. So the peasant groups, which felt that they were unprotected against disintegration, formed groups with administrative powers which were called *hamula*² and assigned the management of the village lands to these groups. Organizing their agricultural activities in a coordinated and cooperative fashion was obligatory for the Palestinian cultivators so as not to lose control on their lands. The *masha'a* system of production and the *hamula* organization as the upholder of this system assumed very beneficial roles for the overseeing of the social and economic lives of the peasants and exhibited extraordinary cooperative methods that helped to relive many of the hardships they went through.

In the *masha'a* system the right to till the land was shared by several peasants who conducted periodical cultivation. These lands in question were large undivided tracts. With the promulgation of the land code in 1858 the right to dispose of land was transferred from

¹ Ghazi Falah, "Pre-State Jewish Colonization in Northern Palestine and Its Impact on Local Bedouin Sedentarization 1914-1918", *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (July 1991), p. 304.

² Scott Atran, "Hamula Organization and Masha'a Tenure in Palestine", *Man*, New Series, Vol. 21, No. 2 (June 1986), pp 272-275.

the people who long performed praiseworthy work on it to the members of wealthy families.³ As a consequence of the provisions of the code, hapless peasants were robbed of the chance to obtain title to the lands they tilled. This came into the picture as such: In order to give the title deed, the Ottoman authorities expected from the applicants either to prove that they were conducting farming activities on the lands for at least ten years or to pay a certain amount of money that was called redemption price.⁴ Since the bulk of the peasants could not manage to pay this money, the land they claimed was sold by auction. With no surprise, the purchaser in the auction turned out to be the highest bidder who had abundant financial means for belonging to the wealthy stratum contrary to the peasant class who lacked such resources. Another aim of the ordinance was to extend the control of the state on the lands within the vast boundaries by organizing them under five categories. These categories were *mulk*, *waqf*, *miri*, *matruk* and *mawat*. Going into the details of the features of these categories would be to transcend the purpose of my thesis. Therefore I shall rather elaborate on the consequences of the innovations brought about by the code within the framework of the growing animosity between Arabs and Jews that stemmed from the Zionist acquiring of Arab land.

Since land registration was not a prevalent application in the Ottoman before the introduction of the code, peasants had cultivated the land without encountering any significant obstacle. However, as the legal proprietorship passed to the members of the upper class, the usurpation of the rights of the peasants emerged as a fact of the day. This was how the new owners of the land ascended to the top of the population pyramid since land ownership was the major determinant to be regarded from the upper echelons of the society. At this point, we can easily draw the conclusion that the Land Code of 1858 paved the way to the close correlation between land possession and the class formation.

Nevertheless, the code could not achieve the goals it intended to reach initially. Neither the range of application of the masha'a system could be reduced, nor the peasants could be emboldened enough to register the lands they tilled. Peasants were reluctant to register the lands they cultivated due to several different reasons. Since the Ottoman administration laid down the land code of 1858 with the purpose of increasing the efficiency in collecting taxes and arranging the conscriptions with precision, the cultivators mostly refrained from putting their lands under registration to evade such transactions of

³ David McDowall, *The Palestinians, The Road To Nationhood*, London: Minority Rights Publications, 1994, p. 7.

⁴ Atran, "Hamula Organization", p. 291.

the state.⁵ For this reason, registration was either sluggish or at the times it gained momentum it contributed to the concentration of vast amounts of land in the hands of few families including the ones living in today's Lebanese or Syrian territories who did not hold proximate linkage with the lands they owned. With respect to the sales of lands to the Jews, these absentee landlords are regarded as the main culprit and facilitator of the Zionist colonization of Palestine.⁶ While Arab landlords and peasants of Palestine showed sensitivity to the land sales in order not to serve the Zionists' implicit efforts, the absentee landlords were eager to secure a share of the Jewish capital simply because they were aloof of the hardships emanating from the Zionist colonizers' endeavors. The increase in the land prices was met by some landowners with glee. Contrary to the merchants and tradesmen who were concerned about the detrimental effects of increasing Jewish immigration on Palestinian Arab economy, the elites in Jerusalem displayed a certain degree of flexibility toward Jewish settlement.⁷ Although the motives of the rural and urban Palestinian Arab population in resisting the land sales to the Jews varied, the Arab national movement owed a significant part of the low rate of the Jewish land purchases prior to the establishment of the Israeli state to the part played by them.⁸

When the military administration of the British ceased and the civil administration took office, one of the first attempts of the mandate officials was to destroy the masha'a system so as to implement the traditional *land settlement policy*. The aim was again to extend registration, but this time division of land took precedence over it. The land reforms, which manifested itself for instance in the Land Settlement Ordinance of 1928 and Land Settlement Amendment Ordinance of 1930, envisaged by the mandate rule were part of the colonial wisdom where land settlement policy served as the backbone. According to this understanding, the undivided large lands ran counter to any developmental pattern contemplated by the British authorities, thus should have been replaced with smaller

⁵ Talal Asad, "Class Transformation under the Mandate", *MERIP Reports*, No. 53, (Dec., 1976), p. 4.

⁶ The close involvement of the absentee landlords in transferring the centuries-old Arab lands to Jewish immigrants is evident from the percentage of land purchased by Palestine Land Development Company in 1936. 89% of the land sale transactions were realized as a result of the negotiations with large landowners. This information can be found in; Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1979, p. 69. Of the rest of the land purchases made by the Jews, the lands sold by the Arab peasants constituted only 9.4%, namely 0.25% of the total area of Palestine. This information can be obtained from; Falah, op. cit., p. 302.

⁷ Baruch Kimmerling & Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994, p. 74.

⁸ Falah, op. cit., p. 302.

parcels called *mafruz* through partition. After partition was accomplished, encouraging Jewish settlement on these smaller tracts constituted the essence of the new land policy of the mandate government. Article 6 of the mandate terms was a guarantee for the Jewish community that Britain would assist their close settlement on Palestinian lands.⁹ Actually British mandate rule's two main goals concerning the land tenure system in Palestine was to give a totally different shape to it that would promote a national home for the Jews and divide the large masha'a lands.¹⁰

Contrary to the traditional colonial wisdom which claimed that the masha'a tenure relied on exploiting the peasants to the utmost end owing to its feudal structure, there was neither any exploitation nor any feudal feature inherent in the masha'a system. This type of land tenure exhibited a high degree of village cooperation and rather than forcing the economic conditions of the cultivators to be at a standstill or to deteriorate, it helped them to get over most of the difficulties including the ones that emanated from governmental intentions to alter the exercise of the masha'a system fundamentally. In brief, the members of the hamula helped each other in various ways.¹¹

In order to depict the masha'a as a catastrophic land tenure system, the British mandate administration associated it with the underdeveloped condition of lands and production. Although Palestinian cultivators engaged in extensive agricultural work, masha'a was deliberately portrayed as a system that did not necessitate any hard work by the tillers such as fertilizing, weeding, seeding, ploughing etc.¹² However, the reality was completely different. Rather than the considerably favored intensive cultivation, extensive

⁹ Article 6. The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of the other sections of the population are not prejudiced shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage in cooperation with the Jewish Agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including state lands and waste lands and waste lands not required for public purposes. For the full text of the terms of the mandate for Palestine see; Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine: British Economic Policy, 1920-1929*, London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1993, pp. 185-192.

¹⁰Falah, op. cit., p. 299.

¹¹ Atran, "Hamula Organization", p. 281-282.

¹² "Under the musha' system there is no incentive to invest for ameliorating land, which in any case passes sooner or later into the hands of others." Baer (1966:151); "It is useless to expect that any land will be weeded or fertilized, that trees will be planted, or, in a word, that any development will take place" Johnson-Crosbie Report (1930:45); "Musha tenure is, undoubtedly, one of the main reasons of the present low productivity of the once prosperous plains of the interior of Syria and constitutes an obvious bar to any form of agricultural progress." Klat (1957:19); "Of course the system has great disadvantages, since it prevents any investment in the land and is an obstacle to any attempt at progress. The individual cultivator is precluded from manuring the land or undertaking any improvement such as terracing against erosion." Warriner (1966:76). All these quotations were obtained from Atran, "Hamula Organization", p. 290. The first quotation can be found in the first footnote and the last three quotations can be found in the second footnote in the said page.

cultivation preferred by the Arab peasants of Palestine neither entailed the peasants to lie idle the whole season, nor brought about a decline in the fertility of soil.¹³ Departing from these points, all criticisms of the British mandate rule directed against the masha'a tenure which was supported by the hamula group, proved unfounded. Moreover, it is hard to say that the British ordinances earmarked for the objective of eradicating the field of application of masha'a turned out to be efficient in this sense. Just like the Ottoman Empire's futile initiatives to provide the outright registration of the land, the mandate power failed to dismantle the masha'a system completely.¹⁴ Although the British mandate regime offered the Palestinian Arab peasants the chance of being the legal holders of the lands they conducted agricultural work as part of the masha'a system, this system managed to preserve its internal dynamics against outside intervention. The cadastral innovations introduced by the mandate rule for the most part could not achieve success on the masha'a lands once the Ottoman government also tried to divide but could not achieve success either. Despite the fact that the exercise of masha'a system varied from region to region within Palestine and the features it displayed could be very different,¹⁵ by and large the social aspect of the masha'a, namely the hamula organization as the manifestation of the village cooperation, proved to be robust, preventing the break up of the system. The rough estimates point out that only %25 of the Palestinian lands was registered in 1925.¹⁶ Eight villages were in the scope of the British endeavors to abolish the masha'a system between June 1929 and February 1932¹⁷ and the masha'a lands were partitioned only in 171 villages out of approximately 850 when the year 1937 came.¹⁸ The British land ordinances also included salient setbacks for the Palestinian Arab cultivators which caused them to lose certain advantages that had been given to them in the time of the Ottoman Empire with the Ottoman Land Code of 1858. After the enactment of this code, the peasants were granted with the right to till the lands that had been considered mewat¹⁹ and mahlul²⁰ by paying

¹³ Ibid, pp. 276-278.

¹⁴ Scott Atran, "The Surrogate Colonization of Palestine, 1917-1939", *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (Nov., 1989), pp. 724-727.

¹⁵ Atran, "Hamula Organization", pp. 288-290.

¹⁶ McDowall, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷ Atran, "Hamula Organization", p. 288.

¹⁸ Lesch, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁹ "The Ottoman Land Code defined mewat, literally translated as 'dead land', as land sufficiently distant from any village or town which was left uninhabited and uncultivated for a long period of

redemption price or proving that these lands had been cultivated for the previous ten years up until the point of their application. These stipulations of the Ottoman land code were abolished by the British lawmakers and instead more restrictive conditions were put into effect. The Muhlul Land Ordinance of 1920 and the Mawat Land Ordinance of 1921 nullified the above mentioned clauses of the Ottoman land code. Thus, it became more difficult for the Arab peasants to get access to the mawat and muhlul lands, for only the approval of the British authorities let them gain the cultivation rights in these lands.²¹

The British bids to crush the strength of the masha'a fitted well to the interests of the Zionists for a multiple reasons. First of all, Zionists sought to forestall the complexities originating from the masha'a land. Since the masha'a land was a communally used tract, the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 created problems regarding the person to be registered for the title deed of the land. Because Zionists' were avid to seize as much land as possible in Palestine, the problems of title retarded or hindered the transfer of lands to the Zionist organizations. Another factor that produced obstacles for the land purchases by the Jews was the opposition of the peasants to abandon their lands due to their perception of being the real owners of the lands they cultivated. If the masha'a land had been divided, the determination of these peasants would have been removed and their standing would have been attenuated to let the Zionists buy these lands easily. In view of this point, through the encouragement of the Arab politicians, Arab peasants insisted on carrying on with the masha'a system for the purpose of forestalling the Jewish purchases. Nevertheless, the British land policy acted as a facilitating factor for the land sales to the Jews. For instance, the Transfer of Land Ordinance of 1920 entitled the High Commissioner with the authority to approve the land transactions when three conditions were met.²² During the sales process of lands, the mandate administration cooperated with the Jewish Agency and in this way looked after the interests of the Jewish community, jeopardizing the economic status of the Arab tenants and fellahin by depriving them of lands. Consequently, the lands acquired by the Zionist movement showed an upward trend and thanks to the backing of the British, the Zionist colonization made great gains for itself during the mandate rule. Apart from these,

time (Kedar: 2001). Mawat land was state property by operation of law." Isaachar Rosen-Zvi, *Taking Space Seriously: Law, Space and Society in Contemporary Israel*, Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 47.

²⁰ "In Ottoman Turkish law, muhlul was miri agricultural land that had reverted to the crown because the owner had died without an heir or the land was not cultivated for three years or more." Encyclopedia of the Middle East, <http://www.mideastweb.org/Middle-East-Encyclopedia/muhlul.htm>

²¹ Atran, "Hamula Organization", p. 287.

²² Falah, op. cit., p. 299.

the Palestinian Arab agriculture which used to be dominated by cereals was not a labor intensive way of farming. In other words, limited number of cultivators was sufficient to reap the grain crops. Thus, it contradicted with the labor intensive Jewish land policy. The aim of the Zionists concerning the lands in Palestine was to create as much employment opportunities for the Jewish immigrants as possible. For conquering the labor force in Palestine for the Jewish laborers, it was necessary to bring about a change in the cultivation methods. Cereal farming should be abandoned and instead of extensive cultivation, intensive cultivation should be adopted.²³

Up until the point that land sales to the Zionists began, the unfavorable outcomes of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 had not been felt in its literal sense. Through the code, most of the peasants became tenants on the land who started working on behalf of the wealthy upper class. Nonetheless, peasants had continued to regard themselves as the original holders of the land until sales of lands to the Zionists were consummated by the absentee landlords which entailed the displacement of the tenants. Thousands of Arab farmers were evacuated under coercion to be replaced by the Jewish settlers. This is the point of origin of the Arab-Jewish conflict and constitutes the essence of the century-old problem. The adverse impacts of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 came into existence after several decades passed and brought forth irreversible consequences. However, there are some Jewish writers who turn a blind eye to this obvious truth and claim the opposite because of not being able to putting their biased view point aside. The argument they committed themselves in order to prove that the land sales were completely in line with the moral values is that these sales were strictly compatible with the law.²⁴ Yet, neither the absentee landlords' part, nor the lawfulness of the purchase agreements is a reasonable justification for leaving the Arab peasants in destitute. Moreover, using legality as a pretext neither reverse the unfavorable positions Arabs were subjected to nor change this fact.

2.2 The Social Structure of Palestine

The Ottoman class system contained no less disparity than the land tenure. This system was such an inveterate one that it took too long to be eradicated and replaced with a more egalitarian type. Thus, it will be wishful thinking to assume that the mandatory power succeeded straightaway in reversing this highly stratified composition.

²³ Atran, "Hamula Organization" p. 277.

²⁴ Alan Dershowitz, *The Case For Israel*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003, pp. 13-14.

The population pyramid was relatively sharp and the bottom layer, which encompassed the majority of the population -farmers-, was extremely wide. The privilege to own land was peculiar to a handful of affluent families, who constituted the top layer of the pyramid, and the rest of the population was landless farmers who were working as tenants on the soil of this privileged class.²⁵ For the most part, the monopoly of management capacity was reserved for the members of the wealthy families, thus the governing elite and the landowning class corresponded to each other. As a result of the reforms undertaken by the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, including the land code of 1858, the task of collecting taxes was transferred to the wealthy classes. Prior to the enactment of the land code in 1858, village shaykhs had conducted the role of intermediaries between the state authorities and the villagers.²⁶ The peasants used to cultivate the lands in accordance with the masha'a system and pay their taxes to their shaykhs for deliverance to the Ottoman authorities. Before handing the taxes, shaykhs got a certain share from them and in the end the amount accrued to the government was less than the accumulated amount. The land code deprived the shaykhs of their wide privileges with the purpose of enhancing the central power of the state. The government authorities began to collect taxes directly from the individuals who became the legal owners of the lands on account of the title deed they were granted. Thus, not only the tax revenues of the Ottoman government relatively increased,²⁷ but also the urban notables rose in strength politically at the expense of the village shaykhs thanks to the Ottoman regulations. Here it is of importance to mention the leading families in Jerusalem, for their influence throughout entire Palestine increased in time and they seized huge powers which enabled them to be in control of the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement in the country. The notables living in Jerusalem owed their prominence to the offices granted to them by the Ottoman authorities which also rendered them dependent and loyal to the Ottoman Empire. As a part of the reforms undertaken by the Ottomans in the late 1900s, certain institutions, which were crowded by the members of these families, were established as a result of the creation of Jerusalem municipality in 1863. Thanks to these political and administrative duties assumed by the notables of Jerusalem, they became well versed in the matters of administration and increased their executive talents.²⁸ In other words, the end of the century

²⁵ Nathan Weinstock, "The Impact of Zionist Colonization on Palestinian Arab Society before 1948", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (Winter, 1973), p. 54.

²⁶ Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, pp. xxi-xxii.

²⁷ Asad, op. cit, p. 4.

witnessed the assumption of significant administrative posts in Palestine by the urban elites who also acquired economic advantages by taking hold of lands. In short, while the social structure changed to the disadvantage of the rural population, the wealthy urban classes seized even more favorable conditions.

The middle class, which have the crucial role of acting as the agents of democracy in genuinely open societies, had a slight existence in Palestine during the Ottoman regime. This stratum included the craftsmen, civil servants and tradesmen. On account of their semi-skilled or full-educated positions contrary to the ignorant and illiterate cultivators, they carried substantial weight for the future social and economic advancement of the Arab society. Nevertheless, in consideration of the absence of careful treatment they deserved, they could not take up the progressive role they would have done otherwise. Most of the members of this class were Christian Arabs²⁹ and this was an important indicator of the unbridgeable social and economic cleavage among the Muslim population, who were either low-income farmers or prosperous landowners. In default of the Muslim middle class members, Muslim lower stratum was left devoid of an essential linkage which could have conveyed their grievances and complaints to the authorized bodies.

Another societal element that is by and large ignored due to their nomadic life style was the Bedouins. However, their economic and social line of actions rendered them quite essential for the applicability of the mandate ordinances that made amendments in the former land and settlement policies of the Ottoman rule. The number of Bedouins declined gradually owing to the planned sedentarization policies of the British mandate administration. Both the British and the Zionists considered the Bedouins as an impediment to the economic progress that should be eliminated at once. The joint motivation to get rid of them made the Bedouins subjects of forced evacuation from the lands they long deemed their own and finally transformed them to a bunch of settled people. The harshest incidents of this kind was experienced in northern Palestine, for the lands in this region were the most fertile in the whole country and were thus subjected to Zionist endeavors of colonization. Even during the Ottoman times, a high percentage of the population inhabited the coastal districts even though the taxes were the highest compared to the other regions of Palestine.³⁰ The first Zionist endeavors to acquire land in northern Palestine arose with the

²⁸ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

²⁹ Rony E. Gabbay, *A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict: The Arab Refugee Problem (A Case Study)*, Geneve: Librarie E. Droz, 1959, p. 13.

³⁰ Asad, op. cit., p. 4.

short-term prohibition for the Jews to buy land in the Mutasarrıflık of Jerusalem.³¹ Owing to the fact that the Zionist institutions did not fall behind in finding out that the conditions were more suitable for land purchases in northern regions, within three years (1898-1901) six colonies were established on the lands that were purchased by the Jewish Colonization Association.³² The consistent land sales to the Jews in north Palestine led to a considerable decline in the lands that the Bedouins living there used for grazing. This was the major element that brought forth the denomadization of the Bedouins there and contrary to the spontaneous advent of sedentarization in other regions of the country, Bedouins in northern Palestine found themselves under compulsion to change their life patterns on account of the colonial practices. The pastoral activities conducted by the nomadic populations were an impediment for the intensive agriculture that the settled Jews intended to do. The more lands sold the Zionist bodies meant the more lands usurped from the Bedouins. As the confines of lands used for agriculture expanded, the Bedouins were disposed of exercising pastoral activities, increasingly abandoning nomadic practices and instead adopting sedentary way of life.³³

The feudal system in which the possession of land was the major determining factor prevailed also during the British rule and it not only shaped the British policies towards the Arabs and the patterns of life they perpetuated so far, but also created a faulty image of them in the Jewish mind. According to the British point of view, this multiple-layered configuration was bound to be eliminated in order to ensure the enlightened headway of the Palestinian society and approximate it to the European standards. On the other hand, the fragmented nature of the Arab people suited the interests of the Zionists who felt anxious to settle in Palestine and establish a home that would lead to a state for their own in there.

Since the bulk of the Arab society scraped a living, for so long Zionists perceived them as lacking the necessary qualifications to stand up and fight the hardships they faced; they were destined to be subordinated and swayed. Zionists were also convinced that the Arabs could not foster nationalistic sentiments and what was termed the Arab nationalism was nothing more than the personal zeal of the minor wealthy class. This Zionist

³¹ Jerusalem was established as a mutasarrıflık in 1887. This move was an extension of the administrative reforms being applied in the Ottoman Empire for almost half a century. From that moment on, the connection between Jerusalem and the Porte was maintained directly without the mediation of a governor. See; Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 68.

³² Mandel, op. cit., pp. 21-23.

³³ Falah, op. cit., pp. 289-294.

motivation was not totally groundless. The reason was the intra-class relations which were hardly peaceful.

There were fierce rivalries among the members of the prominent wealthy families. These disputes mainly involved struggle over political clout within the society and the most evident contestation was between the Nashashibi and Husseini families.³⁴ Following the surfacing of the Zionists' original endeavors, these two families did their utmost to foment people's resentments and after an uprising broke out, they competed with each other so as to oversee these popular disturbances. Nevertheless, their failure in finding a common point engendered an image of a shattered Arab leadership incapable of orienting the furious crowds properly or manipulating the events to the advantage of the whole Arab community. This multi-headed leadership hindered the active and effective struggle of the Arab masses vis-à-vis the better organized and coordinated Jews and gave impetus to the colonization efforts of Zionists' by invigorating their faith in the impossibility of a staunch Arab nationalist movement. The mélange of Jewish nationalistic objectives and Zionist pretensions in comparison with the inert Arab reactions generated a tenacious Zionist act of obtaining the support of the British mandate officials for their immigration and land purchase policies throughout the 1920s, which they for the most part executed seamlessly.

2.3 The Educational Standards

For truly grasping the separate though relational development of the social and cultural lives of the Arabs and Jews in Palestine and the feebleness of the Arab masses in interfering with the British policies, it is important to scrutinize the policies of education during the Ottoman period.

The ratio of attendance to school among the Arabs was awfully low and remained so under the mandate rule despite piecemeal improvements. Moreover, there was wide range of disparities throughout the country such as gender and class biases. The opportunity to receive training was confined to a small group of fortunate children, composed mainly of males and middle and upper class members living in towns.³⁵

Missionary schools were rife throughout the country. The foreign powers attempted to increase their intervention into the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire by means of establishing consulates in Jerusalem. Under the pretext of providing protection to their

³⁴ Taysir Nashif, "Palestinian Arab and Jewish Leadership in the Mandate Period", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 6, No.4, (Summer, 1977), pp. 120-121.

³⁵ Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, "Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (Spring, 1972), pp. 38-39.

citizens, the penetration of the European states grew. Accompanying this situation was the presence of the foreign religious communities, especially in Jerusalem because of its spiritual character.³⁶ The religious missionaries put forth vigorous efforts at penetrating the Arab and Muslim mind through the purposeful education activities they carried on. On the other hand, the training facilities provided and education policies pursued by the Porte were regrettably limited. The shortfall of the Ottoman Empire in providing the necessary means for an operative educational system until the Young Turk revolution in 1908 carried the missionary and private schools to the foreground with the pretext of filling this gap. Changing the medium of instruction from Arabic to Turkish in the Arab provinces³⁷ after the revolution as a part of the centralization efforts exacerbated the situation. The compulsory usage of Turkish was not only limited to public educational institutions, but also comprised the judicial and administrative units.³⁸ Thus, although Arabs constituted the majority of the population throughout the whole Middle Eastern region, they were robbed of their right to receive education and to defend themselves in courts in their native tongue. Indeed, the Ottoman government after 1908 laid emphasis on the improvement of the educational facilities and as a part of the policy of expanding the school system, new schools, which used Arabic as the medium of instruction, were established. Namely, the mandatory usage of Turkish in Arab provinces was not an all-encompassing implementation. The nationalist tendencies that were showing an obvious upswing among the Arab communities compelled the Young Turks to moderate their centralist policies and cool down the separatist aspirations of them by giving a certain degree of freedom.³⁹ Furthermore, it will not be fair to accuse the Ottoman administration for maintaining a centralist structure in order to conserve the unity of the empire. The separatist tendencies of the ethnic groups started to mount up in the 19th century on account of the outspreading nationalist sentiments following the French revolution and starting with the Tanzimat period, the Ottoman rule did its best to wipe out the European interference in its internal affairs and to cease the schismatic voices by rearranging the rights that were previously accorded to the religious and ethnic elements.

When Jews established their separate and advanced education system owing to the inadequate standards inherited from the Ottoman rule and the scarcity of the resources

³⁶ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 69.

³⁷ Gabbay, op. cit., p. 14.

³⁸ Lesch, op. cit., p. 24.

³⁹ M. F. Abcarius, *Palestine: Through the Fog of Propaganda*, London: Hutchinson & Co. Publishers Ltd., 1946, pp. 100-101.

allocated by the mandatory rule to the development of this backward education system, the foundation of the cultural segregation of Arab and Jews was laid. Actually the mandatory power's shortfalls in meeting the educational needs of the Arab population not only stemmed from the budgetary limitations. When looked from another aspect, this was a deliberate policy intended to render them apathetic to the political issues for the fear of a likely insurmountable activeness in case of their inclusion to any formal education.⁴⁰ Thus, British officials displayed an inclination of not expanding the educational possibilities for the already illiterate and indifferent Arab people.

On the other hand, every necessary mean was present for the Jews to develop an education system distinct from the Arabs'. The consciousness dictating that they were culturally different from the Arab community was the leading motive. It was essential for them to educate their children exclusively in Hebrew language and to provide them with a national consciousness consistent with the Zionist aspirations. Moreover, Jewish funds flowing into Palestine and appropriated for the disposal of the Zionist organizations enabled the Zionists' to create a separate system without depending on any government assistance or subsidy. By doing this, their only goal was to offer outstanding opportunities solely to the Jewish community; they were by no means loyal to the joint interests of the whole population or country.⁴¹

When the Ottoman deficiency in the provision of educational services combined with the prevalent colonial wisdom of the Palestinian government, who preferred spending in administrative needs, safety supervision and defensive purposes and abstained from making large amounts of expenditure in order to raise the standards of education or sanitary services, the disability of Arabs in exhibiting an image of a coherent community devoted to their national cause became more acute. Since the majority of the Arab population lived in villages and engaged in agriculture, they remained incompetent in the face of the versed and advanced Jews who accumulated necessary knowledge to make headway in diversified fields for the good of the Jewish national interests. This of course should not lead to the underestimation of the impulsive force of the Palestinian nationalism, which was born out of the instigation of the Zionist movements, and its capacity of gathering the Palestinian Arabs together. I will mention this point in detail in following chapters.

⁴⁰ Martin Bunton, "Mandate Daze: Stories of British Rule in Palestine, 1917-48", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, (August, 2003), p. 488.

⁴¹ Barbara Smith, op. cit., pp. 58-60.

2.4 The Emergence of Zionism and Its Demands

The advent of Zionist movement dates back to the late 19th century. Although Jews' will to go back to the promised lands remained almost intact since Romans exiled them and various solutions were offered in different time periods for their restoration in Palestine,⁴² the idea of a founding a state for the Jewish people on these territories was the most essential factor that distinguishes Zionism from other ideologies. The fact that the dispersed Jews could not manage to forge integration with the European societies that they lived amid made them the target of sporadic anti-Jewish outbursts in these countries. The failure of Jews in assimilating themselves and the lack of enthusiasm to espouse the Western way of life and traditions stemmed partly from their powerful commitment to their Jewish identities. Despite the physical detachment, their success in retaining the historical experiences of their ancient kingdoms alive and their immovable faith in reviving this experience once again attached them emotionally. Although the contribution of the religious themes to this attachment is substantial, it will be wrong to reduce the elements solely to religion when defining the Jews. It is put forth that the Jewish people justifiably deserve to be regarded as national community, for they held the necessary qualifications to be defined as such.⁴³

The Zionist ideology was formulated by Theodor Herzl in his book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) that was published in 1896. One year later, in 1897, Zionism was embodied with the convening of the first Zionist Congress in Basel and the following annual meetings. Besides, the creation of the *Zionist Organization* (the name *World Zionist Organization* was accepted in 1960) in the first congress was the key progress for the future of Zionism, because it provided Herzl with a solid foundation to conduct negotiations with the relevant parties. Without such an organization, which made the Zionist movement an acceptable actor in the international relations, Herzl would have encountered formidable difficulties in voicing his views and gaining supporters to the Zionist cause. No one would have taken him seriously, if he had not built himself as the leader of the Zionist Organization, for he was just a journalist prior to his assumption of this position.⁴⁴

Initially, Palestine was not the main focal point of the Zionist aspirations. This was evident from Herzl's remarks in his diaries. Herzl's sudden interest in embodying the idea of

⁴² Mim Kemal Öke, *II. Abdülhamit, Siyonistler ve Filistin Meselesi*, İstanbul, 1981, p. 17.

⁴³ Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁴ Öke, op. cit, p. 30.

a state for the world Jewry was said to be triggered by the *Dreyfus affair* in France.⁴⁵ A French army member of Jewish origin – Alfred Dreyfus – was tried and condemned to imprisonment in 1894 just because of his Jewishness and in spite of his innocence. This incident ignited the long vested hatred for Jews in the French society in particular and in Europe in general. For centuries, they were deprived of equal civic and political rights with the citizens of the countries that they dwelled because they were regarded alien with the influence of racist approaches. The anti-Semitic attitudes acquired several dimensions. These attitudes emerged in most cases as political inequality, personal humiliation and finally as physical persecution.⁴⁶ In the second half of the 19th century, the Jews came under an ascending trend of concurrent oppression against them in many parts of Europe. The slaughter of Jews witnessed in Russia has gone down in history as the *pogroms* and held a notorious connotation. This heated antagonism against them, which took root purely from their religious affiliation and nothing else, has come to be known as anti-Semitism and caused many Jews to take cognizance of their Jewish identities and constituted the crux of the *Jewish question*.

When assimilation ceased to be regarded as a viable solution to the Jewish question, the advocates of political Zionism began to gain adherents from all over the world. The second part of the 19th century witnessed the rise of modern political Zionist ideology. When the assimilationists turned out to be wrong in their presumptions that Jews would have been able to live a normal life if they had adopted the modes of non-Jews, the idea of a state for the Jews in order to give them normalcy came to the foreground. In other words, the resolutions offered for the persecution of the Jews were grounded on the urgency of liberating them from the confines of the states they faced all these sufferings and this would be within the bounds of possibility only if a state for their own could be guaranteed in some part of the world. Religious aspect no doubt distinguished the Palestinian alternative from other alternatives, yet the urgency of rescuing the Jews had the priority. By giving precedence to the temporal needs of the Jewish people, political Zionists automatically put the spiritual and moral necessities of this religious community to the background. Tackling the problem only from the political perspective and treating the protection of the religious characteristics of the Jews as a secondary issue was condemned by the cultural Zionists. According to a leading personage of cultural Zionism called Ahad Ha'am, the tendency of Jews following the French Revolution to fuse with the milieu in which they lived and their eagerness to blend into a whole with the European values

⁴⁵ David Waines, *The Unholy War: Israel and Palestine: 1897-1971*, Montreal: Chateau Books Limited, 1971, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Tessler, op. cit., p. 21

endangered the cultural lives and national attributes of the Jews. Ha'am argued that the restoration of Jews in Palestine would offer a way out to the impasse facing the Jews in Europe. However, founding a Jewish entity in Palestine only with physical concerns would depreciate the meaning of this entity, for the gathered Jews would lack the essential will to rebuild their impaired national feelings and religious commitment.⁴⁷ The arguments proposed by Ha'am inevitably caused him to come up against both the classical and political Zionists. However, unlike Herzl, there were people among the precursors of political Zionism who believed in the urgency of "the creation of a state that would be uniquely and authentically Jewish, one that addressed the spiritual needs of Judaism as well as the temporal needs of the Jews."⁴⁸ The principles defended by these people approximated them to the cultural Zionists who stood for the establishment of a state for Jews only upon the condition that this state would serve as a cultural center for the Jewish community, distinguishing its character from the other states' of the world.⁴⁹ Herzl, however, yearned for the establishment of a Jewish state not different from other states and evaluated any opportunity that would be seized to put the Jewish nation on equal footing with other nations as a great opportunity and pondered different alternatives. Thanks to the historical and religious significance of Holy Lands, however, Palestine assumed precedence in the Zionist movement and at the first Zionist Congress the purpose of Zionism turned out to be the colonization of the Palestinian territories by Jews all around the world. In this sense, Zionists began to pursue the ultimate goal of establishing an independent Jewish state there.

On account of the cruelties they faced, Jews were bit by bit attracted to the discourses adopted by the leading colonizers of the world. During the efforts to get access to a piece of land which would offer them the chance of living a peaceful life far away from the European discriminations and oppressions, Jews were mainly interested in relieving their pains. Once they started to settle in Palestine under the patronage of the British Empire and confronted the indigenous Arab population, they began to perceive themselves as being far more superior and civilized than the natives. Their perception of bearing more advanced attributes than the Palestinian Arabs was an extension of the colonial conception of the European powers. This perception grew so stronger that, they found a good reason to regard their colonization movement justifiable in the face of primitive and under-developed Arab community who curbed the development of the country. Similar to the traditional colonists, Zionists tried to dominate the indigenous Arabs and pursued an expansionist

⁴⁷ Öke, op. cit., pp. 24-26.

⁴⁸ Tessler, op. cit, p. 46.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

movement at the expense of them.⁵⁰ Another similarity of the Zionist colonization in Palestine with the long standing colonialism was the belief that the Palestinian lands were mainly vacant in terms of people. This view can be clearly detected from the motto “a land without a people for a people without land” which defended the settlement of persecuted Jews of Europe in Palestine. By suggesting that the lands they were eager to conquer were under-populated, they sought to justify their colonization initiative which would not cause a great extent of marginalization of the natives. Nevertheless, apart from the meager voices in favor of sharing their technical know-how, professional experiences, and other more advanced skills with the Arabs, Zionists mainly did not benefit from the major pretext of colonialism, that is, the divine mission of civilizing the other relatively barbarous parts of the world. Contrary to the traditional colonizers, the disinterest of the Zionists towards the progress of the indigenous community stemmed from the idiosyncrasy of the Zionist colonization movement which wanted to realize their goals through their own efforts without exploiting the natives. Since the success of Zionism would in the end rely merely on the performance of the Jewish community, they did not develop any significant interest in the bad state of the certain Arab fields and preferred for the most part to engage in their own works as if the Arab community did not exist.

After creating the framework in the first Zionist congress for the will to restore the Jews to their historic lands and to provide a home for them, who came under the rising wave of anti-Semitism in various European countries and were maltreated with growing racist behaviors, the problem of how to attain this purpose was began to be debated within the ranks of the Zionist Organization. The historical lands the Jews were ousted two thousand years ago and adhered to the desire of going back was a subject of the Ottoman Empire at the time of the Zionist stirrings. Therefore, the Porte’s permission was necessary to put into practice the settlement of Jews in Palestine. As the chairman of the Zionist Organization, Herzl got down to the task of making contacts with the Sultan and persuading him and his entourage to approve of the Zionist ambitions. In this sense, Herzl contributed to the development of political Zionism as an ardent diplomat, negotiator and organizer, since this ideology had been theorized by other Jewish intellectuals before him.⁵¹ Leo Pinsker was one of them. In his book *Auto-Emancipation*, he argued that the Jewish question could only be resolved if national sovereignty of Jews was established in

⁵⁰ George Jabbour, *Settler Colonialism in Southern Africa and the Middle East*, Beirut-Lebanon: The University of Khartoum, August 1970, pp. 11-14.

⁵¹ The Jewish writers who contributed to the political brand of Zionist ideology with their writings are; Yehudah Alkalai, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, Moses Hess, Elizer Ben Yehudah, Moshe Leib Lilienblum and Leo Pinsker, See; Tessler, op. cit., pp. 36-39.

Palestine. In this way, he believed, Jews as a national community would acquire equal status with other nations and escape from being degraded and persecuted by the gentile world.⁵² The pioneers who championed the political and national rights of the Jews saw the Jewish question as a political problem and thus claimed that only a political solution could have a drastic effect on this problem. Assimilation failed in removing anti-Semitic behaviors within European countries. So, Zionism became the only feasible option. To this end, Herzl devoted himself to diplomatic actions with the perception that diplomacy would prepare the convenient circumstances for Zionist colonization. Without winning the diplomatic war, Herzl believed that the colonization activities should not be commenced. Contrary to the practical Zionists, who displayed a great eagerness to launch the colonization movement with or without the success of the diplomatic campaign and considered diplomacy and colonization complementary to each other, Herzl and his proponents gave full weight to diplomacy in the Zionist program and rather than deeming diplomatic endeavors and colonization efforts equally important, they saw diplomacy as the overriding element in realizing Zionist desires.⁵³ Yet, for the sake of preserving unity within the movement, rather than opposing the suggestions of the dissidents, he chose to compromise with them during the congresses. He even approved several demands of the practical and cultural Zionists which he was not in favor of. In return, he received their approval for launching negotiations with the European states.⁵⁴

Actually at the beginning, Herzl was not obsessed with Palestine in finding a political solution to the Jewish question, proving that he was not under the influence of religious arguments.⁵⁵ Tessler says that “Herzl’s vision of the Jewish state was nonetheless modern; it would be progressive, almost secular, in character, not a Torah-dominated polity fashioned in the image of the Old Testament.”⁵⁶ This fact created a great rift between the champions of political Zionism and Orthodox Jews who embodied their thoughts under the banner of classical (traditional) Zionism. Classical Zionists were against the establishment of a Jewish state in their promised lands as in the way it was aimed in the political Zionist thought. Rather the traditional Zionists believed it was the duty of God to bring the scattered Jews together and restore them to the Palestinian lands. Therefore, they came to

⁵² Öke, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁵³ Fayez Sayegh, *The Zionist Diplomacy*, Beirut-Lebanon: Palestine Research Center, June 1969, pp. 20-26, 34-39.

⁵⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

⁵⁵ Jabbour, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁶ Tessler, op. cit., p. 46.

regard the objectives of Herzl and leading political Zionists as a deviation from the Jewish law.⁵⁷ By assuming the duty of the Creator on themselves, the political Zionists laid bare their intention to found the long anticipated Jewish state without waiting for the God's plan to unfold.⁵⁸ According to this plan, first the Messiah would emerge and this would accompany the reconstruction of Jewish national independence in the promised lands. It was evident that the political Zionists showed a great degree of impatience and gave weight to mundane affairs by precipitating this reconstruction. Adopting this line of action was an indication of their relatively religious-free thinking. Besides, the difference in their approaches puts it explicitly that Zionism in its modern and political sense has never been an all-encompassing ideology within the Jews. Instead of accepting the passivity of classical Zionists⁵⁹, Herzl was in favor of glorifying the Jewish nationality by providing it the same conditions with the other nations. He had been planning to reach this end through the support and sponsorship of the European powers. He held the view that the Jewish state could be established in any part of the world provided that the chosen land would carry the necessary features to shelter the massive number of Jews. When it became clear in the first Zionist Congress that the majority of the Jews envisioned Palestine as the territory where their future independent state would be established on, Palestine gained the upper hand in the discussions regarding the place of colonization.

In this context, Herzl travelled to Istanbul in 1896 with the idea of easing the financial bottleneck of the Ottoman government in return for the Sultan's consent to the Zionist colonization in Palestine. However, Sultan Abdulhamid's reply was straightforward.⁶⁰ He turned down this proposal, because it was inconceivable for him to ceding any tract of land in return for money. Another plan in Herzl's mind was to lend a hand to the Ottoman Empire in the Armenian question which was fretting the Empire. By mobilizing the Jews influential in the European press, Herzl claimed that he could turn the European states in favor of the Ottoman Empire in this issue. He even proposed to mediate between the Ottomans and the Armenian parties. However, he failed in this task.⁶¹ In 1901 he decided to take his chance once again and travelled to Istanbul. According to him the plan was simple: the Sultan would succumb to the proposal of Herzl to cover a part of the

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁵⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 19.

⁵⁹ To learn more about the element of passivity in classical Zionist thought, see; Tessler, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

⁶⁰ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 9-12.

⁶¹ Öke, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

Ottoman public debt and in return let the Jews colonize Palestine. After refusing this offer, Abdulhamid invited Herzl to the Porte one year later in 1902, for he regarded the Jews useful in remedying the Ottoman finances which were in a bad condition. In this third meeting, Abdulhamid set his conditions for letting Jews to the Ottoman territories. First of all, he demanded the Jewish immigrants to be subjects of the Empire after settling. Palestine was excluded from the lands that the Sultan would allow the Jews to colonize, however. Secondly, the Zionists would found a company whose running would be shared by Jews and Ottomans. This time, Herzl found the stipulations unacceptable and left Istanbul. Within the same year, a message from the Porte was transmitted to him that a French banker was ready to liquidate the Ottoman debts. Hereupon Herzl went to Istanbul to offer more advantageous clauses.⁶² To this end, he embarked on outlining an agreement to point out the terms of the rapprochement between the Zionist Organization and the Ottoman government. The *Jewish-Ottoman Land Company* would be the mainstay of the Jewish-Ottoman understanding.⁶³ However, things did not go as smooth as Herzl expected. Since the company was equipped with extensive prerogatives, it was out of possibility to gain the acceptance of the Sultan. The provisions presented by the draft that Herzl prepared and the conditions stipulated by the Ottoman government did not match each other. While it was evident that Herzl was decisive to guarantee an unlimited immigration to Palestinian lands, the Sultan set himself to hinder any Zionist plan of transforming Palestine to a Jewish homeland from materializing. This was the underlying reason of the breakdown of the negotiations. Even the promise of financial aid in order to beguile the Sultan did not prove effective.⁶⁴ Moreover this promise was far from being realistic, since at that time Herzl did not have the sufficient means to cover the Ottoman debt.⁶⁵ It was stated that the shortage of funds was so serious that the Zionist organization could not conduct its envisaged activities in the expected level. Herzl was reasonably unhappy about this situation and he struggled hard to reverse it by negotiating with wealthy Jews in different parts of the world and thus by trying to persuade them to invest a part of their capital to the colonization efforts of the Zionist movement.⁶⁶ However, the wealthy Jewish philanthropists were reluctant to provide the necessary financial means, because they did

⁶² Ibid., pp. 81-84.

⁶³ Walid Khalidi, "The Jewish-Ottoman Land Company: Herzl's Blueprint for the Colonization of Palestine", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Winter, 1993), pp. 30-32.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 32-38.

⁶⁵ Mandel, op. cit., p. 17.

⁶⁶ Tessler, op. cit., p. 54.

not give credence to what Herzl struggled for. It is also fair to say that even if they had granted subsidy to Jewish colonization efforts, it would not have been possible to persuade the Ottoman Sultan. The reason was that “the Ottomans regarded consolidation and colonization as two separate issues.”⁶⁷

When Herzl could not manage to obtain the long-awaited political charter at the end of the negotiations with the Ottoman Sultan, most Zionists credited the idea that it should not be mandatory anymore to get the approval of the concerned states to start colonization. In other words, the failure of political Zionism carried practical Zionism to the forefront. From that moment on, diplomacy and colonization were conducted simultaneously. Weizmann spearheaded this new line of action and the champions of practical Zionism gained the upper hand. Zionist movement owes most of its progress to the interaction of diplomacy and colonial activities.⁶⁸ In 1907, Weizmann emphasized the importance of the two going hand in hand and underscored the shortcomings of Herzl’s approach by saying:

Even if a charter, such as Herzl had dreamed of, were possible, it would be without value unless it rested, so to say, on the very soil of Palestine, on a Jewish population rooted in that soil, on institutions established by and for that population. A charter was merely a scrap of paper; unlike other nations and governments, we could not convert it into reality by force; we had nothing to back it with except work on spot.⁶⁹

As the conditions changed and the financial situation of the Ottoman Empire deteriorated, the Porte’s hostility against Zionist ideals eased. Only a decade passed after Herzl’s last futile attempts, another round of negotiations began between the Zionist Organization and the Ottoman government in 1912 which could have paved the way to a massive Jewish purchase of land in Palestine if the talks had not aborted once again.⁷⁰ The policy of the Ottoman government, which was adopted as a result of the inception of the significant Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1880s, towards the Jewish settlement in Palestine continued relatively uninterrupted except for some minor breaches. These breaches were an outcome of the pressures put on the Ottoman government by the European powers which requested the relaxing of the restrictions implemented against Jewish settlement in Palestine. The Ottoman Empire, which stood firm in not permitting Jews in settling Palestine, but rather accepted the Jewish settlement in other parts of the

⁶⁷ Öke, op. cit., p. 85.

⁶⁸ Sayegh, op. cit., pp. 41-45.

⁶⁹ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 122 in Sayegh, op. cit., p. 49.

⁷⁰ Lesch, op. cit., p.30.

Empire on the stipulation that they would become Ottoman subjects and constitute dispersed groups,⁷¹ submitted in some cases to the insistent calls of the European states to open Palestine to Jewish settlement.⁷² Moreover it can be said with complacency that despite the shortcomings in the application of the regulations and the Jewish shrewdness in rendering these regulations ineffective⁷³, the vigilance of the Ottoman authorities to the threat of Zionism remained firm and they displayed a certain level of determination to impede the Zionist plans to colonize Palestine until the end of the first decade of the 1900s. In 1890, in accordance with the order of Sultan Abdulhamid, the cabinet agreed upon precautionary measures which consisted of four phases. The ministries shared the tasks. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was entrusted with the task of forestalling the endorsement of Zionism by European states. The Ministry of Internal Affairs would take steps to hinder the entrance of Jews in Palestinian lands. On the other hand, the Porte was assigned with the task of overseeing the Jewish immigrants who managed to enter Palestine despite all the measures. Lastly, the ministry responsible for land registry and title deeds would try to prevent Jewish immigrants from purchasing land in Palestine.⁷⁴

Thanks to the considerably stable Ottoman policies against the Zionist movement, the number of Jews residing on these lands remained limited due both to the paucity of Jews who were brought to this geography through immigration (called *aliyah* in Hebrew) and to the failure to convince the Porte on constituting a legal basis for a massive immigration and colonization policy for Palestine. The inception of the Young Turk rule in 1908 weakened the Ottoman firmness in placing restrictions on the settlement of Jews and their land purchases in Palestine. There occurred an obvious increase in the number of the Jewish immigrants settling in Palestine following 1908.⁷⁵ The inauguration of the Zionist Office in Jaffa can not be regarded as a coincidence; it had so much to do with the new regime's rise to ascendancy.⁷⁶ Although the adversities accompanied the first (1882-1903) and second aliyahs (1904-1914) remained narrow and the actual dangers inherent in Zionist endeavors did not become visible until the British occupation, the first Arab reactions manifested themselves only after a few years passed after the first immigration movement.

⁷¹ Mandel, op. cit., p. 2.

⁷² Ibid, p. 7.

⁷³ Ibid, pp. 18-21.

⁷⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

⁷⁵ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 30.

Palestinian Arabs resorted to both diplomatic – handing over complaints to the Porte and raising their outcry against Zionist encroachment through the newspapers they published – and non-diplomatic means – acts of outrage against the Jewish colonies – to show their grievances taking root from Jewish immigration and land sales.⁷⁷

Actually, the commitment of Jews to a place where they were ousted approximately two thousand years ago was not a plausible justification to their right to return. It was an unfounded rationale and the Sultan detected the clandestine aspirations of the Zionists. That was why he offered some other part of the Ottoman territories to the Zionists but not Palestine.⁷⁸ The attempts to carry out a blockage policy against the Jewish settlement in Palestinian territory had been pursued by the Ottoman Empire since 1882 – the year large-scale Jewish immigration into Palestine started – due to several reasons. The reluctance to accept Jews from European states and Russia in Palestine emanated from the alarming political atmosphere that was caused by the minorities' quest for autonomy and resulted in too much distress for the Ottoman government in the second half of the 19th century. The Ottoman Empire did not want to encounter another trouble conducted by other nationalities under its reign. The Jews' increasing presence in Palestine might have triggered the national consciousness of the Arab people to rise. Another reason was caused by the privileges conceded to the European powers through capitulations. If the European citizens had been allowed to increase in numbers in Palestine, the scope of the capitulations would have widened. This was the last thing the Ottoman government wanted while it was trying to lift the bases of these privileges.⁷⁹

The dashed hopes relating to the Ottoman prohibition paved the way for the consideration of other alternatives so as to bestow Jews a location that would become their national home. In bringing up the alternatives, the proximity of the suggested places to Palestine was a necessary condition for the purpose of facilitating the chance of gaining foothold in Palestine. Cyprus and al-Arish were the places in Herzl's mind and he tried to receive green light from the governing force in these territories, namely Britain. However, Britain was pleased with neither of the proposals and thus stated its own point of view.⁸⁰ In this context, the *Uganda Scheme* was one of the most controversial plans, which was put forth by Joseph Chamberlain – the British Colonial Secretary – one year after the faltering of the negotiations between the Sultan and Herzl. The proposal of settling the Jews in a large

⁷⁷ McDowall, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

⁷⁸ Khalidi, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

⁷⁹ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 2-5.

⁸⁰ Waines, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

area within the boundaries of today's Kenya caused heated discussions in the sixth Zionist Congress and took two years to arrive at a decision. Although some Jews regarded the plan to be a well advised one and did not see any point in being persistent on settling the Jews exclusively in Palestine, a majority of them shelved the generous offer of Britain and continued to be the zealous champions of the colonization of Palestine. A group of Zionists under the leadership of Israel Zangwill found it unwise to refuse the Uganda scheme and showed their determination by joining the organization established by Zangwill. Contrary to the ones who clung on Palestine for Jewish colonization, the Jewish Territorial Organization was a staunch advocate of Zionist colonization in any part of the world.⁸¹ Herzl was also among the Zionists who were sympathetic to the British offer. This attitude, however, drew too much criticism from the Zionist circles whose commitment to the promised lands was too high. The split between the supporters and opponents of this proposal damaged both the health and the well-built prestige of Herzl in the eyes of the followers of Zionism. They were deeply irritated by the fact that Herzl, the father of Zionism, was determined in taking a secular course of action in the attempts at establishing a state for the scattered Jewish communities. Following the relinquishing of the plan, however, the central place of Palestine within the Zionist endeavors was reinforced and not even a minor possibility of contemplating another locality other than Palestine for the establishment of the Jewish national home was left.⁸²

This refusal of the East Africa offer showed that the ultimate aim of the Jews was not to find the most lucrative place for themselves where they could reap the utmost economic benefits for their well-being. If it had been so, their final decision would not have been establishing themselves in Palestine which bore favorable characteristics needed for neither agricultural nor industrial development. In the determination of colonizing Palestine, religious and political zeal were in play rather than economic considerations. This rendered the colonization efforts of the Jews relatively different from any other colonization experience. Although they got the more advantageous *Uganda Scheme*, the special spirit imbued with Palestine made it a location difficult for Jews to forsake.

In conclusion, the socio-economic circumstances prevailed in Palestine when it constituted a part of the Ottoman Empire did not help much to the Arabs in their struggle against the Zionist colonization. Despite all the restrictive measures of the Ottoman authorities against the incursion of the Jewish immigrants into Palestine, the first clashes between the Jewish settlers and native Arabs occurred in the terminal decades of the

⁸¹ Jabbour, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

⁸² Tessler, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

Ottoman Empire. Not only the land tenure system restructured with the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 and the affected class system, but also the meager educational services that the Palestinian Arabs had access to created the convenient environment which the Jewish colonizers needed to dominate the Arab population and capture the Palestinian territories. Owing to the fact that Palestine held a historical significance for the Jews, the Zionist ideology made the Palestinian lands its central core for the colonizing practices it devised. Nevertheless, from the very beginning it was evident for the Zionists that combining forces with the international community was a sine qua non for the success of the Zionist movement. In this regard, the British Empire came to the forefront, for the Jews and the British realized that their interests concerning Palestine were overlapping.

CHAPTER 3

THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE JEWS

3.1 The Pledges to the Arabs

Exploring the origins of the current Palestinian-Israeli question is an intriguing work and requires getting down to the issue of British policies revolving around Palestine during the World War I and the mandate rule of Britain. Throughout the course of the war, Britain was exerting great effort to turn the fate of the war to her advantage. To this end, it would be an artful manner to draw the actors, which were thought to be instrumental in securing her strategic interests, to her side by making certain promises. In this sense, Arabs became the major focus, for they could be the key element in challenging the Ottoman forces and serve as the cat's paw for Britain to undermine the military potential of these forces and to destroy the empire from within.

According to the British plans, Arabs would be emboldened to rise up in arms against the Ottoman armies in collaboration with the British forces in exchange of an independent Arab kingdom. The details of this military and politic cooperation were sketched out in the exchange of letters between the High Commissioner of Egypt - Henry McMahon- and the Sherif of Mecca – Hussein- during 1915-16. The first step for the contact, asking for the British acknowledgement of a one and united, independent Arab state within specific boundaries, was taken by Hussein in July 1915.⁸³ Only after several exchanges of letters McMahon managed to convince the British authorities in London to lend a hand to the Arabs in their efforts to stand on their own within the framework of a free and federal state structure. Britain had her own reasons of a four-month delay in passing a concrete judgment on the issue of an independent Arab kingdom. Her reservations took root first from her concern of not running counter to the interests of France in the Middle East and secondly from her conviction that some elements within the Arab world did not forsake supporting the Central Powers in the World War I.⁸⁴ Actually the negotiations, which culminated in the notorious Sykes-Picot agreement, between Britain and France of dividing the Ottoman Arab lands into spheres of political and economic influences were approaching

⁸³ Isaiah Friedman, "The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence and the Question of Palestine", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (1970), pp. 87-88.

⁸⁴ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 27-30.

their final stages notwithstanding the Arabs' unawareness of these secret discussions. During the time elapsed between Sherif Hussein's letter demanding an independent Arab state and McMahon's reply boosting such a demand, the British Empire gained time with regard to the determination process of the boundaries of the demanded independent Arab state. In this interval, the real intention was to try to accommodate the interests of Britain and France and what was proposed to the Sherif seemed to be a consensus of opinion of the two Allies.

In this way, with the consent of his government, McMahon gave an affirmative response to Hussein's demands due to the assessment of a potential Arab backlash in case of the refusal of his requests.⁸⁵ Since it was presumed that the estrangement of the Arabs would prove disastrous for the future interests of Britain, McMahon decided to confirm what Hussein craved and informed him about the decision and the obligations he delegated for Hussein and the Arabs as a whole in October 1915. The French interests on certain regions left their mark on the boundaries approved by the British by bringing about vital amendments on the Arab proposal with the exclusion of several places whose cession to foreign powers could not be envisaged from the point of view of the Arab national aspirations.⁸⁶ The revolt broke out in the mid-1916 in accordance with the British expectations, but soon it was realized that the Arab strength to water down the advent of the war to the disadvantage of either the British forces or the Ottoman armies was nothing more than an illusion. In other words, Arabs could not manage to fulfill their obligations stemming from the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. Could this be the underlying reason of the breach of the British promises to the Arab nation?

3.2 The Shift in the British Policies

It is not that easy to find an appropriate and rational answer to this deterring question. There is something more complex underlying the intricate policies of Britain. But what was the exact point that represented the termination of the strategic alliance between

⁸⁵ Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-92.

⁸⁶ Mersina, Alexandretta, Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo were openly counted among the districts that were not to be included in the so-called independent Arab state with the justification that these places were not dominated by Arabs. (Abcarius, *op. cit.*, p. 29-30.) However it is no doubt that the real concern was totally different as it was mentioned above, since the strategic interests of the Allies took precedence over the national rights of the Arab nation. Furthermore, the vagueness of the terms used by McMahon in the correspondence paved the way to the British subsequent exploitation of the situation by detaching additional territories from the Arab boundaries at the expense of violating the agreement as in the case of Palestine. This unlawful attempt when combined with the Balfour declaration and the process led to the establishment of the mandate administration was one of the devastating elements causing the rise of a century-old problem.

the British government and the Arabs? Contrary to the answer to the former question, the answer to this latter question is precise and obvious: the recognition of the Zionist aims with the issuance of the *Balfour Declaration* in November 2, 1917. The imperialistic designs of Britain played the most essential role in recognizing Zionist pleas concerning Palestine. At first she gave conflicting pledges to Arabs, Jews and the allies so as to secure her strategic interests, but in the end the final victor from these *tripartite promises* was the Zionists. The Arabs and France were sidelined from the power game by Britain⁸⁷ since the alliances between them was a necessity in the war circumstances. This means, as soon as the war ended, the urgency of preserving these alliances disappeared. On the other hand, allowing Zionist colonization held long-term benefits for the British Empire and these advantages were well understood by them. Thereby, Jews with Zionist aims gained the right to establish a national home in Palestine, which they believed to be their *promised lands*.

At the turn of the 1920s, there were even British officials as Arnold Toynbee, who made a name for himself as a prominent historian, to state frankly and courageously that the source of the conflict between Arabs and Jews was the contradictory promises that were given to them in the course of the World War I. The *Palestinian Question* was a British artifact and Toynbee came to realize the urgency of finding a peaceful solution to that problem whereby Britain as the mandate power should assume full liability.⁸⁸ The attitude he maintained was of self-criticism in its nature. Moreover, one of the examples he gave concerning the British-imposed circumstances in Palestine was valuable in shedding light on a rare conception that was found among the British:

...But we have been even more audacious than that. At a time when, all over the Ottoman world, nationalities that used to live intermingled with one another, and have been living like that for centuries, have been sorting themselves out and segregating themselves by "methods of barbarism", we have undertaken, in this one Ottoman province of Palestine, to intermingle two nationalities which were not intermingled before. We are like a showman who says to his audience: "Ladies and

⁸⁷ The pledges given to France in regard to Palestine in the course of the World War I were specified in the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement that was signed in March 1916. According to the secret understanding embodied between Britain and France, Palestine escaped not only from falling under French control, but also from becoming a British zone of influence. Instead, international administration would be established in this territory. The French statesmen were somehow convinced to withdraw their claims on Palestine and reconciled themselves to the idea of power-sharing in the affairs of these lands. But in return for their compromise, what obligation was promised to be undertaken by the British is unknown. See; Abcarius, op. cit., p. 48. The designation of Britain as the power responsible for the mandate rule in Palestine in 1922 despite the one time apparent displeasure of France represented the point that Britain went back from her promises to her war-time Ally.

⁸⁸ Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Present Situation in Palestine", *International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (Jan., 1931), pp. 44-46.

gentlemen, you know that once upon a time lions and lambs used to lie down together, but that nowadays the lions have taken to eating the lambs. Now, just to show you what a fine performer I am, I am going to introduce a lamb into this lion's den-or a lion into this sheep-fold. And I guarantee you, ladies and gentleman that, under the influence of my magnetic personality, both animals will be so thoroughly domesticated that neither will dream of eating the other!"...I am speaking of parables because that is the best way I can think of to convey the extreme audacity of the experiment which we have undertaken in Palestine.⁸⁹

When his skeptical approach towards the credibility of the British policies is taken into account, it is clear-cut from this lion-sheep analogy that the lion is connotative of the Jews and the sheep is connotative of the Arab community. His recourse to this parable gives insights about the quagmire Arabs were drawn by the Jews. And as the showman, Britain was the main culprit of this unfavorable situation. On the other hand, Toynbee evinced that he did not have faith in the possibility of a compromise and peaceful cohabitation between Jews and Arabs. Although Friedman raises doubts about Toynbee's early inclination toward the Arab case,⁹⁰ in his official statements, Toynbee displayed his belief in an independent Palestine in accordance with the pledges that were made by Britain to Arabs in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence.⁹¹

The terms of the Balfour Declaration encompassed conflicting statements with the McMahon-Hussein correspondence. It is now ripe time to explain the contradictions inherent in these documents. Since the West of the Jordan River – Palestine – constituted the basic departure point of the Balfour Declaration, the main problem is whether the Palestinian territories were included within the boundaries of the pseudo independent Arab state as imagined by the Sherif of Mecca and backed up but later abandoned by McMahon. Until the establishment of the Israeli state, in the academic and bureaucratic circles of the period, this was one of the most widely debated and compelling issues to arrive at a consensus though it ceased to be a worthwhile subject to be discussed after the realization of Israel.

Friedman claims that the root of the problem was the vagueness of the terms in the letters exchanged between Hussein and McMahon. Hussein did not specifically mention 'Palestine' whereas the British authorities, who undertook crucial roles in the formation of the British policies in the Middle East, assumed that Palestine was already excluded from the Arab demands and did not feel the urgent need to place Palestine on records as a region

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 48.

⁹⁰ Isaiah Friedman, "Arnold Toynbee: Pro-Arab or Pro-Zionist?", *Israel Studies*, Vol. 4, (1999), pp. 74-97.

⁹¹ Ritchie Ovendale, *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli War*, New York: Longman, Third Edition, 1999, pp. 45-46.

that would be left out. At this point, it seems that each party held equal liability in the creation of a confusion which had long-lasting implications. Nevertheless, according to Friedman, the correspondence comprised certain hints which indicated the British disposition of exempting Palestine from the Arab state they gave consent to. This view finally leads us to the contemplation that Arabs were the ones who made a huge mistake by taking wrongly what British officials meant. Friedman espouses the official British line by implying that the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and the Balfour declaration were consistent with each other and by trying to refute the people who gave credit for the opposite argument. Besides, Friedman holds the view that Palestinian lands were not the real concern of the Sherif Hussein and thus he did not feel any anxiety about the fact that Palestine was reserved for the Jewish colonization efforts by Britain. The reality was quite different. We can detect this from the attitude displayed by the Sherif when the Sykes-Picot agreement, which was signed between Britain and France shortly after the Arabs rose in revolt against the Ottoman forces in accordance with the correspondence, was disclosed by the newly setup Bolshevik government. The commander of the Turkish forces in Palestine, Cemal Pasha, was somehow acquainted with this secret pact and made efforts to inform the Hashamites about the clandestine aims of Britain so as to divert the steady Arab allegiance to her. Although the communications between Cemal Pasha, the Hashamites and the British high authorities were resulted in the pursuance of the adamant Arab faith invested in Great Britain, Sherif Hussein was at first become deeply irritated by the likelihood of the existence of such an understanding between the Allies and contacted one of the prominent British officials without delay with the desire to obtain information at first hand. The result was disappointing since once more the British got out of this slippery road of diplomacy by having the Arab leaders on her side through insincere ways of persuasion. Namely, Cemal Pasha failed in convincing the Arabs about the hypocrisy of the British Empire at a time they seemed to pay reverence to the national aspirations of Arabs.⁹² However, the unwillingness of Arabs in trusting Cemal Pasha's cautions would prove costly to them as the time went by. The history showed everybody interested in Palestine that one of the weakest points of the Hashamites that brought nothing but catastrophe to the Arabs was their intractable sense of confidence for the words of the British.

A valuable critical approach to what Friedman posits was published by Charles Smith in the year 1993. In his narrative, first of all he provides an organized account of

⁹² Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 40-44.

Friedman's contentions which he found inaccurate⁹³ and later explains how Friedman deceived the readers by deviating from the scientific research techniques. Smith's counter-argument is that Palestine was part of the lands that was settled on by Hussein and McMahon in their correspondence and there was not even an inkling of an Arab avowal of Palestine's exclusion from the designed independent Arab kingdom since it was impossible for Sherif Hussein and other prominent Arabs to play down Palestine.

3.3 Hashamites' Standing

We also learn from Smith's text that money had always been used as a means by the Zionists to make others fall in line with their causes. The methods of buying off Arabs in order to ensure their deviation from the Arab nationalist course ranged from spearheading the formation of Arab parties which would serve the Zionist interests⁹⁴ to bribing prominent Arab politicians.⁹⁵ As I mentioned earlier, Herzl attempted to mislead the Ottoman Sultan by offering him financial aid as a remedy for the Empire's economic plight. Although not all Zionists believed in the efficiency of handing out money to Arabs as a way of eliminating causes of Arab complaint and drawing them on the Zionists' side, Weizmann was one of the Zionist leaders who gave credence to the power of money owing to his pejorative approach towards the Arabs.⁹⁶ This was why he followed in the footsteps of his predecessor by resorting to the same method in 1918 when he started negotiations with Faisal – the son of Sherif Hussein.⁹⁷ This agreement was a unique instance in itself in which the Zionist colonists tried to receive the approval or at least the implied consent of the indigenous population to their colonizing activities in order to use it as a rationalization

⁹³ Charles D. Smith, "The Invention of a Tradition: The Question of Arab Acceptance of the Zionist Right to Palestine during World War I", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Winter, 1993), pp. 48-51.

⁹⁴ There were two such Arab political parties as Lesch mentioned. One was the National Muslim Societies of 1921-23 and the other was the Agricultural Parties of 1924-26. *Arab Politics*, pp. 51-52.

⁹⁵ An inconclusive initiative of buying off the head of the Arab delegation set out to London in 1923 with the aim of disrupting the meetings of the British officials and leaders of Palestinian Arabs; Lesch, op. cit., p. 52.

⁹⁶ This pejorative approach was evident in some of his talks with British authorities. He depicted the Palestinian Arab politicians as "unscrupulous Levantine politicians" in a letter to Shuckburg in 1937 and he put forth in a talk with High Commissioner Herbert Samuel in 1922 that "extremists and moderates alike were susceptible to the influence of money and honours". For the quotes, see Lesch, *Arab Politics*, pages 50 and 52 respectively. For the exact dates and the names of the people Weizmann contacted, take a look at the references.

⁹⁷ Charles Smith, op. cit., p. 56.

in cases of protests from the Arabs. As a matter of fact, this agreement was designed as defense mechanism whereby Zionists would attempt to hide their true motivations and emotions by providing reasonable or self-justifying explanations for their unacceptable behaviors in Palestine. Moreover, this agreement was never deemed to hold decisive influence on the headway of Zionism in Palestine. Even if Faisal had not approved of the Jewish settlement, the Zionists never contemplated to lay their projects concerning Palestine aside. To sum up, “the natives’ consent, whenever it was ever sought by the settlers, was thought of as a formal but necessary pretext; something to be happier with, but not to be sad without.”⁹⁸

Zionists have regarded Faisal with reverence for his constructive stance and moderate approach in tackling the Balfour declaration. The agreement Faisal and Weizmann managed to reach in January 1919 has been presented and praised as the one and only instance where a leading Arab gave his blessings to the Jewish settlement in Palestine. For the very same reason, lay Palestinians and their local leaders did not regard Faisal’s agreement as having a decisive influence on their future and swept aside any possibility of accepting the Balfour declaration. Just about the same time, however, a Palestinian Arab conference was convened in which most of the delegates laid their backing to an independent and federal Arab state. Although Faisal’s ideal of such an Arab state won supporters among Palestinian Arabs, the approaches of the Palestinian Arabs and Faisal clashed with each other when it came to Jewish settlement in Palestine. Contrary to Faisal, who consented to Jewish immigration, Palestinian Arabs rejected any action related with Zionism.⁹⁹ The motive of Faisal in sympathizing with the Zionist colonization efforts in Palestine was to gain the support of Weizmann and the Zionist movement to his efforts of countering the French influence on Syria in order to fulfill his dream of a sovereign Arab rule on these territories with himself as the King. It is evident that Faisal reached an understanding with Weizmann in the context of reasonably stressful circumstances and this made the nature of the agreement quite questionable. Although very short-lived, Faisal succeeded in realizing this dream without the backing of the Zionists. When it was understood that Weizmann acted sluggish in complying with his promises stemming from the agreement, Faisal did not fall behind in renouncing his commitment to what Jews aspired as regards Palestine. In the Second General Syrian Congress in March 1920 he displayed his opposition against Zionism and this way acquired the chance to repair his

⁹⁸ Jabbour, op. cit., p. 39.

⁹⁹ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 76, 78.

relations with the Palestinian Arabs.¹⁰⁰ This alteration in his views increased the confidence of the Palestinian Arabs in him and they gave full faith and credit to the impending Syrian kingdom hoping that it would be fatal to the Zionist plans. As soon as France reestablished its control over Syria by inflicting a crushing defeat on Faisal in July 1920, Palestinian Arabs laid aside any possibility of a Syrian rescue.¹⁰¹ In this way, the credibility of Hashamites' among the Palestinian Arabs fell dramatically after experiencing a short-term rise.

The initial signs of Hashamites' weakening representative power among the Arab community appeared during the British instigated Arab revolt against the Ottoman rule. Especially in Palestine, the support given to the revolt was quite meager owing to the natives' allegiance towards the Ottoman administration.¹⁰² The idea of Palestine being an integral part of an independent Greater Syria grew stronger only after Ottoman armies lost grip on these territories and Britain established its authority. Until that time, Palestinian Arabs were in favor of continuance of the Ottoman dominance rather than falling under the yoke of any of the colonial powers.¹⁰³ In this context, British control was viewed with contempt by the Palestinians Arabs and its sympathy towards the Zionist ideals was perceived as the origin of their subjugation to foreign hegemony. Therefore the Faisal-Weizmann agreement was perceived as a betrayal to the Arab course and added to the Hashamites' notoriety among Palestinian Arabs.

It is a crystal clear reality that Hussein and his son Faisal tried to reconcile the deep-rooted Arab rights on Palestine with the Jewish national home policy without imperiling the future Arab sovereignty in Palestine. However, their efforts served the opposite purpose, because when British authorities communicated both of the protagonists, the facts were perverted and the real intentions concealed in the Balfour declaration were veiled. This was the exact situation when the news about the promulgation of the Balfour declaration reached the ears of the Arab leaders and the lay Arab people who bore arms on the side of the Allies. The Arab revolt was in process when Sherif Hussein was notified about the British sponsorship for Jewish colonization plan in Palestine. In order to decide the fate of the revolt, Sherif, without losing time, applied to the British officials with the hope of receiving clear-cut and satisfying information about the declaration. Since Sherif's faith in the British was long-established, he was not expecting a disappointing response. A

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁰¹ Lesch, op. cit., pp.133-134.

¹⁰² Friedman, "The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence and the Question of Palestine", pp. 96-103.

¹⁰³ Lesch, op. cit., p. 25.

British official in Cairo named Hogarth was entrusted with the task of persuading the Arabs about the honesty and justice present in the words of the British Empire. Once again Hussein was deceived owing to the British assertions that they did not abandon pursuing the goal of an independent Arab kingdom. Thus, Hussein's volatile fears that the British-Arab understanding was in tatters were soon disappeared. For this reason, he did not see any harm in affirming the setting up of a Jewish national home in Palestine provided that the political hegemony of the Arabs on these territories would not be affected adversely from this occurrence.¹⁰⁴ Hashamites' hospitable approach towards the Jews even though they approved the Zionist schemes without being cognizant of the aims skillfully covered in the diplomatic tactics, portrayed them as Arabs who adhered to the Jewish cause and abandoned the Arab case. Yet, the Hashamites' line of action was not fallacy-free. Most probably, personal interests played their part in the countenance of the Balfour declaration. For instance, the financial aid offered by Weizmann to Faisal must have been an important factor in pushing Faisal to reconsideration.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the Hashamites' did not bare the sensibility of the Ottoman Sultan who discovered the secret Zionist aims ingeniously.

3.4 The Rise of the Balfour Declaration

The eagerness to learn more about the Zionists' aims in Palestine, the strategic interests of the then British administration and the striking overlap of the purposes of these two forces lead us to a letter written by the then British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour to a leading Zionist in Palestine Baron Rothschild in November 2, 1917: the *Balfour Declaration* with its prevalent usage in the literature.

As discussed above, there was a minor Jewish population vis-à-vis the Arab majority in Palestine prior to the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Zionist colonization in Palestine succeeded to materialize only after Britain interfered in the Middle Eastern territories of the Ottoman Empire with great vigor in the course of the war. The military administration of Britain was inaugurated in 1917 and the civil administration took over office three years later in 1920 and remained there until 1947. Thereby the *Palestinian Administration* was formed with the High Commissioners overruling the policies from inside. Within the interim mandate rule period, if we set aside the policy differences of the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office which altered the course of events appreciably prior to the second World War, the Balfour declaration served as the essence of the general line

¹⁰⁴ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 50-53.

¹⁰⁵ Ovendale, op. cit., p. 47.

of policy carried out by the British government. The friction between these two ministries eventuated in the issuance of the *White Paper of 1939* in conformity with the Foreign Office's discourse. Until that time, Zionists were favored in almost every field by the British government in expense of the growing Arab resentment and the Balfour declaration was used as the justification of that policy. This declaration also represented the rupture of the cooperation between the Arabs and Britain as the focus slid to the aim of gaining the Zionists.

The important questions that should be asked at this point can be drawn up as follows:

What is the driving force of the cooperation among the British and Jews? What gave rise to the turnover in British policies which had given support to an independent Arab state few years before the Balfour declaration?

3.4.1 The Driving Force of the Declaration

There are a wide range of responses given to these questions by different scholars. Some believe that the persecutions Jews faced in various countries in Europe at the turn of the century, especially the pogroms in Russia, were the prime consideration in providing them with a safe haven in Palestine where they could live in comfort. Chaim Weizmann, the fourth president of the WZO, was one of the major proponents of this idea. According to him, the British statesmen were responsible people who felt obliged to settle the tormented Jews in their promised lands.¹⁰⁶

Some more rational scholars contend that there is something more complex underlying the intricate policies of Britain. The imperialistic designs of this state played the most essential role in recognizing Zionist pleas concerning Palestine, a contention Weizmann rejected fiercely. Palestine could serve as a perfect buffer zone for the sake of the British interests in Suez and India. Besides, winning the support of the Jews could have altered the fate of the war profoundly. In this context, two major states, where Jews held a relatively significant numerical density, were the focus of British efforts for securing the war in moving ahead to the advantage of the Allies. From the British point of view, American Jews could have a drastic effect in drawing the United States in Britain's side. On the other hand, if Russian Jews had been satisfied, they could have forestalled the

¹⁰⁶ Chaim Weizmann, "Palestine To-Day", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939)*, Vol. 15, No. 5, (Sep.-Oct., 1936), p. 673.

debacle of the Russian army.¹⁰⁷ This view was stated expressly in a note to the Russian Foreign Ministry for the purpose of getting clear information about the approach of the Russian state to the Zionist projects concerning Palestine.¹⁰⁸ In this vein, it seemed that Britain conducted a thorough inquiry about the views of the Allies prior to the issuance of the Balfour declaration. Satisfying the Jews was a matter of concern for realizing the British strategic plans. However, this satisfaction should be provided without frustrating the Allies and without giving away the British intention of preserving Palestine for her imperialistic designs. As a result of this careful attention of the British Empire, the Jews were convinced that Britain would serve as a precious ally for them and this conviction played a crucial role in affecting the aftermath of the war in favor of the Allies. On the other hand, approval from both America and the major European powers as France and Italy was obtained for the British initiative of conferring patronage for Jews in Palestine.¹⁰⁹ Britain made the European states see an interest in supporting the British intention of extending its political and imperial interests to Palestine. Consequently, the decision to be arrived is that the states participated in this injurious British attempt have equal share in the predicament of the Arab community and have to carry the responsibility of their maneuver. Furthermore, the loyalty of the Arabs during the war was already obtained with the McMahon-Hussein correspondence and the subsequent Arab revolt against the Ottoman rule did not prove very effective.¹¹⁰ This must be why Britain felt at ease when breaking its promises to the Arabs.

Although there exists some circles believing Balfour's pro-Zionist sentiments and his eagerness to find a solution the Jewish problem regardless of implementing the imperialistic designs of his state¹¹¹, Joe Stork claims that most of the high-ranking then British officials, including Balfour, were anti-Semitic and their only concern was to guarantee favorable conditions for Britain in Palestine.¹¹² Since anti-Semitism has an

¹⁰⁷ John Davis, *The Evasive Peace, A Study of the Zionist-Arab Problem*, London: John Murray, 1968, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ "If the point of view set forth above is correct, it will be clear that by means of utilizing the Zionist idea, important political results might be achieved. One of these would be the conversion to the side of the Allies of Jewish elements in the East, in the USA, and other places, whose present attitude towards the cause of the Allies is, to a considerable extent, hostile." This quotation from the British note dated March 1916 was taken from J. M. N. Jeffries, *Palestine the Reality*, in Abcarius, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁰⁹ Jabbour, op. cit., p. 36-37.

¹¹⁰ Friedman, "The McMahon-Hussein Correspondance and the Question of Palestine", pp. 95-103.

¹¹¹ Quincy Wright, "The Palestine Problem", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3, (Sep., 1926), p. 407.

¹¹² Joe Stork, "Understanding the Balfour Declaration", *MERIP Reports*, No. 13, (Nov., 1972), p. 10.

underlying religious partiality, the difference between the religious impulses and political motivations should be well discerned at this point in order to avoid confusions. Claiming that the driving force of the British assistance in settling Jews in Palestine was either exclusively religious or political is wrong. There was certainly an overlap between these forces; sometimes one became more dominant, other times the other was used to veil the original aims, but they were always intertwined. In the long run, the political interests of the British Empire outweighed the minuscule religious inducements vis-à-vis the vital strategic issues.

The Protestant sect of Christianity has always been sympathetic to the Jews contrary to the Catholics who nurtured hostile feelings against them. Belonging to the Protestant sect has made the British credit the Biblical terms which stipulates the return of Jews to their historical promised lands. This vibrant religious belief engendered the *restorationist movement* among the Protestants.¹¹³ Palestine was deemed necessary for the colonial rationale of the British Empire prior to the formulation of the Zionist ideology and the champions of the Jewish restoration to Palestine were not pursuing purely religious commands; they were equally alert about the imperial preferences. Whenever the Zionists began their tenacious works aiming to win the British consent for the project of colonizing Palestine, a staunch political connection was formed between the British and Zionist interests and the need to bring the religious motives to the foreground waned. The successful conduct of the Zionist campaign proved fruitful and resulted in a process of

¹¹³ Restorationism is one of the Christian movements which establishes a close link between the return of Jews to their ancestral lands (which encompass Palestine) and the return of Jesus on earth. The restorationist movement also forms the basis of the Christian Zionist movement through the emphasis it has given to the Biblical prophecy which was included in the Old Testament. In 1978, the American President Jimmy Carter stated that “The establishment of the nation of Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and the very essence of its fulfillment”. The incontestable support given to the Jews by Christian Zionists has engendered the glorification of the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 and has caused turning a blind eye to the intimidation and oppression of Palestinian Arabs by the Jewish community. For this reason, some people perceive Christian Zionism as a deviation from the true path of Christianity with the sole aim of serving the political interests of Zionism. The struggle by some Christians, especially the people belonging to the Protestant sect, to restore Jews to their “promised lands” should not necessarily lead to the idea that these Christians do this because of their purely sympathetic approach towards Jews or Judaism. In direct contradiction, most of the time, Christian Zionists have devoted themselves to their religious obligations and considered the Jewish restoration in Palestine as a part of such obligation or have been imbued with imperialist interests as in the case of Britain prior to the World War I. However, at the time there were also politicians and bureaucrats among British elite who could be considered Philosemite. When all these factors are combined, it is evident that the Zionist movement found the necessary backing, say it political or theological, to seize the Palestinian lands for the purpose of creating a Jewish state. Lord Shaftesbury in Britain displayed the prominence of restorationism in Christian faith with these words: “...the Jews must be encouraged to return in yet greater numbers and become once more the husbandman of Judea and Galilee...(They are) not only worthy of salvation but also vital to Christianity’s hope of salvation”. For more information about restorationism; Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, *The Land of Promise: A Critique of Political Zionism*, New Brunswick, N.J.: North American, 1977, pp. 83-89.

whose key point was the Balfour declaration. Throughout this campaign, prominent Zionists such as Weizmann managed to convert many leading then British politicians to the Zionist cause. Being a Zionist does not necessarily require being a Jew. Likewise, the attachment to the Zionist ideal does not always entail being a philosemite as in the case of most of the high ranking British officials who assisted the Zionists in obtaining an independent state of their own. Fostering anti-Semitic feelings does not inhibit acting as an ardent Zionist.¹¹⁴ This bizarre situation stemmed from the British ambitions to fulfill its imperial schemes. From this aspect, while Zionism served the British strategic plans, British acknowledgment suited the Zionist ideals. This British-Zionist cooperation was a symbiotic relationship to its full extent. This fact can also be discerned from the following paragraph:

The materialization of European (Jewish) settlement in Palestine was the result of a factor...This newer factor is the development of British interest in the Middle East...imperial British allied itself with Zionism (the 19th century expression of the feeling of nationality among some Jews) and as a result of this alliance, a non-European land, Palestine, was chosen for settlement because it was advantageous to British interests to do so. This choice was also convenient to the Zionists who interpreted controversial Biblical pronouncements as promising them Palestine.¹¹⁵

What is more, a politician like Balfour who bestowed the Zionists a peerless political, social and economic voucher for the prospective Jewish state was proved to be an anti-Semitic.¹¹⁶ According to the prominent anti-Semitic figures within the European society, Jews were inferior in comparison to other races. They tried to justify their efforts to drive the Jewish people out of their country by relying on this racist approach. Their main concern was to hinder the racial mixing of Jews with their noble people.¹¹⁷ Thus, the only concern of all these ostensibly Zionist British statesmen was actually to purge their respective societies from the alien Jews and also to realize the policies they deemed beneficial for the sake of the Empire. It is clear that strategic interests took precedence over

¹¹⁴ This situation can also be observed in Germany during the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Although Germany was one of the European states in which anti-Semitic feelings were too intense, Zionist movement succeeded in gaining the support of the German emperor. This support finds meaningful explanation in Germany's eagerness to expel the Jews whom they deemed inferior from their territories. For the sake of preserving the unity of the Ottoman Empire, however, Kaiser Wilhelm gave up quit advocating the settlement of his Jewish citizens in Palestine. Öke, op. cit., pp. 126-128.

¹¹⁵ Jabbour, op. cit., p. 21.

¹¹⁶ Elmessiri, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

¹¹⁷ Öke, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

any other consideration that is claimed to be governed by emotions. In this way, a *Palestinian Question* was created while the *Jewish Question* was trying to be remedied.

The remedy came with the Balfour declaration which granted Jews permission to colonize the country on behalf of the British. This is called the “surrogate colonization”¹¹⁸ or defined as the “deviant pattern of colonization”.¹¹⁹ Consequently, the two thousand years old longing of world Jewry to return these promised lands was finally on the brink of coming true thanks to the British policies. Actually, the above mentioned probable causes of the British leanings towards Zionist pretensions should not be considered as independent from each other, since they form the integral parts of the rationale behind the “surrogate colonization”. The British administration placed confidence on part of the Zionists believing that they would remain faithful to their master who rescued them from their stranded position by granting them the right to establish a national home in Palestine which served as the first and the most important stepping stone to the Israeli state.

Due to the inadequate resources and meager potential of Palestine, the British officials were well aware that it would be daunting to convince the British to colonize these lands. This understanding prompted Britain to nominate the Zionists as “would-be colonists” in Palestine.¹²⁰ The good relations between the Zionists and Britain were conducted without any serious interruption until the British officials happened to understand the grave mistake they begot in Palestine on account of the intensifying grievances of Arabs that manifested itself in sporadic insurrections as in 1921, 1929 and 1936. The “surrogate colonization” of Jews in Palestine came to an end with the issuance of the White Paper in 1939. As the British officials took measures to reverse the two-decade long pro-Zionist policies and prevent the entrance of Jews in Palestine, Jews emerged as the most ardent enemies of the British mandate rule.

3.4.2 The Vicissitudes Accompanied the Declaration

As the declaration became valid, certain fundamental alterations followed relating to the socio-economic and socio-political conditions in Palestine. The logic of the Zionist colonization, which gained legitimacy through the Balfour declaration, relied on two important principles. One was to expand the Jewish population through *immigration* and the other was to provide them with property through *land purchases*. Both of the policies

¹¹⁸ Atran, “Surrogate Colonization”, pp. 719-721.

¹¹⁹ Weinstock, op. cit., p. 50.

¹²⁰ Barbara Smith, op. cit., pp. 5-6; 19-20.

were bound to perpetrate profound sufferings upon the native people of the land-Arabs. First of all, the demographic situation was changed gradually at the disadvantage of the Arabs. Secondly and not less importantly, the lands they tilled were taken from their hands ruthlessly and they were forced to live on the edge.

The materialization of the Balfour Declaration through the extensive diplomatic efforts of the Zionists brought about the formation and dispatch of a *Zionist Commission*, which was carrying the objective of clearing the hurdles on the way of the Jewish national home and easing the establishment of it through the information gathered on site and the subsequent evaluation of the conditions. Such a privilege for Jews could not come to fruition in the absence of Britain's stable aid. When the commission stepped into the Palestinian territories and embarked on conducting its work in April 1918, Arabs' former staunch conviction that the British would assist them no matter what in the process of arising as an independent nation ceased to exist. The evident favoritism that was showed towards the Jewish community in Palestine caught the attention of Arabs. So, they immediately realized that the independence was nothing but a dream and would have been at great stake if the discrimination between Arabs and Jews in social, economic and political matters had continued to be undertaken in that manner. Namely, the legitimization of the Zionist Commission was a point in the Palestinian politics unfolding the fact that despite the guarantees provided to the Arabs over and over again to appease their agitation, the Balfour declaration was actually the preliminary step of the project of a Jewish state through settling hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants in Palestine up until the point of gaining the majority.¹²¹

Throughout the history, however, Arabs' existence as the majority on the Palestinian territories remained as an unchanged reality until Britain precipitated the Jewish immigration to Palestine. As the aliyahs gained momentum and finally culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the standing of Arabs in Palestine weakened gradually and bulk of them, who were deterred by the ascending Jewish terrorist acts and the encroachments on their lands and civil liberties, were forced to detach from their homelands in the end. Especially the case of Jerusalem was interesting. At the turn of the 18th century, Arabs were the majority in this holy city. Jews constituted 20-25 percent of the population in the early 1800s. Namely, their population was approximately 2,000. A decade before the inception of the first wave of Jewish immigration in 1882, the Jewish population formed half of the total population of Jerusalem which accounted to 11,000. On the eve of

¹²¹ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 59-62.

World War I, Jews finally outnumbered the Arabs, becoming more than 45,000.¹²² Notwithstanding these woeful events inflicted upon them, the main argument Arabs has clung on is their protracted attachment to these controversial lands. No one can repudiate the fact that Arabs were inhabitants of Palestine long before Jews settled there.¹²³ Yet, ignoring a fact does not make it a more trifling offense vis-à-vis the offense of repudiating it. The British statesmen deemed it appropriate to fill the Palestinian territories with Jews coming mainly from Europe and Russia without even having the consent of its indigenous community. However, contrary to what had been imagined by the early Zionists, the land of Palestine was neither a land without people as was stated by Israel Zangwill, nor a sparsely populated land. For this reason, how the Palestinian Arabs approached the settlement of European Jews on their lands was of great importance. When the Zionists were compelled to admit the existence of Arabs in Palestine, instead of trying to receive the blessings of them to their plans, they preferred searching for ways to turn Palestine into a vacant land that was stripped of its native population in accordance with what they imagined.¹²⁴ The necessity of reaching an understanding with the Arabs was expressed by some Jews who attended the Zionist congresses. These delegates believed that the Arabs were the genuine owners of the Palestinian lands and this fact made it compulsory for the Zionists to obtain their consent to the colonization attempts. Herzl and his followers, however, undervalued this viewpoint and instead of working to strike an agreement with the Palestinian Arabs they chose to focus their attention to the realization of their ideals.¹²⁵ First, they drew the British to their side and the British, who were informed of the Zionist desire to expunge the Palestinian Arabs, set the stage for the pure Jewish settlement in Palestinian territories by promulating the Balfour declaration. This unilateral attitude of the British administration induced the resentment of Arabs and fomented the enmity against Zionism already found among the Palestinian Arabs, but had never brought about any serious collision formerly.

The disputes between Arabs and Jews intensified as the land sales to the Jews showed an upward trend in the 1920s. Zionists perceived the land dealings from the spectacles of legality without even worrying about the human and moral aspects of the phenomenon. From the very beginning, Zionists ignored the rights and concerns of the

¹²² Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 66, 68.

¹²³ Hanry Hilmyy, "Re-Partition of Palestine: Toward a Peaceful Solution in the Middle East", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (1972), p. 133.

¹²⁴ Jabbour, op. cit., pp. 60-62.

¹²⁵ Öke, op. cit., pp.. 116-117.

Arabs and paid mere attention to the issues related with the development of a national home for Jews in Palestine.

The outcome of the land purchases was the seizure of the most fertile parts of Palestinian territories by the Jews and this situation deepened the disturbances of the Arab population despite the tiny percentage it constituted in proportion to the aggregate lands.¹²⁶ The lands that were fertile in character were found in northern Palestine including the sub-districts such as Haifa, Acre, Tiberias, Beisan, Safad and Jaffa. Although the first four sub-districts constituted only 14% of the total land in Palestine, in 1914 Jews purchased 71% and in 1947 60% of their lands from these regions.¹²⁷ The mainstay of the Jewish coveting on the strategically vital coastal regions was at first hand driven by economic factors whereas its subsequent political advantages transcended the economic achievements. The economic interests were surely taken into account but it had its own reasons. The Zionist movement carried on with its colonization activities thanks to the endowments of the outside contributors. Part of these outside contributions was in the form of funds delivered by public or semi-public institutions. However, a significant percentage of the investments were individually-made, namely private in character. Reasonably, the major concern of the private investors was to gain as much profit as possible. This concern necessitated investing into regions with the highest possible economic returns. So the best choice was the northern part of the country.¹²⁸ Yet, the upcoming years showed that the political advantages overpowered the economic ones. Jews utilized these lands as if they were a springboard to their future prospects of an independent Jewish state that would be established at any cost. Consideration of the population densities throughout the country and the subsequent allocation of the lands with Jewish majorities to the contemplated independent Jewish state when drawing up the partition plans proved that the Jews became the majority in the northern coastal regions owing to the land acquisitions there and thus were qualified to incorporate these lands within the boundaries of their sovereign state. One matter that should be highlighted once more is that the religious and political considerations acted as the engine of the efforts to colonize Palestine since economically Palestine had not promised too much to the Jews.

When Palestine turned out to be their final point of settlement, Jews encountered a territory mostly barren and whose value was wasted by an Arab population whose majority were peasants. Once a fertile land with an *economic absorptive capacity* that had let twice

¹²⁶ Atran, "Surrogate Colonization", pp. 735-736.

¹²⁷ Falah, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 301.

as many people as in the 1930s,¹²⁹ decayed and lost its productivity due to neglect, which aggravated the unfavorable consequences of soil erosion, and the inability of preserving the early methods of agriculture, namely *terrace agriculture* - “a way to prevent erosion on slope farming”.¹³⁰

As it can be seen, one of the significant issues that came to the fore due to the tidal wave of Jewish immigrants to Palestine was the economic absorptive capacity of these territories. This concept was first invented by the then premier of the British state Winston Churchill in his policy statement issued in 1922. The White Paper of 1922 made the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine as a precondition for the future Jewish immigration into the country. This provision was far from satisfying the Palestinian Arabs for it mainly intended nothing more than hoodwinking them.

The most frequently resorted phenomenon both by the advocates and the opponents of the Jewish migration was the capacity of these lands to admit the increasing number of Jews. Various prospective data were published regarding this capacity with the intention of either highlighting the danger of letting more Jews into Palestine or underscoring the possibility of approving growing demands from Jews all over the world to migrate Palestine. By and large these data indicated divergent results since the inputs utilized were flexible representing the different aims of the people who suggested them. For instance, one of the Hebrew sources claims that the lands cultivated by the Arabs increased from 5 million dunams to more than 7 million dunams between the early 1920s and mid-1930s;¹³¹ a claim whose purpose is to prove that the interaction of the Arab and Jewish sectors benefitted the former and led to an advance in its productivity and thus an obvious increase in the economic absorptive capacity of the country. Most of the Zionists sustained the claim that the Jewish immigration was not a burden on Palestine and its limited economic absorptive capacity. On the contrary, according to them Jewish immigration would help in great extent to increase this capacity by creating employment and increasing the purchasing power. Namely, immigration would create the necessary economic conditions for more absorption. They believed that the rise in immigration eventually paved the way for the rise in the economic improvement rather than decline. The reason of the acute economic crisis Jews encountered during 1926-28 was seen in the slowdown of the immigration and

¹²⁹ Walter Clay Lowdermilk, *Palestine: Land of Promise*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, pp. 57-59.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

¹³¹ Jacob Metzger; Oded Kaplan, “Jointly but Severally: Arab Jewish Dualism and Economic Growth in Mandatory Palestine”, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 45, No. 2, The Tasks of Economic History, (June 1985), p. 338.

solution to the drift of the Jewish population into such a deep crisis of unemployment and deterioration in living conditions was found through the start of another wave of immigration in 1932.¹³²

The immediate effect of the numerical growth was not to worsen existing conditions, but to bring about prosperity. The more immigrants, the more work. The unemployed of the previous wave were also absorbed...¹³³

However, the final economic absorptive capacity of Palestine was far from being estimated accurately as long as the long neglected resources of the land would be revived.¹³⁴

3.4.3 A Critical Approach to the Declaration

In the course of the Palestinian history, the publication of the Balfour declaration was a milestone that represents the irreversible predicament of the Palestinian Arabs. A true perception of the anguish of the Palestinian Arabs can be obtained with a detailed scrutiny of the terms utilized in the text of the declaration. Only in this way the consequent British favoritism towards the Jewish community in Palestine (yishuv) and the ill disposition towards the Arabs might be well understood. The words were chosen attentively for the purpose of obscuring the secret plots of the forces that prepared the declaration. For this reason, the hints of the deceptive nature of the declaration are to be read between the lines. Although the declaration was brought to the public attention a week later, depicting it as a bilateral ploy between the British and the Zionists will not be unfair. The actual goal was to hoax the Arabs with word games and perverted meanings whereas the Arabs were shrewd enough to recognize these fraudulent representations at once.

Balfour Declaration was in the form of letter that was sent to one of the pioneers of Jewish colonies in Palestine - Lord Rothschild - and it is mentioned by the name of the Foreign Secretary of the then British government. The utilized method should not mislead us about the Zionists' role in the framing phase of the declaration. It was a joint British-Zionist determination to have the British approval of Zionist demands to be embodied in a

¹³² Shulamit Carmi and Henry Rosenfeld, "Immigration, Urbanization and Crisis: The Process of Jewish Colonization in Palestine during the 1920s", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, No. 12, (1971), pp. 53-55.

¹³³ Ibid, p. 45.

¹³⁴ Lowdermilk, op. cit., pp. 219-229.

letter. The concision of the script casts doubts on a previous understanding between Zionists and Britain that means an underhand dealing was at issue:

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

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."¹³⁵

In the threshold of the 20th century, the Zionists' embarked on their attempts to attain the endorsement of the British Empire for their plans relating to Palestine. This determination on the part of the Zionists intensified during the second decade of this century with the increasing draft resolutions circulating in the White Hall and envisaging the British blessings for a possible Zionist take over of the Palestinian territories. Henceforth, the Zionists were incorporated into the legislative process in British politics with respect to the issues relevant to the Zionist interests in Palestine. Their determined stance contributed to their success in convincing most of the British bureaucrats to the necessity of supporting the Zionist aspirations. In this way, most of the alleged anti-Semitic British statesmen crossed over to the Zionist domain. The multiple talks arranged between the Zionists and Foreign Secretary Balfour finally produced their effect and at the request of Balfour, Rothschild submitted a draft for subsequent British revision and approval.¹³⁶ After making certain modifications on Rothschild's proposal, gauging the United States' approach to a written British support for Zionism and eliminating the objections of the British Jews¹³⁷ and a few anti-Zionist British statesmen - most importantly Curzon - to the idea of a national home for Jews in Palestine, Balfour received green light to express the

¹³⁵ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 73.

¹³⁶ Ovendale, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

¹³⁷ The main departure point of the resistance of British Jewry to the idea of a prospective Jewish state in Palestine, which would serve as the place of attraction for the Jews world-wide, was the possibility that the existence of such a place would jeopardize political and social acquisitions hitherto of the Jews who established themselves in different parts of the world and one way or another succeeded in becoming integrated into the societies of the states they lived in. The anxiety of the British Jews were accommodated through a passage that was included in the Balfour declaration guaranteeing to protect the rights of the Jews dispersed in other countries in case of the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine: "...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*". See; Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

British commitment to Zionism through a declaration.¹³⁸ These processes bring us to the conclusion that it is almost impossible to visualize a key policy statement like the Balfour declaration that the Zionists did not take an active part in its building up. The elaboration on the draft of the declaration was such an in depth one that the pretexts about its negative repercussions that emanated from its wording hold no validity.¹³⁹

The prime blatant injustice of the document lies in the preference of the British government in taking into full account the Zionist point of view while playing down the concerns and conceptions of the Arabs. When pledging the lands of a nation to another group of people, it was even deliberately refrained from asking for their acquiescence. They could have at least resorted to this recourse out of courtesy. This fact becomes even more acute when it is bore in mind the demographical datum which demonstrates Arabs as the irrefutable majority and Jews as the minor element within the Palestinian population.

In return for the allegations that were put forth about the Balfour Declaration of being null and void, some social scientists champion the idea that the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the mandate terms and the approval of the these terms by the League of Nations were a proof of its internationally binding character. Dershowitz is among such researchers and he even goes too far by remarking that the Jews had deserved the Balfour Declaration by fighting in the ranks of the Allied troops contrary to Arabs who chose to aid the Ottoman armies.¹⁴⁰

The blind logic of the British government in displaying a wholesale leaning towards the Zionist mind is evident from the definition used for the Arabs in the declaration: 'non-Jewish communities'. Depicting the people constituting ninety percent of the population as such was a gross injury to the Arabs' long-term reputation on these lands and it was obviously an outcome of the Zionist pressures on the British authorities. They had equal liability and concurring interests in creating the unfavorable situation for the Palestinian Arabs. Yet, in the long run, it became clear that the British yielded to the Zionists' exigencies in such an excessive fashion that the forces of the most robust Empire of the period turned out to be mere tools in the hands of the Zionists. In the collective British-Zionist work of Balfour declaration, the British statesmen laid bare their biased

¹³⁸ Ovendale, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

¹³⁹ J. M. N. Jeffries, *The Balfour Declaration*, Beirut: Longmans, Green and Co., The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969, pp. 5-7.

¹⁴⁰ Dershowitz, op. cit., 32-38.

attitude towards the Jewish community by calling “the multitude the non-Jew...the 670,000 the non-60,000...out of a hundred, the 91 the non-9.”¹⁴¹

3.5 The Wrongdoings Emanating from the Covenant of the League of Nations

The destructive effects of the World War I urged the belligerents to put an end to further hostilities for the sake of peace and quietness. An international organization embracing the membership of the major world powers was deemed a necessary medium for the attainment of international relations ruled by mutual understanding and security. In this context, the decision to establish the League of Nations was reached in the Paris Peace Conference which was convened on January 18, 1919 in order to determine the terms of peace between the victors and the losers of the war. Faisal attended the conference as the representative of the Arab nation; meanwhile Weizmann assumed the agency of the Jews.

Only two weeks prior to the opening up of the peace conference, these two prominent leaders embodied their common apprehension regarding the Jewish and Arab interests in Palestine in an agreement. As I mentioned above, under the heading “Hashamites’ Standing”, through this agreement Faisal displayed his sympathy towards the Zionist cause and gave his implicit approval to the Balfour Declaration and this fact constituted the main reason for the impairment of Hashamites’ reputation among the Arabs. The intellectual cleavage emerged between the ruling clique and the Arab people in this way was evinced and stiffened in the peace conference on account of Faisal’s conciliatory remarks towards Jews flocking the Palestinian territories.¹⁴² The written communication that was forwarded to the peace conference by the key Arab people was in total contradiction with Faisal’s approach and constituted the primary indicator of the difference in tackling the Palestinian issue.¹⁴³

According to the victors of the war, which were in favor of imposing their own conditions on the defeated states, exploiting the human and natural resources and taking advantage of the strategic positions of the defunct Ottoman Empire were of great importance from the colonialist perspective. In this way, they invented the mandates system and justified it by reference to the lack of administrative experiences and ruling skills of the Arab communities of the Ottoman Empire. The newly devised exploitation system, namely the mandates system, was incorporated into the diligently elaborated and later on legalized

¹⁴¹ Jeffries, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁴² Davis, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

¹⁴³ Ovendale, op. cit., p. 46.

covenant of the League of Nations. In the League's covenant, the terms of the mandate were taken on a concrete shape and paved the way for the foreign interference to the political and economic affairs of the territories that were subjected to the mandate rule. Ostensibly the objective of implementing the mandates system was to assist the communities, which had deficiencies in self-administration, in acquiring the required attributes to manage their affairs of state on their own. In fact, this was the pretext for the mandatory power to reap the maximum benefits from being in command of all governmental business. According to this detailed mandates system, three different categories – A, B, and C - were created as per the level of political and administrative experience of the communities involved. In this framework, the former Arab provinces of the defunct Ottoman Empire, including Palestine, were put under the category of “A” mandates thanks to their treatment by the colonial powers as the most developed of all these territories which were in need of foreign assistance.¹⁴⁴ The mandates rule was supposed to be different from the colonial administration, especially when the advance acknowledgement of the right to independence of the mandated nation is considered. Nevertheless, what Britain contemplated for Palestine was a disguised colonization of this country. In order not to reveal her actual aspirations, Britain should find out a middle course wherein she would be able to wield control but at the same time relieve herself of a huge burden. This middle course was what I referred above as the “surrogate colonization” method.

Yet, in the Covenant of the League, the mandatory powers were invested with a set of liabilities towards its subject nation. Incremental introduction of the self-governing institutions was the primary obligation of the mandatory government, since according independence was the ultimate goal of the mandates system. Furthermore, mandatory

¹⁴⁴ Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations elucidated this issue as such : “To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the formance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be 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. The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances. Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory...”, <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eracolonialism/qt/MandateA22.htm>, January 3, 2009.

powers were entrusted with the task of delivering annual reports about their administration in the mandated territories to the Permanent Mandates Commission that acted under the supervision of the League of Nations. The commission's role, however, did not have any restrictive impact on the mandatory powers' scope of jurisdiction. Namely, the Commission was constituted only with pseudo aims.¹⁴⁵

The only clause in the Covenant that acted in favor of the mandated territories was the right that was bestowed to the people of the mandated areas for showing a preference for the state that would be liable in facilitating their transition to self-government. This was expressed in Article 22 of the covenant, but never put into practice when Arabs were at issue.¹⁴⁶ The inclinations of the Arab nations were affiliated through an American commission which came to be known as the King-Crane Commission. The findings of the commission reflected the true orientation of the Arabs owing to the observations performed on-site and data gathered through face-to-face discussions. Although the commission conducted its research in an unbiased fashion, the final report was brushed aside by the conference delegation. Thereby the wishes of the Arabs were never taken into account and the British rule was imposed on the Palestinian people despite their inclination towards a united and sovereign Syria with Palestine as its southern part or American guidance as a second choice. This was the most marked wrongdoing against the Palestinian Arabs emanating from the covenant of the League of Nations and proved that the British partiality towards Jews, where the Balfour Declaration stood as the landmark, would continue with a strong disposition and with the longest duration possible.

3.6 The Inequity Connected with the Terms of the Palestine Mandate

The influence of the Zionist protagonists in shaping the British policies was once again at issue in the preparation of the mandate terms and the appointment of Britain as the mandatory power in Palestine was the outcome of the Zionist Organization's intensive propaganda. After the announcement of the King-Crane Commission's report, almost a year passed until the designation of Britain as the official mandatory power in Palestine. In this elapse, the desires of the Arab nations were overlooked as the report was denied publication and the predilections of Zionists gained priority. Eventually at the San Remo Conference, whose main task was to settle the sharing of the territories that came on the

¹⁴⁵ For a brief information about the powers of the Permanent Mandates Commission see; Lesch, op. cit, pp. 38-39.

¹⁴⁶ Davis, op. cit., p. 18.

scene with the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Britain was declared to be the mandatory power for Palestine in April 1920.

In accordance with the resolutions arrived at the San Remo Conference, the provisions of the mandate rule in Palestine were worked out by the British and the final form was sent to the League of Nations. The truth was that the terms of the mandate were an outcome of extensive negotiations between Zionists and British politicians. As a consequence of this exchange of ideas and thorough interaction, the terms of the mandate were taken on a shape that suited to the Zionist interests in a perfect way. Since Arabs' national objectives were diametrically opposite to the aims of the Zionists concerning Palestine, this meant that the mandate rule would be conducted to the detriment of the Palestinian Arabs. This was not only evident *ab initio*, but also inevitable.

In 1922 Britain completed its work on the Palestine mandate terms and the League of Nations gave its consent to the settled draft. This legitimization of the British mandate provisions by the League was a legal error since, as it was mentioned above, the covenant of the League had envisaged taking into account the pretensions of the indigenous populations. The unfairness committed by the colonial powers against Arabs did not only comprise the infringement of the League Covenant. The grievances of the Palestinian Arabs taking root from the mandate provisions had two facets. One was the reiteration of the Balfour Declaration in the articles of the mandate for Palestine and the other was the nomination of a *Jewish Agency* in order to oversee the economic, social and political matters that concerned Jews closely.¹⁴⁷ The former was specified in the Article 2 and the latter was in Article 4.¹⁴⁸ This Jewish body created by the approval of Britain was not only represented the incompetence of the mandate administration in properly carrying out its dual obligation, but also was a irreparable blow to the administration's reputation because of its subjugation to the Zionists by letting them give assistance to the administration in

¹⁴⁷ McDowall, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Article 2. The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

Article 4. An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such social, economic and other matters as may effect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.

The Zionist organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognized as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home. See; Barbara Smith, op. cit., p.186.

certain issues. The need to get assistance from the Jewish Agency automatically paves the way to the supposition that such a long-established empire as the British Empire was not versed enough to master the things going on in Palestine on her own as if the management of affairs related to the Jewish national home policy would have been hindered without the boosting of the Jewish Agency. Leaving everything aside, if such assistance had been a *sin qua non*, it should have been needed also in the matters of Arab concern. Some of us may translate this situation as an indicator of the ethnocentric approach of Britain assuming that the Arabs were easy to check and inclined to pacification whereas the Jewish policies were so complex that assistance from a veteran body was indispensable. Apart from all these calculations, what is clear was that the Jews would be responsible for the conduct of their own affairs and would be active in the legal processes alongside the British lawmakers whereas Arabs would be inferior elements owing to their deprivation of an equivalent institution as Jews'; namely an *Arab Agency*,¹⁴⁹ which could have had a telling effect on the British higher echelons, so as to safeguard not only the civil and religious rights as the Balfour Declaration and the mandate terms which encompassed it envisaged, but also the political and economic interests of the Arabs. In other words, while the Jewish Agency was empowered to engage with the tasks concerning the *yishuv*, almost as an auxiliary committee, under the acknowledgement of the British mandates rule, the Arabs were not in possession of an equivalent organization in spite of the suggestion of Herbert Samuel - the High Commissioner of Palestine who took office in 1920 with the end of the military administration and remained there until 1925.

In reality, the British authorities were well aware of the necessity of establishing an Arab Agency that would have the telling effect of placating the Arabs by incorporating them into the policy making process. This would no doubt put the Arabs on equal terms with the Jews in mutual cooperation with the mandate administration in matters pertaining to the vindication of the Arab rights. The attempt of a cabinet sub-committee formed to evaluate the British policy in Palestine in 1923 was indicative of the British concerns to set up an Arab Agency. As the most influential person in taking part in the drafting of the sub-committee's report, then foreign secretary Lord Curzon underscored the benefits of setting up an Arab Agency and gave the details of its embodiment. Yet, this proposal of the British cabinet members hardly satisfied the Arabs and caused discomfort among the Zionists. However, in essence the rejection of the Arab notables to the creation of an Arab Agency was the primal reason of the shelving of the proposal.¹⁵⁰ In spite of the failure to realize the

¹⁴⁹ Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

Arab Agency project, even the making of such a suggestion was essential to show the British endeavors to remove the inequalities stemming from her clashing dual obligations, although they were inadequate.

Arabs were not only deprived of maintaining their interests by working in coordination with the British authorities as a consequence of the nonexistence of an Arab Agency, but also their legal right to gain the upper hand in the political arena was forfeited throughout the mandate rule on account of the failure to establish a *Legislative Council*. Initially, Arabs were reluctant to cooperate with the mandatory power so as not to give the impression of legitimizing their rule and the Zionist colonization of their country. Therefore they turned down all the plans of the high commissioners, most importantly the undertakings of Herbert Samuel as regards the creation of such a council. In the course of time, as Arabs realized that they were marginalized contrary to the increasing Jewish superiority in almost all the fields, they turned in favor of the idea of constituting a Legislative Council. This time, the British authorities grew unwillingness to the same idea. This vicious circle rendered the realization of the Legislative Council practically impossible and the decades-long efforts were thrown into the basket. The lack of any self-governing institution meant that although Palestine was in theory a mandated territory, in practice it “was ruled along the lines of a crown colony”.¹⁵¹ The failure of setting up a Legislative Council with fairly elaborated representation proportions during the thirty-year mandate rule was the bankruptcy of not only the mandate rule of Britain in Palestine, but also the whole mandate system prepared by the League of Nations. The Palestinian Arabs were never granted the chance of getting acquainted with self-governing institutions in the course of this lengthy Britain rule. This was also the bankruptcy of the fulfillment of Britain’s obligations towards Arabs. In other words, the dual obligation defined in the Balfour declaration and specified in the mandate terms was never implemented as it had to be and perceived as a mono obligation only towards satisfying the Jews.

The formidable situation which was encountering Arabs was not a confidential matter to them. The British policies giving the necessary hints about the urgency to precipitate the realization of the Jewish national home policy at the expense of ignoring the international obligations toward Arabs, which stemmed from the mandate terms and

¹⁵⁰ Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict 1917-1929*, London: Royal Historical Society, 1978, pp. 125-129.

¹⁵¹ Lesch, op. cit, p. 39. The phenomenon which differentiates a crown colony and a mandate was the direct British control conducted and sovereignty prevailed over these territories. A mandate had the right to have a voice in its administration through the development of representative institutions whereas the crown colony was fully subordinated to and dependent on Britain in its administrative issues.

previous understandings, were going on under their nose. Thus, Arabs could easily sense the miserable fact that they would eventually be deprived of their right of independence in direct contradiction with the British word of assurance.

The Arabs readily conceded that it would be simpler for Great Britain to administer Palestine as a colony rather than as a country whose ultimate destiny was independence. They saw in this move a design calculated to deprive them of the prospect of attaining their aspirations. They saw in it, the possibility of realizing the Jewish hopes under a strict colonial regimentation. From that moment on, every act of government was viewed with distrust and consequently subjected to close scrutiny. No wonder. A declared policy by the British Government to favor the setting up of a Jewish national home in Palestine; a slow but steady trickle of immigration of Jews which gave a foretaste of what it would be like when that trickle has swollen into a turbulent torrent; the Zionist Commission's pressure on the Administration and their influence at Home; Hebrew admitted as an official language bidding fair to oust the Arabic language when the Jews become numerically superior in the land; the Jewish avowed policy of setting up a Jewish State; a Jewish High Commissioner, and finally the placing of the country in the position of a Crown Colony – these, in short, were the facts facing the Arabs.¹⁵²

Another instance of Britain's insistence to perceive Palestinian territories as a colony emanated from its policies breaching the Article 18 of the mandate for Palestine. According to this article¹⁵³, Britain was barred from establishing preferential treatments in Palestine. This underpinning of the policy which intended to bar Britain from resorting even a semblance of such an action was defined as "open door policy" and the main objective of this policy was to put the members of the League of Nations at equal terms "in matters of taxation, commerce or navigation, the exercise of industries or professions, or against goods originating in, or destined for, the said states."¹⁵⁴ Contrary to the conventional colonial administration, it was strictly forbidden to treat the mandate as if it was the property of the mandatory power whose only task was to assist the people in their path to self-government. However, since Britain treated Palestine as one of her crown colonies, she got the upper hand in the country's commercial life and tried her best to bypass the restrictive clauses. By giving herself priority in the trade relations with Palestine, Britain caused an outright transgression in the mandate terms and thus deviated

¹⁵² Abcarius, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁵³ Article 18. The Mandatory shall see there is no discrimination in Palestine against the nationals of any State Member of the League of Nations (including companies incorporated under its laws) as compared with those of the Mandatory or of any foreign State in matters concerning taxation, commerce or navigation, the exercise of industries or professions, or in the treatment of merchant vessels or civil aircraft. Similarly, there shall be no discrimination in Palestine against goods originating in or destined for any of the said States, and there shall be freedom of transit under equitable conditions across the mandated area...Barbara Smith, op. cit., p. 189.

¹⁵⁴ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

from the nub of the mandate rule as it swung to some sort of manner akin to a colonizer.¹⁵⁵ Actually Britain's derogative approach towards Palestine in the domain of trade relations had it causes in the deliberate confusion created on account of the interpretation of the clauses of the mandate categories which found its way in the draft of the British mandate terms in Palestine. The open door policy was originally envisaged for the B mandates. It was cited in the Article 22 of the League Covenant with these words: "The territories under B mandates are especially those of Central Africa, where the Mandatory will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion and will assure equal opportunities for trade and commerce to all members of the League."¹⁵⁶ Such a liberal policy was not adopted in the case of the A mandates where Palestine was included. In view of the circumstances, Palestine can said to be under double colonization with the British overseeing the financial, administrative and commercial issues and with Jews working actively on land. The alienation of Arabs mounted up when these facts were compounded with the difficulties experienced by them showed an upward trend on account of the expanding Zionist influence in Palestine thanks to the Balfour declaration.

As a consequence of the overlap between the British interests and Zionist objectives and with the help of the efficient diplomacy techniques of Zionist notables, after five years of its publication the Balfour Declaration finally found the favorable field of application via the ratified mandate terms. The British administration was empowered to carry out to exigencies of the declaration thanks to the League of Nations. Thereby the successive British governments turned out to be the instrument of extolment of Jewish presence and the symbol of Arab sufferance in Palestine. Moreover the *dual obligation* of the British administration, which was first introduced by the Balfour Declaration, was endorsed by an international organization and set the inception of the long-term distress the British authorities experienced in their control of the mandated Palestinian territories due to the impossibility of reconciling the conflicting interests of the two communities.

3.7 The Impact of the British Military Administration on Zionist Interests

The British reign in Palestine had begun long before the mandate rule came into effect in 1923. As the British troops proved their military superiority over the Ottoman forces by compelling them to withdraw from the Palestinian territories, the British Military Administration was established. The inception of the military administration materialized in

¹⁵⁵ Barbara Smith, op. cit., pp. 19-25.

¹⁵⁶ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 82-84.

December 1917 that was nearly a month after the publication of the Balfour Declaration. Not this entire six years duration that passed until the official birth of the mandate rule constituted a favorable milieu for creating the necessary conditions for the Jewish national home policy despite the potent will displayed by Britain. The limits of the jurisdiction of the military administration formulated in the Military Law were the major obstacles on the way of the realization of the national home and related issues.

The military administration remained in office until June 1920 and this two-and-a-half-year period was one of the exceptional cases until 1939 where the relations between British officials and the Zionists encountered formidable hardships. The objective of the military government, which was to maintain the status quo, was in direct conflict with the implicit and explicit goals of Zionism. This was the major underlying reason of the dispute between the military rulers and the Zionist leaders between the years 1917-1920.¹⁵⁷ For instance, the insistence of the Zionist Commission, which popped up in Palestine in April 1918, in interfering with the duties of the Military Administrators on the grounds that the topics they were interested in was in direct connection with the future of the Jewish national home, plagued the relations between the Military Administration and the Zionists. It was foreseeable for this administration that every attempt by the Jews to meddle in the status quo would inevitably create discomfort in the country. They made several applications to the government in London to reverse its special treatment of Jews explaining that this pro-Zionist approach was emboldening the Zionists to take a more determinant stance when championing their case. One of these applications was taken on concrete shape in a note forwarded to London in which Chief Administrator -General Allenby- recommended “in the interests of peace, of development, and of the Zionists themselves that the Zionist Commission in Palestine should be abolished.”¹⁵⁸ Recognizing this risky attempt was peculiar not only to the Military officers; the first civil administrator of Palestine – Herbert Samuel – sensed that the privileges bestowed to the Jewish Agency in the Article 4 of the draft mandate in the teeth of Arab opposition were illogical. Thus, he not only proposed the dilution of this mentioned article, but also demanded a certain degree of restriction to the Zionist Commission in its tasks.¹⁵⁹ Bearing in mind his Zionist presumptions and his early endeavors in the British cabinet to have the approval of British politicians for a Jewish state in Palestine, this attitude displayed by him was very crucial in

¹⁵⁷ For a detailed analysis of the military rule, see; John J. McTague Jr, “The British Military Administration in Palestine 1917-1920”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Spring, (1978).

¹⁵⁸ Abcarius, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁵⁹ Wasserstein, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

understanding the discrimination implemented against the Palestinian Arab community. According to the Arab perception, being sidelined from the political game played over Palestine, as if the long-established occupiers of these lands were Jews and the people ceded their lands two thousand years ago and now endeavoring to establish themselves artificially once again were the Arabs, was a huge offensive committed against them.

That (Arabs') opposition, it should be noted, was directed against the establishment of the national home, not against the Jews as such. The injustice of setting up an alien home in the Arabs' own home was in itself outrageous. But this preferential treatment meted out to Jews weighed more heavily on the Arabs' heart. He could understand even a harsh military administration. He had known an oppressive Turkish rule. He had just been through the rigor of war-time rule under the Turk and German. He had learned that those in power arrogated to themselves rights and privileges denied to others. But he still had to learn that those in power could discriminate between Arab and Jew...In the official Haycraft Commission report several instances of favoritism are recorded as having been among the factors which determined the outbreak of the 1920 riots. The Jews "enjoyed greater facilities than the Arabs in the matter of obtaining permits to travel on Military railways and to import merchandise by them, owing to the fact that the Zionist Commission was accepted by the Administration as sponsor for the Jews." Thus the Commission which had ostensibly come to Palestine to placate Arab opinion signally succeeded in arousing the Arabs' opposition to the home it had come to establish...¹⁶⁰

This quotation sheds light on the grim reality of the casting away of the findings of a great many of reports of inquiry that were published following the acts of violence besetting these territories. Most of these reports objectively put forth the real causes of the fighting between Arabs and Jews, and the predominant conviction that can be found in them was that the persistent Zionist pressures on the British officials to realize the requirements of the Jewish national home as soon as possible dragged the country into a state of turmoil and rendered the exercise of a fair government in Palestine on equitable terms almost impossible.

The assessments of the politicians in London and the military officers in Palestine regarding the political and social circumstances of the country were inevitably different since the true evaluation of the background as outsiders was hardly possible. The military rulers had access to the details of all the occurrences at first hand and they hold the chance of eye witnessing the skirmishes broke out between the inhabitants of the country. Besides, preserving the situation in the way they inherited it required a certain degree of impartiality towards the resident populations without showing any preferential treatment to any of them. However, the policies Zionists sought to carry out entailed a significant shift in the social, political and economic state of Palestine hitherto. The deep motive of the occasional acts of

¹⁶⁰ Abcarius, op cit., p. 61.

violence originated between Arabs and Jews following the issuance of Balfour Declaration was the mass migration and extensive land purchase policies which constituted the backbone of Zionist ideology and required the above mentioned alterations. In the execution of these policies, Zionists assumed an indifferent and negligent attitude towards the long-term dwellers of the territories by their cussed and ethnocentric conducts.

The military administrators did not fail to realize the causes of the Arab resentment and the righteousness in their indignation against the Zionist encroachment. The victimization of Arabs paved way to an intimacy on the side of the military officials towards the Arab case. On account of the upward trend of the Arab irritation, even the officials who began their tenure as staunch advocates of Zionism could not manage to perform policies which would work to the obvious advantage of Zionists.¹⁶¹

Whether the intimacy of the military administrators towards the complaints of Arabs had any effect on the even handed policies that must have been pursued and whether it led to any apparent anti-Semitic practices by the military rulers is a complex issue to unravel. There is no doubt that the sympathy nurtured towards Arabs made the Military Administration vulnerable to criticism, thus they frequently came under harsh rebukes from the Zionist Organization and were charged with anti-Zionist leanings by the Zionist Commission. McTague discusses this point in his article by citing certain names from the military administration as a reference.¹⁶² After emphasizing some cases where officers expressed their aversion for Jews, he concludes that blaming them as antagonistic to Zionism or anti-Semitic is inaccurate since they acted in a realistic way when interpreting the circumstances in Palestine. On the whole, other than a few exceptions, the officials of the military administration can be considered to succeed in preserving their impartiality. Yet, the Zionists' dislike for the military administration lasted until its cessation in June 1920.

The dilemma of the British government, which conducted its policies in London, was a daunting one. On the one hand, it was committed to smooth the path leading to the Jewish national home. On the other hand, the military administration, which was accountable to and obliged to fulfill the orders of the government, was bound to keep itself within the limits of the international law in ruling Palestine until its political future would be legally determined, which means no distinction would be made between Jews and Arabs. For this reason, any pressure from the British government so as to render the conditions in Palestine convenient for the Jews to build up a national home for themselves

¹⁶¹ McTague Jr., *op cit.*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61.

would have been the breach of the international law. Although this was the source of the dilemma, with its reinforcement of the status quo, the British government displayed tendency to abide by the military law at the cost of the Zionist interests.¹⁶³ However, this was not applied as a general rule during the Military Administration. Certain exceptions did exist with their drastic repercussions. These exceptions were embodied through several resolutions which infringed the international Military Law and disturbed the partiality of the administration in favor of the Jews. One of them which bore the deepest impact in the way of injuring the relations of the two communities was recognition of Hebrew as the third official language of Palestine alongside Arabic and English.

The Military Occupant could not, under Military Law, accede to this demand, and the Commission knew it; the Jews in Palestine were less than ten percent of the population. The Commission, therefore, knew that even if the Military Authorities were prepared to recommend to higher Authority a departure from the canons of Military Law, the Jews' numerical strength would hold the Chief Administrators' recommendation up to ridicule...the recognition of Hebrew as an official language in Palestine did more harm than good to the Jewish cause. It goaded the Arabs into open resistance against the national home. Their patience was wearing thin. They felt that they had been betrayed...They could not understand how the Jews got their way, no matter how unreasonable their demands.¹⁶⁴

The Jewish national home and policies that were designed to facilitate it thus put the Jews in a position far more superior than Arabs in political, social and economic fields. This was the root cause of the Arab violent uprisings that started to break out in the course of 1920s and finally culminated in the forcible Arab strike in 1936. The Military authorities were well aware of the injustice befell on the Arabs on account of pro-Zionist policies and contemplated the outcome of implementing these policies beforehand. Yet, it could not hinder the British authorities in London from adopting such resolutions which carried disastrous implications.

A new era for Zionists was opened up with the transfer of the administration from military to civil rulers. The inception of the civil administration's tenure represented the end of the binding effect of the military law and the priority passed to the implementation of the Jewish national home policy. In this way, the fruitful political climate that the Zionists' had anxiously waited for came into being, unfolding the close Zionist-British alliance. The pledges stated in the Balfour Declaration came to be the determining factor of the inaugurating civil period.

¹⁶³ Foreign Secretary Balfour's rejection of Weizmann's suggestions which he regarded as a violation of the status quo in Palestine. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

¹⁶⁴ Abcarius, op. cit., p. 65.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the things that were told in this chapter is that the socio-economic and socio-political changes in Palestine during the British mandate which left profound effects on the lives of the Palestinian Arabs emanated from the British decision to encourage the progress of Zionism on these lands. Various motivations caused this encouragement to be given to the Zionists, but most determining of them was to acquire outstanding benefits for the empire. On account of this logic that located the imperial interests at the top of the priority list, Britain withdrew from her initial promises to the Arab community during World War I. From the moment the Palestinian Arabs realized that they made a huge mistake by trusting the British Empire, the relations between them deteriorated. The pledges given to the Arabs were replaced by the pledges given to the Jews. The Balfour declaration became not only the manifestation of official alliance between Britain and the Zionists, but also the prime reason of the predicament of the Palestinian Arabs. Contrary to the promises that were given to the Arabs and which were not kept, the alliance between the Zionist movement and the British officials bore political, economic and social fruits in the real sense for the Jewish community in Palestine. By incorporating the Jews to every process that would affect the future of the Jewish national home, Britain proved its commitment to the agreement made with the Jews. Every time the Jews were given a say in the Palestinian affairs, the Arabs were inevitably excluded from the developments. Except for the two-and-a-half-year British military administration which tried to keep a balance between the inhabitants of the country, the Jewish community seized almost every opportunity to evolve into a state-like structure under the British mandate rule. This time, Britain proved quite determined to adhere to her promises. However, the cooperation between her and the Zionists could prevail only as long as this cooperation benefitted the British interests. This situation is an extension of the principle that can be put like this: 'Britain neither has friends nor enemies, she only has interests'. Unfortunately, the sake of the British interests created a catastrophe in Palestine which forfeited everything the Arabs possessed; their majority status, their jobs and their lands.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES IN PALESTINE DURING THE BRITISH MANDATE

4.1 Jewish Immigration and the Demographic Transformation

The transformation of Palestine in terms of large scale changes experienced in the cultural, social, political and economic lives of its Arab population had its origin in the finely coordinated Jewish immigration movement which planted the Jews on this territory as the second largest community until they outnumbered the Arabs following the creation of Israel. Although massive immigration of Jews and the extensive attempts on land buying went hand in hand in transforming the whole structure in a sense different from the way it had been conducted previously, the negative impact of the land sales to the Jews would have remained minor without the ascending number of Jews in Palestine day by day. Since the Jews, who started to settle in Palestine in the last decades of the 19th century, pursued the ideal of establishing a Jewish state there from the first days of their arrival, the settlement activity should be backed by the transportation of Jews from all over the world in order to become the majority and seize the power. The backbone of a prospective Jewish state lay in the preliminary stage of establishing a national home for Jews in Palestine. It was hardly possible to realize the ideal of a national home and later an independent Jewish state without drawing Jews in Palestine by introducing certain incentives to them. In other words, the passing of Arab lands to Jewish hands did not have the necessary power to cause a structural transformation on its own in favor of the Jewish residents. The actual driving force of the transformation was the immigration policy.

Before the Jewish efforts to colonize Palestine began, the population of Palestine under the Ottoman rule in the 1880s was approximately 650 thousand. This number comprised a great many Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, whereas Jews had not exceeded a small percentage. This Jewish population (old yishuv), who could be counted among the old occupiers of the Palestinian territories alongside Arabs, were mostly interested in their religious duties and for this reason inhabited four cities -Jerusalem, Safad, Tiberias and Hebron - which were of importance to the Jewish faith. Majority of them were the members of the Sephardi (Oriental) Jews. Owing to the fact that the language they spoke and most of the traditions that was adhered by them were common with the Arab community, they were

perceived by the Arabs as their fellow countrymen contrary to the perception about the new Jewish settlers who were regarded as alien and aggressive. Namely, a perfect integration occurred between the old yishuv and the Arab population.¹⁶⁵ Contrary to their co-religionists (new yishuv), who flocked the country with successive aliyahs, they were oblivious of the Zionist aims and did not follow the clandestine Zionist line of capturing the Palestinian lands. Moreover, while they were Ottoman subjects and under the protective umbrella of the millet system, bulk of the members of the new yishuv refused to be Ottoman subjects and benefited from the privileges under the capitulations system.¹⁶⁶ The activities of the old yishuv did not incur any harm nor had a detrimental effect on the Arab community. This was why peace and harmony were the most important factors commanding their relations. The perception of being a nation that was found among the Jews of the Diaspora barely touched the lives of the old yishuv. Since they did not hold a balanced concentration throughout Palestine, neither could they develop a sense of national community, nor display any degree of political integrity. Thus, rather than bearing political motivations for the creation of a state for Jews, they showed interest only to religious issues.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, they did not prove helpful in the improvement of modern Zionist notions.

As a small country such as Palestine was crowded with an increasing number of Jews, the pressure on Arabs heightened. A wide-range of sources indicates that the population growth in the Jewish community was achieved through an artificial medium, which was immigration. On the other hand, the Arabs increased in numbers owing to natural ways. The statistics show that the growth rate of the Arab community and Jewish community between the years 1922 and 1935 were 2.5 and 11.7 respectively,¹⁶⁸ supporting the above mentioned argument. No matter how high the birth rates and how low the infant mortality rates among Palestinian Arabs¹⁶⁹, they did not succeed in achieving the abnormal growth in the Jewish population. The ratio of the Arabs to the Jews showed a marked decline in 1935 as against the figures in 1922. While it was 8.4 in 1922, it receded to the level of 2.9 in 1935.¹⁷⁰ The reason of this incompetent, yet rapid increase in the number of

¹⁶⁵ Mandel, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 30-31.

¹⁶⁷ Tessler, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

¹⁶⁸ Metzger; Kaplan, op. cit., p. 335

¹⁶⁹ Weinstock, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁷⁰ Metzger; Kaplan, op. cit., p. 335.

the Palestinian Arabs was related by Talal Asad to the desperate economic circumstances that the rural population was exposed to.¹⁷¹ Although he stated that this proposition was open to discussion, according to him, Arab peasants perceived reproduction as a panacea for dealing with their hopeless destitution. A plausible explanation for Asad's thinking may be that the people living in rural areas considered every new child added to their families as an impulse to cope with the difficulties in the agricultural sector. Moreover, the excessive increase in the number of Jewish immigrants in Palestine was considered synonymous with the Arabs' eventual deprivation from the numerical superiority they held in Palestine for centuries. A prospective Jewish majority in Palestine would, under no circumstances, ease the way leading to the establishment of a Jewish state. That is to say, Arabs may have tried to catch the Jewish population growth rate through paying no attention to the economically detrimental outcomes of increasing family population.

Between the years 1917 and 1939, the period which I confine myself in this thesis, two censuses were organized; one in 1922 and the other in 1931.¹⁷² From 1922 to 1946, while the number of Arabs increased twofold, the Jewish population increased eightfold.¹⁷³ This fact sheds light on the great privilege that Jews held in their hand for decades, since through immigration they had the chance of bringing hundreds of thousands of people at one time.

Table 1 Results of the Censuses Carried Out in 1922 and 1931

	Census of 1922	Census of 1931
Muslims	486,177	693,147
Christians	71,464	88,907
Jews	88,790	174,606
Others	7,617	10,101
All population	752,048	1,033,314

Source: Gabbay, op. cit., p. 7

¹⁷¹ Asad, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷² Gabbay, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷³ Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London & New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948, pp. 54-55.

Table 2 Numbers of Jews Arrived and Total Jewish Population Between
1922-1931

	Jewish Immigration	Jewish Population
1922	8,685	88,970
1923	8,175	97,145
1924	13,892	111,037
1925	34,386	145,423
1926	13,855	159,278
1927	3,034	162,312
1928	2,178	164,490
1929	5,249	169,739
1930 + 1931	4,867	174,606

Sources: Wasserstein, op. cit., p. 160; Gabbay, op. cit., p. 7

4.1.1 The Impact of Immigration on Arab-Jewish Relations

Zionists never abandoned their struggle to multiply the number of Jews immigrating to Palestine despite the counteraction of Arab politicians and the British policy statements and inquiry reports touching upon the necessities of limiting the Jewish immigration due to the growing difficulty of accommodating the Jewish and Arab national interests. At the outset, the prevalent view with regard to the British contradictory arrangements affecting the relations between Arabs and Jews was not wrapped with a negative connotation when looked from the British spectacles. The British politicians were treating the matter with an unmitigated wishful thinking. Their expectation was that the allowance of the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine would bring a huge amount of capital with it and this capital had the power of remedying the unfavorable conditions Arabs were wrestling with. As the Arabs saw that their standards of living were increasing due to the means of the settling Jews, they would feel contend with the Jewish

national home policy and its repercussions. Namely, a conflict between Arab nationalists and Zionists had not been prophesied initially.

The special attributes of the Jewish immigration and the features rendered it different from other immigration movements, however, made conciliation between Jews and Arabs almost impossible at the outset. The flowing of Jews into a country with meager opportunities in economic domain showed that their precedence was not to acquire economic advantages. What made them feel a strong desire to immigrate and settle in Palestine was, as explained in detail above, the religious and nationalist magnitude ascribed to it. In Palestine the circumstances forced the newly settled Jewish immigrants to start from the scratch, since almost no employment opportunities whatsoever were available for the middle and upper class Jews when they stepped up into these lands.¹⁷⁴ The objective of the generation process commenced by the Zionists was inevitably set as creating the necessary circumstances for the upcoming immigrants and providing them subsistence. Arabs were not the target section of this process and naturally fell outside the realm of the Zionist prospects. The Zionists were interested only in ameliorating their standards of living while the Arabs were left on their own to cope with the organized immigration and its bitter implications. This was how the seeds of the Arab-Jewish conflict were sown in the Palestinian territories.

The obligations of the British Administration in Palestine that were formulized in the Balfour declaration and later included in the mandate terms were not considered to engender turmoil in the country, since they were regarded to be in a total harmony with each other. The incidents Palestine went through in the later years proved that neither the Jewish immigration was making a good impact on the Arab community, nor the Arabs and Jews were willing to get along with each other on good terms. In other words, these obligations were congenitally incompatible with each other, because one was a positive and the other one was a negative obligation; each one was interfering with the other.¹⁷⁵ The implementation of the positive obligation would inevitably run against the exercise of the negative obligation and vice versa. The business Britain engaged herself was like running into a brick wall. Thus, the British hopes of a Jewish-Arab compromise and a peaceful environment in Palestine under the British rule were dashed.

¹⁷⁴ Ariele Tartakower, "Social Forces in Palestine's Economy", *Social Forces*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (Mar., 1949), p. 231.

¹⁷⁵ The positive obligation of the British Administration in Palestine was defined in the first part of the Balfour declaration as follows: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object..." and the negative obligation was specified in the latter part of this sentence: "...nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..." See; Abcarian, op. cit., p. 93.

The collision of two communities started to be felt strongly at the end of the 1920s and in the course of 1930s, since violence appeared to be the only viable option to the Arabs in order to reverse the pro-Zionist policies of Britain. As diplomatic means lost ground and violence became the rule of the day parallel to this, several clashes erupted in different time periods among Arabs and Jews. The 1921, 1929 and 1936 riots were marked points in the political history of Palestine under the British mandate, rendering the British rule in Palestine more and more problematic to sustain. Although Arab notables believing in the efficiency of diplomatic struggle did always exist in Palestine in spite of the crystal clear detachment taking place between almost all of the Arab and Jewish sectors, be it educational, health, industrial, agricultural, political organization, trade unionization, the conditions prevalent in this small country compelled all segments of the Arab society to non-cooperation with the British administration and Jewish community. Even the most moderate predisposed Arab leading figures emerged as the supporters of the most extreme measures in some cases as the Jewish entity got the semblance of a state and their autonomous activities emphasizing the separate evolvement of the communities mounted up.

4.2 Land Sales and the Class Transformation

Until the Jewish craving for acquiring land in Palestine was followed by a process between the Zionist institutions responsible for land purchase and the Arab landlords, in which intensive sales transactions occurred, bulk of the Arabs were engaged in agriculture. The sector they worked in was rendering land more indispensable for them than any other thing. They were making a living through land they tilled and the yields they gathered from this land were the only underpinning for their survival. Furthermore, land was the only asset they clung on so as to vindicate their centuries-old attachment to Palestinian territories. From the very inception of the Jewish immigration, they were well aware of the disadvantages they would be subjected to through the severe experiences they went through or witnessed. When the impact of growing Jewish population, although at a slow pace until the end of the World War I, was added to the rising need of meeting their settlement demands, the alienation of Arabs from their lands became acute, affecting the current state of existence not only for every single Arab family, but also for an enduring robust Palestinian Arab entity in the future. In return, Arabs highlighted their insistence on not

surrendering their lands to an alien community and thus the contention between Jewish and Arab communities which concentrated on land ownership intensified.¹⁷⁶

The class system prevailing in Palestine during the time period in question was quite an unjust one. The great majority of the Arab community was composed of landless tenants working under the yoke of landowners who were members of no more than a dozen privileged Palestinian families living either inside or outside Palestine. The pouring of Jews in Palestinian territories speeded up various Zionist organizations' attempts at getting access to lands as much as possible. The Arab peasants living under diverse hardships were inevitably affected adversely by the agreement between the Arab landowners and Jewish land purchasing organizations because a large part of the Arab lands that were sold were owned by wealthy Arabs. Namely, the majority of Arabs who felt the undesirable consequences of the land sales were mere cultivators on land. On the basis of these purchase agreements, they were forced out of their homes and deprived of their rights of employment on land. Waging a subsistence economy was already putting them under hard circumstances. Now they were obliged to evacuate the lands and abandon their modest livelihood. That is to say, landlessness of the rural Arab population was aggravated by the urgency of moving to towns since their established traditional social order in the villages was at the brink of disintegration. Although Arabs did not remain inert and responded to the intensive land sales to the Jews sometimes with similar endeavors to purchase land,¹⁷⁷ sometimes with diplomatic delegations entrusted with the task of altering the British point of view in favor of Arabs and sometimes with violent actions when peaceful means were exhausted as in the case of 1936 strikes and the subsequent riots, for the most part the Jewish attainments outstripped the Arab efforts.

The lack of necessary strength to impede this disintegration led to a switch in their old habits and employment modes, as they became dwellers of urban areas and workers of the industrial sector. This was the result of the direct pressure of an inevitable sociological process; "class transformation".¹⁷⁸ Zureik, defines the way in which Palestinian peasants' participation into the ranks of wage-earning working class in the cities as a "distorted form of urbanization", because "Arab urbanization in Palestine resembled more a process of

¹⁷⁶ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 32-44.

¹⁷⁷ In this context, Supreme Muslim Council played the key role in purchasing land. Land that came into possession of the Council was directly treated as waqf, which means its sale was prevented and it had to be kept as the inalienable property of the Council. Therefore, part of the Arab rural population seemed impatient to donate their lands to the Council in order to impede its sale to the Zionist organizations by converting it to waqf land. See, Lesch, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

¹⁷⁸ Elia Zureik, "Toward a Sociology of the Palestinians", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (Summer, 1977), pp. 5-6.

partial ruralization of the cities...”¹⁷⁹ The inadequacy of Arab peasants’ experiences outside the realm of rural subsistence was a precipitating factor for the mentioned ruralization of the urban areas. On the other hand, while huge amounts of money flowed into the hands of a bunch of already wealthy absentee Arab landlords, no or little compensation was paid to the tillers.¹⁸⁰ Consequently, Arab cultivators were deprived of their only guarantee for continued existence and condemned to economic catastrophe.¹⁸¹

In the second part of the 19th century, a certain change in production methods was already under way as the European penetration into the Ottoman economic and political systems expanded. As a part of this process, capitalist mode of production was imposed also on to the Palestinian Arabs who hitherto preferred utilizing traditional means for production. Since they lacked the modern techniques to keep pace with the developing economic upswing in Europe, they became vulnerable to the fundamental changes and structural transformation in the economic system accompanied by the pressures taking root from the introduction of the capitalist order. However, the real impact of the capitalist transformation manifested itself with the outset of the Zionist colonization movement. The bitter escalation in the exploitation of the Arab cultivators had a direct correlation with the inception of the colonizing activities of the new yishuv. The British mandate rule encouraged the expansion of the Jewish-centered capitalist sector and favored it against the non-capitalist Palestinian Arab economy. In order to ensure the growth of the capitalist mode of production in Palestine, the peasant class of the Arab community should make financial and economic sacrifices. With the rearrangement of the economic system and the modification of the legislations that was inherited from the Ottoman Empire, the Arab fellahin was forced to produce and pay more, namely relinquishing their subsistence economy turned out to be imperative and at the same time inevitable for them. Preservation of the Arab economy within a level of definite stability brought the importance of the market forces to the foreground. The survival of the Arab agriculturalists depended on the level of integration that would be displayed with the market forces. The introduction of the principles of the capitalist system obligated the Arab peasants to work closely with the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

¹⁸⁰ Lesch, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁸¹ Lowdermilk, interestingly claims that he witnessed personally that the Arab cultivators were not left without compensation by the Jewish purchasers of land when they were forced to evacuate the lands on account of the sales agreements. By this way, he uses a few instances he observed for advocating the idea that the prominent figures in Arab political life were not as concerned as the Jews for the Arab peasants’ sufferings. Moreover, he expresses clearly that the land sales provided the Arabs with a great amount of money, which they used to bloom in other fields, such as building and industry. But in view of the general picture of Palestine, there is no way to support this essentialist approach. *Palestine: Land of Promise*, pp. 155-156.

capitalist market forces. So instead of producing that would suffice for their subsistence, they began to orient a considerable part of their production to the market.¹⁸² Similar to the Jewish economy, the proportion of exported goods in the Arab economy increased dramatically, citrus being the main export item in both economies.¹⁸³

In this way, not only the market became the major determinant, but also the long-standing non-capitalist production methods ceased to exist gradually; European capitalist production superseding the Arab non-capitalist mode of production. On the other hand, the surplus extracted from the Arabs by the mandate administration on the basis of the new fiscal system was used as an incentive for the Jewish capitalists rather than as a means for developing the Arab economy.¹⁸⁴ In other words, until the injection of Europe-originated Jews in Palestine, the Palestinian Arabs did their utmost in counteracting the influence of capitalism and waged their subsistence economy one way or another. As soon as Jews began their efforts to colonize Palestine, Arab peasants' endeavors up to that date dashed to pieces and they became the part of the imposed capitalist system without their will. In other words, Jewish colonization movement was the last straw in the economic transformation and social decay of the Palestinian Arabs.¹⁸⁵

4.2.1 A Capitalist or Socialist Economic Order?

Yet, in the academic domain, there seems to be a difference in opinion among the researchers about the ideological orientation of the Zionist movement and its economic methods. Reaping profits from the invested capital was the number one aim of the capitalist system. To this end, investment is directed toward lands where the cost of production will be the lowest through the proximity to the raw materials and the presence of cheap labor force. Since in Palestine the required raw materials were lacking, the Zionist investments, whether in agricultural or industrial sectors, must be made without any expectations of profitable material returns. The advocates of this evaluation¹⁸⁶, which seems to be prevalent in the scientific works analyzing the economic circumstances in Palestine, put forth that in their goals the cooperative (moshav) and collective settlements (kibbutz) established by the Zionist colonizers for agricultural production were profit-free establishments. The

¹⁸²Metzer; Kaplan, op. cit., p. 328.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 334.

¹⁸⁴ Asad, op. cit., pp. 3-7.

¹⁸⁵ Weinstock, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁸⁶ Tartakower, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

establishment of these two kinds of agricultural settlements was regarded revolutionary because of the values they represented. As the driving motive of these settlements, the principles of labor Zionism left their mark on the organization of these settlements. The immigrants of the second aliyah, who were deeply stimulated by the ideal of creating an egalitarian Jewish society, spearheaded their formation and sustained them. The socialist tendencies which affected the Eastern Jewry of the time were also reflected on the organizational structure of these settlements and the exercise of the works taken up in them. The intensive efforts to create a Jewish working class were launched when the second aliyah was in progress and the Jewish labor only policy was experimented in these settlements, especially in the kibbutz.¹⁸⁷ The details about this policy will be given in the following pages.

In the preparation phase of the Palestinian lands for an independent Jewish state, agriculture took up the most essential role. The immigrants were indoctrinated in a way to enthusiastically devote themselves to work on soil. The creation of the cooperative and collective agricultural settlements was necessitated by this concern. Besides, as it was mentioned above, it was the reflection of the labor Zionist ideology. The Zionist institutions, which were the agencies of this ideology, was in desperate need to compete with the low-wage Arab workers in order to eliminate the distressing conditions prevailing in Palestine during the second decade of the 20th century. In this context, *General Federation of Jewish Labor* (Histadrut) assumed the role of preparing the Palestinian territories for an independent Jewish state and the formation of these two kinds of agricultural settlements was a part of Histadrut's plan of achieving an independent and self-contained Jewish economy.¹⁸⁸

Contrary to the absence of the first condition mentioned above, the second condition for the perpetuation of the capitalist system was found in Palestine; a cheap labor force was existent. However, to a large extent this cheap labor force of Arabs was denied employment and no benefits were derived from them in the Jewish sector. The wage requests of the Jewish laborers were higher when compared to the Arab laborers owing to the fact they were industrialized and they bore higher expectations and desires relative to their life standards. Arab laborers deemed lower wages sufficient for their subsistence and for this reason should have been preferred over Jewish labor force from a capitalist view point. The elimination of Arab laborers from the Jewish enterprises and the preference of the Jewish workers over them can be regarded as another indicator of the non-capitalist

¹⁸⁷ Tessler, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

¹⁸⁸ Zachary Lockman, "Railway Workers and Relational History: Arabs and Jews in British-Ruled Palestine", *Comperative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, (Jul., 1993), p. 609.

character of the Zionist economy due to its indifference to the requisites of the capitalist mode of production. In reality, however, the exclusive Jewish labor policy of the Zionist institutions and Jewish private enterprises, as discussed below, were an outcome of the exceptional characteristics of the Zionist colonization in Palestine, although the dominance of labor movement and socialist pretensions did play a significant role in the formation of the Zionist ideology. Since the ultimate goal of Zionism was to build a homogenous Jewish state in Palestinian territories that was purged of its Arab elements, the existence of an indigenous population in these territories served a negative purpose. According to the *split labor market* theory developed by Edna Bonacich, the racist tendencies that are found within a labor market consisting of labor forces belonging to different nationalities and commanding different wage levels, the hostile attitude of the labor force that wielded better qualifications against the work force that is ready to settle for a lower wage stems from the desire of the former to possess higher economic standards.¹⁸⁹ However, as Deborah Bernstein states, this approach of Bonacich is inapplicable to the Palestinian case under the British mandate rule.¹⁹⁰ When pursuing the exclusive economic practices and adhering to the Jewish labor only policy, which was the most essential extension of these exclusive practices, the thing that the Jewish settler community attached importance was not to secure better material conditions for the Jews in Palestine. The main concern of them was the fate of their national movement. Namely, material benefits that would be gained from overpowering the low-wage Arab labor force and thus guaranteeing the allocation of jobs in the Jewish sector to exclusively Jews weighed very little in the perception of both the Jewish employers and employees. Contrary to what Bonacich claims, broadening their national interests was far more crucial not only for Jews but also for Arabs in the split labor market of mandatory Palestine.¹⁹¹ Pursuance of the declared policy of making Palestine Jewish as England was English and France was French by the Zionists from the outset required the outright elimination of the Arab community in economics and politics in the primary stages and led to the physical elimination in the end even by resort to intimidating

¹⁸⁹ Bonacich explains this view in several of her publications such as; “A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market”, *American Sociological Review*, No. 37, (October 1972), pp. 547-559; “The Past, Present and Future of Split Labor Market Theory”, *Research in Race and Ethnic Relations*, No. 1, (1979), pp. 17-64; “Class Approaches to Ethnicity and Race”, *Insurgent Sociologist*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (1980), pp. 9-23. The information about all these publications were obtained from Deborah S. Bernstein’s article; “Expanding the Split Labor Market Theory: Between and Within Sectors of the Split Labor Market of Mandatory Palestine”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 38, No. 2, (April 1996), p. 243.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 246-247.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 243-248.

methods like terrorism. The principal thing that differentiated traditional colonialism from surrogate Zionist colonization of Palestine was the brushing aside of the indigenous people.

On the other hand, some authors are of the opinion that the methods in the service of Zionist colonization of Palestine were actually the extension of the capitalist system. These authors underpin their arguments by refuting the discourses about the anti-capitalistic nature of the basic elements that played a role in the foundation of the cooperative and collective settlements. These two kind of settlements, they argue, were “although characterized in varying degree by non-capitalist relations of work and consumption, are governed nevertheless by capitalist relations and forces of production.”¹⁹²

The endeavors correlated with the Zionist ideology in Palestine, whether built on socialist or capitalist ideals, undermined the centuries-old Arab holdings in Palestine. The denial of the Jews to hire Arab workers in their installations, which they established thanks to the funds Jews world-wide sending and the capital the immigrants bringing in, did have a close linkage with the deviant pattern of the Zionist colonization efforts. If they had not followed this deviant path and consequently did not pursue the goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine at the expense of Arabs since the very beginning, they may most probably have displayed inclination to cooperate with the Arab workers. This argument is plausible both from a capitalist framework, when the possibility of keeping the cost of production at a much lower rate existed due to the cheapness of the Arab labor force, and from a socialist framework, when the esteemed position of the labor is taken into consideration. Nevertheless, looking at this deviant pattern of colonization from a completely different and positive aspect, as if the Zionists should not be regarded as real colonizers only because they wanted to bear the burden of their work on their own, can also be possible. The words of a Jewish philosopher and a cultural Zionist – Martin Buber – are the proof of that positive interpretation:

Our settlers do not come here as do the colonists from the Occident, to have natives do their work for them; they themselves set their shoulders to plow and they spend their strength and their blood to make the land fruitful.¹⁹³

If the eagerness of the Jews to continue their living in Palestine had taken on another shape rather than the self-centered Zionist ideology, the increasingly violent conflict between Arabs and Jews would not have emerged and caused the great many of subsequent catastrophic incidents. However the Jews, who had been scattered to the four

¹⁹² Asad, op. cit, p. 7.

¹⁹³ Dershowitz, op. cit., p. 14.

corners of the world, became acquainted with the idea of Palestine as their ancient home and were indoctrinated with the interest in establishing a state for their own, only through the construction of the Zionist ideology in the late 19th century. Compromise and cooperation was lacking in the Zionist state of mind and they were blind to the reality of how these perceptions should have been helpful in creating a territory jointly and peacefully governed by Arabs and Jews together. Cooperation and collectiveness existed only as regards the intra-Jewish relations.

4.2.2 The Alleged Jewish Contribution to the Arab Agricultural Sector

It can not be given full faith and credit to the assertion that prior to the Zionist colonizers' stepping to the Palestinian territories, Arab peasants had made great headways or provided great leap forward as regards the agriculture. As there had been no visible improvement on the land, the outputs had been offering no considerable prospects. When these average conditions combined with the consequent Zionist land purchases, the whole land situation appeared to move along a path which was to the disadvantage of the Arab peasants.¹⁹⁴ As a soil conservationist, Walter Clay Lowdermilk got the opportunity to work on the Palestinian lands as the 1930s approached and reached significant results which are evidentiary for the deteriorated agricultural conditions that he believes in progress for thirteen centuries. In this sense, he divides the processes these lands have gone through into five categories whereby the fourth period embodies the fragmentation of terraced agriculture which was introduced in the third period by the Roman.¹⁹⁵ He holds the view that the settlement of Jews in Palestine and their everlasting attempts, which constitutes the fifth and the last period, has reversed this centuries-old agricultural decline and acted as a cure for the defects of the land. However, Lowdermilk's partial sympathy towards Jewish migrants and his exaggerated reference to the 'glorious' contribution of the Jews to the country's economy and the population's welfare as a whole while showing implicit signs of contempt against Arabs necessitate evaluating his approaches cautiously.

Jews' contributions in the context of land development and agricultural improvement were hardly deniable. Owing to the capital at their disposal, which provided the introduction of advanced equipments and scientific techniques contrary to the backward and primitive methods of Arabs, the industry and agriculture of Palestine experienced a considerable amelioration. The fiercest enemies of Zionism even concede this fact. Their

¹⁹⁴ Weinstock, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

¹⁹⁵ Lowdermilk, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

constructive contributions, however, proved useful mainly to the Jewish community living in Palestine rather than the whole population. This is another undeniable fact alongside the noteworthy services they offered. The vast majority of the Arab population did not wield the competitive power to run against the advanced Jewish sectors. The superior means of the Jewish community transcended the challenging power of Arabs and kept them at bay by hindering their resistance against the self-centered and sidelining Zionist policies.

Yet, Zionists never relinquished emphasizing the advantages that were to be gained by the native Arabs through their contacts with Jewish settlers. There are a wide range of alleged benefits to Arabs emanating from the advent of Jewish colonization in Palestine. Zureik criticizes this unrealistic argument and complains about the Zionists' domination of the pre-1948 studies concerning Palestine.¹⁹⁶ In view of the above mentioned class transformation process and the drifting of the Arab rural population to villages in large numbers, it is almost impossible to speak of any advantages connected with the Jewish colonization. Despite the Zionists' allegations of a probable break-up of the feudalist structure in relation to the headways in Arab society through the impact of the modern Jewish sector, Arabs experienced the most tragic outcomes of feudalism and deterioration in their living conditions mounted up.¹⁹⁷ For Arabs, the one and only advantage of being excluded from the Jewish economic evolution may be considered as the Arab economy's crisis-proof structure in times of a downturn in the Jewish economy.

4.3 Labor Policies of Zionist Ideology and Economic Development in Palestine

Jews were mainly decisive in creating their national home without the help of the Arabs. Relying solely on Jewish labor force and the promotion of that policy, which is come to be widely known as the Jewish labor only policy (*avodah ivrit*) was imperative to generate a staunch Jewish community that would be capable of sustaining the Jewish national home. Thus, producing employment opportunities for the Arabs would contradict with the essence of the objective of establishing a national home.¹⁹⁸ The *Jewish National Fund* (JNF)¹⁹⁹, which was established in 1901 at the fifth Zionist Congress to purchase and

¹⁹⁶ Zureik, op. cit., pp. 4-6.

¹⁹⁷ Weinstock, op. cit., pp. 56-61.

¹⁹⁸ Toynbee, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

¹⁹⁹ The establishment of the JNF (Keren Kayemet in Hebrew) was a good instance to show the crystallization of the differing ideas of political and practical Zionists. Since the birth of the fund took place as a result of the pressures of practical Zionists, their policies of bringing physical and

develop land for new-comers, and the Histadrut, which was established in 1920 with the aim of acting as a trade union for the Jewish workers, defending their rights and meeting their urgent needs, were the primary and the most passionate advocates of the Jewish labor only policy. This policy was predicated on the view point that the Jewish entity in Palestine should learn to be self-sufficient and create its own labor force in order not be dependent on the labor force of the other communities. Here, agricultural activity came to occupy the gist of the Jewish colonization movement. Following is an explanatory note about the logic behind this understanding:

Due to their special status, resulting particularly from their neighbors' attitudes towards them, European Jews have mainly occupied themselves with such activities as banking, commerce and the intellectual professions. Working the land was not one of their fields of activity. When the idea of Jewish nationality, vehemently espoused and advanced by political Zionism, gathered momentum among European Jew under the impetus of the credo of nationalism that swept Europe in the 19th century, Zionists thinkers paid increasing attention to the necessity of acquiring land to serve as a material basis for the concept of Jewish nationality. Zionist thinkers also felt it imperative, in order to assert their claim that the Jews formed a nation, that this Jewish nation should have its own peasants and workers. Bankers and merchants were not enough to build a full-fledged nation. There was a need for people whose occupation psychical work, especially farming. The Zionist ideology thus extolled the value of "Jewish Work" and considered it an essential ingredient for establishing the Jewish national identity. The Zionists accordingly insisted that in their settlement schemes they would do all the work by themselves; henceforth the natives, when their existence was not denied, were not needed anyway; they should be cleared out.²⁰⁰

At this point, however, a distinction should be drawn between the lines of policy adopted during the different aliyahs in connection with the tendency to hire Arab workers in the Jewish work places. For the most part, during the first and second aliyahs, the traditional colonial wisdom was at work. This means that the Jewish immigrants of the period 1882-1914 mainly gave preference to the Arab labor force over Jewish laborers. The reasons of this choice were clear and simple. According to most of the Jewish immigrants, who ended up in Palestine, agricultural work did not ensure a sufficient flow of money. For this reason, urban settlement was a priority for them because of the better opportunities it provided. Moreover, the correspondence of the employment opportunities in urban areas with their educational background and business experience made urban settlement more preferable for them. The Jews who started to work in agricultural colonies right after they arrived in Palestine, waited for opportunities to leave these places and as soon as they

practical efforts to the foreground can be said to be approved by political Zionists. See; Tessler, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁰⁰ Jabbour, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

seized them they sought employment in towns. So a significant shortage of Jewish workers occurred in villages and the owners of the Jewish agricultural workplaces tried to cover this deficiency by hiring Arab laborers.²⁰¹ Furthermore, the intensive agriculture that was adopted by the Jews required a fairly large labor force. So the Jewish owners and managers of the agricultural colonies had no other chance than letting Arab workers penetrate their colonies. On the other hand, their lower wage demands and superior know-how and experience played a significant part in giving priority to them over Jewish farmers.²⁰² In this way, contrary to the colonies established by the immigrants of third and fourth aliyah, a tradition embedded within the old Jewish colonies such as Petah Tiqva, Hadera and Nes Ziona of forming mixed places of employment where Arab and Jews worked together.²⁰³

Yet, in some circles, mainly Jewish, it is asserted that the immigrants of the first and second aliyahs bore neither imperialist nor colonialist goads. They were victims of Jewish persecution in Europe and pogroms in Russia and were in such a helpless situation that Palestine seemed as a savior place in connection with its historical and religious significance. They were not interested in realizing the Zionist ambitions; their only concern was to escape the persecutions they were subjected to in the European countries and to procure a safe life in their ancient lands.²⁰⁴ There is a piece of truth in this argument, since the Zionist ideology was embodied five years after the first aliyah started. Furthermore, the embodiment of the ideology was not adequate to start to give effectiveness to its ideals in practice. Zionists had to wait until 1917, when the British government recognized the Zionist ambitions and pledged to facilitate their realization in the Balfour declaration. It is also argued that the absence of necessary funds prior to the forth aliyah was a great obstacle on the way of the formulation of an organized plan for colonization. Thus, the realization of either short-term or long-term Zionist expectations in terms of colonization could not find a fruitful ground on account of the meager financial means up until the mid-1920s.²⁰⁵ In order to refute the arguments that Israel was established on colonial grounds, Dershowitz emphasizes the underlying impetus of the first and second aliyahs:

The initial phase of the yishuv ("return" or "community") was thus more of an immigration of refugees than a determined political or nationalistic movement,

²⁰¹ Steven A. Glazer, "Picketing for Hebrew Labor: A Window on Histadrut Tactics and Strategy", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 30, No 4, (Summer, 2001), p. 42.

²⁰² Tessler, op. cit., p. 60.

²⁰³ Glazer, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁰⁴ Dershowitz, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

²⁰⁵ Carmi and Rosenfeld, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

although the seeds of political Zionism were certainly planted during the First Aliyah (and perhaps even earlier) by those whose decision was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to return to Zion. At about the time, the first wave of European Jewish refugees were immigrating to Palestine, other waves of Jewish refugees from Muslim countries such as Yemen, Iraq, Turkey, and North Africa were also beginning to arrive in Palestine. These Arab Jews had no knowledge of political Zionism. They were simply returning home to escape persecution, having learned that the Ottoman Empire was permitting (or closing its eyes to) some Jewish immigration to Palestine.²⁰⁶

It is interesting that he does not say a single word about the third (1919-1923) and forth aliyahs (1924-1929) in terms of the ascending influence of the Zionist policies and connected colonization efforts. Although, it is difficult to renounce his opinions regarding the first and second aliyahs, it is equally difficult to put the third and forth aliyahs under the same category with the former, for an intensive effort of Zionist colonization and an intensive effort to boost this colonization movement was at work during 1919 and 1929. The Jewish immigrants who belonged to the third wave are frequently defined as Pioneers of the Zionist colonization movement on account of the character of the tasks they engaged themselves. These tasks played an important part in the speeding up of the Zionist colonization in Palestine. Despite their national dedication and willingness, what prevented them from making a breakthrough in the colonization efforts was the insufficient financial means. The forth wave proved useful in removing this deficit. Owing to the considerable socio-economic difference in the composition of the forth wave, a vast amount of capital was brought into Palestine. So, it can be said without hesitation that when the enthusiasm of the third aliyah was combined with the powerful financial sources of the forth aliyah, the Zionist colonization activities gained great momentum.²⁰⁷

The first immigrants, who were alien to the Palestinian terrain and the circumstances prevailed in there, did not go through a training program contrary to the immigrants of the third and forth aliyahs. For this reason, they almost totally lacked the required capabilities to cope with the difficult conditions and scrape a living for themselves. Consequently, they chose either to leave Palestine or to stay and derive benefits from the experience of the Arab laborers. Yet, some degree of advice and assistance was provided to the immigrants of the second aliyah by the Zionist institutions, most notably the Zionist Organization and JNF.²⁰⁸ After the proclamation of the Balfour declaration, these Zionist institutions started to pursue their goals in a more organized way. Thus, the Jewish labor

²⁰⁶ Dershowitz, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁰⁷ Carmi and Rosenfeld, op. cit., pp. 41-45.

²⁰⁸ Tessler, op. cit., p. 61.

only policy became the rule of the Zionist economy and stipulated as a condition by the JNF to the Jewish leaseholders who were qualified to lease land from that institution.²⁰⁹

The Jewish labor only policy was accompanied by the 'Jewish product only policy' (tazoret ivrit)²¹⁰ and 'conquest of labor policy' (kibbush haavoda). These two policies were the direct result that was desired to be achieved with the strict implementation of avodah ivrit. The compulsion to hire only Jewish laborers in enterprises owned by Jewish entrepreneurs made the cost of production higher in comparison to the cheaply produced Arab goods due to the lower wages paid to the Arab workers. Thus, the Jewish employers whose cost was high due to employing Jewish labor alleviated the burden on them by reflecting these high costs directly at the prices. Moreover, the privileges shown by the mandate administration towards the Jewish economy, such as exemption from certain taxes or reduction in taxation, facilitated the growth of the Jewish economy. Escaping certain expenditures which would have been essential in the absence of these privileges compensated the hiring of high-wage Jewish labor force in the Jewish sector.²¹¹ Consequently, the Jewish people were compelled to purchase these goods at high figures while they had the opportunity to buy the same products from the Arab market to much lower prices. However, since the national interests of Zionists had priority over economic interests, the Jewish customers preferred buying more expensive Jewish products rather than Arab products which entailed lower prices and in this way would have contributed to the budget of the Jewish people by saving expenses. Although not always successful, tazoret ivrit policy was a common case which the Jewish population in Palestine adhered themselves.

The threat of the low-wage Arab laborers precipitated the execution of the Jewish labor only policy and the conquest of labor campaign by the Zionists.²¹² The presence of vast amount of Arab workers seeing the low wages enough was a menacing factor to the continuation of the Jewish immigration in large numbers and to the promotion of the progress of the yishuv. Labor Zionists were preoccupied with the desire to make the individual Jews acquainted with agriculture and to replace Arab workers with Jewish workers that "some added that in such a political community even the criminals and prostitutes should be Jewish."²¹³ Although it was in direct contradiction with the Jewish

²⁰⁹ Lowdermilk, op. cit., pp. 122-126.

²¹⁰ Gabbay, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

²¹¹ Bernstein, op. cit., p. 253.

²¹² Lockman, op. cit., p. 609.

labor only policy, however, the Zionists worked up on the plan of establishing a joint Arab-Jewish labor organization with the apparent purpose of scaling up the expectations of the Arab workers by transmitting their know-how and experiences to them. This was one of the two ways of eradicating competition between Jewish and Arab labor forces. In case of a failure to equalize the wages of them and to approximate the conditions of the two, the other option would inevitably come to the forefront; the efforts of monopolizing the labor market for their own interests.²¹⁴ In the Palestinian context, this effort manifested itself in the Jewish labor only policy. Bonacich explains this exclusive approach of the advantageous labor force as follows:

Dominant group workers react to the threat of displacement by trying to prevent or limit capital's access to cheap labor, through efforts to exclude members of cheap labor groups from full participation in the labor market. That these exclusionary efforts have a national or racist character is a product of historical accident which produced a correlation between ethnicity and the price of labor.²¹⁵

Thereby after realizing that the ideal of a joint Arab-Jewish labor organization was impossible to maintain, contrary to the socialists' arguments, due to the deepening cleavages between Arab and Jewish communities, the right wing Jewish parties became fiercer in their methods to implement the Jewish labor only policy. The resort to picketing campaigns against the Arabs working in Jewish business quarters took root from the desire to extend the fruits of the conquest of labor policy and was in most part envisioned as a way to thwart the Arabs from capturing the labor market at the expense of the Jewish workers.²¹⁶ The shrinking of the labor market at the disadvantage of Jews would no doubt brought a significant reduce in the number of immigrants who were planning to settle in Palestine. If no jobs had been available, despite the religious and historical specificity of Palestine, the Jews would definitely give their decision in favor of a settlement point which could offer more.

So, the Zionist institutions sought a way through this situation by developing policies that would encourage the Jews in Europe, who through the years grew used to high standards of living in their indigenous countries, to immigrate in Palestine without fearing for their livelihood in this country. In this context, the Zionists planned to conquer all the labor opportunities in the mandatory Palestine, be it private Jewish industrial enterprises or

²¹³ Tessler, op. cit., p. 65.

²¹⁴ Glazer, op. cit., 40.

²¹⁵ Bonacich, "Class Approaches", p. 14 in Bernstein, op. cit., p. 243.

²¹⁶ Glazer, op. cit., pp. 39-42.

agricultural colonies under the control of Jewish institutions, by blocking the Arabs from entering these work places as wage-earning workers.²¹⁷ For this reason, Zionist colonization in Palestine differs from other colonial movements on account of its passing up the indigenous labor force.²¹⁸ The backbone of traditional colonialism was its exploitation of the native population on the territories the colonial rule was established. However, “in the mandate period, the Jewish sector did not seek Arab labor but Arab land”.²¹⁹ Due to the self-sustaining racist Jewish industrial sector, Arab tenants, who were evicted from their lands and were forcedly gravitated to the urban areas in search of new jobs, were marginalized in towns and condemned to remain as farmers without any land to farm. Not only they were left in an awkward position as the group constituting the bottom layer of the class formation, but also their ascension to a higher layer in order to become middle class members was impeded. The cleavages between the classes were purposefully remained huge so as to thwart the emergence of political consciousness among the masses.²²⁰

Exclusion of Arab labor force from Jewish enterprises also led to the separate but intertwined evolution of the Arab and Jewish economies. Thus, three interdependent sectors were found in mandated Palestine: Arab, Jewish and the British government. While the labor force represented in the Arab economic sector consisted entirely of Arabs, in the Jewish and government sectors the representation was mixed; meaning that Arabs and Jews were employed simultaneously but in varying proportions. The small percentage of Jewish workers in the public works or the low level of Arab workers in the Jewish workplaces took root to some extent from the particularities of each group. For instance, the works conducted in the Jewish sector necessitated a certain degree of proficiency. On the other hand, most of the government-related works required unskilled labor force. However, these explanations did not suffice to have the exact insights about the sectoral employment preferences.

The Arab and Jewish sectors interacted with each other through land trading transactions, the benefit from services, and the buying and selling of commodities which the other sector was incapable of producing because of its structural characteristics. Since the Jews were specialized mainly in industry, the Arabs contributed to the capital inflow between the sectors by purchasing industrial products. On the other hand, since the Arabs were more advanced in agriculture, the Jews met their shortages in agricultural products by

²¹⁷ Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

²¹⁸ Weinstock, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-52, 61-62.

²¹⁹ Asad, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²²⁰ Weinstock, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-63.

trading with the Arab sector. It is clear that the driving force of interaction between these two sectors was the structural differences between them.²²¹ Moreover, the proof of the rising interaction between the two sectors was the increase that was recorded in the sale of Arab products in the Jewish market in a way transcending the Arab exports to the foreign countries in the same years. In 1921 9.3% and in 1936 14% of the Arab net product was purchased by the Jewish community.²²² The purchase of Arab lands was included in these figures. Besides, the depiction of the sales by the Arab sector to the Jewish sector as 'export' indicates that the inter-sectoral sales and transactions are regarded by Metzger and Kaplan as international trade.

Table 3 Arab-Jewish Balance of Payments in 1921 and 1935

	Goods and services sold by Arabs to the Jews in 1921 (by percentage)	Goods and services sold by Arabs to the Jews in 1935 (by percentage)
Agricultural Products	47.2	26.8
Building Materials	2.8	13.4
Other Manufacturing Products	-	6.7
Transport, Trade and Other Services	18.7	13.4
Labor	22.5	24.1
Rent for Residential Services	8.7	15.6
	100	100
Total Goods and Services	66.5	56.9
Land Sales	33.5	43.1
Cumulative Sale of Goods, Services and Lands	100	100

Source: Metzger; Kaplan, op. cit., p. 340.

²²¹ Bernstein, op cit., p. 251.

²²² Metzger; Kaplan, op. cit., pp. 339-340.

From the inception, Jews worked very hard to sow the seeds of their own economic entity and their achievements in this context facilitated the formation of a “state within a state”²²³ towards the end of 1930s. The fundamental reason for the political and geographical partition of Palestine was this economic disintegration preceding it. Yet, it is not inaccurate to say that Jews’ improved systems served as a role model for Arabs, thus enabled their upswing through imitation. Nevertheless, the blend of pro-Zionist British policies and the exclusive stance of the Jewish community hindered the robust and steady development of the Arab economy.

So, the policy of developing a Jewish economy relying merely on Jewish labor was not that innocent as some Zionists contended. They spoke of their willingness to cooperate with the Arab labor force, but because creating employment for the Jews flowing into Palestine was binding, Arab laborers could not be given any opportunities of employment in the Jewish enterprises even for a short span of time. The perpetuation of the Jewish immigration in an uninterrupted and stable way was conditional upon the provision of constant employment opportunities to the Jewish immigrants. Otherwise they would have lost a vital instrument to fix increasing rates for immigration. In this way of thinking, a certain effort to vindicate the Jewish line of policy - as if willingness to cooperate with the Arabs existed but the circumstances created a compulsive impact for excluding Arabs from Jewish industries and agricultural settlements – was concealed. If we assume that this approach was accurate and contained righteous elements, then we will have to approve that the Arabs were erroneous in their claims about being deprived of employment opportunities in Jewish industrial establishments. We can obviously see the reflections of this conception in the words of Lowdermilk:

The leaders of the Jewish labor movement in Palestine are genuinely sympathetic with Arab labor, but believe that Arab workers should, for the time being, be employed not in the Jewish but in the Arab and governmental sectors of Palestine’s economy...The Jewish labor leaders insist, (however), that since Jewish work in Palestine aims to create a Jewish Commonwealth for the persecuted masses of European Jewry, all hopes for such a commonwealth would be frustrated if Palestine were built by Jewish capital but predominantly Arab labor.²²⁴

For the Jewish state of mind, this was a plausible and legitimate justification for slamming the doors of the Jewish enterprises to the Arab work force. However, this was not the case. Everlasting exclusion of the Arabs, whereupon eventual ousting of them out of these territories was the final goal, was what they planned and the distortion of the

²²³ Barbara Smith, op. cit., p. 3.

²²⁴ Lowdermilk, op. cit., pp. 162-163.

Palestinian social structure was the main point in order to keep the Arabs fragmented and incapable of challenging the Zionist schemes. Moreover, Zionists were not willing enough to relinquish the government-related works to the Arabs as it was implied in the above quotation. They were putting considerable efforts to seize as much position as possible within the mandatory government sector, competing with the Arabs to this end, since “although the government economy was smaller than the other two (Jewish and Arab), it was still the single largest employer of labor in Palestine.”²²⁵ Although the British mandate government did not have a responsibility, either verbally or in a written way, the Zionists demanded from the mandate power to determine a certain proportion for the Jewish workers in the government sector and they were quite insistent in their demands. When conveying their requests to the British authorities, the Zionists relied on the mandate terms that promised the establishment of favorable conditions in Palestine for the establishment of the Jewish national home.²²⁶

4.3.1 The Jewish and Arab Trade Unionism

The major deficiency of the Arab labor force was its failure to establish an umbrella trade union, similar to Histadrut, comprising most of the Arab work force in mandatory Palestine. The nonexistence of such an organization deprived the Arab laborers from the essential guarantee of their rights vis-à-vis the employers and an efficient competition vis-à-vis the Jewish laborers. Thanks to the efficient bargaining power of Histadrut on behalf of the Jewish labor force, large employment opportunities were guaranteed for the Jewish laborers in the Department of Public Works – a unit linked to the British mandate administration and responsible for the conduct of works designed to introduce high standards for the country in diverse fields and made economically great headways. According to the colonial wisdom and considering the dictates of the government in London, the expenditure in the colonies should be organized in the lowest level possible. The budgetary arrangements necessitating a cost minimization could only be possible by taking advantage from the cheap labor force. Thus the British tax-payers’ share in the colonial expenditures would be fixed in the lowest level possible. In Palestine, Arabs represented the cheap labor force favorable for the execution of the public works whereas Jews should not have been preferable in such works on account of their higher wage demands. However, the Zionist pressures once again affected the labor policies of the

²²⁵ Bernstein, op. cit., p. 250.

²²⁶ Ibid, p. 254.

British mandate rule and Jewish laborers were preferred over the cheap Arab labor force in some cases. This created discrimination against Arabs by causing a double standard in the wages of Arabs and Jews.²²⁷ The Haifa port was one example of such cases in which the percentage of Jewish workers showed an upward trend over Arab workers every passing year.²²⁸ By giving employment to the Jewish laborers in the government sector, the British mandate rule undertook the risk of encountering the reaction of two groups: one was the British taxpayer and the other was the Palestinian Arab community, because the economic consideration of maintaining the expenditures in colonies at the lowest rate possible was left aside for giving applicability to the political consideration of facilitating the Jewish national home.²²⁹ Still, despite the Zionist endeavors, the overall number of Arab workers who were recruited in the governmental sector continued to exceed the Jewish workers. In 1935, while 6.7% of the Arabs were employed in the government, only 1.5% of the Jews were employed in the same sector.²³⁰ In the same way as the report of the Royal Commission indicated, in the government economic sector the number of Jewish workers accounted for %14.5 whereas the Arab workers accounted for %85.5 in the years 1935 and 1936.²³¹

Along with its extensive health and social services, Histadrut played a very important role in the establishment of the Jewish state. The main ideological pillar of Histadrut was labor Zionism which was led by David Ben Gurion. The central issue that was given precedence by Labor Zionists in creating the Jewish state was the class struggle and they believed in the significance of creating a strong Jewish working class so as to form and maintain the Israeli state. Labor Zionism represented the left-wing of Zionist movement and was engaged in outright conflict with the right-wing parties represented by Weizmann's General Zionist Party and Vladimir Jabotinsky's Revisionist Party.²³² Ben Gurion's intellectual transformation was a perfect case to comprehend the alterations in the socialist ideology. Gurion was an ardent supporter of cooperation between Arabs and Jews in the area of labor organization in the first half of the 1920s whereas he reached to a completely different stage in his thinking in mid-1930s as the Arab-Jewish conflict dashed

²²⁷ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

²²⁸ Bernstein, op. cit., Table 2, p. 259

²²⁹ Ibid, p. 255.

²³⁰ Metzger; Kaplan, op. cit., p. 332.

²³¹ Palestine Royal Commission, Memoranda, p. 143 in Bernstein, op. cit., p. 252.

²³² Lesch, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

any hopes for joint action and economic solidarity. Especially the disturbances of 1929 constituted a point where he dropped his conciliatory gestures and ceased embracing any project of cooperation between the two communities since the circumstances made him drift to the rightist policies. He lost his early blind faith in any prospect of accommodation between Jews and Arabs.²³³

The mélange of socialist tendencies with Zionist ideas first took place in Eastern Europe and laid the foundation of the Labor Zionist movement. The factors that made the leftist movement politically attractive for the Jews were first of all the social discrimination they experienced in the European countries after the currents of emancipation came into being thanks to the French Revolution and the economic difficulties that threw them into the arms of poverty during the 18th and 19th centuries.²³⁴ At that period, since most of the socialist movements were sympathetic to the Jewish right of emancipation whereas bulk of the right-wing movements represented an anti-Semitic attitude, Jews found it appropriate to support socialist ideas in order to cease the morass that was a part of their lives.²³⁵ For the first time in their history as a community suffering dispersal, Jews gained the right of equal representation with the effect of the ideas disseminated by the French revolution. Most of the European states followed in the footsteps of each other in lifting the restrictions on their Jewish populations. However, since this trend of emancipation was not stable and did not remain unchanged, in several cases the rights that were granted to the Jews were taken back from them and the whole situation reversed.²³⁶ As a consequence of the reappearance of anti-Jewish violence in especially Eastern Europe, the belief that liberal Western notions could protect Jews was no longer appealing. When the emancipated Jewish communities encountered intolerance once again, they wished to find the path to salvation in socialist movements. One of the most important instances of this preference occurred in the Russian Empire. Prior to the exodus on account of the pogroms²³⁷, Russia had harbored the greatest number of Jews in the world. Since the Eastern Jewry were subjected to great discriminations by the Tsarist regime and went through severe oppressions, they became sympathetic to socialist and communist parties which aimed to remove the Tsarist rule. In

²³³ Anita Shapiro, "The Ideology and the Practice of the Joint Jewish-Arab Labor Union in Palestine, 1920-1939", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (Oct., 1977), p. 691.

²³⁴ Philip Mendes, "The Rise and Fall of the Jewish/Left Alliance: An Historical and Political Analysis", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 45, No. 4, (1999), pp. 483-488.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 486-487.

²³⁶ Tessler, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

²³⁷ The number of Jews who left Russia starting from 1881 until the beginning of the 20th century was more than four million. *Ibid*, pp. 41-42.

this way, the Jews of the East forged a unity of interest with the revolutionary movements. They pursued the same goal of toppling this repressive and autocratic government.²³⁸

On account of the repressive policies of Tsarist rule and the prevalent anti-Jewish feelings, the Russian Jews were living a relatively conservative and traditional life and their thoughts were not touched by the schools of thought that dictated cultural emulation with the Westerners. The radical change in the political and social climate of the Western countries engendered the emergence of various responses to this transformation. Many of the Jews in Western Europe opted for implicit assimilation to a degree that they abandoned their way of life hitherto which characterized their identities as Jews. On the other hand, among the Jews of Eastern Europe, assimilation was never a widespread factor contrary to the situation in Western Europe following the French revolution. Rather they were in favor of conserving their values which distinguished them from the Western societies. For this reason, the zealous advocacy of a Jewish state with an exclusive character that would be able to strengthen the Jews religious beliefs and national consciousness by a Russian-born person – Ahad Ha'am – during the reign of the Tsarist regime was not a coincidence.²³⁹ Thus, the bulk of the assimilationists were found in Western Europe whereas the defensive approach of cultural synthesis was prevalent in Russian Empire. Jews in this vast empire repudiated harshly the attempts to reform Judaism and to equate the social and economic conditions of the Jews with the people who constituted the majority in their states by means of relinquishing their Jewish identities.²⁴⁰ Instead, they turned to socialist and communist organizations in order to relieve themselves of the limitations. Namely, the obvious shift to the left within the Jewish community scattered throughout Europe was for the most part triggered by the oppression of the Jews. This fact made most of the socialist Jews conscious of their Jewish identity and sensitive to the injustices that the Jewish population was subjected to.²⁴¹ The frustration experienced as a result of the failure of the socialist parties in bringing the anticipated changes to the unfavorable living conditions of Jews in Eastern Europe, however, withered the attention and interest in these utopian movements and the validity of modern Zionist principles increased. The unsuccessful attempt at revolution in Russia in 1906-1906 affected this turn in a great extent. This failure dashed their hopes in the establishment of an egalitarian system in Russia which would offer them a free and peaceful life. Even in the following years, the relations between the socialists and Jews in

²³⁸ Öke, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

²³⁹ Tessler, op. cit., pp. 50-53.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 26-34.

²⁴¹ Mendes, op. cit., pp. 495-497.

Russia became so tense that the revolutionaries ousted them from their parties by accusing their Zionist movement as being racist.²⁴² In 1843 Karl Marx, the founder of communism, wrote a book called 'On the Jewish Question' in which he argued the evils related with the Jews and how their relations with money embodied capitalism. This book has been regarded as anti-Semitic by too many scholars. Yet, the socialist tendencies among Jews did not wane completely and the ideal of the construction of a socialist Jewish society was adapted to Palestine through the labor Zionist ideology.²⁴³

As the labor Zionist ideas became widespread in the context of Palestine, the colonization efforts reached a turning point and this put the Zionist colonization movement in a place where there was a huge cleavage between it and the classical colonial movements. The reason was that providing employment opportunities to the Jewish people took precedence over establishing the favorable milieu for mutual understanding and compromise between the Jewish and Arab communities. Actually the underlying reason of this egocentric stance of the Jewish community was the ideology adopted by the Histadrut which was called *constructive socialism*. Adhering to this ideology brought forth the pursuance of activities by Histadrut that disregarded the joint benefit of the two communities and instead served solely the interests of the Jews.²⁴⁴ This method of approach of the Labor Zionists consequently paved the way for the fierce championship of the Jewish labor only policy,²⁴⁵ and thus the socialist ideals were postponed for the sake of achieving the Zionist aims.

There were certain obstacles on the way of organized Arab labor movement and although some attempts were made in terms of establishing trade unions, they could not go beyond the boundaries of one or two cities and remained by and large confined to local arenas.²⁴⁶ At times when attempts were culminated in the public appearance of labor unions aimed at gathering Arab workers under a protective umbrella, the prevalent illiteracy and widespread poverty among the Arab community as well as the shortage of financial means

²⁴² Öke, op. cit., p. 27.

²⁴³ Tessler, op. cit., p. 61, 63.

²⁴⁴ Glazer, op. cit., p. 41.

²⁴⁵ Weinstock, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

²⁴⁶ After the collapse of the first attempt to gather the Arab and Jewish laborers hired in the railway sector in a joint trade union, Arab railway workers in Haifa went their own way and set up an Arab labor union in 1925 with the aim of broadening its base to encompass the whole Palestinian territories. This union was called the *Palestinian Arab Workers' Society* and for the sake of the Arab laborers it was envisaged to assume the tasks what Histadrut was fulfilling for the Jewish labor force. Yet, the membership of the organization could not exceed the Haifa area in a way that would enable it to achieve the equivalent clout of Histadrut. See; Lockman, op. cit., p. 616.

and the interference of political interests in the unionization efforts contracted the scope of unions' jurisdiction and watered down the benefits envisaged to be gained by operating under an organizational structure rather than making individual efforts.²⁴⁷

The stirrings among Arabs in the way of trade unionism occurred after witnessing the earliest unionism movement among the Jewish railway workers which culminated in the establishment of the *Jewish Railway Workers' Association* in 1919. Since the Palestine Railways was the one of the few instances where the conquest of labor policy could not be rendered effective, Arabs and Jews decided to combine their forces to cope with the unfavorable conditions of that area of employment controlled by the British mandate rule. The idea of a joint organization including Arabs and Jews was a highly controversial issue and engendered too much debate between the Jewish political parties and within the Histadrut.²⁴⁸ The advocates of the urgency of sharing the experiences of Jews in trade unionism with the inexperienced Arab workers and the members underscoring its advantages mainly belonged to the left wing parties and they confronted the champions of the possible undermining effects of forming a joint union with the Arabs on Zionist ideals.

After reaching a fragile accommodation in 1924, Histadrut declared its approval of a single trade union for railway workers comprising the Jews and the Arabs at the same time. In this way, a heated debate started between the Arab and the Jewish laborers. Although the unionization of Arab and Jewish railway workers under a single umbrella, namely the emergence of the *Union of Railway, Postal and Telegraph Workers* in 1924, did not last more than a few months, it was an unprecedented formation to shed light on the interaction between two communities and their willingness to cooperate in times concerted action was mandatory.²⁴⁹ This was the only example of such a formation in Palestine and it posed an exceptional case in the split labor market of mandated Palestine where national conflicts between the Jews and Arabs was the rule.

The futile endeavors to perpetuate the joint Arab-Jewish labor organization were followed by other policies that were put into effect by Histadrut in order to cope with the troubles emanating from the low-wage Arab work force. Although Histadrut was the hub of the labor Zionist ideology, which strongly promoted the Jewish labor only policy, it espoused the idea of joint labor union for Arabs and Jews. This rested on practical reasons. If the Arabs had been instilled with the consciousness to ameliorate their working conditions through drawing a sample from the Jewish experiences of trade unionism, they

²⁴⁷ Lesch, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

²⁴⁸ Shapiro, op. cit., pp., 670-691.

²⁴⁹ Lockman, op. cit., pp. 607, 610-616.

could have started to make efforts to gain improvements in their salaries. This way, the Zionists could have got rid of spending their energies to wrestle with the cheap Arab laborers. For the first time in the mandated Palestinian context, the Jews as constituting the more advantageous higher-waged workforce tried to find a solution to their competition with the low-waged Arab workforce by contemplating joint action with them instead of pursuing exclusive policies. Unfortunately, the joint labor union could not achieve the desired end.

At the outset, almost entire Jewish labor force in the Palestine Railways served as skilled workers contrary to the Arabs workers who crowded the departments requiring unskilled labor force. In the following years of the British mandate administration, as the Arabs holding the necessary attributes for being hired in the departments requiring certain skills increased, the threat perceived by the Jewish skilled workforce increased as well. They feared that they could be replaced by Arab skilled laborers who settled for lower wages. As a result, a great many of Jewish workers in the Palestine Railways chose to quit their employments in Palestine Railways as soon as they found more promising jobs in other workplaces. The ones who continued to work in the Palestine Railways strove to better their conditions by establishing an organization and later on combining their forces with the Arab workers.²⁵⁰ When this initiative proved to be unsuccessful, the Histadrut felt the urgent need of searching for other ways of eliminating the cheap Arab labor force and gave full weight to the exclusive Jewish labor policy. Thus, segregation once again gained ground. Picketing campaigns were invented by Histadrut to protest against the Jewish work places who insisted on hiring Arab laborers and to guarantee the replacement of these Arabs by Jewish workers by putting pressure on the managers or the owners of these Jewish enterprises.²⁵¹ The first picketing campaign was conducted in 1927 and as the communal violence intensified, the picketing campaigns became harsher parallel to it. Although the picketing campaigns could not be counted to be successful in terms of its intention to minimize the number of Arab laborers working in the Jewish sector, its moral effect on the yishuv can not be underestimated. The failure of the picketing campaigns is an unmistakable fact in view of the labor figures that proved almost stable during the period between 1921 and 1935.²⁵² Although the percentage of Arab labor force hired by the Jewish enterprises was already low, the Histadrut and the supporters of the picketing campaigns

²⁵⁰ Bernstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-264.

²⁵¹ For more information on the picketing campaigns; the course of action adopted by Histadrut and the development process of the campaigns in accordance with the years, see; Glazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-51.

²⁵² Metzger; Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

could not achieve the desired end of outright elimination of the Arab workforce in the Jewish economy.

4.3.2 Discriminative Economic Policies Favoring the Jews

From the first days of the British administration in Palestine, both military and civilian, Jews were favored in the economic as well as in the other domains by the British in expense of the Arabs. But here favoritism displayed in the economic domain will be tackled. The yishuv showed a great industrial development under the mandate regime and the Jewish industry flourished vastly owing to the British protective measures. The mainstay of all the economic advantages provided for the Jewish community was the obligations designated for Britain in the mandate preamble. As it was stated in Article 2, the mandate administration was responsible for creating the necessary economic conditions that would facilitate the establishment of the Jewish national home. By relying on this clause, Jews kept the British mandate authorities under heavy pressure to make her enforce certain regulations that would offer special treatment for them. For the most part, the British met the Zionist demands. However, under such conditions Britain as a mandatory power appeared as lame in her Palestine patch, since she had other obligations to fulfill for the good of the Arab community but proved largely incompetent or reluctant to show an adequate performance. Thus arises the conflict between the positive and negative commitments of Britain as a mandatory power; the civil rights of the majority of the Arabs were sacrificed and they were left in a desperate position for the sake of securing a more profitable environment for the Jewish economy.

In Palestine, the circumstances were special and all the actions taken by the British mandate were designed to benefit the Jewish community before else rather than serving the general interests of the whole country. The protective measures that should have been adopted for the sake of newly emerging industries by a rational government in a different context were manipulated by the British mandate in the Palestinian context. The whole system of tariffs was set up from head to foot in accordance with the Jewish desires. All the increases and decreases in the customs duties were rearranged considering the steady development of the Jewish industry. Although the Arab manufacturers seemed to draw some benefits from these protective measures, as a matter of fact the sole beneficiaries were the sectors that the Jews engaged themselves. So instead of calling these measures protective, regarding them discriminative is more accurate. Since furthering the Zionist interests while turning a blind eye to the well being of the Arabs explicitly was a stance impossible to vindicate for the mandate regime, the British authorities tried to find

sustainable legal solutions. The mandate officials did not take action on their own accord in the matters of industrial facilities. Instead, the applications of the producers were taken into account by a related committee.²⁵³ There are some occasions to exemplify the privileges granted to the Jewish industrialists and agriculturalists under the banner of fostering the so-called common interest.

In order to guarantee convenient trading conditions for the Jews involved in poultry farming, the duty on imported eggs was raised.²⁵⁴ In honey production, the customs levied on sugar - the main bee feed - was reduced considerably upon the request of the Jewish bee-keepers.²⁵⁵ A Jewish company, which was in oil refining industry, was granted outstanding concessions, enabling it to sideline the local olive oil producers and to frustrate their sales by preferring imported raw materials.²⁵⁶ The same company was provided with another concession in the field of soap manufacturing at the disadvantage of long-standing Nablus soaps that was manufactured by Arabs.²⁵⁷ The necessary machinery and raw materials for a Jewish cement factory were exempted from import duties.²⁵⁸ Similarly, another Jewish company that displayed activity in jam, jelly and fruit juice production imported the required machinery and sugar - the primary material in jam and jelly production - duty-free. Besides, the duty on imported jams and jellies were scaled up in order to protect local production.²⁵⁹ Another example of the attempt to foster the indigenous industry was the lift in the customs duty collected from foreign cigarettes with the clear intention of invigorating the Jewish cigar manufacturers.²⁶⁰

Despite all these facilitating formulations, the Jewish industrialists did not regard them sufficient for the protection of their industries and therefore they demanded more protection. However, the more reduction in the customs duties would inevitably mean more reduction in the revenues derived by the mandate rule from these duties. Thus, Britain had to either sacrifice its revenues by letting the Jewish national home policy grew stronger or augment her income by denying the Zionist plans any ground to materialize. However, the

²⁵³ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 158-160.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 160-162.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 165-167.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 167-168.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 168-169.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 169-170.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 170-171.

guiding principle of colonial administrations necessitated keeping the expenditures in the lowest level possible and in the meanwhile giving precedence to the interests of the mother country rather than looking after the interests of the colony. So according to this logic, the British mandate should have been in the pursuit of obtaining as much revenue as possible. Nevertheless, she chose the opposite course, for Palestine was not governed as a traditional colony. For this reason, every step taken by the mandate government that merely protected the Jewish industry without earning the country a competitive power in the foreign markets eventually served the purpose of securing a favorable milieu for Jewish immigration. The fact that the future of the Arab industry was overlooked indicates that the real aim was not to industrialize the country in real terms, but just to strengthen the standing of Zionism in the country. Britain was not sincere in her intentions. Under the guise of the discourse defending the protection of the local industry, the British mandate government rendered the Jewish industry far more privileged in the face of Arab industry in its infancy. The Jewish industry was not the only component of the Palestinian local industry. Arab industrialists should also have been regarded as the other constituent making the local industry a whole alongside the Jewish industrialists.

On the other hand, multiple concessions were granted to them in the fields of energy supply and mineral extraction projects, namely the Dead Sea concession granted to Moses Novomeysky and the concession for the country's electric supply granted to Pinchas Rutenberg. As the Jews added to their wealth and grew richer, Arabs' sufferings deepened severely in the same extent. The company assigned with the duty of supplying the electricity which the country was in need of was founded by Rutenberg under the name of Palestine Electric Corporation. Thanks to the concession, Rutenberg's company undertook the electrification of Palestine. Owing to a warrant by the Ottoman authorities that authorized another company, Jerusalem was excluded from the Rutenberg concession. Consequently, 92% of the electricity was produced and distributed throughout Palestine by the Palestine Electric Corporation.²⁶¹ Similarly, Novomeysky's company, Palestine Potash, obtained from the British mandate government the power to extract minerals from the Dead Sea which has abundant of them ranging from potash to bromine, salt to magnesium.²⁶² Another concession that was acquired by the Zionists pertained to the Huleh Valley in the northern part of Palestine. A Zionist institution took over the project of transforming the valley to a fertile land suitable for cultivation by draining the swamps in the valley from Arabs that were assigned with the same task by the Ottoman authorities.

²⁶¹ Lowdermilk, op. cit., p. 116.

²⁶² Ibid, pp. 117-118.

The aim of this project was to make the Huleh valley eligible for agriculture. The valley encompassed the Huleh lake which badly needed a reclamation work due to its presentation of unhealthy conditions emanating from the swamps. Besides, when the mission specified in the concession was completed, the valley would become a region with abundant agricultural resources. Since the project covered only a part of the valley, the Zionists were entitled to work only in the area allocated for them. When the British mandate rule was terminated, this rehabilitation plan of the Huleh valley was still not launched²⁶³ As a matter of fact, this project can be said to be intended to raise the economic absorptive capacity of the country by expanding the areas of cultivation. The lands ameliorated as a result of the project would be utilized for Jewish colonization purposes. Besides, the increase in the economic absorptive capacity of the country would no doubt enable the Zionists to strengthen their discourses on the issue of immigration. Accordingly, there would be a more staunch ground to support the uninterrupted flow of Jews into Palestine.

4.4 Administrative Framework and the Question of Representation

As it was mentioned above, Palestine was administered between the years 1917-1920 in accordance with the international Military Law owing to its treatment as an occupied enemy territory. The civilian authority, which took over the government from the Chief Military Administrator in 1920, was actually designed to be in rule for a short span of time, although the precise date was not determined. The provisions of the mandate rule necessitated this situation, since the mandated territories were considered in advance to be in a certain level of political competence which means that assistance of one of the then colonial powers in administrative works on a limited scale would be adequate for them to stand-alone. Institutions gradually transferring the authority to the indigenous people of the country would be introduced by the mandate power.

However, not only the terms of the Britain's mandate rule in Palestine exceeded the designed limit by stretching to a protracted thirty-year stay in office, but also they failed in reaching a compromise with both Arabs and Jews in laying the foundation stone of self-government in Palestine. Certain factors, most importantly Arabs' objections and the chaotic climate prevalent in the country undermined the endeavors of constituting a Legislative Council. As a matter of fact, the real intentions of the British authorities, which showed that they were also not very ardent about forming such a representative council and would drag their feet from time to time, were pronounced even at the very beginning of the

²⁶³ Ibid, pp. 142-145.

mandate rule as the then Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill revealed his opinions with these words in 1922: “Our children’s children will have passed away before self-government is accomplished.”²⁶⁴ Churchill also exhibited his sympathy towards Zionist ideals and his opposition to anything that would interrupt the realization of Jewish national home policy and anything related with it in 1935 when British officials in Palestine came with another Legislative Council proposal. This proposal predicated representation on the numerical situation of the Arabs and Jews and did not fall behind in attracting the reactions of the Zionists.²⁶⁵ The matter was widely discussed in the House of Commons and Churchill was among the pro-Zionist majority who stood for the shelving of the proposal with unfounded arguments in favor of prolonging the mandate rule in Palestine. In this context, he delivered that the Council “would be a very great obstruction to the development of Jewish immigration...and to the development of the national home of the Jews...”²⁶⁶

4.4.1 Arab Political Life

4.4.1.1 Arab Activities in the Ottoman and the Subsequent Family Disputes

Prior to the establishment of the mandate rule in Palestine, Arabs’ experience in political domain was confined to certain posts assigned to them by the Ottoman Empire in local level.²⁶⁷ Following the restoration of the Ottoman parliament as a result of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, almost one-fifth of the deputies were Arabs.²⁶⁸ After the inauguration of the British mandate, Arabs who had previously held the two most important tasks - Mayoralty of Jerusalem and Muftiship of Palestine – focused their energies in the competition for the preservation or capturing of these positions. However, it would have been more beneficial for them to try getting rid of the disunities between them and struggling to compose a strong and united Arab front for the sake of their national cause. The dismal circumstances functioning at the disadvantage of the Arabs became harder for them because of lack of any coherent and stable leadership who was capable of orienting

²⁶⁴ Abcarius, op. cit., p. 74.

²⁶⁵ W. F. Abboushi, “The Road to Rebellion Arab Palestine in the 1930”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (Spring, 1977), pp. 30- 31.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 32.

²⁶⁷ Gabbay, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁶⁸ Mandel, op. cit., p. 66.

the furious crowds properly or manipulating the events to their own advantage. The Palestinian leadership was the monopoly of the prominent landowning Arab families of the era. Although they were unanimous about the dangers inherent in the Balfour declaration and opposed to the upward surge of Jewish immigration and land purchases, they never arrived at a consensus regarding the method to deal with the pro-Zionist British policies. This multi-headed leadership hindered the active and effective struggle of the Arab masses vis-à-vis the better organized and coordinated Jews. The major rivalry was among Husseini and Nashashibi families²⁶⁹ and matters pertaining to the families were playing the decisive role in determining the political conflicts and thus the Arab leadership.²⁷⁰ What added to the strength of the Jews was the representation of all the classes of Jewish society in the Jewish Agency, which was established in 1921 to supervise the issues of vital importance to the Jewish community in Palestine, contrary to the lower or middle class Arabs' deprivation of the right to representation in any political group despite their position in the population as the majority holders.²⁷¹

Besides, through their ethnocentric approach towards the Arab community, Zionists intended to obstruct any development that would threaten their superior position in Palestinian politics. They were trying to influence the British officials in not granting the Arabs any right to form their own representative parliaments. Zionists' were prone to despise the Arab population and regarded them falsely as incapable of having a voice in their own administration and destined to be dependent on some other nation's assistance and patronage. When the expressions of most of the members of the House of Commons who convened in 1936 to discuss the Legislative Council proposal are taken into consideration, the impact of the Zionists' anti-Arab propaganda can easily be detected. Many of the British politicians, apart from a few exceptions, were of the opinion that bulk of the Arabs was not adequately civilized, were in need of protection against the yoke of their Arab rulers and lagged behind in many ways from the Westernized Jews.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Nashif, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

²⁷⁰ Wright, op. cit., pp. 389-391.

²⁷¹ Nashif, op. cit., pp. 113-118.

²⁷² The seriousness of this derogatory approach was articulated by Abboushi in these words: "There was the interesting notion that whenever the Arab made progress it was because of Jewish influence, and when he did not it was because he did not interact with the Jews. Although it would be erroneous to deny any benefit from Jewish influence, the generalization was unfair to the Arabs not only in Palestine but in other Arab countries. The Arabs, especially the Palestinians, were highly civilized in spite of the fact that they were rural and Jews were industrial...Only the Jews were modern and progressive and everyone else was hopelessly backward and primitive.", *The Road to Rebellion*, pp. 31-33.

Furthermore, Zionists came to believe that or, put it more accurately, tried to manipulate the public opinion by a feeble argument that the Arab lower classes were being incited by the Arab notables who started to feel enmity towards the British rule on account of their loss of once privileged positions under the Ottoman rule. This meant that because Arab politicians regarded it a necessity to frustrate the conduct of the mandate rule, they used the Arab peasants and middle classes to this end. Namely, lay Arab people, unqualified to build and hold any national consciousness and develop sensitivity for political matters, were nothing more than mere tools in the hands of the Arab notables.²⁷³ Arabs demanded from the British mandate administration a just representation that would be based on their numerical majority. The rejection of this demand, however, made them reluctant to bow to another arrangement which would be prepared under the pressures of the Zionists and aimed at suppressing the Arabs.

4.4.1.2 The Arab Executive and the Never-Ending Splits

Under these circumstances, Arabs convened seven congresses to discuss among themselves the matters they faced in the Palestinian political milieu. The objective of these congresses was, after detailed evaluation, to adopt policies so as to counter the injustices awaiting them and determine influential measures to put forth their claims before the British mandate administration. In this way, the years 1920-1934 can be defined as the period of Arab Congresses. The resolution to establish an *Arab Executive* was taken in the third Arab Congress in 1920. Contrary to the first two Arab Congresses which was convened in Syria, the venue of the third congress was Haifa. Besides, this time the focus was not the independence of Syria, and Palestine as a part of this independent Syrian state, but rather the issues concerning the Palestinian Arab community. Therefore, it was

²⁷³ Abcarius underscores the fallacy of this view by quoting from the report of the Haycraft Commission which also held similar contentions: "It has been argued before us that the present state of popular feeling is due to an artificial agitation promoted by men who suffer by the change of Government who, having lost the advantages they enjoyed under a corrupt regime, are anxious to embarrass the British Administration by any means and to bring about a change of Government...There may be some truth in these arguments...but that is not enough to account for the present state of feelings...A good deal has been alleged by Jewish witnesses about the instigation of the Arab mob to violence by their leaders. If this means no more than that while the educated people talk and write the mob acts, than there is truth in the allegation. But if it means that it had it not been for the notables, Effendis and Sheiks, there would have been no riots, the allegation can not be substantiated...the general belief that the aims of the Zionists and Jewish immigration are a danger to the national and material interests of the Arabs in Palestine is well nigh universal among the Arabs, and it is not confined to any particular class. All that can be truly said in favor of the Jewish view is that the leaders of Arab opinion not only make no secret of what they think, but carry on a political campaign. In this campaign, however, the people participate with the leaders, because they feel that their political and material interests are identical." *Palestine: Through the Fog...*, pp. 76-77.

contradictory to show the first two general Syrian Congresses and the following congresses as part of a series of congresses. Since the strategies adopted in the first two congresses and the subsequent ones about the future of the Arab nation were totally different, it was not possible to relate them with each other.²⁷⁴ The reason was simple: there was no more an independent Syria since it was eliminated by the French forces five months before the assemblage of the congress. Consequently, all the participants of the third congress were Palestinian Arabs contrary to the first and second congresses which gathered attendees from different Arab countries.²⁷⁵ Starting from its formation, the Executive turned out to be the most influential political organ representing various opinions that were found among the contending Arab families up until 1934.²⁷⁶ The mandate government was at first displayed the semblance of reluctance in according the Executive recognition, but in the course of time the Executive gained the acceptance of the British authorities in an incremental fashion.²⁷⁷ The alteration in the British approach towards the Executive can be explained with the increasing urgency to placate the Arab frustration caused by the Arab community's weakening hand in political, social and economic matters because of the lack of representation in governmental level whereas the Jews had all the means in their disposal to invigorate their project of a Jewish national home in Palestine. On the other hand, the refusal of the Arabs to cooperate with the mandate administration and their determination of not regarding the mandate as a legitimate government complicated the work of the British authorities in fulfilling their obligations. The hearts of the Arabs must have been won one way or other, by mislead or by virtuousness. The moderating stance of the mandate rulers to the Arab Executive was done to this end.

The demise of the leader of the Executive – Musa Kazim al Husseini- in 1934 paved the way to the rapid disappearance of the Executive from the Palestinian Arab political scene. But this does not mean that the harmony between the Arab members of the Executive, who belonged to different families that were engaged in political competition, was perfect prior to the dissolution. On the contrary, the commitment of the members to each other's argument was too loose that the rivalries between them during the existence of

²⁷⁴ Kimmerling & Migdal, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²⁷⁵ Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-91.

²⁷⁶ Gabbay, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

²⁷⁷ Although Herbert Samuel was the most high-ranking authority in Palestine to voice objections against recognizing the Executive as the representative of Palestinian Arabs, in time he reduced the degree of his opposition in order to meet at a common denominator with the Arab Executive. See; Wasserstein, *op cit.*, pp. 94-95.

the Executive prepared the process of disintegration. The passing away of its leader was only the last straw. The impulse that forced Arabs with various political opinions to organize under the roof of various political parties as a consequence of deepening of the cleavages between them was at work even before the dissolution of the Executive. The *Istiqlal Party* was spearheaded by Abdul-Hadi family – one of the prominent Arab families in the Palestinian scene, especially in Haifa and Nablus – and its establishment in 1932, when Executive was still active, was the concrete crystallization of the separatist stream in the Arab nationalist movement.²⁷⁸ Although Hajj Amin managed to strangle the party within a few years after its establishment, the Abdul-Hadis and their young supporters left a vibrant impact on the Palestinian politics. Contrary to the leading families of Jerusalem who monopolized the Palestinian Arab national movement and thwarted other voices to gain ground in this movement, the younger segment of the Arab population found a fruitful ground to come to the fore through the Istiqlal Party. The party devised its plank on the basis of opposition first to the British mandate government and then to the traditional Palestinian Arab leadership which consisted of the prominent figures of Jerusalem, including Hajj Amin. The harsh criticisms of the Istiqlal Party against the Jerusalem-dominated leadership and the party's accusations against the leading figures for working with the British caused great inconvenience within this leadership cadre. The policies championed by the Istiqlalists were the extension of the currents of anti-imperialism that started to grip the Palestinian Arabs following the Wailing Wall incidents in 1929. To the alarm of the Jerusalem notables, this party adopted a fierce anti-British rhetoric, advocated noncooperation policy and organized challenging demonstrations.²⁷⁹

The ideological splits in the Executive were present since the very beginning of the Executive's establishment. As a symbol of the obvious dissimilarities emanating from the tackling of the Palestine problem and the policies of the mandate administration, the members of the Nashashibi family set up a political party in 1923, named the *Arab National Party*, for an orderly and integrated framework to gather within. After going through some modifications, this party was transformed into another party called the *National Defense Party* in 1936. The political works of Nashashibi's both parties were based on the polarization with the Husseini family and the institutions under their control. In this sense, the Arab political life could be defined to develop in the context of the conflict between the adherents of Hajj Amin Husseini – by being the Mufti of Jerusalem and the president of the *Supreme Muslim Council* (SMC), the leading figure of the Arabs during the British

²⁷⁸ Abboushi, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁷⁹ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 92-93, 99-100, 102.

mandate rule – and the opponents of him; the former called the *majlisin* and the latter *mu'aridin*.²⁸⁰ The root of the rivalry of these groups ostensibly grounded on the fact that they adopted conflicting methods in dealing with the Zionist encroachment and the British mandatory government. Whilst the *majlisin* held an inflexible approach towards the mandate rule, the *mu'aridin* had a quite conciliation-prone appearance. For a few years after the issuance of the Balfour declaration, Husseini family sided with the British. The reason for this preference was to put the Nashashibi family, which used to support the French, on the spot. As the circumstances changed, however, the Husseinis turned against the British.²⁸¹ In other words, when the Palestinian people became weary of the embroilment between the government and the *majlisin* that achieved almost nothing in national terms but proved quite useful in guarding limited individual and family interests, their support turned towards the *mu'aridin* which they believed would be far more beneficial in the struggle against the Zionists and the British rule thanks to their cooperationist policies.

Although the Palestine Arab Executive was indirectly legitimized and recognized as the representative of the Palestinian Arabs by its defense before the Commission set up to investigate the causes of the 1929 disturbances²⁸², the political influence of the Executive slowly diminished as an outcome of the failure of the Husseinis and Nashashibis in creating a unitary Arab position for the sake of the success of the Arab nationalist movement against the Zionist encroachment.

The political competition between the Nashashibi and Husseini families resulted in periodical outstripping of one group and thus the decrease in the political reputation of the other group. This phenomenon displayed a quite fluctuating course. The shift in political ascendancy could occur within a short time and the group once dwindling in power could gain a surprising degree of reliability and credibility in the eyes of the Arab public. In this vein, until the 1929 the *mu'aridin* group, owing to the circumstances processing in favor of them²⁸³, showed a significant accomplishment in maintaining the upper hand in Arab politics. However, the tensions signaling the outbreak of the 1929 riots, served in a perfect way first and foremost the president of the SMC – Hajj Amin Husseini, and helped the

²⁸⁰ Wasserstein, op. cit., pp. 217-219.

²⁸¹ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 83.

²⁸² Gabbay, op. cit., p. 20.

²⁸³ The reasons of *mu'aridin*'s success were ranged by Wasserstein as follows; "...a convincing victory in municipal elections all over Palestine...accumulated personal and family grievances against the Supreme Muslim Council and its President...the failure of the Palestine Arab Executive to secure any tangible gains in its struggle against Zionism and British rule.", Wasserstein, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

majlisin group to restore its former hegemony among the Palestinian Arabs. Hajj Amin's initial closeness with Britain since the World War I which emanated from the important offices assigned to him by the mandate officials caused the Husseinis to take a relatively balanced attitude towards the mandate government during the mid-1920s. Even the third Arab Congress, in which delegates from Jerusalem's leading families especially Husseinis were the majority, opted for British protection for their autonomous Palestinian state.²⁸⁴ Hajj Amin once a man, who had been accused of being a spy for the British, however, turned out to be the most uncompromising Palestinian Arab leader against the British especially following the 1929 disturbances which culminated in another British disavowal of her previous pledges mentioned in the White Paper of 1930 through the Prime Minister MacDonald's letter addressing the Zionists.²⁸⁵

Although the general outline of the point of views of the leading families as regards the activities of the Zionists in their homeland was identical, the points that distinguished them and caused the nub of their detachment in political matters came into existence in the means to find a way through the pro-Zionist stance of the British mandate rule and the methods to curb marginalization of Arabs on account of the Zionists' escalating coveting on Palestinian lands. Speaking in general terms, the Nashashibi family stood for cooperation with the mandate government and believed in the resolving power of working hand in hand with the British authorities. In most cases, when the Zionist aggression became unbearable for the Arabs, this policy was deemed too moderate and infirm to relieve the Arabs of their woes. In times Arab people believed in the effectiveness of harder policies and a rigid response to the Zionists, they turned their face to the Hajj Amin and adhered themselves to the political line of the Husseinis, who were come to be known for their uncooperative attitude when compared to the Nashashibis'. Nevertheless, also a certain degree of substitution existed between the two families. When one of them reduced the intensity of its discourses, the other replaced it by adopting a harsher manner in the pursuit of political advantages over Zionists.²⁸⁶ The cold reality of the Palestinian issue necessitated such a mutually binding involvement in the Arab cause. Otherwise, the Arabs would have been left completely strayed.

²⁸⁴ Kimmerling & Migdal, op.cit., p 83.

²⁸⁵ Waines, op. cit., p. 81.

²⁸⁶ Gabbay, op. cit., p. 18.

4.4.1.3 The Formation of Arab Political Parties and the Arab Higher Committee

The period after the demise of the Executive witnessed the establishment of six Arab political parties by 1936. When the connective power of the Executive disappeared, the Arab political parties preferred to hold their courses on their own. These parties and their representatives were as follows: *Arab Reform Party* (Khalidis), *Arab Party* (Husseinis), *Istiqlal Party* (Abdul-Hadis), *National Bloc Party*, *National Defense Party* (Nashashibis) and finally the *Palestine Nationalist Youth Party*. Although the emergence of political parties seemed to represent the divergence in political programs to be pursued, these parties hardly held the necessary power or the extensive constituency to challenge the political clout of Hajj Amin Husseini's Arab Party and did nothing more than articulating minor disagreements.²⁸⁷ Actually, this was the case for more than seventy years. The influence and power of the Jerusalem elite exceeded the authority of the families located in cities other than Jerusalem. For instance, the Abdul-Hadi family had its roots in Nablus. For this reason, Abdul-Hadis and other families whose constituencies laid outside Jerusalem "could serve as little more than adjuncts, and sometimes counterpoints, to the struggles in the holy city."²⁸⁸ However this situation was changing by the mid-1930s.

In 1936 very important incidents took place in Palestinian territories. A broad strike was commenced on account of the Jews' rising control in Palestinian economy and politics and the dominance over social life. Shortly after the beginning of the strike, in order to put an end to the splits between them, the six Arab political parties created an umbrella organization to act in coordination for finding a decisive solution to the problems of the Palestinian Arabs. Thanks to this, the national committees working in different districts obtained the chance to conduct coordinated policies. The establishment of the *Arab Higher Committee (AHC)* was designed as a remedy to the disintegrated Arab nationalist movement. Not surprisingly, its leader was Hajj Amin Husseini. After the AHC was formed with the participation of all the politically active sides, the most important step taken by it was the adherence to the strike.²⁸⁹ The AHC supported carrying on with the strike relying on the belief that this would eventually oblige the mandatory government to recognize the validity of the Arab claims. AHC, however, could not be able to secure a significant shift in the British pro-Zionist policies. Despite the tenacious struggle of the Palestinian Arabs,

²⁸⁷ Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

²⁸⁸ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 72.

²⁸⁹ Gabbay, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

neither immigration nor the land sales were ceased by the mandate government and the result was a total disappointment for the Arab community and the political leadership as well.

From the outset, the British mandate took strict measures to curb the civil disobedience and the AHC got its share from these harsh and sweeping actions for spearheading the demonstrations and economic boycott. Most of its leaders were arrested.²⁹⁰ Failing to convince the British authorities and realizing that they were no more capable of maintaining the strike on account of its economic repercussions, the AHC lost almost all its political efficiency when in the end it was understood that they were in desperate need of the mediation of the other Arab states as a backstop. As a result of the intervention of the Arab states, the strike was called off in order to provide a relatively easy environment for the Royal Commission to conduct its work. In other words, the strike ended without gaining the acceptance of the mandate administration to any of the Arab demands and the subsequent acts of violence were brought to an end by appealing to the last resort; which was the mediation of the other Arab states.

During the time elapsed between the publication of the Commission's report and the British parliamentary debates about the practicability of the recommendations presented in the report, the position of the AHC was vulnerable and its relations with the mandate government was hanging in the balance. In such a tense climate, in September 1937, the district commissioner of Galilee was killed. Lesch suggests that this assassination had a symbolic meaning.²⁹¹ First of all, according to the partition plan put forth by the Royal Commission, Galilee district was included in the Jewish state which meant that the Arabs living there would most probably be subjected to the population exchange operation. So the killers may have wanted to show their reaction against this imminent British move. In any case, the technical commission which was established to discuss the feasibility of the partition plan of the Royal Commission, put forth in its report that the plan was unworkable because the boundaries were highly controversial. Galilee was one of the regions that complicated this boundary issue owing to its almost entirely Arab population.²⁹² Secondly, Britain felt quiet uneasy about the murder of Andrews, since it was a deliberate action with the aim of damaging the morale of the British forces. Andrews was chosen as the victim of the assassination for being a senior executive of the mandate administration whose killing would have extensive repercussions. The expected repercussions did not take too long to

²⁹⁰ Waines, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-85.

²⁹¹ Lesch, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

²⁹² Abcarius, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

come, but proved counterproductive for the Arabs. This incident provided the mandate officials with the pretext it was searching for long and thus it was used against the Committee. Thereby only one and a half years after its formation, the British mandate rule decided to disband the AHC and it was completely overpowered when its prominent figures were deported.²⁹³ Hajj Amin was removed from the leadership of both the AHC and the SMC, but luckily escaped deportation. Members of these two committees were inflicted imprisonment. All these drastic regulations executed by the mandate authorities engendered the removal of the leaders of the Palestinian Arab national movement and accordingly left the Arab nationalism stranded without any means of recovering after this setback. Hajj Amin's policies had also so much to do with the predicament of the Palestinian Arab nationalism. He repressed his rivals and dominated the Palestinian political domain in such a way that they did not find the opportunity to flourish. So the partisans of the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement were left on their own, dispersed and desperate.

From all this information, it will not be wrong to arrive at the conclusion that the milieu which acted to the disadvantage of the Arabs in Palestine was the outcome of the Zionist-prone policies of the British mandate rule. Thus, following the promulgation of the British mandate the milieu in Palestine became ripe for the realization of two mainstays of the Zionist ideology – immigration and land settlement – without any blockade. The impact of the rising number of Jewish immigrants and connected land purchases by them was awful in terms of the peace and the centuries-old uninterrupted Arab presence on these lands. Several other very important factors accelerated the socio-economic and socio-political transformation of Palestine. The principles of the Zionist ideology were one of them. Labor Zionist ideology was adopted by the Zionist institutions which assumed the leading role in the colonization of Palestine. This ideology dictated the Zionist entity to be self-sufficient in economic sense which meant that reliance on any other force in making its economic progress was not acceptable. On account of this understanding, the detachment between the Arabs and Jews in the economic domain deepened. Economic separation predated the political separation and in the end, with the establishment of the state of Israel the full separation of these two communities has been completed. Another factor which aggravated the socio-economic and socio-political transformation was the incompetence of the Arabs in their struggle against the colonization of their country. Despite the activeness in policy and diplomacy, the Arabs could not be able to match the success of the Jews in this arena. Since their political life was dominated by disputes between prominent Arab families, the Jews managed to outstrip them in having the British backing when their

²⁹³ Waines, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88.

demands and complaints were concerned. The Arab national movement was destined to lag behind the Jewish national movement as long as they could not overcome the disagreements between the ruling cliques. Although the Arab leaders invested most of their energy and time in struggling with each other, the Arab resentment and anger against the pro-Zionist British policies and the unfavorable circumstances related with the Zionist anxiousness to achieve their goals as soon as possible manifested itself in periodic protests and clashes.

CHAPTER 5

ARAB REACTIONS TO THE ZIONIST ENDEAVOURS AND THE BRITISH STAND IN THE MIDST OF THESE DISTURBANCES

From the very moment of the establishment of the British civil administration until 1939, when the impending war conditions obligated the British authorities to make a radical shift in its Palestine policy in favor of the Arabs, the prevalent political and economic atmosphere ran against the spirit of the Arab nationalist demands. Although the Palestine Arab nationalist movement was fraught with splits by virtue of the fierce struggle between the families, the sufferings of the Arabs on political, social and economic grounds on account of the Zionist project was an undeniable fact. In order to set a counter-poise to these Zionist threats, especially at times when the extent of this threat was felt more strongly among the Arab community and the belief that the British would not take any effective measure to thwart the Zionist encroachment became common, they found ways to display their annoyances by resort to violent means.

As soon as the Jewish immigration was directed towards Palestine and the Jewish settlements began to rise in numbers, Arabs started to feel that their presence on these territories was at stake. In view of this perception, clashes between the Jews and Arabs occurred even prior to the molding of the Zionist ideology. But these clashes hardly had the political orientation of the subsequent decades and grew out from only limited personal or group grievances, which prevented them from assuming a far-reaching national prominence. The conflict in 1886 over the first Palestinian land colonized by the Jewish settlers in 1878 that was known as Petah Tiqva²⁹⁴ was a major indicator of the speedy advent of Arab hostility against possession of land by Jews. In the initial years of the modern Jewish immigration, the main thing that was causing problem between the two communities was the fact that the Jewish immigrants did not heed the social circumstances reigning in Palestine and customary conducts generally accepted by all segments of the society. That was the case in the Petah Tiqva collision.²⁹⁵ But over the years, as the Jewish

²⁹⁴ "Begun by Rumanian Jews, Petah Tikvah, whose name in Hebrew means 'Gate of Hope', was established as an agricultural village on the Plain of Sharon, not far from the present-day Tel Aviv. The experiment failed, and the community was abandoned after a time, but a few years later it was refounded by Russian Jews belonging to Hovavei Zion who had come to Palestine as part of the First Aliya." Tessler, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

colonies established on Palestinian lands and the number of Jews working in these colonies showed a considerable increase,²⁹⁶ the Arab hostility took on a different shape. Beginning from the first decade of the 20th century, an added political dimension to the problem began to make itself felt among the Arabs both within Palestine and the other parts of the Arab world. This transformation could easily be detected from the newspaper articles being published in the newly emerged Arabic press.²⁹⁷ Although the mainstay of the nascent anti-Zionist attitude of both the Muslim and Christian Arabs differed in motivation and the aims to be achieved through voicing this opposition varied, the factor which unified these dissident figures was that almost all of them agreed on the undermining effect of the collective Jewish immigration and settlement on social, political and economic future of the country unless this was prevented one way or other. The fact that the educated segment of the Arab society assumed the spokesmanship of the anti-Zionist feelings did not mean that the poorer sections which were consisted of the fellahin were unaware of the developments taking place regarding Zionism. On the contrary, they were the main group that had to bear the worst consequences of the Jewish colonization movement. At the outset, since the impact of the immigration and the colonies were not that appalling and the purposes of mass Jewish settlement had not yet been seated on a political framework, the fellahin group found a way to conduct their relations with the Jews in a relatively peaceful state.²⁹⁸ However, since regularizing the Jewish purposes concerning Palestine was a compelling issue for the resolution of the deteriorating Jewish question in Europe, setting up a political scheme for this end did not take up a long time. When in 1897 the Zionist movement made its appearance officially in the first Zionist Congress and the aims of this movement were fixed in detail, the orientation of the world Jewry changed fundamentally. This was the determining factor of the course of events henceforth. The characteristics of the elements that made up the successive waves of immigration were in a way tailored in accordance with the developments taking place within newly emerged Jewish nationalist revival. For instance, the Jews of the second aliyah were a major source of contention between the immigrants and the settled Arab community, for they were more assertive in their discourses and more aggressive in their actions contrary to their predecessors making

²⁹⁵ Mandel, op. cit., p. 35-36.

²⁹⁶ While the number of Jewish colonies in Palestine in 1898 was 18 with four thousand Jews working in them, this number rose to 26 and ten thousand respectively in 1908. These figures were obtained from *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. i, col. 251 by Mandel, op. cit., p. 34.

²⁹⁷ Journals such as al-Muqtataf and al-Manar, Mandel, op. cit., pp. 44-47 and papers such as Filastin and al-Karmal, Weinstock, op. cit., p. 60.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 37-38.

incursions into Palestine with the first aliyah. They were the upholders of political Zionism and conducted all their activities in Palestinian lands by staying within the bounds of this new ideology. That was why they advanced the ideas as conquest of labor and conquest of soil and used their best endeavors to spread and implement these ambitious projects which were most effective in sowing the seeds of hostility in these lands between the two groups. Furthermore the socialist and Marxist ideologies they brought in with them into Palestine were perceived as alien and dangerous by Arabs. In some instances of acts of violence, this fact was acknowledged by some of the consuls of the European countries in Palestine.²⁹⁹ Other than the exhaustion of patience on part of the Zionists and the desire to achieve their aims rapidly, there were some other reasons which drew the reaction of Arabs and caused annoyance among them. Despite all the efforts of the Ottoman Empire to forestall the entrance of Jews in large numbers into Palestine and the legal arrangements laid against the purchase of land by them, Jews could benefit from economic and social privileges of the Capitulations –owing to the fact that they were foreign subjects - and these rendered them more advantageous in face of the Arabs and local Jews who were Ottoman citizens.

Accordingly, the step by step opening of the avenues of success for the Jews and the hereby weakening position of the Arabs in Palestine altered and hardened their perception regarding the intentions of the Jews. Consequently, the stiffening of the events in Palestine went hand in hand with the growing advantages acquired by Zionism. Namely as the political goals of the Zionists of seizing the land of Palestine and establishing a Jewish state on this land became more noticeable, their relations severed. In other words, the politicizing of the Jewish problem by the Zionists and its direct repercussions on the Palestinian Arabs gave rise to the political awareness of the latter. The Palestinian Arabs started to undertake the issue and search for solutions to their despair by staying within the domain of politics as the first decade of the 1900s moved toward its end. From this point, the real problem for the Arab population of Palestine was not only the Jewish immigration, but the Zionist plans that were to shatter the whole political, social and economic configuration of Palestine.³⁰⁰ The phenomenon which attracted the attention of Arabs to the Zionist intentions, fueled their rage against this movement and its program, turned them into the fiercest anti-Zionists and caused them to participate into affairs in which they could bring up their antagonism to Zionism was the loss of large-scale lands through land purchases.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 26-27.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 55-56, 77.

It is obvious that Arabs were not late in realizing the Zionist objectives and their reflections as soon as they appeared. The first stage of the Arab reaction displayed itself against the background of Jewish immigration. But inevitably this would evolve into its second stage as the search for land to settle these Jews began. As it was defined in the previous chapters, the Zionist ideology has two cornerstones of which one of them is facilitating immigration and the other is acquiring land. It is impossible to imagine that Zionism can succeed without one or the other since they are integral parts which brought about the triumph of Jewish nationalism over Palestinian Arab nationalism. This way the Arab opposition against Zionist movement continued in a growing fashion. However, in the history of Arab-Jewish conflict, issuance of the Balfour declaration can be regarded as a top point which constituted the necessary impetus for the dissemination of political consciousness among almost all segments of the Palestinian Arab society. Anti-Zionism among the Palestinian Arabs in its real sense was set in motion with the emergence of the Balfour declaration and the consequent pro-Zionist practices that were hastened on the basis of this declaration. As the Arabs faced the cold reality that it was almost impossible to induce a change in the British policies, which were undermining the long-established rights of Arabs, through negotiation or cooperation with the mandate officials or the high-level authorities in London, the patience on part of the Arabs exhausted and the inclination to benefit from more aggressive methods gained acceptance. Aside from the members of the commissions of inquiry set up for the purpose of investigating the reasons of the disturbances and were assigned with the duty of making helpful suggestions, and a few exceptions that was to be found among the ranks of the government departments, the whole system was under the sway of Zionism. The passing of the government from the conservative to the labor party or the reverse did not even change this fact. Britain designated the line of Palestinian policy in 1917 and did not deviate from this path until 1939 in spite of the huge political and ideological disunities between the parties in the right and left wings of the British politics. During this term, episodic Arab uprisings arose and the causes and consequences of the most significant ones will be examined in detail below.

5.1 The Disturbances of 1920

5.1.1 The Causes

The circumstances prevalent in the 1920s caused much trouble and engendered long-lasting disappointments for the Arab population of Palestine. In this decade, they witnessed the Jewish body gaining a far more different and superior status than the previous

decades. The developments seen in the Zionist entity was for the most part attained through the staunch promotion it was given by the British authorities. First, the right of establishing a national home in Palestine and the British assistance for this end and then the occupation of Palestine by the British army provided the Zionists with unprecedented advantages that were gained for the first time in the Jewish history in the last two thousand years. Moreover, the reluctance on part of the Allies in implementing the findings of the King-Crane Commission added to the grievances of the Arab community. With the decision to set up and send a commission to detect the wishes of the Arabs, the people of these territories sensed the ray of hope and maintained the conviction that the Allies were determined to act in accordance with the political wills of the indigenous populations rather than imposing their will on them. In this vein, the frustration of the Arabs caused by the Balfour Declaration was on the verge of reversal. However, treating the report of the Commission as it had never been carried out dashed the hopes of the Arabs once again. If the findings of the Commission had been taken into account and thus the wishes of the people of these lands had had the priority when deciding the political future of the Middle East, the acute crisis which hit the Palestinian Arabs would have never happened. But as it has been emphasized up to this point many times, the political project which was a product of British-Zionist alliance was a foregone project and for this purpose the pledges previously made to the Arabs and their expectations related with these pledges were given no consideration after the war aims were achieved.

In April 1920, just a few months before the military administration was replaced with a civil one, Arabs and Jews engaged in a bitter fighting with each other in Jerusalem. Several disturbances in the cities of Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem in the preceding months of February and March had prepared the intense background for the skirmishes to break out in Jerusalem in April; a time which bore religious importance for all the three faiths. Although the already tense atmosphere had contributed to the eruption of violence in Jerusalem in April, the Palin Commission refuted the claims of the Zionists, that the riot had been previously determined by the Arab nationalists, by stating that the incidents in April should have been regarded to be independent from the previous demonstrations and protests and they emerged rather spontaneously.³⁰¹ In other words, the February-March protests can said to be a coordinated action whereas the violence of April grew out uncontrolled. The need to organize such a widely participated demonstration was precipitated and the flame of the

³⁰¹ Porath, p. 98.

incidents were ignited following the determination of Britain to adhere strictly to the Balfour declaration was expressed by General Louis Bols in February 27, 1920.³⁰²

One of the chief military administrators in Palestine, Bols was actually a strong critical of the ardent Zionist policies that were put into effect at the expense of the Arabs. Even, just a week before his proclamation supporting the Balfour declaration, he drew up a review of the situation in Palestine, opposing the partiality-entailing Zionist proposals and demanding the abolition of the Zionist Commission.³⁰³ A week later, the order to issue an official declaration completely opposite to his thinking was given by the London government and should not be deemed the personal preference of Bols. As a matter of fact, he was aware of the impossibility to reconcile the national interests of the Jews and Arabs as the former was embodied in the Balfour Declaration and the latter was comprised in the Hussein-McMahon correspondences. Bols can be deemed as a foresighted man, as his official remarks reveal that from the inception he saw the adversities that were inherent in the act of supporting the Jewish national home³⁰⁴ and the risk of alienating the Arabs on account of the incompetence of the Military Administration in abiding by the international laws to the fullest extent possible.³⁰⁵ His statements before the Palin Commission concerning this issue were as follows:

It is not to be wondered at that the Arab population complained of bias on the part of the Administration in favor of the Jews. They see the Administration repeatedly overruled by the Zionist Commission; they see the Zionist Commission intermeddling in every department of Government, in Justice, Public Health, Legislation, Public Works, and forcing the Administration...to interfere in their favor, in a purely business transaction. They see Jews excluded from the operations of the Public Custodian with regard to enemy property: they have seen the introduction of the Hebrew language on an equality with Arabic and English; they have seen considerable immigration not effectively controlled; they see Zionist stamps on letters and Zionist young men drilling publicly in open spaces of the town. Finally they have seen them proceeding to the election of a Constituent Assembly.³⁰⁶

³⁰² Ibid, p. 96.

³⁰³ Sahar Huneidi, *A Broken Trust: Herbert Samuel, Zionism and Palestinians, 1920-1925*, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001, p. 34.

³⁰⁴ "It is manifestly impossible to please partisans who officially claim nothing more than a National Home but in reality will be satisfied with nothing less than a Jewish State and all that it politically implies." in McTague, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

³⁰⁵ "It is no use stating to the Muslim and Christian elements of the population that our declaration as to the maintenance of the status quo made on our entry into Jerusalem has been observed. Facts witness otherwise, the introduction of Hebrew tongue as an official language, the setting up of a Jewish Judicature, the whole fabric of Government of the Zionist Commission of which they are well aware, the special privileges given as regards traveling and movement to the members of the Zionist Commission, has firmly and absolutely convinced the non-Jewish elements of our partiality." in Huneidi, op. cit., p. 34.

Bols were right in his observations for the Arabs' contempt towards Zionists were in the rise due to the superior position accorded to them by the British administration. The requests submitted by the Zionists were too assertive and demanding. Arabs responded to the threats posed by Zionism in various ways. They developed political solutions such as forming and organizing groups. Muslim-Christian Associations were the manifestation of the Arabs' will to fight against Jewish national movement within political platforms.³⁰⁷ However, the fury of Arabs became conspicuous to everybody when they displayed their reactions in the form of protest movements and violence. Besides, when the slogans utilized by the Arabs in the clashes were examined, it became obvious that the Arab community was also caught up in a certain excitement over Faisal's proclaimed crown in Syria and owing to the fact that bulk of the Arab population was at that time still bore the perception that Palestine was an integral part of Syria, they were desirous to see the implications of the newly proclaimed independent Great Syria in Palestine.³⁰⁸ Although what actually triggered the violence remained unknown, the preparatory factors for the riots can be listed as above.

5.1.2 The Consequences

Although this riot was relatively a small-scaled one owing to the fact that it did not spread to the other parts of Palestine and remained confined mainly to the Jerusalem area, its importance lay in the fact that it was the first materialized popular Arab discontent in the history of the British rule. The February-March disturbances and the violence took place in April, although the two were not regarded as a chain of events, were the first manifestations of anti-Zionist reaction and signs of nationalist awakening within the Arab community. What is more, the first commission of inquiry –the Palin Commission- of the six commissions, which were established with the same purpose, came into being, displaying a pro-Arab stance. Since Palestine was under military control at the time of the disturbances, the Palin Commission was decided to be composed purely from military officials. Its composition constituted another source of contention between the military administration and the Zionists, whose relations were already tense. Zionists were well aware of the criticism voiced hitherto by the military officials against the Zionists' impatience to breach the status quo and to widen the scope of the Jewish national home, and their sympathetic

³⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 37-38.

³⁰⁷ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 75-77.

³⁰⁸ McTague, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

approach towards the Arab cause was not a hidden matter. So it was anticipated beforehand that the commission would reach pro-Arab resolutions.³⁰⁹

This commission, its findings and recommendations were infrequently mentioned in the literature comprising the history of Palestine during the British mandate rule owing to the fact that the report of the commission was not given public appearance. It is evidently understood from the report that the main point of Arab dissatisfaction instigating them to attack the Jews was the presence of the Zionist Commission and the works that it conducted. Arabs were getting more and more awake to the reality of a Zionist body which was turning into a state-like organization thanks to the privileges it was bestowed by the British administration, which was submitting itself to the pressures of the Zionists inside and outside Palestine.³¹⁰

Contrary to the fact that the Military Administration was empowered to preserve the conditions in Palestine as it had taken them over from the Ottoman Empire until the future of the country was legitimately decided, several arrangements were made in favor of the Jewish national home or some attempts of the Military Administration to ameliorate the conditions effecting the Arab community were rendered ineffective with the counter-works of the Zionists. In the case of the former, the most bothersome decision given by the mandate authorities was to recognize the Hebrew language as one of the official languages of Palestine and thus equating its status with Arabic. For the latter situation, the retraction of the Military Administration as a consequence of the Zionists' protests against enacting a law for the purpose of granting agricultural loans to the Arab farmers can serve as a case in point. On the other hand, Zionist Commission was manifesting great activities to realize the national home in the shortest duration possible, in a way uncovering the ultimate –but at that time the hidden- aim of the Zionists. The pressure exerted on every British official, who had a say in the Palestinian affairs, – from the most insignificant public official to the most high-ranked one - by the Zionist leaders reached such a level that it could not be underestimated. In every attempt of the mandate authorities, which had the effect of giving priority to the Arab demands, whether it was in a cultural, political or economic matter, or jeopardizing the Jewish national home ideal in one way or other, the Zionist diplomatic canals stepped in and the undertaking was blocked.

At this juncture, it is estimated that mentioning the Zionist diplomatic efforts and their essential contributions paving way to the attainment of the Zionist objectives will be valuable. As soon as the Zionist movement was established, a roadmap was drawn in the

³⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 69-70.

³¹⁰ To learn more about the 1920 disturbances and the Palin Commission, see; Huneidi, pp. 33-42.

first Zionist congress and it was elaborated in the successive Zionist congresses. This roadmap was followed diligently during many decades and policies were formulated in accordance with the consent of the attendees of these congresses. With the implementation of this roadmap, the Zionists envisaged realizing their goals and in this way the phases which the roadmap would embrace were molded. In his study of the Zionist diplomacy, Fayez Sayegh fixed seven elements that form the Zionist plan of action. According to him, the diplomatic attempts of the ardent Zionists, who devoted themselves to the fulfillment of the aims of the Zionist movement, are complemented by other six elements; Zionist policy, colonization, organization, collection of funds, propaganda, and military action.³¹¹ This view points out to the fact that the effective utilization of the negotiation tactics and diplomatic skills was the key to the success of Zionism alongside the other six elements. This diplomatic action became the instrument of pressure, which was implicated in the Zionist affairs, on the interested states.

Although diplomacy has always been important for the Zionist movement, the level of its importance showed certain differences during the course of the movement. Before explaining the reasons of these differences, the consequences of the rising and declining importance of diplomacy and their impact upon the fulfillment of the aim of colonizing Palestine, it will be useful to put forth the factors which has rendered diplomacy a *sine qua non* for Zionism. The indispensability of taking diplomatic steps and relying on these steps for the future gains of the movement stemmed from the unique character of the Jewish nationalist movement which set it aside from the other nationalist movements.³¹² The most outstanding of these characteristics was the obligation of organizing large-scale immigration into the designated territory in order to gather a group of people which would suffice to colonize the land. The main difficulty arose from the fact that the population that would be mobilized as part of this colonization project was not concentrated in one country but was rather dispersed throughout the world. Therefore, the Zionists had to encounter a great many of European countries which Jews were residing. The other difficulty was that the land that they determined to colonize belonged to the Ottoman Empire. This meant that without the approval of the Empire, the immigration movement could not materialize. Namely, a persuasion initiative on part of the Ottoman Sultan should be undertaken. In addition to these difficulties, the Zionists should suggest convincing arguments to all these parties in order to make them find benefits for themselves in giving support to the Zionist project. All these factors evince the central role occupied by the diplomatic activities.

³¹¹ Sayegh, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

³¹² *Ibid*, pp. 22-27.

However, the difference in the methods employed by political Zionists and practical Zionists, and their contending approaches regarding the right course which would lead to the establishment of an independent Jewish state wavered the significance of diplomacy in the Zionist program and from time to time rendered its success dependent upon the concurrent success of the other elements. Since Herzl was the pioneer of political Zionism, during his lifetime diplomatic action for the purpose of procuring a charter from the Ottoman Empire and receiving the backing of the European powers in this issue was considered to be the primary mean which would enable Zionist colonization in Palestine. When it was understood that Herzl's ventures were in vain, practical Zionists, who objected to the intensive work that was put into action to convince the foreign powers and who advocated the needlessness of the undue energy invested in the diplomatic negotiations, came to the fore. As the practical Zionists gained the upper hand within the Zionist movement, diplomatic efforts began to lose their gravity and the colonization efforts accelerated instead, because they believed in the complementary role of theoretical framework and practice. Thus diplomatic initiatives were started to be perceived as meaningless without intensive settlement and colonization endeavors which should assist diplomacy both before and after negotiators put their cases on table. Thus the success of deskwork was attached on the success of on-site work. The fruitless attempts of political Zionists to gain official approvals from the governments of various states without laying before the interested parties any indication of headway on the soil proved that the Zionist movement had to reach a certain level of cultural, social and economic development in Palestine for winning over the European countries to their cause. This view was defined by Sayegh in the following words:

Diplomatic endeavors to obtain international promises and agreements can not succeed unless they are preceded by pioneer work in Palestine. This reality was first brought home to the Zionists as a result of Herzl's failure in all his efforts to obtain from the Sultan permission for the Zionist movement to colonize Palestine. The conclusions they drew from this in that phase were of the utmost importance. To them, Herzl's failure meant that diplomacy alone, no matter how clever, could not persuade the parties concerned to see eye to eye with the Zionist movement and grant it a permit to undertake the colonization of Palestine, unless that diplomacy was preceded by a tangible Zionist success in Palestine. Such a success in pioneering settlement will act as an effective instrument in the diplomatic negotiations to induce the Powers whose support is required that the Zionist community inside Palestine can serve their interests in the area if permitted to grow and expand.³¹³

Weizmann was the person who stood in the forefront of the implementation of this new plan of action which blended the discourses of Herzl and the necessities emerged as a

³¹³ Ibid, pp. 45-46.

consequence of the abortive attempts of political Zionism. During his life he made great contributions to the Zionist movement and as the top executive of the principles of practical Zionism, he was responsible for many of the accomplishments that were guaranteed through intense contacts with the British high-ranking authorities. These contacts, which started before Britain did not have any say in the affairs of Palestine, continued after the establishment of British mandate administration in these lands, swelling in time into a dominant factor in positioning Britain as an open pro-Zionist state in the international arena.

As the Zionist interference in the administration accelerated and it became more conspicuous to the Arabs that the British authorities were conducting their policies consistent with the Zionist demands, their unrest grew larger and culminated in the clashes between the two communities in April 1920. The level of confidence on the part of the Zionists were so great that, they showed tendency to reach misjudgments regarding the political consciousness of the Arab community and underrate the power of the Arab national movement. According to the Zionist approach, Arabs were idle and lacked the necessary power to act collectively in case of a repressive attitude towards them. With the British support behind them, they felt free to act in contradiction to the Arab rights. This extreme line of action of the Zionist institutions did not escape the attention of the British officials and in certain matters they felt the urgency to halt them, since the Arabs' increasing resentment and disposition to attempt at violence were a direct result of the Zionist impatience in making the dream of a Jewish state real.

In spite of being a Jewish and an acting Zionist, and despite the fact that he took advantage of every mean during his tenure to fulfill the positive obligation written in the Balfour Declaration, even Herbert Samuel once came up with the proposal of dismissing the Zionist Commission. However, almost every policy-maker in both London and Palestine was of the opinion that the Balfour declaration should be adhered strictly and never contemplated abrogating it. Only a certain degree of moderation could be observed on part of some authorities as regards the extent and pace of the pro-Zionist policies in order not to cause an outright explosion of wrath in the Arab community. Even the Palin Commission clung to the Balfour declaration and its provisions,³¹⁴ despite all the charges directed by Zionists against the military officials who constituted the Commission. It was a sign of the impartiality of the members of the Commission and their adherence to the decisions taken by London was strong as long as the Arabs were not incurred heavy losses and irreversible infringement of their rights on account of the Zionist endeavors.

³¹⁴ Huneidi, op.cit., p. 38.

5.2 The Disturbances of 1921

5.2.1 The Causes

During the course of 1920, a great deal of historic changes occurred which strengthened the Arabs' conviction that the alliance between the Zionists and the British was so powerful that Palestine would go through changes affecting the lives of Arabs adversely. First of all, when the Palin Commission was working on its report, the administration of Palestine was civilized and Herbert Samuel, with the complete praising from Jews and in the midst of downright protests from Arabs, took office as the first High Commissioner in June 1920. Although he was a committed Zionist, who considered his post as an opportunity to make the dream of a Jewish state come true, he seemed to adopt a moderate and incremental approach towards the application of the national home policy. His intention was not to cause Arab indignation and not to draw the reaction of the national elements in the Arab population when pursuing a pro-Zionist line. In case of an outright Zionist political orientation in the British Administration, it was highly unlikely that the Arabs would remain intact and most probably violent incidents would take place. Samuel acquired this apprehension after the outbreak of the Jaffa riots in May 1921 and stopped overlooking the powerful anti-Zionist potential among the Arabs, which was at the brink of exploding in case of even a small fomentation.³¹⁵ As he gained a better understanding of the need to calm down the Arabs in face of British-backed Zionist colonization in Palestine and to be able to proceed with the national home policy in a peaceful environment, the first thing he tried to undertake was to introduce self-governing institutions, starting with the proposal of establishing an Advisory Council.

What was more devastating for the Arab nationalist cause more than the appointment of a Jewish and Zionist high commissioner was the toppling of Faisal in Syria by the French forces in July 1920. The removal of the independent Kingdom of Syria and expulsion of Faisal from these territories following the military triumph of the French forces, which is also known as the battle of Maysalun, brought about a swift and radical ideological transformation in the Arab national movement in Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs who had hitherto placed huge dependence to the ideal of an independent Greater Syria in order to save them from the danger of falling prey to the Zionist projects now found themselves in profound despair when it was realized that this ideal was far from becoming real. This incident represented in the history of Palestine a point where

³¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 122-123.

Palestinian Arabs completely withdrew their support to unification with Syria – with the exception of a small pro-Syrian section which insisted on struggling for the hindrance of the separation of Palestine and Syria – and concentrated their actions on effecting a radical change in the pro-Zionist stance of Britain instead. The Palestine Arab Congresses that were convened after the collapse of Faisal's regime in Syria were a proof of the change in the Arab nationalist movement in Palestine, since no one declared any sympathy to the unity of Palestine and Syria and the depiction of 'Southern Syria' was dropped off altogether.³¹⁶ Even after "reorganizing their national movement on a purely Palestinian basis" with the disappearance of the spirit of unity, the Third Arab Congress in December 1920 consisted of only Palestinian Arab delegates.³¹⁷ Hereafter the focal point of the Arab nationalism in Palestine turned out to secure an autonomous and Zionist-free Palestine with an Arab majority commanding their own affairs. Diplomatic contacts between Arabs and British authorities were held to convince the British statesmen that Arabs were competent enough to command their own affairs. These conversations revolved around the Arab demands for the setting up of a national government and introduction of self-governing institutions on condition that the numerical strength of the Arabs would be observed, so a fair treatment and a rational balance would be maintained between the religious communities. Moreover, the rejection of the Balfour Declaration was voiced at every level with the hope of pulling the rug from under the Zionist movement by bringing about an interruption in the Zionist-directed British policy. The Zionist threat approximated the Christian and Muslim elements within the Arab community even more and they waged a joint combat against the Zionist encroachment as they participated the national Arab congresses together, adopted the same discourses and thus constituted a united Muslim-Christian front against the united British-Zionist front.

Against all the Arab endeavors to make the British authorities agree on the destructive effects of the Balfour declaration to the social status and previously acquired administrative privileges of the Arabs and the impossibility of safeguarding the civil and religious rights of the Arabs in case of continuing adherence to the Jewish national home policy by Britain, the Arabs' sense of being sidelined from having a say in the political future of their own country continued to increase. The Arab Executive was continuously denied official recognition by both the Palestine mandate administration and the London government. Although discussions were held with them, a pre-note was always made by the British officials that the Executive would not be recognized as the official Arab

³¹⁶ Porath, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-122.

³¹⁷ Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-91.

representative. The basis of this conduct lied in the deliberate misinterpretation of the motives in the Arab community which led to the conclusion that not all the segments of the society had support in the Arab Executive.

The leaders of the Arab nationalist movement were faced with the grim reality of the degradation of their representative power as the British control in the country became more established in direct contradiction with the situation in the Ottoman times. After it was decided in the San Remo Conference that Britain would be responsible for the administration of Palestine as a mandate ruler, the draft of the mandate terms were began to be elaborated in consultation between Zionists and the British in order to be presented to the League of Nations for approval. From time to time the draft in hand was leaked to the public through the newspapers adding to the alarms of the Arab population.

Meanwhile, in accordance with an official decree, the Colonial Office took over the control of the mandated territories from the Foreign Office in March 1921. This was a watershed decision for the fate of the Arabs in Palestine, since the Middle East Department (MED), which was established as a unit of the Colonial Office for the purpose of assuming the role of a supervisor in the execution of the British policies in the mandates, was the hub of the pro-Zionists.³¹⁸ Not only the MED was on good terms with the leading Zionists, but also the British politicians favoring the Arab cause faced the opposition campaigns of the department and every means was tried by the MED in order to hinder the proposals put forth by pro-Arab British authorities from being put on the agenda. The head of the MED, John Shuckburg, emerged as one of the passionate advocates of the Balfour declaration. Although he seemed to try to remain in an equal distance to both Jews and Arabs, he was only another example of the British officials whose words and actions were totally inconsistent with each other when the Palestinian policy was concerned. Therefore the analysis goes that the MED was the primary factor in carrying on with the pro-Zionist policy of the British administration in Palestine. The department was a golden opportunity for the Zionists to penetrate into the pivots of the British policy in which the Palestine affairs were molded. The reversal or condonation of the reports of the inquiry committees, mostly bearing clauses favorable to the Arabs, was even connected with this close association between the MED and the Zionist entities.

The dominance of the MED in Palestinian affairs continued without interruption until 1939. As the Second World War loomed, the contention between the pro-Arab Foreign Office and the pro-Zionist Colonial Office reached its climax and the necessity to appease the Arab world appeared as an over-riding motive which earned the proposals of

³¹⁸ For more information about the policies of the Middle East Department and its relations with the Zionists, see; Huneidi, op. cit., pp. 48-70.

the Foreign Office primacy. The policy of satisfying the Zionists and meeting the requisites of the Jewish national home lost its prominence vis-à-vis a potential Arab support to the Axis powers and the almost two-decade long pro-Zionist British stance was abandoned in view of the compelling circumstances brought about by the war. The Middle East was a strategic region for the conduct of the war and there would have formed great tensions and constraints to the disadvantage of the Allies unless the Arab countries had been drawn to the Allies' side by certain soothing elements. In this way, the long-established Zionist sympathizer MED was left out of the political game. It was even debated that if the Foreign Office had continued to be in charge of the mandate territories, the Zionist impact on the Palestinian territories would have been much less immense and destructive for the Arabs. Huneidi expresses the following views about this issue:

During the first nine months of Samuel's term of office, from July 1920 to March 1921, Palestine was still under Foreign Office control, with Lord Curzon as foreign secretary. With Curzon's well-known anti-Zionist sympathies, it is tempting to ask whether the Zionist program could have been greatly reduced had Palestine remained under Foreign Office control. There is reason to speculate that this may have been the case.³¹⁹

After the Colonial Office assumed the dominant role in Palestine, then Colonial Secretary Churchill left London for a visit to the Palestinian territories. His presence in the country created an excitement among the Arabs as regards the belief that if opposition to the Balfour declaration and the increasing Zionist influence was expressed loudly, the British policy-makers may acknowledge their mistakes and turned in favor of the Arabs. By virtue of this understanding, Arabs staged large-scale demonstrations on the itinerary of Churchill to show him their degree of distress caused by the British policies. Nevertheless, Churchill had had deep-seated convictions about both the Arabs and Jews and how to tackle their affairs in conformity with the British interests prior to his departure. Therefore, neither the demonstrations, nor the meetings with the Arab leaders shook his way of thinking. The efforts of the members of the Arab Executive to persuade Churchill of the righteousness of their arguments culminated in vain. Churchill informed them about the determination of his government to cling to the policy that was in harmony with the Balfour declaration. Consequently, Churchill's visit to Palestine caused the Arabs' expectations to come to naught. The signs of hope for procuring a pro-Arab leaning in the higher echelons of the British government were declining day by day which in the end deepened the antagonism against the British among the Arab population.

³¹⁹ Ibid, p. 122.

5.2.2 The Consequences

In this strained atmosphere, Arabs gained a trump card to reflect their hatred for the Zionists when in May 1921 a group of Bolshevik Jews staged demonstrations in Tel Aviv. Among the Arabs, before these socialist tendencies within the Jewish community became pronounced, there was already a fear of Bolshevik threat since bulk of the immigrants, who were fleeing the pogroms and brutal persecution they faced in Russia, was of Russian origin. The contributions of the Russian Jews to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 were well known and also the influence of socialist ideology in shaping the Zionist movement was already a common knowledge of the Arab population. So, the demonstrations which declared overt sympathy to the Bolshevik rule in Russia lighted the fuse of the fears of Arabs. The news of the clashes between the Arabs and Jews spread to the other parts of Palestine in a very short while, creating tensions in these places too. Although the Jewish immigrants who held Bolshevik dispositions were quite limited, Arabs used these demonstrations as a justification for future stoppage of the Jewish immigration. Indeed, the situation in Palestine prior to the May Day demonstrations, which was susceptible to simmer, and the jittery relations between the Jews and Arabs allowed a different reading of the whole incident. Even if the demonstrators had not displayed a socialist sympathy, the clashes would have broken out anyway. The threat of Bolshevism was only a pretext which proved useful for the Arab nationalist demands.

The mandate rule took rigorous steps in order to quell the violence. More troops were deployed in various parts of Palestine, Haifa and Jaffa ports hosted a number of British warships which were invited as a backing in the suppression of the disturbances, and martial law was declared in places where the clashes were causing great damages.³²⁰ These were resorted as contingency measures and inevitably bore stern features in order to be effective in restoring peace in the country. The long-term peace in Palestine, however, was predicated on alleviating the distresses of the Arab population and even meeting their certain demands. Otherwise, the violent conflicts between the two communities would recur in the future. Thus, 1921 disturbances had a great part in facilitating then High Commissioner Samuel to grasp precisely the uncompromising attitude of the Arab people and their resolution not to come to an accommodation with the pro-Zionist policies of the British rule.³²¹ In other words, one of the most significant outcomes of the 1921

³²⁰ Porath, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

³²¹ Huneidi, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

disturbances was Samuel's apprehension of the gravity of the Arab national movement and an overview of the policies turned out to be compulsory for him. Wasserstein remarks that:

Deeply affected by the bloodshed of early May, and assailed by these hostile pressures from various sides, Samuel embarked on a re-examination and reformulation of his policy, in an attempt, while preserving its pro-Zionist essence, to render it more palatable to Arab opinion.³²²

This fact obliged Samuel to undertake certain plans to calm down the Arab ire in the teeth of Zionist pressures to have their demands met by the British authorities. The espousal of a gradualist approach by Samuel in paving way to the establishment of the Jewish national home with the implementation of all its complementary elements took place after encountering the bitter events in May 1921. At this point, Samuel was bound to adopt such a line of action that would not engender profound reaction on side of the Zionists whereas would prove useful to persuade the Arabs to the just and unbiased approach of Britain. The cornerstone of these plans consisted of suspending the Jewish immigration, proclaiming the first oral interpretation of the Balfour declaration and most importantly the introduction of self-governing institutions. In the long run, however, neither of these measures envisaged to soothe the Arabs attained their objective. Firstly, the suspension of immigration was designed on a temporary basis³²³ and the deportation of the immigrants who were determined to be Bolshevik sympathizers was only a showpiece attempt. It did not take very long to set new immigration quotas and to let the Jewish immigration continue on the basis of these quotas. Secondly, the speech of Samuel at the very beginning of June 1921 comprised many details regulating the Arab life in various aspects. Although ostensibly the points highlighted by Samuel seemed to act in favor of the Arabs, when they were elaborated by the Arab print media, it became obvious that they fell short of meeting the political demands of the Arab community.³²⁴ The political progress

³²² Wasserstein, op. cit., p. 107.

³²³ This suspension was of short duration and it lasted less than a month. In the early June, the suspension was lifted and the Immigration Ordinance of 1920 continued to be in force until it was replaced with another immigration ordinance in 1925. Abcarius, op. cit., p. 110.

³²⁴ The improvement of education, transport, breeds of horses, cattle and donkeys, developing the country economically, establishing mortgage and agricultural banks, setting up a new branch of police force, prohibition on the export of cereals were listed as the things desired to be implemented by the mandate administration. Since the primary concern of the Arab people was about the political future of their country and their say in the administration, the economic policies were automatically subordinated to the political matters. The Arab Executive and various Arab newspapers expressed their discontent with what Samuel pledged in June 1921 and rather insisted on the wholesale rejection of the Balfour declaration. So, although Samuel intended to attenuate the complaints of the Arab people, he on the contrary caused more reaction against himself on account of the Arab

that the Arabs awaited for long since the end of the World War I, but for which the British mandate rule showed reluctance was the main source of Arab resentment. In direct contradiction to this expectation, Arabs witnessed the political ascendancy of the Zionists on the Palestinian lands due to the British countenance for the Zionist efforts to gain the upper hand at the expense of Arabs. This reality was closely connected with the third issue – the introduction of the self-governing institutions. When the difficulty of appeasing the Arabs with the promises mentioned by Samuel in his June speech was admitted, it was realized by most of the high authorities in the British administration that recognizing a Zionist body as legitimate and contemplating cooperation with it in various fields as it was envisaged in the draft mandate was fueling an insurmountable Arab rage. Thus, organizing a convenient environment for self-government appeared as an urgent step to be taken. On the other hand, the measures attempted to be taken by Samuel, contrary to his belief, caused a salient deterioration in the relations with Zionists. The suspension of immigration was the main source of Zionist distress. Thus, Samuel, who began his tenure with considerable blessings from the Zionists, was hard hit before he completed a year in his office by the measures he contemplated to appease the Arabs. He became the target of scathing Zionist criticisms and these criticisms reached such a level that his removal from office as High Commissioner was also argued. That is to say, he failed in both of his aims. Neither the Arabs could be calmed down, but the already calm Zionists were infuriated. His measures served the opposite purposes.³²⁵

In accordance with the traditional conduct of policy, a commission of inquiry was set up to advance proposals about the British policy in Palestine in full view of the underlying reasons of the severance of relations between the Jews and Arabs. After receiving the evidences of both sides, Haycraft Commission reached certain conclusions that manifested the fallacy of the British executions concerning Palestine. The fact that the report of the commission considered the Arabs right in their opposition to Zionists was obvious from the Arabs' warm welcoming of the report. The reasons listed by the commission that caused anti-Zionist feelings on part of the Arabs perfectly overlapped with the Arab perspective. Therefore, since it was hardly possible to find a common point between the Zionist and Arab national interests, a report handled gladly by one of the sides could not be expected to please the other side. In other words, Zionists were totally disillusioned by the report of Haycraft Commission, but thanks to their interaction with the

perception that he was trying to delude the Arab community with token steps. For more information about the content of Samuel's speech and its repercussion, see; Huneidi, op. cit., 130-133.

³²⁵ Wasserstein, op. cit., pp. 104-106.

British government departments, this report was included among the other reports that were buried into the British state archives.

Amidst the violence in May 1921, the Fourth Arab Congress convened at the end of that month. The Arab nationalists were awake to the immediate necessity of conveying their demands to the British high authorities. The decision to set up a delegation to leave for London and to speak in advocacy of the Arab cause was taken in this congress.³²⁶ The dispatch of a delegation emanated from the hope that the British policy could still be diverted to a different course remote from the influence of the Zionist entities. Although it seemed that the disturbances of May 1921 acted to the advantage of the Arab community in bringing their grievances to the attention of the British authorities, the measures applied were only of a temporary nature and far from removing the causes of distress in the long run. The party who ended up as the sufferer as a result of the violence in 1921, it was also discussed, was not the British government, but the Palestinian Arabs. The greatest damage was done to the Arab nationalist cause by paralyzing its ability to combat during an eight-year time. Until 1929, no significant act of violence broke out in the Palestinian territories between the Arabs and the Jews. The blow to the Arab nationalist movement was tried to be remedied by the British mandate administration through accepting one of their requests. The appointment of Hajj Amin as the mufti of Jerusalem and putting him to a superior level in comparison to the other muftis in the country by the designation of Grand Mufti (Rais al-Ulema) a week after the riots broke out was a step towards conciliating the Arab nationalists.³²⁷ This title was not been found in other Muslim mandates and invented by the British mandate rule in order to assuage the Arab nationalists, since Hajj Amin was a prominent figure for the Palestine Arab nationalist movement. Although Samuel had approached Hajj Amin with suspicion on account of his involvement in the 1920 disturbances, he was instrumental in earning him this prestigious post after the death of his brother Kamil al Husseini who was the first person to assume this office. Thanks to the approval of Samuel, Hajj Amin returned to Palestine and gradually became “the most important leader in Palestinian history, at least until Yasser Arafat.”³²⁸

On the other hand, the harsh measures which were resorted by the British mandate rule in order to curb the violence were regarded to be influential in rendering the moderate line a more acceptable and overriding approach vis-à-vis the extremists among the Arab

³²⁶ Lesch, op. cit., p. 95.

³²⁷ Wasserstein, op. cit., p. 100.

³²⁸ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

nationalists in the Fourth Congress.³²⁹ To make their national demands met by the British government, Arabs preferred to wage a diplomatic war rather than using physical force against the Jewish residents. At least, this view gained prominence over the adherents of extremist means and the prevalence of the cooperationist orientation within the Arab nationalist movement continued until the official inauguration of the British mandate rule in accordance with the decision of the League of Nations in September 1923.

The ratification of the British mandate in Palestine by the League in July 1922 and the official inauguration of the mandate rule in September 1923 displayed that the first Arab delegation in London failed in all its objectives to make the British politicians fall in line with the Arab view points despite the fact that there had been positive signals. Yet, a rude and arrogant approach was adopted by most of the British officials towards the members of the Arab delegation. Their apparent tendency was to make the Jews and Arabs sit together on the negotiation table and discuss the matters regarding Palestine. The British authorities, apart from some exceptions candidly interested in the Palestinian Arab case, preached the Arabs to meet with the Zionist leaders if they had any matters to solve on any issue on Palestine.³³⁰ Namely, Arabs were directed to the Zionists, although their counterpart were not them and the actual actor who was in charge and obliged to listen to the complaints of the communities and come up with solutions was Britain. Consequently, the first Arab delegation returned to Palestine almost empty-handed.

Thereby the moderate approach espoused in the Fourth Arab Congress began to weaken and proponents of extremer measures against the mandate government grew stronger. The Fifth Arab Congress, which convened the month following this ratification, moved away from the moderate tone of the Fourth Congress and the main subject discussed in this Congress was the ways in which the elections for the proposed Legislative Council could be prevented. The dominant voice declared in the Congress its objections to the holding of the elections and this disposition contradicted with the approaches of the moderate groups. The non-cooperationist militant elements and their calls to boycott the elections commonly found acceptance within the Arab community and an extensive support was shown to this end by not casting a vote in the elections. The moderate elements in the AE were overpowered by the extremists who believed in the efficacy of boycotting every proposal presented by the mandate government that was tantamount to legitimization of the

³²⁹ Porath, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-137.

³³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 78-79.

pro-Zionist documents over a straw.³³¹ The words of Abcarius on the non-cooperation policy of the Arabs are as follows:

...their refusal to appear before it (the Woodhead Commission) must be regarded as a protest against the implementation of a policy they had rejected. In point of fact their refusal to cooperate with Government from the very start was based on similar considerations. The delegations they had sent to London were intended to bring about an adjustment of policy that would admit cooperation with Government. When all attempts had failed...they were driven to the adoption of the sullen irresponsible attitude so often mistaken for intransigence instead of its being regarded in its true light as a protest against the Jewish national home policy.³³²

5.2.3 Attempts at Self-Government

Even after the non-cooperation policy gained validity in the eyes of the Arab community following the failure to guarantee the reversal of the draft mandate, attempts to negotiate with the British authorities continued. More Arab delegations were formed and dispatched to London. The underlying reason of this situation had its response in the characteristics of the different phases of nationalist movements as depicted by Lesch. The nationalist movements go through three stages according to how much their objectives were attained. The discourses and the methods of the nationalists stiffen more and more during the evolution of their movement as they encounter obstacles which complicate the path leading to their goals. The failure to introduce self-governing institutions channels the moderate elements to more rigid and inflexible methods and convinces them to the benefit of these methods in guarding their interests.³³³ In view of this fact, until the early 1930s the Arab nationalist movement can be said to be in its second phase, in which the diplomatic efforts continued whereas relatively temperate techniques such as boycotts and strikes accompanied them. During this second stage, peace throughout the country was safeguarded. When these methods pay off in the end, there was no need to resort to extreme tactics in the third and the final phase. However, if self-government and independence still seems aloof, then outright violence may prevail in the country until independence is achieved. So, the conclusion to be arrived is that the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement could not accomplish its goals and its development remained unfinished.

The Arab Executive, which deemed itself the representative of the Palestinian Arab community despite the objections of the British high authorities to bestow any recognition

³³¹ Porath, op. cit., pp. 147-151.

³³² Abcarius, op. cit., p. 198.

³³³ Lesch, op. cit., pp. 17-20.

to its status in the way the Executive demanded, conducted this policy of non-cooperation for several years. Accordingly, the Executive body not only sent delegations to London to receive the backing of the likely prospective ruler of Palestine through diplomatic means, but also acted reluctant to accept the establishment of a Legislative Council. The Arab objections centered mainly on two concerns. One was the unacceptability of its clauses, which suppressed any significant influence of Arabs over so vital issues, such as immigration quotas and land transactions by giving the right to have the last word on all these matters to the High Commissioner or by denying them the majority representation in the proposed council.³³⁴ The administrative structure of the Palestine mandate was constructed in such a way in the successive order in councils which served as the constitution of the mandate government that the indigenous population of the country was denied almost any duty in the legislative and executive procedures. The participation of the Arabs and Jews in these processes was envisaged to be realized in the mandate regulations through the build up of a Legislative Council. However, the legislative, executive and judicial bodies were occupied predominantly by the British officials until the termination of the mandate rule as a result of the constant failures to form this council. The high commissioner was at the top of this administrative configuration which did not yield the necessary representative power. The commissioner was appointed from London and he was responsible to the Colonial Secretary. Two councils, executive and advisory, were instituted as secondary bodies for the purpose of lending a hand to the High Commissioner in the administration of the mandated territory. The presidency of both councils was assumed and conducted by the High Commissioner and the membership of these two councils was confined to the British officials. The matters that fell into the province of the Advisory Council were more comprehensive in character in comparison to the Executive Council. Whereas the members of the Executive Council were no more than ten, the number of the members of the Advisory Council was almost twenty five.³³⁵

³³⁴ The British authorities proposed in London to the members of the first Palestine Arab Delegation the setting up of a LC and informed them about the principles of this Council. Since it was obvious that the Arab vote would be suppressed when it was considered that the cumulative votes of the nominated members and the elected Jewish members would act in favor of the Zionist ideals, the Arab delegation rejected the proposal. In this proposal, Arabs were indirectly denied the majority votes. Besides, the mandate government had the power of vetoing all decisions passed by the Council. Namely, Arabs were not in a position to curb the legislations favoring the Zionist colonization in Palestine. See; Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

³³⁵ **Executive Council:** President, Chief Secretary, Attorney General, Financial Secretary, District Commissioner, Civil Service Commissioner, Clerk to the Executive Council.
Advisory Council: President, Chief Secretary, Attorney General, Financial Secretary, Civil Service Commissioner, Inspector-General of Police, Director of Medical Services, Director of Public Works, Director of Education, Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, Director of Customs and Excise,

The other concern stemmed from a deep seated conviction that if the Arab nationalists had engaged in a joint work with the British administration within the framework of a political structure formed by the British authorities, then they would indirectly legitimize the mandate and the terms of the Balfour declaration included in it and all the other pro-Zionist British attempts.³³⁶ If they had done so, they automatically would have approved the Zionist approach that Palestine should be reserved for them as a national home and that this policy should be underpinned by Jewish immigration and land transactions. This would have been read as an implied consent on the transfer of thousands of Jews in Palestine and would have required a willing accommodation with the Jews in Palestine at the expense of relinquishing their own property rights. Thus several Legislative Council proposals were made at different times by the British mandate rule, but none of them could be realized owing to the refusal of the Arab leaders. This is described as the dilemma of the Arab nationalists³³⁷, since in a sense they were left out of the legislation process by their own accord. Some circles criticized the AE for this decision, for they regarded the proposal as a precious opportunity that should not have been missed. For instance, some writers contend that if this opportunity had been made the best of it by the Arabs, there would have been a chance to prevent the extremist orientation in the Zionist movement as can be seen in the following passage:

...Palestinians tended to appear recalcitrant and negative. Because they viewed the mandate's provision for Jewish settlement as an illegal violation of the indigenous population's rights, they decided against any participation that might imply they accepted the mandate's legitimacy. Technically they may have been right. Practically they ruled themselves out of the game now in play no longer one of preventing Jewish settlement, but one of seeking to limit and contain it by effective persuasive means. Thus both Christian and Muslim Arabs boycotted a Legislative Council proposed by the British to draw all communities into participation in the administration. So the Palestinians abandoned the chance to moderate Jewish settlement, but proved too disunited to achieve the kind of total boycott of the British administration that might have forced the mandatory's hand.³³⁸

General Manager, Railways, District Commissioner, Jerusalem District, District Commissioner, Haifa District, District Commissioner, Galilee District, District Commissioner, Lydda District, District Commissioner, Samaria District, District Commissioner, Gaza District, Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Postmaster General, Director of Land Settlement, Director, Department of Labor, Director of Social Welfare, Clerk to the Advisory Council. This information was taken from; Issa Nakleh, *Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem*, Volume I, New York, 1992, p. 27.

³³⁶ J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, p. 52.

³³⁷ Lesch, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

³³⁸ McDowall, pp. 16-17.

However, the reality was very different from the wishful thinking that is exhibited above. All the proposals made by the mandatory to establish a LC were elaborately designed to curb any detrimental intervention of Arabs to the national home policy and its components. In other words, the structure of the Legislative Councils and the stages of the legislation process would not let the Arabs to bring forth favorable circumstances for Arabs in Palestine. In any case, the Zionists would adamantly implement what they had decided. Namely, the LC would help the Zionists in conserving their extremist attitude, would even make them take a more hard-line stance. Accordingly, being incorporated into such a structure that was intentionally designed to put down any Arab attempts to create obstacles for the implementation of the national home policy would depreciate the essence of the Arab nationalist struggle and subjugate it to the Zionist political clout. From many aspects, this would inevitably make the Arabs a part in the enforcement of the policies that would make the Zionists superior in Palestine. Contrary to what McDowall defends as quoted above, Arabs were both technically and practically right in opposing the proposed LCs. In this vein, Arabs sacrificed procuring a step towards self-government for the sake of championing their national demands without signaling any inconsistencies.

Nevertheless, inconsistencies existed in the Arab nationalist movement by virtue of the clandestine cooperation between the Zionist bodies and some Arab parties. A strategic tactic experimented frequently by the Zionists was to give financial support to Arabs in order to impair their nationalistic dispositions and taint their ability to act conjointly and thus prevent them from presenting a united front against the Zionist protagonists.³³⁹ Moreover, the precondition of overcoming the dissidences in the Arab front that had been stipulated by the British authorities for the purpose of making a proposal of a LC was never met. These separatist endeavors to retain the divisiveness of the Arab nationalist movement showed in what degree the Zionists were antagonistic to the idea of bestowing self-governing institutions to the Arab community.

The non-cooperation policy had a peaceful dimension. In this context, the AE distanced itself from the riots occurred in May 1921.³⁴⁰ The detachment of the AE from the violent incidents was confirmed by the Haycraft Commission by its final conviction that the disturbances had not been organized by any institution in advance; they developed spontaneously within the societal circumstances. Yet, the sudden happening of the clashes

³³⁹ There were several examples of Arab parties which owed its existence to the Zionist funds. National Muslim Societies, which was established by Raghib Nashashibi and his supporters with the aim of competing with the influence of the Muslim-Christian Associations, was one of them. See; Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 59.

³⁴⁰ Porath, op. cit., p. 131.

was of great value to the Executive, for it strengthened the anti-Zionist discourses of it. On the one hand, the Executive abstained from supporting violence with the fear of alienating the British government and thus giving them a pretext to refuse making contacts with the representatives of the Arab nationalist movement. On the other hand, the Executive benefited as much as it could from the advantages brought about by the intense relations between the two communities.

The British efforts to establish self-governing institutions emerged as a positive step for granting the Arabs what they were persistently asking for so long. The failure to agree on a certain arrangement and the British endeavors to limit the jurisdiction of the proposed Legislative Council and the Arab representation in it as much as possible, should not disparage the fact that the British authorities at least made an effort to fulfill their obligation as a mandate power. When the futile attempts to incorporate the Arabs into the administration and make them seize the opportunity to have a say in the legislation process regarding the political, economic, social matters began to exasperate the Arabs, Samuel used personal initiative and decided to give freedom to the Arab community at least in the conduct of their religious affairs. The establishment of the SMC in January 1922 was a product of this understanding.³⁴¹

5.2.4 The Supreme Muslim Council

When the political structuring of the Jewish community was compared to the Arabs' political organization, there appeared to be a great cleavage which should be bridged for the sake of both the British interests in Palestine and for the maintainability of peace and justice in the country. The SMC assumed a role of a quasi-government that represented the majority of the population and remained as the sole instance of self-government for Arabs until the end of the Mandate rule, since the British authorities and the Arabs could not agree on the establishment of any other self-governing institution. The aim of the British authorities in spearheading the formation of this Council was to compose a counterpart for the Zionist autonomous self-governing bodies and to compensate the absence of such institutions in the Arab political arena.³⁴² Although the Council was established with full autonomy in order to oversee the Muslim religious affairs, within the course of time, its political characteristics began to assume supremacy over its religious tasks. The role of its leader Hajj Amin al Husseini had so much to do with this divergence

³⁴¹ Hurewitz, op. cit., 51-53.

³⁴² Wasserstein, op. cit., p. 131.

in its jurisdiction. The role assumed by the SMC in the political sphere could easily be understood from the declarations made by the Arab notables on the formation of the Council. The Secretary of the AE – Jamal al Hussein – forged a link between the diplomatic and non-diplomatic endeavors of the nationalist movement and the subsequent inauguration of the Council by saying that he saw the SMC as “a victory for the nationalist movement”. Another remark about the SMC highlighted this link, too and also emphasized the fact that it was “the vanguard of the nationalist movement, despite its being a religious body.”³⁴³ Yet, the British authorities naturally preferred to repudiate the Council’s interference in the political matters saying that the SMC was designed as an administrative body responsible with only the administration of the matters pertaining to Islam in Palestine, which automatically denied it any political power in advance.³⁴⁴ One of the distinct instances of the SMC’s engagement in political matters was the support given to the boycott campaign of the proposed Legislative Council elections in 1922 and 1923. The AE and the SMC conducted this campaign hand in hand throughout Palestine immediately after the British mandate government announced its will to hold the elections. The efforts to convince the people not to cast votes in the elections were the extension of the non-cooperation policy that was still in force. In these efforts the places of religious prayer took up the central role. In the mosques, imams attacked the idea of a legislative council and summoned the people not to participate in the elections. Namely, muftis and imams were the actors of a joint action. This action was carried out within the bounds of the directives of the SMC. Hajj Amin’s personal interests came to the fore in this issue. He was against the formation of a Legislative Council with the fear that another recognized self-governing institution would likely to cause the influence of the Council and especially his political clout over the Arab population to diminish.³⁴⁵ When his post as the Grand Mufti was taken into account together with his election to the presidency of the SMC, it can be said that Hajj Amin ascended to a very eminent position in the eyes of his supporters whereas his opponents began to feel more and more anxious by his increasing influence in the Muslim Arab politics. He did not want to lose this position or share it with another body with the same status as the Council.

The formation of the SMC was an outcome of the grievances of the Muslim Arab community that started to manifest itself in the early 1920s. Religious expectations of the

³⁴³ Porath, op. cit., p. 200.

³⁴⁴ Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam Under the British Mandate for Palestine*, Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1987, p. 18.

³⁴⁵ Porath, op. cit., pp. 151-155.

Muslim population were conveyed to the mandate rule through contacts between Muslim notables in Palestine and the mandate officers arranged by the High Commissioner as of increasing uneasiness of Muslims. The establishment of a body to handle the Muslim affairs was agreed on as a joint decision between the British mandate officers and the prominent Muslim people. An order which fixed the powers of the SMC was approved by the mandate government in December 1921. According to the Order of 1921, the SMC was equipped with extensive powers and the British control on Muslim religious affairs diminished in a great extent. The British mandate administration, although not in a very enthusiastic fashion, conceded the right to appoint and dismiss the Shari'a officials, the control of waqfs and the selection of the muftis to the Muslims themselves. The underlying reasons of the mandate administration's relinquishing of its right to control the religious domain of the Muslim community were explained by Porath as in the following:

He (Herbert Samuel) believed it to be essential that the satisfaction of the Muslim community be achieved, and in his eyes, the granting of full internal autonomy did not seem to high a price to pay. There appears also to have been another factor at work. Extension of British rule over Palestine meant that a Muslim regime was replaced by a Christian one. What is more, the head of the British Administration in Palestine happened to be a Jew, as did his Legal Secretary, who handled all legal affairs of the country. It appears, then, that this made the British authorities extremely chary of any interference in the affairs of the Shari'ah and awqaf, a vastly different state of affairs from that in other territories under direct British rule.³⁴⁶

The reason that was found to the autonomous structure by Porath reflects only one side of the coin. The other side of it, as it is explained by Porath as well, could be seen only as an outcome of the intense political milieu that gripped the country. The only factor which rendered the SMC vulnerable stemmed from its organic bond with the British mandate government. Although both the British mandate authorities and Hajj himself diligently evaded from emphasizing this bond and rather struggled to underscore its autonomous character, it was evident that the SMC owed its establishment to the mandate administration. The fact that the salaries of the members of the Council was being paid by the mandate rule strengthened this bond.³⁴⁷ Nevertheless, receiving the salaries from the mandate rule did not make the members loyal to the British, but rather Hajj Amin managed to attach the other four members of the Council to himself through his strong influence. The non-interference policy of the British rule and the official recognition of the Council's

³⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 199.

³⁴⁷ Kupferschmidt, op. cit., pp. 21-28.

autonomous status contributed to the interior solidarity among the members of the Council.³⁴⁸

The SMC was also indebted to the British mandate rule for its self-governing status. The noninterference of the British authorities to the purview of the SMC would absolutely not impede the mandate rule from abolishing the council whenever it saw it necessary. An official decree would suffice for implementing such an act. The only reason that made this a last resort in the eyes of the officials of the mandate, most importantly the high commissioners, took root from the obligation that the noninterference to the religious affairs should be preserved as a constant principle. This principle should be abided by in order not to cause any embroilments with the predominant population of Palestine-the Muslims. However, this principle was brushed aside in 1937 out of necessity,³⁴⁹ since the meddling of Hajj Amin to the disturbances of 1936 came to the light and the detrimental activities of the SMC was proved. In other words, the interference of the SMC to political activities terminated the noninterference of the British to the religious affairs of the Muslims in Palestine.

In the beginning, the establishment of the SMC was welcomed by almost all elements in the Muslim Arab population. Since it would constitute a balance of power against the state within a state character of the Zionist political structure, the SMC was regarded as the fruit of the efforts of the Arab nationalist and the outcome of the pressures created on the mandate administration.³⁵⁰ As Hajj Amin proved that it treated the Council as a platform to fulfill his personal ambitions, the opposition groups began to articulate their criticisms to the policies implemented by the Council. At the outset, the dispute between the majlisin and the mu'aridin groups over the SMC and the complaints laid by the latter against the formers' inconvenient policies and methods in the SMC did not affect the British determination to maintain its hands-off policy. Although the administrative defects of Hajj Amin and the members of the Council close to him were widely articulated by the mu'aridin group, the British rule remained its inert position on this issue.³⁵¹ However, in the course of time as the dissatisfaction with the SMC heightened, the calls for affecting a change in its administration and making certain changes in its powers became widespread. The need to reform the Council, the scope and the pace of this reform was started to be discussed within the circles of the mandate rule. The efforts of the mandate authorities to

³⁴⁸ Wasserstein, *op. cit.*, p. 131-132.

³⁴⁹ Kupferschmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-56.

³⁵⁰ Porath, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-200.

³⁵¹ Kupferschmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40.

curb the powers of the Council intensified on two main points. Firstly, since the waqf budget and the revenues coming from the waqf properties were subjected to great criticism, the British authorities contemplated undoing the autonomy of the Council on this matter and establishing a system of government supervision on the waqf funds. Secondly, to remove the authority of the SMC on Shari'a courts and employees and to entitle the British mandate institutions once again about the appointment and dismissal of qadis. Apart from the fact that none of these provisions could be realized by the mandate rule, the scope of the SMC's jurisdiction was widened with the agreements reached in 1932 and 1934 during Wauchope's tenure as the high commissioner.³⁵² These were intended to appease the Muslim Arab community who bluntly expressed their annoyance on religious matters during the 1929 disturbances. The mandate authorities were convinced that the religious feelings could easily be exploited in a way that caused people to rise in rebellion and to disturb the peace in the country to a large extent. These two points mentioned above were of great importance for stretching the political influence of Hajj Amin and the majlisin group over different strata. The unrestricted control over the funds provided the SMC with the opportunity to indoctrinate the school age children, who received education in the schools funded by the SMC, with religious principles. In other instances, Hajj Amin utilized these funds to align people from different political leanings with his political views, such as the Arab peasants by meeting their needs through expenditure on certain services. Besides, he was able to widen his political influence thanks to his empowerment with appointing whoever he saw appropriate to the Shari'a courts, of course most of the time people who were in line with his political and religious approaches, especially members of his family, and dismissing whoever failed to fulfill his instructions.³⁵³ This autonomous structure paved the way to an extensive patronage system within the Muslim community in Palestine. The other four members of the SMC except for Hajj Amin and the officials in Shari'a courts were left to face the intimidation of the president of the SMC and risked being dismissed in case of a disavowal of SMC's policies. This was defined by Kimmerling and Migdal as the outer circle in which Hajj Amin operated. The inner circle incorporated the members of Hussein family who performed duties in the certain institutions as the British mandate authorities saw fit. This situation not only polarized the Palestinian Arab society, but also brought only one faction – the Husseinis – to the foreground, rendering other groups ineffective in the Palestinian Arab national movement. Despite his words assuring unity, the actions of Hajj Amin spoke louder which proved his incompetence in

³⁵² Ibid, pp. 43-53.

³⁵³ Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

representing all parties.³⁵⁴ The main source of criticism mounted by the mu'aridin groups was Hajj's successful attempts in turning the SMC to the political tool of the majlisin group.

One of the pivotal roles played by the SMC in the context of the Arab-Jewish dispute came to the fore on the land issue. The Jewish land purchases were so severe and unpreventable that the Arab community searched for ways to attenuate the effects of the land sales to the Zionist bodies. This way, the SMC, the body which was responsible for the management of the waqf properties, stepped into the stage. Some of the landowners opted to grant their lands to the SMC as waqf land in order to hinder its purchase by the Zionist land purchasing institutes. Since the waqf land was regarded as inalienable property of the SMC from the time the control of it was transferred to the Council, its sale to other parties became impossible. That seemed to be a perfect way to escape the possession of their lands by the Jews. Prior to the establishment of the SMC, the Awqaf Administration was in charge of handling the waqf funds and waqf properties. This was a government department, which could not go beyond the jurisdiction of the mandate rule. Its budget was, contrary to the SMC, under the supervision of the British mandate government. This was an open double standard³⁵⁵ in view of the recognized status of the JNF. The Jewish counterpart of the Awqaf Administration as regards only the land purchase issues³⁵⁶, the JNF, was an autonomous body and it was only accountable to the WZO; the mandate rule hold no right to interfere into the affairs of the fund.³⁵⁷ The financial independence of the fund had its part in its autonomous structure. The wealth of the JNF that would be used for the purpose of creating a land-owning Jewish class in Palestine was acquired through the unasked monetary assistance of the Jews.³⁵⁸ The setting up of the SMC and authorization of it by the

³⁵⁴ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 90-91.

³⁵⁵ A quotation of the British Secretary State for the Colonies in 1940 that was taken from Abcarius: "Under the provisions of that Fund (JNF), the land is not allowed at any time in the future under any conditions whatsoever, to be alienated to anyone who is not a Jew by race. The Jewish authorities considered that condition necessary in order to protect the interests of their own people. I do not know why they quarrel with us when we say that a similar condition-perhaps far less permanent-is required in watching the interests of the Arab population. It is difficult to understand people who say that the Jewish National Fund provision is in accordance with the spirit of the Mandate, and then turn round and say that this provision is contrary to the spirit of the Mandate", *Palestine: Through the Fog of Propaganda...*, pp. 141-142.

³⁵⁶ "A particular feature of Jewish land acquisitions was that once land was bought by the Jewish National Fund or on its behalf by affiliated companies such as the Palestine Land Development Company, it was held in 'perpetuity' as an 'inalienable' trust for 'the nation'. This concept was established at the World Zionist Conference in 1920." See; Huneidi, op. cit., p. 208.

³⁵⁷ Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

³⁵⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 35; Tessler, op. cit., p. 54.

control of all the waqf affairs without any government control could be said to remove this double standard.

There were limitations on the endowment of lands to the SMC as waqf property and also there were certain categories of land that was inherited from the Ottoman land system. The application of waqf provisions to the miri and mulk lands differed sharply from each other. While the miri lands, which the state hold outright control, could not be registered to the SMC under the category of waqf land, the mulk lands, which the individuals held the power of disposition, could be granted to the SMC according to the owners' decision.

5.3 The Disturbances of 1929

5.3.1 The Causes

Up until 1928, the rivalry between the majlisin and mu'aridin groups rose, causing a profound disunity in the Palestine Arab nationalist front. The failure to champion the same methods and to tackle the problems with the same viewpoint made them vulnerable vis-à-vis the Zionist-British alliance. This fragmentation even hindered the gathering of the seventh Arab Congress and it took five years before the seventh congress was held. The disagreements between the Nashashibi and Husseini families turned out to be insurmountable during this five-year period and this split manifested itself in the members who constituted the subsequent congresses and in the public appearance of a political party in 1923 leaded by the mu'aridin group – the Palestine Arab National Party. When the municipal elections were held in 1927-1928, the strength of the mu'aridin in the face of long-time reputable SMC and the Arab Executive, on which the majlisin group kept firm hands, became visible. The British mandate government stipulated rapprochement between the Arab parties and ruled out any possibility of forming a legislative council unless this compromise had been reached. So for both groups, who started to believe in the necessity of being included into the legislation process through becoming members of a LC, the need to arrive at an understanding became pressing. At the Seventh Congress that eventually convened in June 1928, the influence of the mu'aridin group over the majlisin was consolidated. Hajj Amin was quite uneasy about the increasing political clout of his rivals and was in search of ways to overbalance the mu'aridin at a time when the secret

negotiations about the LC were being conducted between the British mandate authorities and the members of the two groups.³⁵⁹

The incidents broke out in Jerusalem between the Arabs and the Jews were an outcome of mutual provocations. Both of the parties prophesied that they had advantages to gain from these provocative acts. At the outset, the moves of each part that created anxiety on the other side seemed to have a religious guise. Jewish worshippers seemed to be seriously disturbed by the building works conducted in the near surrounding of the Wall and the acts that deliberately harassed them during their prayers were the main source of their annoyance. Their desire to take hold of the Wall heightened to prevent further infringements of their rights. Both communities took vigorous actions in order to promote their own rights in the holy places. The formation of a *committee for the defense of the Western Wall* by the Zionists on the one hand³⁶⁰, and the formation of the *committee for the protection of al-Aqsa* by Hajj³⁶¹ on the other hand displayed the significance of the issue for both communities.

The incident which triggered the dispute rose from the departure of the Jews from the established line of action in the holy places in Jerusalem. In the course of the 1920s, the Jews started to bring certain appurtenances, such as chairs, stools and screens, with them in the Wailing Wall (also known as Western Wall) to benefit during their prayers. Following its establishment in 1922, the SMC was entitled to control the Haram al Sharif area, which also encompassed the Wailing Wall. The Wall and the pavement in front of it was the property of a Muslim waqf known as the Abu Madyan waqf who belonged to the Maghribi pilgrims. The Zionists enhanced the idea of taking hold of the Wall from the Muslims – an idea which was tried to be realized even before World War I, but failed - as the national home policy was legitimized by Britain. However, relinquishing the control of a part of the Haram was inconceivable for the Muslims. Above all, its being a waqf property, although its usage pointed to the fact that the pavement was not regarded as a holy place by the pilgrims³⁶², was an obstacle to the purchase by the Jews. The significance of the Haram area for the Muslims was evident from the amount allocated from the waqf funds by the SMC to its restoration. When Hajj Amin realized religious issues had the potential to bring extensive authority throughout the country, he attempted to establish a linkage between Islamic concerns and anti-Zionist tensions within the Palestinian Arabs. His efforts had two

³⁵⁹ Wasserstein, op. cit., pp. 217-221.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 226-227.

³⁶¹ Lesch, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

³⁶² Porath, op. cit., p. 260.

facets. One was national and the other one was international. He conducted campaigns to mobilize Muslims in Palestine and in other parts of the world to win their ear to the negligence suffered by the Haram area and the struggles of the Zionists to take over the holy places from Muslim sovereignty. He tried hard to make the other Muslim countries allocate funds to the reparation of the Haram.³⁶³ He also spearheaded the convening of an international Islamic conference in Jerusalem in 1931.³⁶⁴

After he assumed the presidency of the SMC, Hajj Amin waged a resolute campaign against the Jewish encroachments in the Islamic holy places. In accordance with this campaign, he took immediate actions against the illegal attempts of the Jewish prayers and lodged complaints to the British mandate authorities. In response to these complaints, the police force of the mandate rule interfered in favor of the Arabs and the Jewish community was warned by the mandate authorities not to violate the Ottoman decrees which regulated everything pertinent to the holy places. The Military Administration was bound to eliminate any attempt aimed to violate the status quo, be it political, social or religious. The subsequent civil administration adopted many policies which infringed the status quo in many ways. The only exception to the introduction of new political, social and economic circumstances in Palestine that was stated in the mandate terms (Articles 13 and 14) was the preservation of the status quo with respect to the religious matters. The hitherto British tendency to favor the Jews in nonconformity with the mandate regulations gave the hint that the mandate rule would not be adequately efficient in observing the status quo in the holy places. The difficulties in defining the status quo were an indicator of the fluctuation in the British stance. Whether to regard the customary conduct of the Jews as the status quo or to focus on the Ottoman decrees to maintain the status quo aroused as a problem.³⁶⁵ Although for long the British accurately fulfilled their obligations in this matter,³⁶⁶ the religious quarrels between the Muslims and Jews dragged on like this with sporadic tensions until 1928.

³⁶³ Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-141.

³⁶⁴ Kimmerling & Migdal, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

³⁶⁵ Wasserstein, *op. cit.*, p. 228; Porath, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-262.

³⁶⁶ In November 1928, the British Colonial Secretary, realizing the religious distresses of the Muslim community, officially stated the intention of the British government of preserving the status quo in the Muslim holy places. In defining the status quo, he espoused the stance favoring the Ottoman decrees. According to this stance of the Colonial Secretary, the screen brought to the Wall for the prayers in September was not suitable and was not approved by the British rule. This declaration proved that the Arab arguments regarding the Wailing Wall were favored by the British authorities. See; Porath, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

However, what made the most holy day of the Jews -Yom Kippur prayers- in September 1928 swell into a major political controversy³⁶⁷ was Hajj Amin's yearning for an incident which would yield him great political gains in face of the mu'aridin group. Not less important was the fact that he wanted the long quiescent Palestinian Arab nationalist movement against the Jews to gain briskness. As the Palestine Arab nationalist movement lost momentum during the last 5-6 years, Zionist movement caught an upward trend at the same ratio. However, he would like to be the leading figure in this movement. Thus, he exploited the religious beliefs of the Muslims in order to bestir hatred among them against the Jewish community. He denied any involvement in these inflammatory actions and even tried to give the impression that he was against any violent actions against the Jewish community by ostensibly issuing orders instilling calm to the Muslims.³⁶⁸ Hajj resorted to this so-called appeasing attitude to look like he did not prompt any action that would have the possibility of breaking the peace. Although the government did not have the authority to instruct what to do to the Council, Hajj did not wish to wrangle with the mandate rule and purport itself as the source of dispute in the country. Porath states on this issue:

In return for its establishment, the wide powers vested in it, and British recognition of the pre-eminent status of its President, the SMC strove to prevent the recurrence of disturbances – especially during the al-Nebi Musa festivities in April each year, a period particularly conducive to rioting. The President of the SMC maintained good relations with the authorities, and whenever he took a stand which might be contrary to their wishes, this was never obvious and, outwardly at least, he never appeared to step outside the bounds of the Council's jurisdiction. His main concern during the 1920s was the consolidation of his position within the Muslim community itself.³⁶⁹

In fact at the end of the 1920s, he was fuelling tension and inciting the mobs to counter-attack the self-assertive Jewish activities concerning the Wall. It was obvious that Hajj played the role of an agitator in the 1929 disturbances and was associated closely and directly with the outburst of these violent acts. In the mean time, Jewish courses of action were presented to the Palestinian Muslim community as preliminary steps to seize the control of the Islamic holy places.

The incidents that was transformed into a major crisis and culminated in many casualties in both sides did not erupt from reasons different from the preceding years. What distinguished the events occurred in 1928 and 1929 was the political atmosphere that was

³⁶⁷ The incidents took place as regards the Wailing Wall from the establishment of the SMC in 1922 until 1928 was defined by Wasserstein as a customary cycle and the disturbances in 1928 and 1929 was portrayed as a break from this cycle on account of the fierce campaign conducted by Hajj. See; Wasserstein, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

³⁶⁸ Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-210.

³⁶⁹ Porath, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

prevailing at that time. The Jewish community almost accomplished its state-like structure as the 1930s approached, the political gains obtained by them were considerable and the economic crisis which besieged the Jewish sector during the course of 1926-27 was overcome. These developments heightened the self-reliance of the Jews and assured them of the constant British support to their ideals. In this way, their discourses became more assertive. On the part of the Arabs, there was an enduring discord between the components of the national movement. The power of Hajj Amin and the majlisin group in Palestinian politics was strongly challenged by the mu'aridin group and Hajj was searching ways to surmount the danger posed by the opposition. Secret negotiations had been carrying on shortly before the eruption of violence in Jerusalem. Hajj's objection to the idea of a LC was well known. He had once showed this objection by promoting the boycott of election in 1922. He was so vigorously engaged in the anti-election campaign that for the most part the campaign attained what it aimed and in the end killed the LC proposal. Although most of the Arab parties veered in favor of the set up of a LC, Hajj clung on his fixed opinion as regards the disadvantages of being part of a LC.

The starting point of the events was the interference of a police force to the Yom Kippur prayers of Jews in the Wailing Wall in September 1928. A screen to set the men and women apart during the prayer was placed in front of the wall, outraging the Muslims. There were also other things outraging the Jews. They alleged that the restoration activities conducted by the SMC in the Haram area, which involved Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosques, were interfering with their prayers.³⁷⁰ Thus both sides were complaining about the other's actions. Especially, the controversial subject of what the Jews were allowed to do in the Muslim holy places was once again became an issue which should be resolved for the sake of peaceful joint worship of Jews and Muslims in the Haram area. On the one hand, there was the unwritten customary conducts which came to be observed since the 19th century and on the other hand there was the written guidelines which laid bare what was legally allowed and what was not. Although it was forbid to bring furniture to the Wall according to the Ottoman decrees, Jews deemed this furniture a necessity during their worships. And during the course of the time a customary conduct was originated which the Muslim community of Palestine did not interfere. Namely, the de jure prohibition decreed by the Ottoman authorities was transgressed in a de facto way with the connivance of the Palestinian Muslim community. This was an unspoken consent to the unlawful manner of the Jews. Nonetheless, in the year 1928 it was unmistakably clear that the Zionists made use of the Jewish community to attain their political objectives; the attempts to affect a

³⁷⁰ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

change in the status quo of the Muslim holy places grew stronger. Namely, the religious crying on part of the Jews was an extension of the political desires of the Zionist bodies. Assuming the control of the Wall would mean so much for the Zionist movement and would add to its prestige on the way of having the full characteristics of a state. Thereby, the provocative policies of the SMC and the Zionist bodies continued for almost a year and finally in August 1929 the massive fights occurred.

5.3.2 The Consequences

As a consequence of the mutual agitations, violence dominated Jerusalem for a more than a week in August 1929 and it soon spread to the cities like Hebron and Safad where Jewish community was present. The assaults culminated in a relatively high casualty on both sides in comparison to the previous incidents. Moreover, the Jews came to define these collective Jewish murders as pogroms, which showed that they regarded the Arab violence similar with the anti-Jewish violence occurred in Eastern Europe at the turn of the 19th century. What makes the Jewish casualties caused by the Arab aggression in 1929 more important was the insensitive attitude of the Arabs in not differentiating between the Zionist and non-Zionist Jews when putting in force their violent actions. Most of the Jews targeted by the angry Arab community belonged to the long standing Jewish community residing in Palestine prior to the beginning of the waves of immigration.³⁷¹ Namely, the old yishuv who were disinterested in the Zionist movement constituted a high proportion in the death toll of the Jews. Especially the Jewish killings took place in Hebron have been underscored as one of the bitterest Arab attacks on Jewish civilians, whose only activity was to pray and heed the principles of Judaism. Besides, by some historians Hajj Amin was depicted to be an ardent anti-Semitic and the Hebron massacres were thought to be carried out as a consequence of his religious provocations and discriminative preoccupations against the Jews. This view was underpinned by the argument that during the Second World War, Hajj Amin and Hitler worked on a plan to get rid of the Jews in Palestine by resorting to the same methods utilized in Germany by Hitler.³⁷² Although these were too assertive in their claims, the Hebron Jews' victimization by the agitated Arabs is undeniable. Moreover, it was obvious that the Jews living in Hebron fell prey to the insatiate political desires of the Zionists, but relating the whole incident to the racist tendencies of Hajj would mean to ignore the political greediness of the Zionists which greatly disturbed the Arab community

³⁷¹ Lesch, op. cit., p. 211.

³⁷² Dershowitz, op. cit., p. 40-44.

and to underestimate the unrest prevalent among the Arabs and the related strength of their hostility against this greediness.

The role of the SMC and its president in the violent acts of 1929 made the British authorities in both Palestine and Britain to think that their decision to acknowledge the autonomous status of the SMC in overseeing the affairs of the Muslim community was not rational.³⁷³ Although the Shaw Commission that was appointed to investigate the causes of the 1929 disturbances could not arrive at a precise decision about the role of Hajj Amin in the violence³⁷⁴, it can be assessed that the British non-interference in the domain of Islam in Palestine backfired and damaged the reputation of the British interests on account of its incapacity as a mandate government of preventing the massacre of hundreds of people. The only policy which seemed irrational to the British authorities following the 1929 riots was not limited with the establishment of the SMC. The traditional pattern in which the British officials who performed duties in the Palestinian territories sooner or later moderated their pro-Zionist attitudes and comprehended in a way the justifiability of the Arab theses accelerated with the outbreak of violence between the two communities. Then High Commissioner of that period- Chancellor- followed in the foot steps of his predecessor Samuel and relaxed his approach about the fulfillment of the British obligations towards the Arabs. After 1929, the logic of the Balfour declaration and the immeasurable assistance given to the national home policy were begun to be questioned more widely. Namely, the prevalent and invariable British policy favoring the Jews eventually started to be discussed in the offices of the HMG, although a rapid change in the policy was hardly possible.³⁷⁵ Despite the fact that the number of British bureaucrats and statesmen stood for the promotion of the Zionist interests still constituted the bulk, entering into discussions about a hitherto cut-and-dried issue was a breakthrough for the safety of Palestine and the guarantee of a just political future for the Arabs.

The provocative religious campaign carried out by Hajj Amin inside and outside Palestine, stressed the religious importance of the Haram area and the components of it in the eyes of the Palestinians as well as the Muslims world around. This way for the first time in the Palestine history, the political controversy between the Zionist and Arab nationalist movements acquired a religious dimension and the builder of this mélange of political struggle with the religious one was Hajj himself. As a consequence of Hajj's fierce opposition to the Jewish practices in the holy places which paved way to the collisions

³⁷³ Porath, op. cit., p. 201.

³⁷⁴ Wasserstein, op. cit., p. 234.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 156-157.

between the two communities, not only a compromise between the Jews and Arabs became a remoter possibility, but the gap between the different elements of the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement became more unbridgeable. As the influence of Islam in Palestinian politics began to be felt more deeply, Christian Arabs gradually lost their faith in a Palestinian Arab nationalist movement which drew its strength from the unity of Christians and Muslims.³⁷⁶ About the former consequence, it can be said that the different treatment of Jews by Arabs according to the reasons which made them stay in Palestine, namely the Zionist and non-Zionist differentiation vanished. The difference in the stance of the Arab population hitherto preserved when dealing with the old yishuv and new yishuv ceased to exist following the attacks on the old yishuv in most notably Hebron.³⁷⁷ Henceforth no room for compromise left and antagonism penetrated the every hole reserved for peaceful understanding. As the conflict wrapped a religious coat alongside its political and social dimension, the Palestine problem became more daunting.

The likely result of the decision of the AE to distance itself from the disturbances over the Wall and the preference to avoid any interference in them was a deeper split between the AE and SMC. What is more, a division occurred between the Arab nationalists belonging to the same rank. This stemmed from the distinct stances taken by the members of the Husseini family in the 1929 disturbances. The increasing reputation of Hajj following the Wall dispute raised his preeminence at the disadvantage of other Arab leaders, especially the President of the AE - Musa Kazim al Husseini.³⁷⁸ One of the best sings of the hostility between Musa Kazim and Hajj Amin was that Musa Kazim did not refrain from joining the Nashashibis whose abhorrence to Hajj Amin was blatant in their opposition against him.³⁷⁹ The developments which weakened the significance of the AE in Palestinian politics had been in play since the first moment the AE was established, but the elevation of Hajj's radical voice during this conflict precipitated the disintegration of the AE. Also the disagreement between the two leading figures of the same family put the case clearly that even among a body which was considered monolithic, various and even opposite approaches could be found. Categories such as the supporters and opponents of Hajj became more pronounced after 1929. Besides, the power of the Jerusalem elite was seriously challenged for the first time in the Palestinian history by figures from cities such as Haifa, Jaffa and Nablus and villages. Until that time, the groups from places outside

³⁷⁶ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

³⁷⁷ McDowall, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

³⁷⁸ Porath, op. cit., pp. 271-272.

³⁷⁹ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

Jerusalem had been denied access to the politics. The disturbances of 1929 accompanied a process of political mobilization in such a degree that “eroded the ayan’s oligopoly of power.”³⁸⁰ Moreover, the spirit of unity between the Arabs, which had been struck just before the tension broke out, was lost again and could not be obtained again for several years to come.

The deepening cleavage between Jews and Arabs severely damaged the establishment of the LC and rendered the continuance of the negotiations that had broken off before the Wall issue impossible. The British evaluation that the Arab community was not yet ready to govern themselves provided the Zionists with a perfect pretext. Thanks to this pretext, Zionists cast aside every proposal to cooperate with the Arabs in the framework of a prospective LC. In other words, although the Muslim religious viewpoint as regards the Haram area found too many defenders both from inside and outside, the political future of the Palestinian Arabs were endangered and a huge impediment was placed on the way of self-government.

The Shaw Commission’s findings were guiding to discover the essence of the conflicts between the two communities. Both Muslim representatives, from inside and outside Palestine, and Zionist authorities appeared before the Commission to present their cases. After gathering enough evidence on site, the Commission concluded in its report that the violence in 1929 erupted in an unprompted fashion which meant that neither the Zionists nor the SMC made any plans to prearrange such a conflict. Yet, the provocations on both sides were real and as it was said above, it was most probably gauged that the exploitation of a community’s religious feelings in an already tense environment like Palestine would end in brutal attacks in one way or other. The report of the Shaw Commission contained evaluations apparently of great value to the Arab cause.³⁸¹ The outbreak of the incidents was linked to the British deficiency in keeping her promises to the Palestinian Arab community. The intensification of the Zionist political aspirations owing to the encouragement of Britain caused great tension among the Arabs which ultimately led to the disturbances in 1929. The conclusion that can be deduced from the report was that the Arabs, who were put in a desperate position and whose every diplomatic attempt ended in failure, could find no other way than showing their resentment in a violent way.

When the hard facts that were revealed by the Shaw Commission were accompanied by the Hope-Simpson report, which discussed the impossibility of the continuance of the Jewish immigration in Palestine in a large scale and was published a

³⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 89.

³⁸¹ Davis, op. cit., p. 24.

year later, the British authorities felt the need of a retouch in their pro-Zionist policy which would eventually help the British government save her face on account of not only her failure to curb the Zionist acts aimed at disturbing the religious status quo in the Haram, but also the displayed incompetence in efficiently stopping the bloodshed. The issuance of the White Paper of 1930, which took an attitude explicitly intended to dispel the Arab grievances, was considered to be an outcome of the disturbances in 1929. After a five-year interval when everybody started to believe that it would require radical renewals for Arab nationalist movement to mend itself and regenerate against the Zionist movement, Arab nationalists showed their capacity to mobilize and defend their vital interests. Consequently, the British were once again anxious about the real power of the Arab opposition and its determination in fighting the Zionists and their upholders. The Passfield White Paper, which was termed after the then Colonial Secretary, was the product of this British anxiety.

The White Paper incorporated the assessments of the Shaw Commission and the Hope-Simpson reports and can be said to be the overall interpretation of these two reports. With its emphasis on the dual obligation of the mandate rule and the detrimental effects of the Jewish immigration on the Arab population, the White Paper was quite sympathetic to the Arab side. The criticisms about the outcomes of the Jewish land purchases and 'Jewish labor only policy' proved that the British government was putting her in Arabs' position and trying to acquire the perspective of them, which was comparatively a rare instance since the start of the civil administration. The first statement of policy concerning Palestine was published in 1922 by again the then Colonial Secretary – Churchill. When the statements in the White Paper of 1922 and 1930 are compared, huge differences can be easily found regarding the approaches maintained about the social, political and economic problems in Palestine. The Churchill's White Paper found shape in order to fill the gaps emanating from the meaning of the Balfour declaration. The Arabs were anxious inasmuch as that they could not appropriately predict what changes would take place in their country. The declaration of the Zionist bodies confused them more and more in this respect. So, the British government felt compelled to lay down the cornerstones of its Palestinian policy. However, when the terms of the White Paper of 1922 were elaborated, clear cut expressions which eventually benefit the Jewish community are found. First and foremost the commitment to the Balfour declaration was highlighted. This meant that the immigration and land policies favoring the Jews would continue. The only innovation introduced by this White Paper was the 'economic absorptive capacity' which was set as a criterion for the systemization of the Jewish immigration. Owing to the diverse interpretations attributed to this formulation, it was ambiguous if this criterion would shield the Arab interests and

constrain the Jewish immigration flowing in Palestine. Although the issuance of the Churchill White Paper was presented as the only acquisition of the first Arab delegation³⁸², its implications were quite undermining for the Arab cause contrary to the White Paper of 1930.

The ugly symptoms received by the Zionists from the White Paper of 1930 concerning the intentions of the British government made them grossly uneasy. The two most important mainstays of the Zionist colonization - immigration and land purchase - would seem to be eradicated on the basis of the White Paper by the future arrangements of the British statesmen. The notorious Zionist pressures on the British authorities in London, which hitherto had always borne fruit, were once again in play. The excessive diplomatic efforts of Weizmann in bringing the annulment of the White Paper soon flourished and the then British Prime Minister MacDonald, who could not endure the great pressures coming from Zionists, drafted a letter to be sent to Weizmann. In this letter, all the matters seemed to favor the Arabs in the White Paper of 1930 were reversed and any intentions to suspend the Jewish immigration or to impose a prohibition on the Jewish land purchases were renounced.³⁸³ However, the anger of some Zionists would not seem to subside with the guarantees presented by this letter. In the Congress of the WZO convened in 1931, Weizmann came under harsh castigations. The resignation of Weizmann from the presidency of the WZO in the same year came about as an aftermath of the MacDonald's letter.³⁸⁴ It seems that the letter depicted as black by the Arabs was not so white for the Zionists as well. The tolerant attitude expressed by the British officials appointed by HMG and conducted investigations on behalf of His Majesty's Government (HMG) towards the Arabs was so irritating for the Zionists that they began to estrange themselves from the mandate rule and came to support the idea that they must achieve their objectives through self-reliant policies. Although the Passfield White Paper did not receive full acceptance from the British statesmen and even they had an active part in the preparation of the letter from MacDonald to Weizmann through the pressure they exerted to HMG, the deterioration in the Zionist-British relations was an outcome of the Zionist distrust for the mandatory power on account of its tendency to retreat from the promises made and obligations undertaken. The Zionist confidence was shaken at the turn of the 1920s and to fix it became harder for the British authorities and before a decade passed a profound rift was formed between the one time allies. On the other side of the coin, the Passfield White Paper and the

³⁸² Abcarius, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

³⁸³ Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

³⁸⁴ Davis, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

following incidents affected the relations between the Palestinian Arabs and the British as well, for the disillusionment was not limited with the Zionist circles. The Palestinian political climate was enriched with a new dimension in the hostilities. The Palestinian Arabs, who hitherto directed their indignation to the Zionists with an anti-Zionist fervor, began to gather around equally strong anti-imperial policies.³⁸⁵

5.4 The Disturbances of 1936 and the Following General Strike

5.4.1 The Causes

As the 1930s began, the social and political circumstances in Palestine became more prone to create disagreements between the two communities. The developments taking place in the country disclosed a very dim impending future for the Arab population. Thus the non-cooperation movement, which lost its validity in the first half of the 1920s, again gained ground among the Arabs.³⁸⁶ The Arabs, who had been disillusioned by the inauguration of the British mandate rule and subsequently came to believe in the damages they had been inflicted by staying outside the framework of a self-governing institution, again came under the influence of the political orientation which dictated them to reject every proposal made by the British. In this way, Arabs put all their efforts to display their antagonism to the British and Zionist policies by staying outside the sphere of institutions which required combined membership with the Jews. This non-cooperationist attitude stemmed from the failure experienced by the Arab nationalist movement in accomplishing its objectives in the first stage. This failure automatically opened the road to more uncompromising methods in raising their demands in the second stage.

The heightening tension in the year 1933, which lasted almost two months and gripped a very large area including primarily Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Nablus, indicated that not only the relations between the mandatory power and the Zionists severed as mentioned above, but also the Arab indignation turned gradually against the British rule in Palestine. During this civil disobedience in October 1933, which was ordered by the Arab Executive, clashes and bloodshed occurred between the police force of the mandatory power and the demonstrators. However, the fact that the Arab demonstrators did not notably target the Jews, rather mainly interested in demonstrating their opposition to British

³⁸⁵ Kimmering & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

³⁸⁶ Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 26-28.

support for Zionist ideals, was a proof of the growing hostility against the British.³⁸⁷ This Arab hostility attenuated the British standing in such a strategic point in the Middle East and made the mandate rule more unsustainable as the close of the 1930s approached. First and foremost in the years 1933-1935 the Jewish immigration to Palestine reached its climax in the whole history of the British mandate administration. The engine of the massive increase in the numbers of Jewish immigrants pouring into Palestine was the escape of the European Jews who came under the destructive threat of the Hitler regime in Germany. Contrary to the claims asserted by some Jewish writers, the Jewish immigration was not reduced sharply by the mandate authorities at a time when this would yield too harmful effects for the European Jews when they had no choice but to flee to a safer place.³⁸⁸ It is true that following the first two years of the riots in 1929, the number of Jews immigrating to Palestine diminished in comparison to the previous years, especially the year 1925 in which a very large scale immigration was experienced. But this was a temporary measure not only to ease the intense conditions caused by the violence, but also to take warily the economic absorptive capacity criterion into consideration after it became evident in 1928 that the influx of large numbers had a great potential to engender undesirable economic and social outcomes. In other words, the reopening widely of the doors of Palestine to the Jewish immigrants overlapped with the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany. It would be a wrongdoing to accuse the mandatory power of circumscribing the Jewish immigration and to ascribe the blame for the death of millions of Jews in Europe on the Arabs or British, since Palestine could not absorb more Jews than the accepted number. The British authorities did their utmost to rescue the victims of the racist rule. Besides, immigration to other countries was within the bounds of possibility despite the tight quotas. So the European Jews could not be said to be adversely affected by any restriction in immigration to Palestine in the long-run as it can easily be seen from the peak of the immigration level in 1934 and 1935.

In direct contradiction, Palestine emerged as a safe haven for the European Jews under the Nazi threat thanks to the British officials both for facilitating the legal immigration and for condoning the illegal immigration which almost approached the level of the legal immigration. With the acceptance of almost 60,000 Jews in Palestine, the year

³⁸⁷ Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

³⁸⁸ "The curtailment of Jewish immigration into Palestine could not have come at a worse time for the Jews, since Adolf Hitler was soon to become the führer of Germany with a program to rid Europe of its Jews, either by emigration or by genocide." Dershowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

1935 witnessed the hitherto highest number of Jewish immigrants per annum.³⁸⁹ These enormous numbers, increasing one and a half fold every passing year – from 1933 to 1935- gave rise to great anxiety among the Arabs. The economic absorptive capacity principle, which in 1922 was told to be taken into consideration when deciding the immigration quotas, had been left aside long time ago.³⁹⁰ Owing to the segregationist policies of the Zionists, their argument about the advantages that would accrue to the Arab community through the Zionist capital and knowledge brought to Palestine had lost credibility long time ago as well. There was a close instance that proved the invalidity of this Jewish argument. The dense Jewish immigration took place between the years 1933-35 provided the flow of massive capital to Palestine owing to the good financial standing of the immigrants. Thanks to the sources at their disposal, the Palestinian economy made a great leap forward. However, this economic improvement did not have a widespread effect over the country and the visible effects remained confined only to the Jewish community. Thus the numerical increase brought about an increase in the economic and political clout of the yishuv. Arabs were at that time trying to stand on their own feet by exporting their own products and although their contribution to the revenues could not be undervalued, the mandatory power did not allocate enough money for the development of the neglected fields responsible for the backwardness of the Arab community.³⁹¹ In this way, from almost every aspect the Zionists acquired superiority over Arabs and this would have not been possible without the British assistance. Bearing witness to their two-way humiliation, Arabs exhausted their patience.

The act of civil disobedience and the non-cooperationist mood among the Arabs that gripped Palestine in 1933 and continued this way until 1938 with sporadic silences could not be forestalled despite the stern steps taken by the police force in the October

³⁸⁹ Norman Anthony Rose, "The Arab Rulers and Palestine, 1936: The British Reaction", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (June 1972), p. 217.

³⁹⁰ In 1925, the Jewish immigration reached its highest level since the beginning of the mandate rule. The admission of 34 thousand Jews in Palestine was an indicator that the economic absorptive capacity was not a binding criterion in the determination of the immigration level. If it had been so, it would have been calculated that such a high number would eventually lead to deterioration in the economic conditions. When the economic crisis was sensed among the Jewish community with the growth of unemployment and finally led to the outflow of Jews from Palestine in great numbers, it became obvious that the economic absorptive capacity principle had not been applied accurately and efficiently by the mandate rule. Although the British authorities overlooked this criterion, the Zionists continued to complain about low level of immigration quotas granted and linked this low level to the application of the economic absorptive capacity principle. However, the Zionist argument that put forth the superfluity of this principle by saying that the required capacity would be created by immigration itself was refuted with the adverse economic conditions beleaguered the Jewish sector in the years 1926-28. See; Wasserstein, op. cit., pp. 159-163.

³⁹¹ Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

demonstrations.³⁹² Rather the demonstrations and strikes took a more violent shape and eventually transformed fully into an unmitigated rebellion. Sheikh Izzedin al-Qassam, who believed that the right time had come to enforce a violent attack against the mandatory power, pioneered the first armed revolt against the mandate rule in November 1935 and this way lighted the fuse of the general strike in 1936. Although his revolt did not last more than a week and could not inflict the planned damages to the British rule in Palestine, his killing by the British soldiers ascended him to a high position in the eyes of the Palestinian Arabs.³⁹³ The Arab frustration heightened on account of his death and the funeral organized for him in Haifa can be counted as the onset of the unavoidable events in Palestine in the latter part of the 1930s. When one of the followers of al-Qassam, who was most probably filled with feelings of hatred and revenge, killed two Jews and in return Jews killed two Arabs, trouble flared in Palestine and this way what the Arabs called the Great Arab Revolt broke out.³⁹⁴ However, some other factors related with the joint British-Zionist misbehaviors contributed to the precipitation of these events.

In 1935, the British mandate authorities, who had once again encountered the seriousness of the Arab opposition through the incidents took place in 1933, came up with a new design to set up a LC. This time the suggestion contained favorable clauses for the Arab representation. Namely, the argument Zionists and their supporters in the HMG clung on following the 1929 disturbances that the Arabs were not eligible for self-government was thrown into basket by the mandate administration. Indeed, it can be adduced without hesitation that this argument was never given full weight by the mandate authorities after the 1929 riots, for the Passfield White Paper, in which Arabs were pledged to be introduced with a self-governing institution engaged in the legislation process, was shelved only after the Zionist pressures became unbearable. After dragging their feet on the issue of self-government for several years and the unsuccessful attempts, the British authorities in Palestine eventually expressed their good intention of fulfilling one of their primary obligations deriving from the mandate terms which they had retarded up to that point. Even in the very beginning of 1930 after the violence was quelled, Lord Chancellor tried to continue with the efforts of forming a LC, which came to a halt out of necessity due to the eruption of violence.³⁹⁵ Such an attempt made by an official like Chancellor, who had hardly been counted among the defenders of self-government in Palestine mandate before

³⁹² Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-215.

³⁹³ *Ibid*, pp. 216-217.

³⁹⁴ Kimmerling & Migdal, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

³⁹⁵ Porath, *op. cit.*, pp.272-273.

he assumed the task of the high commissioner,³⁹⁶ no doubt inspired the British bureaucrats in the Colonial Office during the drafting of the White Paper which was issued in October 1930. The Arabs owed much to High Commissioner Chancellor, who altered his views about the JNH policy and its bearer the Balfour declaration soon after he took office in Palestine, for the pro-Arab provisions of the White Paper despite the fact that these provisions were cast aside without being implemented.

In April 1936, the negotiations between the British officials and the leaders of the Arab community to set up a LC broke off once again. This was the third concrete attempt at self-government which failed to bear fruit. Although the non-cooperationist attitude had begun to be a reputable idea for the Arab politicians at the beginning of the 1930s, this time Arabs responded to this proposal warmly, since this was the first LC in which the numerical strength of the Arabs were taken into consideration through its design. Namely, the Arabs were for the first time hopeful about having a say in the government of their country. The consent of Arabs to any British plan meant that it contained elements unacceptable from the point of view of the Zionist ideals. The majority status that would be granted to the Arabs in a prospective LC would imperil the accomplishment of the JNH policy. So, they articulated outright objection to this proposal. This fact was also acknowledged by the pro-Zionist British parliamentarians who played the leading role in the withdrawal of the scheme. However, not all of them revealed their real intentions and found other pretexts which became stereotyped such as the wrong timing for making this proposal and implementing it for the lack of political preparedness of the Arabs. On the contrary, politicians like Churchill did not hesitate to utter their pro-Zionist bias and acted as the vocal proponent of the Zionist demands and complaints in the British parliament.³⁹⁷

When the hopes for having a self-governing institution that would eventually be effective in seeking remedies for their long-time plight dashed, the disappointment of the Arab population heightened in a way rendering a full-scale protest campaign in Palestine inevitable. The spirit of rebellion had already arisen within Arab population. So, it was reasonably easy for the Arab Higher Committee to take control of the events and to orient the insurgent spirit into an organized civil disobedience movement. Since they abided by the calls of the AHC without delay, this movement began as a strike that encompassed nearly all the Arab working classes; farmers, merchants, laborers etc. It was an unprecedented instance of mobilization within the Palestinian Arab society. The planned purpose of the AHC was to complicate the situation in Palestine for the British mandate

³⁹⁶ Wasserstein, op. cit., p. 156.

³⁹⁷ Abboushi, op. cit., p. 30-32.

rule and bring about a radical change in the pro-Zionist mandate policies in the end. For this reason, Arabs refrained from maintaining their economic and business relations with the British administration and even discontinued paying their taxes. This was planned to incur heavy losses in the revenues of the mandate administration and this way Britain would agree to the terms of the Arabs in turn for their abandonment of the strike and the anti-British demonstrations. Despite the calls, the Jerusalem leadership, however, did not discontinue their offices in the mandate government. Rather than joining the ranks of their fellow countrymen, the leadership cadre preferred to stay in the ruling position. This situation proved that the Great Arab Revolt arose from the heart of the Palestinian Arab nation, refuting the allegations that it was an imposed resistance movement. The peasants and workers truly adhered to the essence of the uprising. Their ardor to reverse their predicament was so strong that the Jerusalem dominated leadership, which finally seized the necessary resources to keep the national movement alive, was faced with the fury of the lower and younger classes of the population. So, the disturbances in 1936 were a mixed blessing for the prominent authorities of Palestine politics.³⁹⁸

To make things more problematic for the mandate government, Arabs embarked on acts of violence alongside the general strike. Thereby havoc became prevalent in almost whole country. The 1936 rebellion, which can be considered as a series of events together with the 1933 disorders, was the most rigorous expression of the Arab resentment against Zionism and its upholder Britain since the inception of the mandate rule in Palestine. Kimmerling and Migdal also emphasize this point, saying that “perhaps no event has been more momentous in Palestinian history than the Great Arab Revolt. It mobilized thousands of Arabs from every stratum of society, all over the country, heralding the emergence of a national movement in ways that isolated incidents and formal delegations simply could not accomplish.”³⁹⁹ The revolt also proved that the Palestinian Arabs were at the end of their tether and could no longer bear the consequences of the Jewish immigration and the incidental land sales. They had searched for various ways to convert the British policies favoring Zionists before but none of them turned out sufficiently satisfactory for them. In spite of all the efforts displayed by the Arab community, be it peaceful or painful, the British carried out her line of policy with great determination. This time, as a consequence of this all-out attempt, Arabs wished to crash this determination of Britain. In this vein, they engaged the maximum possible effort and every available resource of their own, but in the

³⁹⁸ Kimmerling & Migdal, *op. cit.*, p. 104-105.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

end it was understood that this effort backfired and began to do more harm than good to the economic and political standing of the Arabs.

5.4.2 The Consequences

As soon as the disturbances started, the British also started to discuss its position and the possible ways to quell the unrest. As it was the traditional conduct of policy, it was immediately decided to appoint a commission to inquire the factors that culminated in the eruption of these events. At the same time, since Britain wanted to pose a powerful image in the international arena for the sake of its imperial interests, she refused to bow to the pressures coming from the Arab community. Thus, while seeing some justifiability in some of the criticisms of the Arabs, Britain did not prefer to retreat from its policies suddenly that may have given the impression of a surrender. However, they were well aware that if the Jews had continued to crowd the country in these high percentages, the Arab population would be marginalized more and more and the situation would become less checkable for the mandate administration. Although they issued other immigration quotas first in May⁴⁰⁰ and later in November 1936⁴⁰¹ which would let thousands of Jews to pour into Palestine, as the events became more heated and aggressive they gradually came to the realization that they should limit the Jewish immigration in order to appease the Arab community and restore order in the country. Yet, the measures they adopted for repressing the Arab violence were considerably harsh, because the anti-appeasement advocates were successful to dominate the discussions in the British parliament regarding the situation in Palestine. Both Zionists and Palestinian Arabs formed pressure groups to conduct discussions with the British bureaucrats and politicians, convey their demands and complaints to them and win them to their causes. The British authorities, who were against adopting moderate measures including diplomatic ones to appease the Arabs and were more disposed to taking harsh steps, seemed to be under the influence of the Zionists. They displayed an immovable attitude. According to this attitude, first the Arabs should terminate their rebellion and then Britain would contemplate future policies. Nevertheless, they did not abstain from assessing the provisions set by the Arabs. The regional and international situation was so jittery that both the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office had restructured their positions and showed a certain degree of flexibility in their views. For instance, the Colonial Office which was in the opinion of carrying on with the obligations arising from the commitments

⁴⁰⁰ Abboushi, op. cit., p. 34.

⁴⁰¹ Gabriel Sheffer, "Appeasement and the Problem of Palestine", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, (May 1980), p. 386.

in the Balfour declaration and resisting the idea of cessation of the Jewish immigration, in the end found it reasonable to suspend the immigration during the investigations of the Royal Commission. On the other hand, the Foreign Office which held considerable reservations about clinging on to the old policies and had a great belief in the advantages of appeasing the Arab world by stopping Jewish immigration to Palestine approved rigid methods to suppress the uprising when it evaluated the matter from the perspective of preserving the British prestige in the world. However, the judgment of the British cabinet on this issue reflected the approach of the anti-appeasers. The matter of suspending the immigration was not closed to a deal whereas an increase in the number of troops was approved. Although this type of British conduct would be supplanted in the following years by the comprehension that appeasement was the accurate policy, the anti-appeasement manner towards the Palestinian Arabs became the determining factor in the repression of the strike and the accompanying disturbances.⁴⁰² The pursuance of the cruel techniques was a proof that the British took it in her head to quell the violence without bowing to the Arab threats. Taking into custody for trivial reasons, entering in towns or villages and demolishing the houses there, punishing the innocent people in a collective fashion, entering their properties, either damaging and plundering their goods or usurping them were only a few instances of the inhuman treatment of the British forces against Arabs. When compared with all these oppressive practices, curfews and fines are observed to be among the mildest cautions.

On the other side of the coin, for the Palestinian Arab political leaders the Arab disobedience that they launched got out of their control and they lost their grip over the events in a very short period of time. Their influence on the masses began to diminish in mid-1930s. Even the members of the AE prior to its dissolution admitted the fact that they could no longer had the necessary leverage to say people what to do or not to do.⁴⁰³ Their efforts to draw the other Arab countries into the trouble one month after the strike began were a strong sign of their weakening hand in the rebellion.⁴⁰⁴ The Palestinians wanted to derive benefit from their Arab neighbors as intermediaries between themselves and Britain, asking them to place pressure on the British authorities to accede to their requests. At the same time, the Arab leaders realized the fact that the strike began to make its adverse effects felt at short notice and in order not to suffer more economic hardships; the strike should be ceased at the earliest date possible. Thus, for the first time in its history, the

⁴⁰² Ibid, pp. 381-385.

⁴⁰³ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., p. 92.

⁴⁰⁴ Rose, op. cit., p. 216.

neighboring Arab countries stepped into the Palestinian problem as active partners and this can be said to be the most important outcome of the 1936 disturbances.⁴⁰⁵ From that date forward, the other Arab states have taken a strong interest in the predicament of the Palestinian Arabs and the Palestinian problem constituted the hub of the Arab nationalist movement. They were recognized as the legitimate parties to the problem who were entrusted with the task of halting the strike and the accompanying violence. The responsibility for this matter could not be laid down solely on the Palestinian Arabs since the British also did her part in ascribing an official charge to the Arab states in a matter that she proved incapable of solving on her own. On the one hand, the imperial interests and the crisis-prone international situation necessitated pro-British and friendly Middle Eastern states to mediate meaning that an immediate solution should be found to the problems in Palestine. On the other hand, Britain could not run the risk of alienating its Zionist allies by making a settlement with the Palestinian Arabs that would be to their advantage. Under these circumstances, Britain endured the involvement of the Arabs states in the Palestinian situation although she had her reservations about it.⁴⁰⁶ To put it differently, the interference of the other Arab states mainly stemmed from the reluctance of both Palestinian Arabs and Britain in moving away from their initially specified positions. Neither the British authorities were ready to accept the cessation of the Jewish immigration without guaranteeing the end of the unrest, nor could the Palestinian Arabs invite the masses to end the strike without even minor changes in the immigration policy of the mandate power. In either case, both of them would lose their bargaining position and prestige in the face of the other party who gained the advantage of stripping its adversary of the chance of imposing its will. So, it was nearly unavoidable for the Arab neighbors to intervene into the civic turmoil as long as both parties expected the other to take the first conciliatory step.

Thanks to the mediation of Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, Iraq and Yemen the strike finally ended in October 1936. Thus, it lasted six months although Britain did not expect it to do so. Still, Britain persisted in implementing her unyielding attitude and this attitude finally obliged the Palestinian Arabs to abandon their resistance. The bids of these Arab states were just a cover to their defeat in the face of the successful British policies of ending the unrest. This way it seemed that the AHC was prone to go ahead with the boycott, but it had to end the strike upon the insistent demands of its Arab neighbors. Namely, it would be believed by the Palestinian Arab populace that the AHC succumbed to the pressures of the Arab governments as if these governments were the ones who would reap gains from this

⁴⁰⁵ Basheer M. Nafi, *Arabism, Islamism and the Palestine Question, 1908-1941: A Political History*, Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 1998, pp. 228-235.

⁴⁰⁶ Rose, p. 218, 226-231.

undertaking. This way the Palestinian Arab leaders tried to figure themselves as consistent and formidable policymakers and executives who could not be subordinated easily by imperialist powers.⁴⁰⁷ In this way they seemed to make a preference to comply with the request of the states of their race rather than adopting the line of policy of a foreign power even if it was their two-decade long ruling power. This preference was more face saving for them. Nonetheless, this does not change the fact that the Palestinian Arabs were compelled to lay aside their most intense reaction against Britain without guaranteeing any pledge from the British government to fulfill their demands following the cease of the events. In other words, this was an unconditional retreat and in the short run it could be deemed as a fiasco in terms of the Palestinian Arab standing. However, it was still early to evaluate the situation and arrive at clear cut decisions at that point, because as far as Palestine was concerned, the circumstances may change in a radical way in an unexpected stage; tension may heighten suddenly and it may lessen in a similar sudden way. Adding to this ambiguous state of affairs was the complexity of the international situation owing to the deterioration in the relations of the European countries. An imminent war was forcing the British authorities to be more cautious in their relations with the Arab states for the sake of their existence in the Middle East.

5.4.3 The Report of the Royal Commission

After the strike came to a close, the inquiry commission was dispatched to Palestine as it was planned before by the British government. The decision to form this commission was taken within a month after the strike began. However, in order to take up the duties it was assigned, the commission had to wait for the end of the disorders. The investigations it would conduct in Palestine were thus postponed for a period of 5 months. The Royal Commission, which was also referred as the Peel Commission on account of the name of its chairman, published its report after six-month survey. The Peel Commission report was an in-depth analysis of the then prevalent conditions in Palestine and thus touched a wide range of issues and came up with a sweeping proposal. In the Palestinian history, the report of the Royal Commission rose to eminence with its radical solution to the problem which had never been articulated officially by the mandate power before; partition of the country between Arabs and Jews. Furthermore, an international zone was designed that would be administered by a mandate power appointed by the League of Nations. The declared goal by creating this enclave was the establishment of peace in the area containing the Holy

⁴⁰⁷ Abboushi, op. cit., p. 38; Rose, op. it., p. 226.

Places.⁴⁰⁸ As a matter of fact, this mandated enclave would hold great importance for the strategic interests of Britain due to the areas it covered, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jaffa. Ostensibly, the League would give the final decision about the power to be designated as the future administrator of this territory. However, since Britain was envisaged to assume this task, the members of the Peel Commission might have worked diligently on the boundaries of this zone that was set aside from the intended independent Jewish and Arab states.

The point of departure of the investigators of the Commission at the end of their research was the incompatible characteristics of the two communities. When they examined these discordant features inherent in Arabs and Jews, they reached the conclusion that creating separate independent Arab and Jewish states on these lands was the only rational solution, since there was no possible way for the members of these nationalities to meet at a common denominator.⁴⁰⁹ The report envisaged allocating the lands mainly populated by Jews to the sovereign Jewish state and the lands mainly populated by Arabs to the sovereign Arab state. The members of the commission were awake to the fact that a major problem would undoubtedly come out as a result of the enforcement of the partition plan; the Arab people and land that would be left within the boundaries of the Jewish state and the Jewish people and land that would be left within the boundaries of the Arab state. The report also advanced a proposal for this problem which had the possibility of complicating the application of partition or endangering the existence of the newly established independent states. An exchange of the populations between the prospective states was contemplated to solve this daunting matter, but this solution was fraught with its own troubles.⁴¹⁰ The insistence of Arabs not to abandon their houses and lands would not be a surprise. At this point, it was a matter of discussion whether to force these people to leave their lands or to rely on voluntary transfer. The report indicated a likely support to the idea of transfer by force in cases of necessity.⁴¹¹

In view of the language employed in the report, it can be discerned that it was prepared in a mood that underestimate the Arabs' way of life because of its low standard and their economic manners. The financial means that the Jewish community disposed of

⁴⁰⁸ Abcarius, op. cit., p. 196.

⁴⁰⁹ T. G. Fraser, "A Crisis of Leadership: Weizmann and the Zionist Reactions to the Peel Commissions's Proposals, 1937-8", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No. 4, (October 1988), pp. 659-660.

⁴¹⁰ "The Problem of Palestine: A Note on the Report of the Royal Commission", *Geographical Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4, (October 1937), pp. 569-571.

⁴¹¹ Fraser, op. cit., p. 667.

were praised under various topics and it was perceived as an effective mean to develop the backward fields in Palestine which the Arabs failed to do so. Jewish capital was treated as if it was the only way to remedy the social and economic conditions in the country. Even in some cases, Arab community was portrayed as an impediment on the way of progress.⁴¹²

Within a week after the report was presented, the British parliament convened to discuss the details of the report, its appropriateness for British interests in Palestine and the Middle East region as a whole and the possible benefits to be gained from adopting this proposal as the official British policy. The first parliamentary debate regarding the Royal Commission report witnessed a certain degree of consensus among the members over backing the scheme. Thus, the initial response of the British government to the report was approval. However, as the situation in Europe began to point out to the inevitability of a disastrous war, the British approach to the unrest in Palestine altered entirely. The policies championed by the British Foreign Office had a major role in this matter. The reversal of the rapid ratification of the report by the British parliament ensued from a heated battle between the Foreign and Colonial offices. These two offices struggled hard to align the British government in their diametrically opposite arguments. Although the first cabinet meetings about the Royal Commission report reflected an acceptance of the observations and recommendations of the Colonial Office in principle, in the following months Foreign Office conducted a strong and successful strategy to impose its own vision to the British cabinet members.⁴¹³

During the preparation stage of the report, the Colonial Office and its Middle East department declared its backing to the partition plan whereas the Foreign Office and its Eastern Department began to show a greater interest to the Palestine problem on account of its immense potential to affect the relations with other Middle Eastern states on the eve of a war and in view of the precarious international atmosphere. In this context, the Foreign Office proved itself as the sternest opponent of the partition scheme.

Although their influence and interest differed, different ministries and departments of the British government were a say in the policies formulated for the Palestine mandate. Their political clout concerning the legislation process for Palestine mandate heightened or lessened in connection with the modifying conditions in Palestine and in the world by and large. The events of the second decade of the 1930s brought the Foreign Office to the foreground even though the core of the responsibility was assigned to the Colonial Office at

⁴¹² Page 248 of the report of the Peel Commission. The quote was taken from "A Note on the Report of the Royal Commission", pp. 567-568, 571.

⁴¹³ Fraser, op. cit., pp. 667-668.

the start of the British civil administration in Palestine.⁴¹⁴ The competence of the Colonial Office was overshadowed by the Foreign Office argument that the international situation dictated a more careful attention to be shown to the Arab states. Adding to the weakening hand of the Colonial Office in respect of Palestine was its low stature in comparison to the more prestigious and reputable Foreign Office.⁴¹⁵ Therefore, the politicians within the British government who came to believe in the error of implementing the partition plan grew numerically and in the end the proposal of Peel Commission report was shelved when the arguments of the Eastern Department got the upper hand over the MED. However, the Foreign Office did not win superiority with ease; this triumph required extensive bureaucratic challenges, putting the proponents of partition plan that were found among the British bureaucratic and government ranks and Zionist movement out of action and even latent political maneuvers to this end. The appointment of a technical commission in order to examine the practicability of the partition plan and the underhand directives that were given to the members of the commission will be explained in the following pages.

5.4.4 The Departure from the Partition Idea

It was natural for the Foreign Office to be concerned for peaceful relations with the Arab countries in the Middle East especially in the highly risky position of Britain in the unsettled international arena in the 1930s. In such a condition, the Foreign Office's contention was that Britain had to keep friendly and stable diplomatic relations with the states in the Middle East since the region would offer a strategic importance for the imperial connections of the British. Cohen found several reasons to explain the strategic importance of Palestine during a war:

Peace in Palestine was essential, not only to eliminate an issue which could lead to general conflagration in the area, but for two other vital reasons. First, the troops tied up in Palestine must be released in time of war to defend the Canal. Second, in the event of Italy blocking the Red Sea exit of the Canal during war, reinforcements from India would have to be brought to Egypt overland from the Persian Gulf, via Palestine. With Palestine in rebellion, this overland route could not be guaranteed.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴Sheffer, op. cit., p. 378.

⁴¹⁵ Aaron S. Kelieman, "The Divisiveness of Palestine: Foreign Office versus Colonial Office on the Issue of Partition, 1937", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (June 1979), pp. 424-427.

⁴¹⁶ Michael J. Cohen, "Appeasement in the Middle East: The British White Paper on Palestine, May 1939", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (September 1973), p. 572.

This meant that the British should not antagonize the Arab states by putting into practice a policy that would evoke reaction from them regarding an issue which they showed increasing sensibility. The Colonial Office was tackling the Palestine problem from a narrow perspective which only involved Palestine and did not take into account other states. This perspective was becoming more and more irrational, since this problem extended the scope of its own framework and became the determining factor in the relations between Britain and Arab states. It was not just a question of the relations between Palestinian Arabs and Jews anymore; it went beyond this limited outlook and spread to the whole region.⁴¹⁷ On the other hand, the Foreign Office was in the view that the Palestine policy should be formulated by not merely with the intention to satisfy the Zionists as it had been done so until that date, but in view of the broader issues in the Middle East. There were indications that the British line of policy in Palestine that was favoring Jews was creating uneasiness among the neighboring Arab countries and in order to soothe the tensions the partition plan should be left aside and another policy that would strengthen the relations with the Arab countries should be adopted. Thus, strife broke out between the anti-partitionist Foreign Office, which tried to invalidate the argument that keeping the promises to the Jews weighed more than alleviating the Arab world about the Palestinian issue, and pro-partitionist Colonial Office, which gave priority to solving the Palestinian problem by complying to the terms of the mandate without taking into consideration the magnitude of the Arab feelings.⁴¹⁸ Putting intimidating measures into force in order to quell the violence was defended by the Colonial Office members. In line with this point of view, Britain pursued wrecking policies against the Arab community. The disbandment of the AHC and the other national committees, the deportation and capturing of Arab leaders so vital in the Arab rebellion, the deposition of Hajj Amin from the leadership of the SMC caused shattering effects for the Arab resistance against Britain. The loss of the offices they had been given by the British paved the way both to the loss of their ties with British and their people. On account of their physical detachment from the national movement, the leverage they started to lose in the middle of 1930s disappeared completely. The absence of the Jerusalem's traditional leadership brought two other forces in the foreground to fill the void. These were the rural-based Palestinian Arabs the Arabs from neighboring countries.⁴¹⁹ Another reason that was counted among the factors that ascended the villages into an important position in the revolt was "the new reverse migration" in which "thousands of

⁴¹⁷ Nafi, *op. cit.*, pp. 267- 278.

⁴¹⁸ Kelieman, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-429.

⁴¹⁹ Kimmerling & Migdal, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

new and temporary city dwellers now moving, with the revolt's toll on the urban economy, back to the hills and the security of their old villages."⁴²⁰

On the military side, the British actions were even more drastic. The non-Palestinian Arabs who came to Palestine in order to contribute to the rebellion and assumed the leadership of it were neutralized. That was a two-way blow to the anti-British Palestinian Arab uprising. The Arab community was deprived of both its political and the military leaders, making the rebellion unorganized and disorderly on account of the assumption of the military commandship of the rebellion by local, rural and inexperienced Palestinian Arabs. This was a point in the three-year long Arab rebellion which represented the weak spot of the Arab standing against the British. The Arabs began to punish with severity their fellow countrymen.⁴²¹ Instead of the previous course of action which targeted the British in Palestine, the rage turned against the Arabs who were regarded as betrayers on account of their relations with the mandate government. This Arab-against-Arab occasion compelled many members of the upper-classes who became the subjects of violence of lower rural classes to leave the country.⁴²² At this point, the accuracy of the British decision to decimate the urban Arab nationalist leaders can be called into question. If the revolt made progress without the thrust of the urban notables, in what ways the punishment of this Jerusalem leadership contributed to the containment of the revolt? Because the urban leadership was paralyzed, both the boundaries of the revolt expanded and the duration of it lengthened. Besides, the fighting among Arabs did not put a complete end to the fighting against British.

To summarize, what began as an urban strike transformed into a rural violence. When it became an undeniable fact that mainly the notables in Jerusalem could no longer be influential in the conduct of the revolt, the control of the uprising passed into the hands of the rural population. These new military leaders from the rural areas assumed a threatening attitude toward the wealthy and privileged Palestinian Arabs who acted reluctant in contributing to the revolt.⁴²³ Namely, Arabs emasculated the force of their own rebellion by struggling with each other instead of displaying firmness of their purpose. Lacking the sturdy activism, Arabs caused the failure of their rebellion. The British resolution to abandon the partition plan and adopt policies consistent with the Arab demands was not an outcome of their demoralization from the Arab violence.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

⁴²¹ Cohen, op. cit., p. 574.

⁴²² Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 40-43.

⁴²³ Kimmerling & Migdal, op. cit., pp. 106-108.

The pro-partitionist Zionists actively took part in the strife between two Offices, taking the side of the Colonial Office. Weizmann, the man in the forefront of the Zionist movement, once again began to operate his diplomatic capabilities and had recourse to intensive diplomacy, predominantly in London, in order to secure the execution of the partition policy. Prior to the presentation of the report, he was informed that the general disposition of the members of the commission was to come up with the partition suggestion. From the very beginning, Weizmann adopted the idea of partition and despite the widespread Zionist conviction that a Jewish state confined to only part of Palestine would mean losing their advantages hitherto and settling for a plan far from meeting their ultimate ideal, perceived it as a stepping stone for full Jewish sovereignty in Palestine.⁴²⁴ Since the majority of the Zionists in the WZO were against the implementation of the partition plan, Weizmann assumed a formidable task of persuading the Zionist movement to a Jewish state that would be created in a certain part of Palestinian lands. He believed that if the proposed frontiers had been favorable for the Jewish community living in Palestine, then the Zionists might start to regard this project as acceptable. Thus, he started negotiating with the British political personages and the leading figures in the Royal Commission to add the lands that were deemed indispensable according to Weizmann's thought to the planned Jewish state. The north, Jordan valley and Negev desert were among the areas that Weizmann specified susceptibility, which included Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Negev and Aqaba.⁴²⁵

The plans designed and implemented by the Zionists to include Haifa in the future Jewish state were the most detrimental ones among the others to the Arab national interests. The strategic importance of the city was recognized by the Zionists in the late 1920s and the efforts to establish a Jewish majority in Haifa was commenced as the city became an important economic center especially after the inauguration of the Haifa port in 1933.⁴²⁶ When the Royal Commission declared its intention to exclude the city from the partitioned independent Jewish state the policy of strengthening the Jewish settlement in Haifa, which had not been proved successful until that time, gained ground even more. The Jewish Agency contributed to Weizmann's diplomatic efforts by working towards the inclusion of Haifa in the Jewish state. Since the plan was to allocate the places with Jewish majority to the Jewish state, the Jewish Agency set up committees that were responsible for presenting the Royal Commission cogent evidences that would show the firm standing of the Jews in

⁴²⁴ Fraser, op. cit., pp. 663-664.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, p. 665.

⁴²⁶ Tamir Goren, "The Judaization of Haifa at the Time of the Arab Revolt", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, (July 2004), pp. 135-136.

Haifa. Even a census was organized in Haifa to this end.⁴²⁷ Nonetheless, when the final text of the report was published, it was revealed that both Weizmann's diplomacy and the efforts of the Jewish Agency achieved almost nothing on the issue of frontiers. So, Weizmann lost his only chance to draw the Zionists to his cause.

In the mean time, there was already disunity among the prominent Zionist figures on the issue of partition from the very moment when this idea was started to be articulated even before the report was completed. They were clashing with each other about the benefits and damages of acquiescing to this British plan and trying rigorously to refute each other's claims. The most distinct of these controversies occurred between Weizmann and the American Zionists. Their objection to the proposal of the Peel Commission report was so powerful to be ignored and even had the potential of repudiation of the plan at the Zionist Congress. The reasons of their hostility to the British plan of creating an independent Jewish state in part of Palestine revolved around the argument that this would be some kind of abandoning their claims concerning whole Palestinian lands. They believed that the Balfour declaration pledged them more and if they had settled for a plan that was offering them less than Balfour declaration they would have chosen to restrict the Jewish community's activities and actions within Palestine. Thus they raised a great opposition in the 20th Zionist Congress at the beginning of August 1937 and proved successful in gaining the Zionist movement over their conceptions. At the end of the Congress, it became clear that Weizmann, the great man of Zionist diplomacy, pursued a futile diplomacy for the first time in his career as a Zionist protagonist. His efforts for making partition the ideal of the Zionist movement were rendered abortive and his strong standing hitherto in the Zionist movement shattered.⁴²⁸

But the prime thing which shaped the British policy regarding the partition scheme was not the Zionist rejections, but the Arab world's reactions. It became obvious that the independent Arab states of the time were not appreciative of the British idea of setting apart a piece of the Palestinian lands for the establishment of a Jewish state on it. Their distaste for the British approach to the Palestinian problem inspired fear to Britain that unless they had renounced their intention to implement partition, the Arab countries would have turned their faces to the Axis powers, become the enemies of Britain and showed forwardness to act against the British imperial interests in their region. On the contrary, the Zionists were not expected to have recourse to violent means against Britain on account of their distaste for the partition. Rather it was supposed that they would use political pressure to draw the

⁴²⁷ Ibid, pp. 140-142.

⁴²⁸ Fraser, op. cit., pp. 669-671.

British to their side.⁴²⁹ In this British calculation, the reality hitherto that the Zionists had always tried to persuade Britain through diplomacy figured large; they had never contemplated to sever their relations with their patron which they owed much of their attainments. Moreover, contrary to the divisiveness of the Zionists on the partition issue, the Arab world presented a unified front against the idea. Although the rivalry between the prominent Arab families of Palestine prevailed, the cleavage between the Husseini and Nashashibi families on the question of partition was effectively swept away and the Palestinian Arab position was portrayed in a way that showed a unity relative to the partition scheme.⁴³⁰ Both the independent states of the Middle East and the Palestinian Arabs stood up against this policy. Yet, other disagreements between the Nashashibi and Husseini families brought about the withdrawal of Nashashibi's political party - National Defense Party – from the AHC in the beginning of July 1937. This incident showed that the friction between them became insurmountable.⁴³¹

On the other hand, the approach of the Zionists living in Palestine was in direct contradiction to the general view expressed by the Zionists in their 20th Congress. They favored the partition plan and saw in it their survival on Palestinian lands in the teeth of growing Arab population. Ben Gurion, who was the chairman of the Jewish Agency executive at the time, was leading the Jewish community in Palestine who were assertive in their support to the partition idea. Initially he was against the partition idea and was converted to it later on. Following the British determination to hold on to Haifa and not leaving it to either Jews or Arabs, Gurion, who made considerable contributions to the formulation of the Judaization of the Haifa policy in the late 1920s, turned out to be more ardent in his belief that the Zionist movement should do whatever it could do to guarantee a powerful Jewish settlement in Haifa.⁴³² Thus, the Judaization of Haifa gathered speed and the Zionists utilized every mean in their disposal to invigorate the Jewish population in the city and constituting a Jewish settlement as large as possible. For this purpose, Zionist bodies related with this issue tried to ameliorate the conditions in the Jewish districts in order to provide the return of the Jews who had left these places and prevent further abandonments. Moreover, some of the districts outside the Haifa municipal boundaries, which proved indispensable in the census taken in March 1938 for the creation of a Jewish majority in the city, were annexed to the Haifa municipality. Namely, as a result of the

⁴²⁹ Cohen, op. cit., p. 572.

⁴³⁰ Sheffer, op. cit., pp. 388-389.

⁴³¹ Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

⁴³² Goren, op. cit., pp. 135-137.

Jewish immigration into the city and the inclusion of the districts with considerable Jewish population, Haifa became a city with a Jewish majority at the end of 1930s.⁴³³ This was the beginning in the break down of the ethnically mixed character of the city and Ben Gurion was totally right in his decision to speed up the Judaization of Haifa in the wake of the Woodhead Commission report which approved leaving the city in the mandated area. This policy guaranteed the future status of the city as a part of the independent Jewish state. Before 1938, as a part of this Judaization policy the Zionists were trying to create territorial integrity and continuity between the existent settlements and failed by and large, but following first the Royal Commission's report and then the Woodhead report the goal of enlarging the population by establishing new settlements gained the upper hand and achieved success to a great extent.⁴³⁴

On the other hand, for accentuating their disfavor over the partition issue, Arabs intensified their attacks inside Palestine after the publication of the Royal Commission report. They also officially declared their protests against the partition project in a national Arab conference which met in Bludan at the beginning of September. Following this conference, contrary to the initial consent of the Foreign Office towards the partition plan which facilitated the endorsement of the proposal by the Cabinet after its issuance, this ministry was convinced that the insistence of the British government to execute the partition plan would be a grave mistake and undermine the imperial interests at the expense of marginalizing the Arab world.⁴³⁵ Moreover, even the Arabs' rejection weighed more in the calculations made by the Foreign Office; both the resistance shown by Arabs and Zionists against the partition plan highlighted the fact that Britain would not be able to execute this scheme without resorting to force. So in such tense conditions, it was not deemed logical for the British to have recourse to more intensive military means. There were also British officials who were trying to justify the policy of undoing the partition policy by taking refuge in the pretext that after Britain proved herself victorious in the European war and manage to overcome the crisis without risking her imperial interests, then she would gain much more vigor to fulfill the Zionist objectives. These British authorities were in a sense preaching the Jews to acquiesce in the appeasement policy of Britain and wait for the long term positive results of it on the Zionist cause.⁴³⁶

⁴³³ Ibid, pp. 144-150.

⁴³⁴ Ibid, pp. 149-150.

⁴³⁵ Fraser, op. cit., p. 671.

⁴³⁶ Cohen, op. cit., p. 577.

On the other hand, the Colonial Office and the MED laid bare that they did not have even the minor aim to recede from their arguments supporting partition. The disputes between the two most important ministries of Britain manifested themselves in a battle of papers and memoranda presented before the Cabinet and which took place between them. The fact that the Foreign Office was close to win this battle appeared in the successive meetings arranged in November and December 1937. In these meetings, the parliamentarians showed an inclination to call off the partition scheme and in this vein discussed the matter several times so as to find a reasonable and acceptable way to repeal their approval. Namely, the theses of the Foreign Office came to dominate the British political scene. Moreover, although the partition proposal of the Royal Commission was accepted in principle, the disagreements of the Colonial and Foreign Offices impeded the execution of the plan and this postponement made the Arab states and Zionists think that the partition policy was not much of a committed policy for Britain.⁴³⁷

In the cabinet meeting at the beginning of December 1937, the anti-partitionists finally figured out an effective way which would lead to the complete elimination of the partition scheme. The members of the Foreign Office decided to agree to the offer of the Colonial secretary Ormsby-Gore to call into being a technical commission for the elaboration of the details of partition. There was a great degree of determination on part of the Foreign Office to pick and choose the members of the commission attentively and inform them underhand towards a conclusion putting forth the impracticability of the partition plan.⁴³⁸ In other words, the opponents of the partition idea were planning to benefit from the Commission as a tool for achieving their objectives without the knowledge of the Colonial Office officials.⁴³⁹ After 3 months of the decision to establish a technical commission, the commission headed by Woodhead left for Palestine in March 1938. When the commission started investigations in Palestine, the Arab leadership had been strangled as a result of the British actions. No Arab representative body with an effective power was left in the country. The most prominent of their leaders were either deported or arrested. Accordingly, the other interested parties submitted their cases before the Woodhead Commission contrary to the Arabs.⁴⁴⁰

In the mean time, as the anti-partition discourses won more and more audience among the British politicians, the Colonial Office and its secretary Ormsby-Gore completely

⁴³⁷ Kelieman, op. cit., pp 433-434.

⁴³⁸ Ibid, pp. 438-440.

⁴³⁹ Sheffer, op. cit., pp. 389-390.

⁴⁴⁰ Abcarius, op. cit., p. 197.

exhausted their political clout. He began to lose his sympathizers, aversion against him and his ideas grew. Weizmann also realized the lessening effect of the Colonial secretary on matters concerning Palestine.⁴⁴¹ This counteraction began taking such dimensions that Ormsby-Gore gave up championing the partition idea.⁴⁴² In May 1938 he left his office to another man – Malcolm MacDonald - who proved to adopt conciliatory gestures towards the Foreign Office regarding the partition theme – assumed the office of Colonial Secretary. Finally with the appointment of MacDonald as the Colonial Secretary, the two-year long battle between Foreign Office and Colonial Office over the Palestine problem ended to the advantage of the Foreign Office. By appointing another commission to work out the details of partition, the Foreign Office aimed at gaining time for the official disavowal of the royal commission's suggestion. The national and imperial prestige was still a point of issue for the Foreign Office.⁴⁴³ It was thought that the renunciation of the partition plan should be grounded on reasonable excuses rather than the urgency to appease the Arab world in face of an impending war; a justification which could have been regarded unfounded and not valid enough to reverse a policy that had been adopted earlier. The Woodhead Commission was designed to serve this goal; it was assured that this Commission would eventually pave the way for the modification of the partition policy. Thus, prior to the publication of the report of the Woodhead Commission in November 1938, it was a known but untold fact that Britain embarked on an initiative to prepare and espouse another line of policy relative to Palestine. Unaware of the Foreign Office's undisclosed attempts revolving around the Commission, Weizmann tried to use his influence on the new Colonial secretary with one last hope. However, he soon realized that MacDonald's convictions about the relations of Jews and Arabs and about the future of Palestine overlapped utterly with the pro-Arab arguments of the Foreign Office. Although initially MacDonald held positive views about the partition idea, he soon turned out to be the most passionate advocates of appeasement towards Arabs and came to defend making further concessions to Arabs. The inadequacy of his political base and the lack of political competency to follow policies that would be in conflict with the Foreign Office's policies also had to do with his joining to the ranks of appeasers and anti-partitionists. MacDonald even introduced a subject to discussion which was closed long time ago; the conflict between the promises delivered by Britain to the Arabs through the McMahon-Hussein correspondence and the pledges to the Zionists included in the Balfour Declaration. He broached the idea that actually Palestine may had

⁴⁴¹ Fraser, op. cit., p. 673.

⁴⁴² Sheffer, op. cit., pp. 390-391.

⁴⁴³ Kelieman, op. cit., p. 441.

been included in the independent Arab Kingdom that was promised to the Arabs. Since this was a matter that was settled on according to the British and the Zionists, the attempt to renegotiate it drew considerable criticism from the Zionist circles.⁴⁴⁴ With the radical shift in the Colonial Office's policies, the Zionists in Palestine lost their last assurance about gaining a favorable condition on the issue of partition and now it was a crystal clear fact that the British government would go along the line of contenting the Arabs. Hereupon, Weizmann came to the conclusion that Britain ceased to be a credible ally for the Jews and from now on there was no other way than rupturing the relations with Britain and stop relying on them for the realization of their long-established ideals.⁴⁴⁵

The deterioration of public order and security in Palestine after the Arab community came to know about the partition plan of the Royal Commission kept going in 1938 and the worsening relations between European powers coincided with the increasing violence in Palestine. Britain was stranded between the urgency to find a way to restore peace and order in Palestine and to guarantee a stable position for herself in such a strategically important region as the Middle East as the crisis drew near. Since the disturbances of 1936 broke out, the British forces proved unable to suppress the unrest in Palestine entirely although they employed rigid methods. In the beginning, before the European situation became irrepressible, most of the British authorities were against adhering to an appeasing line of conduct towards Arabs, so they opted for bringing order in Palestine by resort to austere military actions. However, within two years, the situation in Europe began to pose great threats and dangers. So it was imperative for Britain to revise its Palestinian policy. This revision shed light on the military and political necessity of implementing appeasement towards the Arab world by dropping the partition plan. Namely, the serious crisis which besieged the European countries in 1938 had a direct effect on the Palestinian policy of Britain. Most probably, if Europe had not drifted into a war, Britain would have continued to cling on her anti-appeasement stance in Palestine. The oppressive circumstances in Europe, however, urged Britain to amend her Palestinian policy which had entailed exercises not aimed at appeasing the Arabs up to that point, but to prove the British potential to repress violence instead. In other words, it was not the persistence of Arab violence in Palestine, but the impending war that obliged Britain to transform herself into an appeaser state towards the Arab world on the Palestinian question.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 577-578.

⁴⁴⁵ Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 674-676.

⁴⁴⁶ Sheffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-394.

5.4.5 The Embodiment of the Appeasement Policy

Following the conclusions reached by the Woodhead Commission that partition was not an advisable solution to the Palestine problem, Britain decided to incorporate the parties to the problem to the creation process of her new policy. To this end, the announcement of the convention of a conference in London was made by the British government to the Zionists, Palestinian Arabs and the representatives of the neighboring Arab states. The aim of the St. James's Conference was to come up with an effective solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict. The idea to reach a political settlement in the Palestinian issue was launched by the Colonial Secretary MacDonald. In this conference, the terms and the logic of the Balfour declaration was brought up for discussion for the first time since its publication. Even a delegation consisting of Arabs and Britons was set up to elaborate on the Hussein-McMahon correspondence.⁴⁴⁷ Namely, the issues which carried vital importance for the Zionist presence in Palestine were called into question. The participants of the conference listed their demands to the British and heated discussions took place. Both the Arabs and the Jews pushed their limits to make their demands dominate the conference. Yet, the British stance was signaling a pro-Arab leaning. The proposals presented to the Zionists and Arabs were far from offering complete satisfaction for the Jews and Palestinian Arabs. In conclusion, the conference proved unsuccessful within three weeks, opening the door for a unilateral policy statement determined by Britain.⁴⁴⁸ The provisions that were put forth by MacDonald in the Conference constituted the content of the White Paper prepared by him. After consultations with the Arab states, this policy statement was issued in May 1939 with the sole intention of overcoming their displeasure. However, in these consultations neither the approval of the Arab states including Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, nor the consent of the Palestinian Arabs could be obtained. As a result, Britain had to publish the White Paper in spite of the refusal of the Arabs. The underlying reason of this unilateral step was the persistent attitude of Britain in not making amendments in the original form of the statement of policy as read out by the Colonial secretary. The imprecise approach about the length of the transitional period to pass until the establishment of the independent Palestinian state and the abstention of the British officials from setting a fixed calendar for this purpose prevented the Arabs from giving their support to the British statement of policy.⁴⁴⁹ This meant that although Britain promised for a ten-year period, she may use her initiative to

⁴⁴⁷ Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 580-581.

⁴⁴⁸ For the details of the London Conference; Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 578-592.

⁴⁴⁹ Abcarius, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-207.

extend the transitional period. Needless to say, Arabs lost their faith in the British goodwill as a result of this British way of conduct. On the other hand, the Zionists were not informed of these post-conference negotiations between Britain, Arab states and Palestinian Arabs likewise the Arabs were not informed of the unofficial exchange of ideas between the Zionists and British authorities during the framing of the mandate terms. Thanks to the impending war in Europe, the trump card that had been held by the Zionists for more than two decades now passed to the hands of the Arabs.

The clauses of the White Paper was the open indication of the fact that this newly set British policy was the official embodiment of the appeasement policy of Britain towards the Arab world. The ultimate goal of establishing an independent Jewish state in Palestine which the Zionists believed that they would achieve through the backing of Britain was dashed by Britain to the disappointment of Jews. The superior position conferred to the Zionists in the Balfour declaration and the mandate terms was taken back from them and the Arabs were equipped with a much more superior position in face of Jews. First of all a noteworthy limit was set for the Jewish immigration for the next five years. More importantly, after five years passed Arabs would decide whether the Jewish immigration would continue or not. This was the major setback to Zionism since there was not a prospect for Arab approval to Jewish immigration. Their key objective since the inception of the mandate government was to bring an end to the Jewish immigration. Giving the last word on immigration to the Arabs would inevitably mean that the Jews lose their chance of outnumbering the Arabs and they would remain as a minority in face of the rapidly growing Arab population. Under these circumstances, an independent Palestinian state which would be established within ten years according to the terms of White Paper would unavoidably be under the control of the Arabs. Finally, the land sales to Jews were restricted in some parts and prohibited in other parts of the country. Thus, the two foundation blocks of the Zionist movement- immigration and land purchase- were attacked in the White Paper, which appeared as a major obstacle for the accomplishment of the Zionist goals. Despite the extensive concessions granted to the Arab community, Arabs rejected the White Paper. A British repositioning, which carried the possibility of ushering in a new era in Palestine in favor of the Arabs, slipped out of their hands. On the other hand, the disillusionment of the Zionists was enormous. As an outcome of the White Paper, the British-Zionist relations entered a new and disastrous phase. The Jewish community decided to engage in an armed rebellion against the mandate government.⁴⁵⁰ In this way, Britain found herself in a quagmire in which she had to deal with a Jewish resistance not long after the Arab rebellion

⁴⁵⁰ Abboushi, op. cit., pp. 44-46.

was suppressed. The Arab revolt against the British was followed by an even more violent Jewish revolt. The White Paper represented in the history of Palestinian mandate a point in which the Zionist-British alliance broke off and the prospects for an Arab-Jewish conciliation disappeared.

About giving effect to the policies envisaged in the White Paper little was done. Not long after the White Paper was issued by the British government, the Second World War broke out, creating a turmoil which hindered Britain from making any headways about the new policy set for Palestine. In other words, Britain got all the viable excuses for dragging her feet on implementing the plan. Until the end of the war, too many Jews managed to enter Palestine legally and illegally, exceeding the 75,000 quota set in the policy paper. It may be assumed that Britain had more vital interests to deal with during the war time, but the end of the war did not prompt the British authorities to effectuate the terms of the White Paper. Even it can be said that the impetus that necessitated the framing of a new policy for Palestine prior to the war vanished after the war. Despite the provisions of the White Paper that pledged to consider the Arab approval for the future Jewish immigration, this provision was brushed aside after the exhaustion of the quota of 75,000. Consequently, turning a blind eye to the Arabs' intensive demands of having sovereignty on matters relative to Palestine, the British government set a new monthly quota. Thus they once again impeded the Arabs from having a say on such a vital issue.⁴⁵¹ Apart from the lack of enthusiasm of British in observing the assurances in the White Paper regarding the Jewish immigration, they also failed in abiding by their obligations about administrative changes. Contrary to the statement that Palestinians would incrementally be handed over governmental offices, the British continued to occupy the Departments predominantly.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵¹ Abcarius, op. cit., p. 209, 215-219.

⁴⁵² Ibid, p. 207, 210-211.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Palestine in terms of socio-economic and socio-political circumstances throughout the mandatory administration of Britain was strikingly rapid and fundamental. The impact of the class transformation that was inflicted upon the Arab community and the alienation of the Arab cultivators from their lands were aggravated following the British-Zionist alliance which manifested itself in the Balfour declaration. During the first two decades of the mandate government this alliance worked to the obvious detriment of the Palestinian Arabs and no matter what the Arabs tried to change the run of events, they could not manage to interrupt the British support for the Jewish national home. Even the Arab revolt against the Ottoman armies did not prevent Britain from giving its unconditional support to the Zionists and she disappointed the Arab community by not meeting her obligations in return for the Arab cooperation during World War I. Thus the argument goes that the British mandatory rule was an extended period which the circumstances favoring the Jews at the expense of Arabs prevailed until 1939.

In the second chapter of this study, the social and economic system imposed by the Ottoman government was presented as an important factor that militated against a firm Arab reaction against the implications of the immigrant settlement and dispossession of lands. In this context, it was argued that the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 aggravated the impact of the land purchases by the Jews, adding to the difficulties faced by the Arabs. On the other hand, it was displayed that the shortfalls in the policies of education conducted by the Ottoman government caused ignorance to be rife among Arabs. The subsequent mandatory policies in the domain of education perpetuated this ignorance and created the detachment of the Jewish system of education. Nevertheless, the detachment was not restricted to the educational domain. On account of the denial of inclusion of Arabs to other social, cultural and economic areas controlled by Jews, the so-called positive effects of the Zionist colonization hardly accrued to the Arab community. Besides, although the Ottoman authorities by and large did not display sympathy towards the Zionist demands, the Zionist course of action succeeded in achieving its goals as a result of the tenacious work of the leading Zionists. Moreover, in order to facilitate the Jewish national home, the British mandate rule attempted to dismantle the conditions of the late Ottoman period, most

importantly the cultivation methods and the land tenure, that undermined the performance of the Zionist colonization and hindered the efficient conduct of the mandate government.

In the third chapter, it was set as an indisputable fact that the controversy between the terms of the McMahon-Hussein letters and the Balfour declaration forms the essence of the Palestinian problem. As soon as the alliance of the Arabs became useless, the British did not see any offense in withdrawing her support from them. When it was realized that a cooperation made with the Jews would be far more beneficial, the Arabs, their concerns and desires were set aside. Yet, because Britain did not want to alienate the Arabs without guaranteeing her position, she resorted to every misleading attempt to persuade them about the commitment and trustworthiness of Britain. Unfortunately, the easy persuasion of the members of the Hashemite dynasty damaged their reputation among Arabs.

As a consequence of the Balfour declaration, the Zionist movement obtained an excellent opportunity to materialize its goals through colonizing Palestine. The British backing behind the Zionists and all the privileges bestowed to them during the mandate rule speeded up this colonization and made it easier for them to attain the things that otherwise would have been unimaginable for them. Inevitably, the Balfour declaration paved the way for a marked increase in the Jewish immigration and land sales. These phenomena that gripped Palestine caused many socio-economic and socio-political transformations and created irreversible impacts on the Arab community. All these constituted the main matter for discussion throughout the thesis.

Contrary to the assertions by the Zionists which sustained that the outcome of the side by side existence of the native Arabs and settler Jews would produce constructive effects on the Arab society, the Zionists sidelined the Arab community from their nation building process and did not care for the well-being of the Arabs. Therefore, the Zionist colonization was regarded as an unmitigated egocentric movement. The fixed preference to hire Jewish laborers in the Jewish work places proves that accomplishing their national goals had priority over gaining material benefits in the pre-state period. It was concluded that the choice of the Zionists to enable an economic development that would be able to stand on its own feet smoothed the path to an independent Jewish state. Although it was impossible for the Jewish economic sector to break its relations with the Arab economy and the interaction between two economies continued, the logic behind creating a self-sufficient Jewish economy played a decisive role on the relations between Arabs and Jews.

Besides, concentrating their colonization activities in Palestine rather than another part of the world that would have been economically more promising strengthens the argument that Zionists were first and foremost interested in their national ideals. In a short span of time it became apparent that the neither the Jews nor the British were intent to settle

for a national home; the ultimate purpose of the Balfour declaration was to create an independent Jewish state. Although most of the prominent Zionists made declarations that contained intentions about peaceful cohabitation of Jews and Arabs, they craved for displacing the Arabs and settling to the lands that were purged from them. The British and the Zionist movement together focused all their attention and invested all their energy in the achievement of this ultimate goal in such an extensive way that the Arab society was treated as if they were only worthy of negligence and nothing more. Neither their living standards raised, nor their industry and agriculture witnessed any considerable progress. Instead, the British authorities preferred affecting improvements on the Jewish industry and agriculture by adopting tax policies and granting concessions to this end. The benefits derived by the Palestinian Arabs from the transmittance of Jewish technology and modern techniques remained limited. Palestine had already been introduced to the capitalist mode of production through the increasing European penetration during the late Ottoman period. The socio-economic system of the Palestinian Arabs did not render the espousal of the capitalist production methods simple. Although they relatively succeeded in preserving their traditional system prior to the commencement of the Zionist colonization, this colonization movement with its accompanying capital, modern technology and European-type production methods put the Arab agriculture and industry on the spot.

The conclusion that was drawn from all the unfavorable conditions accompanied the Jewish immigration and land settlement was that as soon as the Zionist ideology was formulated and the Jewish immigrants who were indoctrinated with the political consciousness that this ideology motivated began to settle in Palestine, the indignation of Arabs obtained a political character. In other words, the Jewish national movement and Arab national movement created political repercussions in Palestine just about the same time. When the Zionist movement found a favorable milieu in Palestine to flourish as a result of the British sponsorship, Arabs came to understand that they would have to cope with difficulties. They tried diplomatic means to prevail on Britain to change her course. At times they gave up their hopes about having been given the chance to be treated on a par with the Jews, they resorted to violence against the immigrants and expressed their discontent against the mandate government. Thereby sporadic disturbances occurred. As a consequence of the close examination of these disturbances in detail, it emerged that as the grievance of the Arab community escalated, the intensity of the clashes escalated as well.

The Zionist plan of action was such an orderly and well-worked scheme that until the war circumstances came into the picture in 1938, the Zionists displayed a great success in receiving international support to their cause. When they sensed that their cause was being jeopardized, they took considerable measures to render the step abortive. As a result

of the Zionist pressures the British conducted a pro-Zionist line of policy which ignored the concerns of the Arab population. This situation prevailed until the significance of Palestine for British imperial interests once again appeared prior to the World War II as it was the case in the World War I. The impending war burdened the British with extraordinary obligations and for this reason she sacrificed her good relations with the Zionists. The need to ameliorate the tense relations with the Arab world overweighed the need to preserve the already good relations with the Zionists. The new policy formulated in the White Paper of 1939 severed the British-Jewish alliance irreversibly. However, as soon as the war began this statement of policy died and right after the end of the war the White Paper was completely shelved. This can be said to be a predictable pattern of British imperial behavior, since it held a few similarities with the situation before and after World War I. In both situations, there was an atmosphere that was promising for the Arabs during the war, but Britain retreated from her previous plausible position following the termination of these two wars.

As a mandatory power what the British should have done was to implement an affirmative action to the advantage of Arab community rather than leaving them and their national movement at the verge of collapse in the face of the Zionist threat. At this point, however, it should be noted that the leaders of the Arab society could not contribute to the advancement of the Arab national movement on account of perceiving the family interests as more decisive and superior than the communal interests of the whole Arab nation. If the incidents that took place in Palestine and the fundamental transformations witnessed had been perceived accurately and eminently as they were experienced in their social context and if a pristine perspective had been developed, it could have been within the bounds of possibility to oversee the unwanted events no matter how much assertiveness Zionism posed. Only the British should have nurtured a sincere desire to hold the balance between Jews and Arabs. If such a course of action had been adopted by Britain from the very beginning, it might have impeded her from reinforcing the clandestine Zionist designs or at least enabled her to demarcate a line to stop the aggressive Zionist policies from undermining the Palestinian Arabs as soon as it was realized that the Zionist colonization did not generate the anticipated positive effects on Arab economy and social formation.

Since the British authorities did not prefer to embrace such a line of action, the Zionists declared the establishment of their independent state right after the end of the mandate period. The persistence of British in countenancing the Jews eventually bore its fruit and thus Israel has taken its place among the other sovereign states of the world. Although the British mandate rule had been designed by the League of Nations as a transition period for Palestine until it acquires the necessary competence to self-govern

itself, the political, social, economic and cultural discrimination exhibited towards the Jewish community facilitated and precipitated the creation of the Zionist state which the Jews had been working for since the turn of the 19th century. On the other hand, in face of the Zionist political achievements the plight of the Palestinian Arabs exacerbated. As a consequence of the acts of violence implemented by the Jewish terrorist bands in 1940s, the seizure of the Arab lands by Jews eased. The British authorities proved ineffective in forestalling the forced departure of the Arabs from their homelands, for the incidents turned out to be uncontrollable for them. The Arabs that stayed behind and their descendants have become the subjects of the repressive Israeli rule. When the Zionist-prone British mandate rule was followed by the yoke of Israel, the Arabs became more desperate in attaining the objective of an independent Palestinian state with an Arab majority, since the Jews outnumbered the Arabs in a land that used to belong to the Arabs for centuries. The scope and applicability of this Palestinian state has been restricted to a large extent and the present adverse situation in Palestine that has been persisting at the disadvantage of the Arabs for almost a century was the artifact of Britain. If the British mandate had offered a just government for all the inhabitants of Palestine, the Palestinian question would have never given rise to this prolonged conflict between Israel and the Arab world and all the bitter fights between the Jews and Palestinian Arabs would have never occurred. The Palestine question has become a deadlock that poses a fundamental obstacle to the achievement of peace in the Middle East on account of the British imperial and colonial policies.

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