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British Imperialism in the Middle East  
between 1915 and 1925

Roger Edward Herst

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and  
Ordination

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Referee: Dr. Ellis Rivkin

Dedicated to

MIMI

## Digest

In British Imperialism in the Middle East between 1915 and 1925 I attempt to analyze British Foreign Policy in the Levant from slightly before the First World War until the end of Herbert Samuel's administration in Palestine. This policy is set within a background of the general power structure between the Allied and Central Powers. By a delineation of the salient features of this power structure, I have tried to clarify not only the implementation of British Imperial Policy, but its objectives as well.

Chapters IV and V are an enumeration and analysis of the pre-war and war-time agreements and treaties entered into by His Majesty's Government with the Hejazian Arabs, French, Italians, Russians, and Zionists. In these agreements definite patterns are manifest in which the English Government achieved two ends. First, it dismembered the Ottoman Turkish Empire and absorbed its territories into European colonies. Secondly, it disenfranchised France from her claims over the Middle East. In these chapters there is only brief allusion to the actual British military campaign because there already exist many fine studies dedicated entirely to British military history.

In Chapter VI I resume the analysis of British Imperial Policy after the Armistice with the Turks. In this section there is a lengthy consideration of the administrative



problems which faced the Military Government, The Occupied Enemy Territories Administration. Chapters VII through IX proceed to treat the special problems dealing with Anglo-French relations over Syria and Palestine. Because of their intrinsic relation to this power struggle, analyses of the Franco-British petroleum concessions, the Peace Conference of Versailles, and the Arab National Movement follow.

In Chapters X and XI one finds a consideration of how Great Britain, having had achieved her objectives in military conquest and territorial annexation, attempted to withdraw from the original pre-war and war-time promises which she had made with the Allies. Chapter X deals with the withdrawal of Transjordan from the domain of the Balfour Declaration, and Chapter XI, with the final settlement of British claims over the Ottoman Territories. In the Middle East Conference both the Arab Nationalists and the Zionists learned how Britain's original treaty obligations were to be violated so that His Majesty's Government could restructure the powers in the Middle East to suit her imperial advantage.

Chapters XII and XIV treat the complex of problems which Great Britain faced with the establishment of a Civil Administration to succeed the Military Government of General Allenby. Concomitantly, there are analyses of colonial finance and English policy with respect to

the Arab-Zionist controversies. Finally, in order to complete the picture of British Imperial Policy in the Middle East, Chapters XV and XVI deal with the attitudes and reactions of the American and French Governments with respect British ambitions in the Levant.

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## I. PREFACE

British Imperialism in the Middle East between 1915 and 1925 is an attempt to analyze selected elements of British imperial policy in the Middle East and to reconstruct the significant sequence of events out of which British colonial policy in Palestine was formulated. I shall try to trace the motives, plans, and objectives of British policy in the Middle East from the time of its inception until its actual implementation during the first Mandatory Government under Herbert Samuel.

This study is focused on the years between 1915 and 1925 to assist in the understanding of a segment of British colonial policy prior to the establishment of the States of Israel, Syria, United Arab Republic, Jordan, and Lebanon. This policy differed in many respects from British imperialism elsewhere simply because it was the child of the First World War - two centuries after Great Britain had already extended her mighty Empire. Since the successful establishment of the various Arab and Jewish states, it has been popular to look back on British Imperialism with scorn and disparagement. I shall attempt, however, to avoid this type of value judgment and concentrate on the planning and implementation of British policy. Regardless of our current feelings about colonialism or nationalism, it is important to determine what actually occurred.

Since the British controlled Palestine by a Mandate from the League of Nations (ratified in 1923), it is

revealing to study the history of Zionism along with the Mandatory Period. The British Mandatory provided the soil in which the roots of modern Zionism and the Jewish National Home were planted. Since 1948 it has been attractive to look back on the establishment of the State of Israel - forgetting that its success was due to several facts, inter alia, that it resulted from several groups of people working at cross-purposes for specialized and selfish ends. The early Zionists, such as Weizmann, Ussishkin, and Sokolov were only one group out of several who were involved in Middle Eastern politics. And it is only due to certain external circumstances that their causes succeeded, while others failed. It is believed that this study will reveal much about the British attitude towards Zionism and how the English originally attempted to use Zionism for ends other than which it was intended by its founders.

While the primary purpose of this thesis is to reconstruct British Imperial policy in the Middle East, the secondary purpose is to demonstrate the forces against which and out of which Zionism blossomed. The Jewish National Home grew out of a struggle for power in which Jewish interests were only a small part. Once Zionism succeeded, however, it was natural that the various powers, Britain, France, Italy, the Soviet Union, and the United States, should claim that their intentions were always bent towards its resolution. But it is safe to say that,

at the time when the Turkish Empire was being systematically dismembered, these powers utilized Zionism for their personal ends. These ends, it will be shown, were not altogether compatible with the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

The reconstruction of this segment of history has several distinguishing features. First, the period directly following the First World War was generally characterized by clandestine politics, secret agreements, and international intrigue. Secondly, it marked the transition between the decay of overt Colonialism and the rise of Nationalism. Thirdly, it came at a time when the world power structure was undergoing major alterations. And finally, it was particularly complex because of the numerous nations involved.

To date, the availability of documents and secondary works concerning this period of British Imperialism is limited. While enough material has been released by the governments involved to provide for a spotty recreation of events, much of the literature is still secret. Moreover, many of the agreements and conversations of importance were perhaps never documented at all. The result is that it is impossible to answer all the questions which arise out of the study of this period. But the picture, while not altogether clear, does not render the effort futile. It is possible to arrange the events in such a way that reasonable conjectures concerning the missing links can

be made. These assumptions, it is hoped, may be supported by general picture in which they are made to fit.



## II. INTRODUCTION

Because the British Government was eminently successful in territorial acquisition directly after the First World War, it is attractive to believe that she operated on the basis of a "master plan." I shall not attempt to discover this plan, but rather try to illustrate how Great Britain's success came as a result of masterful planning in two realms: in diplomacy and in action. Great Britain's skillful diplomacy at the conference table became the touchstone for action in the field, and her adroit maneuvers in the field became the springboard for successful diplomacy at the conference table. This masterful planning required visionary but concrete imaginative but realistic thinking. It required a firm command of historic sequence, a true evaluation of the important and relevant events of the times, and a sagacious insight into the moves and operations of the other powers as they manipulated themselves.

The determination and fulfillment of an imperial policy does not occur within a vacuum. Opposing parties, with conflicting interests, also operate within a given frame of reference. Often different factions will attempt to use the same modes of operation to further their individual designs. Thus, the maneuvering cannot be altogether offensive in nature and geared in a single direction. Imperial policy cannot always be overt and direct, but must assume subtlety, secrecy, and abberation. As the imperial



power moves and feigns in realms of diplomacy and action, it must simultaneously cover, defend against, and counter the moves and feigns of the opposition. Therefore, the planning of such a policy cannot come as a result of a single plan whereby an imperial nation implements its objectives in a linear direction.

The choice of an imperial policy must be governed not only by its original aims and objectives, but also by the policies of the other participants. It must be, as well, determined by the chances which the government wishes to take, the expenses it believes it will accrue, and the extent it is willing to sacrifice one goal for another. Finally, it must be influenced by the risks and expenses it believes the opposition will assume.

The subtle play between long-term and short-term objectives demands that certain goals be abandoned in the pursuit of others. In general, the success or failure of an imperial policy is proportional to the ability of the government to choose wisely and cautiously its long-term and short-term goals. The government must be flexible in adapting its policy as the necessity arises. It must be able to turn an event, whether in its favor or not, into a touchstone for further policy in the desired direction. Moreover, it must be able to consider the wide range of possibilities for short-term means in order to achieve its long-term ends.

The attempt to define a moral position with respect to

some short-term goals when long-term objectives are involved is not always justified. Similarly, the confusion concerning the moral status of long-term aims cannot exonerate nor condemn the morality or immorality of the short-term means. Morality is always a point in issue when loss of life is involved. Often some lives must be unavoidably sacrificed in order to preserve more lives at a future time. It is, therefore, rather futile to make moral judgments concerning the means towards any given end, whether it be short or long-term.

In summary, it is most advantageous that an imperial nation commit itself to a policy which will allow the greatest number of possibilities for its day-to-day implementation. It must balance its short-term goals with its long-term objectives so that regardless of what might transpire beyond its immediate control, the government may react in such a way as to further its cause. The proper balance between the short-term and the long-term program is, perhaps, the essential feature of successful imperial policy.

### III. THE POWER STRUCTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

#### 1. The Pre War Position of Turkey

With the outbreak of hostilities between the Central and Allied Powers in July of 1914 it became apparent to the British, French, Italian, and Russian Governments that the Middle East would become an important military, economic, and political theater. Virtually the entire Middle East was then under the domination of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, which was a decentralized administration that was described as early as 1874 by Benjamin Disraeli as the "Sick Man of Europe." Since the time of the Crimean War (1853-56) Ottoman Turkey had served England's colonial system. Great Britain and Turkey had been loosely allied. Ottoman Turkey had served as a "buffer-state" between the territories of traditional enemies, the United Kingdom and Russia. So long as the Dardanelles remained under the control of Turkey, the Russian fleet was bottled up in the Black Sea and could not challenge British ascendancy on the high seas. British interests in Egypt, Cyprus, the Persian Gulf, and Gibraltar were protected from Russian attack. Meanwhile, the French and Italian Governments were contented with their respective domination of the northwestern and southwestern Mediterranean.

When the Crown-Prince Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo and the Central Powers scrambled to support the German cause, it became evident that the strategic location of the Ottoman Empire could be of great use to the Allies.

The western European nations still enjoyed the prime of their colonial days and they were greedy to reclaim the German territories once parcelled to Otto Bismark. Moreover, they were eager to keep any new lands which would open in the future to the colonial pool out of the hands of competitors. Since the Crimean War it was known that the Ottoman Empire was "easy picking" for western imperialism. But for years Ottoman sovereignty had been guaranteed by the fact that the European powers could not agree on who should assume control over her valuable territories. According to the modus vivendi of colonial domination, the European nations felt it was better to neutralize Turkey rather than hand her over to competitors. At the time it was more practical to allow a neutral power to retain control rather than give any friendly nation more than its share. Hence, for years Turkey, though the "Sick Man of Europe," retained her Empire and allied status.

With the outbreak of the War many factors arose which changed Great Britain's attitude towards her Ottoman Allies. First, it was evident in 1914 that the War was going to spread and that the Russians would want to expand on the Eastern and Southern fronts. Turkey seemed to waiver between alliance with the Allies and the Central Powers. Though Russia had early joined the Allied cause, Britain had no intention of letting her resume old feuds with the Turks and gain an access into the Mediterranean Sea via the Dardanelles. For the British it was important

that her Russian allies be contained in the Black Sea.

Secondly, the need for petroleum in the new mechanized warfare of the First World War became an added inducement for English mercantile interests. At the time of the outbreak of hostilities, the known world petroleum supply was limited to relatively few geographic areas. Britain was dependent on the oilfields near Mosul and in the Persian Gulf. She had been investing with Germany and Turkey in an international petroleum trust in Mesopotamia. But the advent of the war had endangered Britain's petroleum supply and made impossible international cooperation in this field.

Thirdly, the Germans were making preparations to install naval bases for their surface and sub-surface fleets all around the Eastern Mediterranean. From the beginning of the war, they had a mission in Yemen to establish a base in the Red Sea challenging British ascendancy in Suez and the Persian Gulf. The plans of the German Admiralty would have greatly endangered the nerve center of British trade and communications, and it might have cut off England from her major colony in India.

Fourthly, Britain realized that control of the Eastern Mediterranean land mass which belonged to the Ottoman Empire would be essential not only for defense, but offense as well. Should Turkey enter the war on the side of the Central Powers, her Empire would provide valuable bases from which an attack on the enemy might be launched

via the Levant. The War on the Western Front did not progress satisfactorily, and, as General Edmond Allenby advised from the beginning, the Central Powers would be more vulnerable to an attack through their "soft eastern shoulder" than a front-all assault from the West.

Lastly, Great Britain wanted to be in a position to establish a stable arrangement between Italy and Greece with respect to the islands on the Eastern shores of the Aegean Sea. So long as Turkey controlled these islands, Britain was powerless to end the constant feuding in the Eastern Mediterranean. The prospects of these islands falling into unfriendly hands, left His Majesty's Government with nothing short of combat to stop the island jumping expansionism of the Greeks and Italians.

At the beginning of the War, Great Britain was faced with three alternatives with respect to the Ottoman Empire. She could attempt to guarantee Turkey's neutrality and prevail upon the Reich to do so as well. She could attempt to persuade the Turks to enter the War on the side of the Entente Cordiale. Or she could encourage Ottoman Turkey to enter the War on the side of the Central Powers. In the latter case, England would be free to invade and dismember Turkey in such a way as to advance British interests by means of a permanent annexation of territory.

If the Turks were to remain neutral throughout the hostilities, the British would stand to lose the rich



petroleum fields within Ottoman control. These had already been parcelled away to the Germans through legitimate business agreements between the Turkish and German Governments prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Nor would Britain be in a position to resist the establishment of German naval bases in the Red Sea. In addition, Great Britain could not be certain that Russia would not turn against her traditional enemy, Turkey, and attempt to force her way free into the Mediterranean. Lastly, England would have no forward bases from which to attack the Central Powers through the Balkans. Nor would she be in a position to settle the disputes between herself, Greece, and Italy over the control of the Aegean Islands.

If, on the other hand, Turkey should enter the War on the side of the Allies, the Russian fleet would be "let out of the hatch" in the Black Sea. Surely, the Russians would not hesitate to capture Constantinople at the first opportunity. Moreover, when hostilities would terminate Turkey would certainly come to the peace negotiations with legitimate and equal rights with the Allied Powers. Turkey would retain control over her petroleum resources and might make an authentic claim to new territories as fair booty of war. Whatever her armies could conquer would eventually be annexed to the already pregnant Ottoman Empire. But more important than all these considerations is, that should Turkey enter the War as an ally of the Entente Great Britain could make no claims on the vast

style

territories within the Ottoman Empire which she had coveted for hundreds of years. It was in the last analysis, easier to annex the conquered territories of an enemy than dismember a friends.

The German High Command must have been aware of the advantages which appeared to the English Government by having Turkey enter the War along with the Central Powers. For obvious reasons the German Government wanted Turkish participation against the Allies. It would have appeared that both Great Britain and Germany required only the proper incident to push Turkey into alliance with the Central Powers. The British were quick to seize the opportunity.

First, Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, cancelled orders for delivery of two heavy battleships which were to be purchased by the Turks. Without these ships Constantinople was laid open to the mercy of the Russian Navy. Then, the Royal Navy allowed the German battleship, Goeben, to sail unmolested through British controlled waters into the Dardanelles to Constantinople. The Germans took advantage of the situation and turned the Goeben over to the Turkish navy for the protection of the Dardanelles from Russian attack.<sup>1</sup> With Germans still operating the vessel, the Goeben proceeded to bombard Russian ports - having the naval advantage in armor and guns over all Russian ships. Once Turkey had secured herself from Russian attack and was insured of German



assistance, it was an easy step to declare her alliance and participation with the Central Powers on August 2, 1914.<sup>2</sup>

Even if the British had not actually prodded Turkey into the war against her, she had much to gain once the Ottoman Government had declared itself. England was then free to engage in military aggression against the Ottoman Empire. A successful conquest of the Middle East would place Great Britain in a position to defend strategic areas, fill the vacuum of power once assumed by the Turks, and discourage all nations (whether friendly or unfriendly) from annexing any of the Ottoman Territories.

## 2. The Allies and Their Objectives in the Turkish Empire

On December 21, 1912, the French Prime Minister made a public claim for French interests in Syria and Palestine. France, being a Catholic nation, made a plea as the protector of the Christians and their Religious Spots in the entire Holy Land. Later, in January of 1913, the French publically admitted that they were contemplating the aid of a Syrian nationalist revolt against the Turks.<sup>3</sup> Because the French feared British plans to extend their influence in Beirut, Damascus, and Northern Syria as they had done in all the other Muslim countries, the French established the Muslim-Christian Association in Paris to restore the Syrian Arab Caliphate in place of the British supported Sultans of Constantinople.<sup>4</sup> Both Great Britain and Turkey had

reason to be suspicious of France's attempt to extend French influence into the Middle East. With Turkey suddenly declaring herself as an enemy to the Entente Cordiale, France suddenly dissevered the bond of Franco-Arab unity which was beginning to give the Arab Nationalists some feeling of optimism. Since France, at the time, was not prepared to engage in military combat in the Middle East and could provide the Arabs with little more than lip-service for their national movement, the British were free to make their move.

The naval and aerial importance of Palestine to the British Military Command in late 1914 cannot be underestimated. In the Eastern Mediterranean, Haifa was a superior naval and commercial port to Malta since it was neither open to attack from Italy nor France. With Cyprus in control of the Royal Navy, it was practically invulnerable to attack from the West. Moreover, Palestine was the natural western terminus for the Indian Airline. In addition, British planners began to think about laying a pipeline from the Mosul oilfields to the Mediterranean, and the prospects of running such a pipe through Palestine seemed attractive. The Air Command was quick to realize how airplanes could be based at multiple airfields throughout the entire region as a first line of defense for the petroleum facilities further to the East.

British intentions with respect to the Ottoman Territories were also molded by a consideration of Italian

aggressive policies in Abyssinia in 1911 and 1912. With Italian naval bases in Abyssinia, the Italians were in a position to out-maneuver the Royal Navy in the Red Sea.<sup>5</sup> Even with Suez and Cyprus firmly under British fortification, her supply lines and communications remained in jeopardy so long as the Italians were not countered in the Red Sea. With Turkey allied to Germany, the British gained an opportunity to attack in Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula, and in this manner to establish British ports on the Red Sea in order to check Italian advances.

The English strove to dismember the Ottoman Empire without conceding any advantages to their traditional enemy, Russia, whom circumstances had made their ally. An unaided conquest of Ottoman Turkey in Anatolia would have been ideal because the British could exclusively control the Dardanelles. But this was impractical because England did not have sufficient military forces to mount such an operation. Thus, they had to accept help from the Entente Powers. From April to June, 1915, the British and French jointly attacked Gallipoli with a major expeditionary force. But having failed to gain their strategic objectives, they were forced to withdraw from Asia Minor altogether.

After the discouraging defeat at Gallipoli, the British High Command began contemplating an attack on Turkey somewhere in the South. A defeat of the Turks at Alexandria would place Britain in a position to make another assault on Anatolia and perhaps the Straights. This plan

was, however, stiffly criticized by the French Military Attaché in London when he presented the Chief of the Imperial General Staff with a note delineating French aims in Syria (even prior to the Sykes-Picot Agreement).<sup>6</sup> Because the War was progressing so poorly on the Western Front and because the British suffered from lack of manpower, the General Staff did not press its plan to invade Alexandretta. Out of deference to the French, the proposal to attack Syria was postponed indefinitely.

The War in the West cost the British people a high price in human sacrifice for the trench warfare had bogged down to a stale-mate. But the British Cabinet would not relinquish sufficient men for a new campaign in the Middle East even though General Allenby had promised that a British victory was certain. Some members of both the Cabinet and General Staff realized that a military victory was, in fact, quite within reason. Further, they realized that the gains of a successful campaign in the Levant justified the gamble. For them, the decision of the Cabinet in December of 1914 to withdraw eastern defense of the Suez Zone to the Canal itself became their tour d'force. It was an opportunity to mold British public opinion firmly behind their program. Lord Kitchener, then the Governor in Egypt, protested. The others remained silent - waiting patiently for the proper moment to force the hand of the opposition.

By January of 1915, the Turks were quick to seize the

advantage afforded to them by the British. It was felt that the Desert of Sinai forbade the type of logistics which would have been involved in a successful operation against Suez. Furthermore, the Turkish navy was no match for the Royal Navy in the Southeastern Mediterranean, thus precluding an attack on Suez from the Sea. Nevertheless, in a prodigious feat the Turkish army succeeded on February 2, 1915, in transporting 20,000 troops with four 7 inch field guns to the Canal itself.<sup>7</sup> After shelling a few ships in the Canal, the Turks were forced to withdraw. Though it is apparent that many of the General Staff were aware of the impending attack on Suez, they did little to stop it. While the German Wehrmacht was building a railroad to support the Turkish advance troops in Sinai, it was not occupied in organizing the crack Turkish troops in Yemen for an attack on Aden. The British could afford to wait until the railroad was finished before making their move. When the Turks attacked the Canal again on August 2, 1916, the British Cabinet was more willing to listen to David Lloyd George, Edmond Allenby, Lord Kitchener, Herbert Samuel, and Winston Churchill who advocated a strong British offensive in Palestine. Their opinion was even more appealing after the chance to advance on the Dardanelles without Russian support was lost. According to the Constantinople Agreement of March and April of 1915, the British were forced to concede to the Russians and French their share in the prospective new colonial territories.



Russia was to gain complete control over the Straights. Thus, Great Britain's opportunity to capture Turkish in Anatolia was totally lost in the Gallipoli fiasco of May 1915.

The Turkish attacks on Suez, which the Egyptian Expeditionary Force repelled, were neither a surprise nor a source of fear. During the building of the railroad from Al Arish to Suez, the Royal Navy never attempted to land Commandos and sabotage the operation. When the Ottoman soldiers finally made their assault they were easily repulsed with little loss of life or damage. These attacks were, however, cleverly used in England to foment public opinion concerning the circumstances in the East. The attack in February made the British Cabinet agree to defend the Canal slightly east of Suez, at Romani.<sup>8</sup> The August attack, defended by Sir Archibald Murray, turned the tide in British policy. At that time the British Government in London realized the opportunities which presented themselves.

### 3. The Petrograd Memorandum and the Constantinople Agreement

After the Allied defeat at Gallipoli, the Russians seized the initiative in opening secret negotiations with France. These negotiations, which were both verbal and written, later became known as the "Constantinople Agreement." In an exchange of letters between M. Paleologue and M. Sazonoff, the French agreed to recognize Russian claims to the Bosphorous Straights in exchange for the

Russian recognition of French claims to Syria should the war turn in favor of the Allies.<sup>9</sup> M. Paleologue sent to M. Sazonoff on March 26, 1915, the following confirming note:

During the conversation which you were good enough to hold with me this afternoon you were pleased to state, in response to my inquiry, that if the Government of the Republic were to receive the agreement of the British Government to the inclusion of Palestine into French Syria, the Imperial Government would have no objections to it.<sup>10</sup>

The French were eager to press their old claims for a united French Syria because they feared that the British would withdraw troops from the failing Western Front in France in order to engage the Turks for their own imperial advantage in the Middle East. With a decisive British campaign in the Levant, the French feared that in the ultimate peace conference the British would be in a position to present a fait accompli of colonial annexation.<sup>11</sup>

The British Government had no alternative but to accept the general conditions of the Constantinople Agreement between Russia and France. While England could no longer entertain hopes of controlling Constantinople, she could try to prevent the Russians from stepping into Anatolia. In March of 1915, Sir Edward Grey sent M. Sazonoff the following note which became known as the Petrograd Memorandum:

His Majesty's Government considers it essential, the moment the expected disappearance of the Turks from Constantinople occurs, to establish in some other place an independent Moslem Power as a political centre of Islam. The existence of such a Power, which must be completely Moslem if not absolutely Turkish character,

is absolutely necessary, and the Holy Places must naturally form the centre. It is likewise absolutely necessary to answer the question whether any other territory in Asia Minor is to be included in its composition, and if the answer is in the affirmative, which territory?"<sup>12</sup>

During the negotiations, the British were forced to counter France's claim over the entire area of Greater Syria (what today corresponds to Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan and Israel). Sir Edward Grey arranged with M. Paul Cambon for the British recognition of certain French claims in the Lebanon and Northern Syria, in exchange for the French acceptance of an internationalized Palestine. In addition, Russia and France agreed to a British proposal to supervise certain zones in Persia and to guarantee an independent Muslim power in the Arabian Peninsula with full control over the Muslim Holy Places.<sup>13</sup>

While it might appear that the British relinquished zones of influence important to her larger designs in the Middle East, the Constantinople and Petrograd Agreements were actually England's first step in the long battle to disenfranchise France of her claims to Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine. Though she was forced to accept Russian terms for the sake of Allied unity, only Great Britain was in a position to make her claims anything more than a paper empire. Only England was prepared to take the necessary steps to actualize her imperial dreams. From a position in which Sir Edward Grey had said in 1912 that Britain had no aims or political designs of any sort in Palestine or the



Middle East, His Majesty's Government had maneuvered into a position by 1915 where it was able to seize the greatest piece of Ottoman real estate. And while the French had claimed all of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine in December, 1912, by 1916 the Government of the Republic was forced to relinquish all claims on Ottoman territories except those on Cilicia, Northern Syria, and Lesser Armenia.

What began as a series of letters between the French and Russian Governments dealing with the dismemberment of Asiatic Turkey, was enlarged to include an Anglo-Franco-Italian Agreement of April 26, 1915 (known as the "Treaty of London"). This treaty was essentially an attempt to include Italy in the proposed spoils of war when the Turkish Empire would collapse. In this agreement the Italian Government, which had entered the War claiming sole right to defend Catholic interests in Palestine, had retreated to a position where she claimed only limited portions of Southern Anatolia. The British Government, in this secret agreement agreed to recognize Italy's right to these spoils should the War shift in favor of the Allies. In return, the Italians consented to support the British plans in Arabia - recognizing that the Muslim Holy Places would remain under the authority of an independent Muslim power.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4. The Holy Places

Control of the Muslim Holy Places, as far as Great Britain was concerned, represented a power in the realm of

politics far above that of religious ascendancy. The Vatican, Italy, and France had made substantial claims for colonial empires on the basis of being the protectors of the Christian populations of the world. Great Britain, being a Protestant country, had never been able to exploit the organized Church to further claims for a protectorate of religious communities. Nevertheless, England had traditionally been the European master of the Muslim nations. At least 40% of her Indian and Oriental populations were Muslim, as well as large numbers in her African colonies. Control over the religious Holy Spots of Islam, therefore, represented political power not to be underestimated. It was a symbol to unify and solidify the sympathies and sentiments of a large portion of the peoples in the Orient.

Under the aegis of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, Islamic institutions had been strongly centralized in Constantinople. The Sultan was appointed as Allah's representative on earth, and he assumed the historic title and duties of the Caliph. When Turkey entered the War on the side of the Central Powers, Great Britain astutely realized the opportunity to capitalize on the split political sentiments of the large population of Muslims in the Middle East. Great Britain sought to withdraw the Caliphate from the Turks, who had used its authority to oppress the Arab Muslims, and make it a Holy Arab Office. But more important, the English wanted to insure that the Caliphate would not fall under

the aegis of the Russians, French, or Italians.

The Muslim Holy Spots had been traditionally located in Mecca, Jerusalem, and Constantinople - three geographic areas which were of supreme importance in the new vision of British imperialism just prior to the War. Never underestimating the force of religious sentiment in the East, Sir Edward Grey realized that if Britain could control the Muslim Holy Spots and keep them from the hands of the Allies or Central Powers, she could win a major victory for British colonialism. Hence, during the Petrograd Agreement, England settled for an independently controlled Anatolia in order to guarantee that the Russians would not seize Constantinople. In addition, His Majesty's Government argued for an independently controlled Hejaz (the western Arabian Peninsula) to keep the Germans from the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Finally, Great Britain forced France to concede an Internationalized Zone around Jerusalem in order to dilute old French claims for a full protectorate in Palestine. It was Britain's plan to centralize Muslim leadership in the Hejaz - far from the influence of any other European power. With the Imirship and Caliphate solidified in Mecca, England could effectively control the entire Middle Eastern Muslim community. With the Hejaz dependent upon Britain's protection (c.f. the Petrograd Memorandum), and Internationalized Zone around Jerusalem, and the new independent Muslim leadership removed from Constantinople - Britain's "Sphere of Influence" was

greatly enlarged. Moreover, by appealing to the Muslim Arabs, England could neutralize the Djihad (the Holy War of Islam declared against the Allies) and reestablish Muslim sympathy for the Allied cause.

At the very beginning of the First World War, the Entente had reached many decisions concerning the dismemberment of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Even before the enemy was vanquished Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy had come to tentative agreements as to how they would annex the territories once dominated by the "Sick Man of Europe." Indeed, it appears that their participation in the War was greatly influenced by the thought of imperial gain. The treaties and agreements were, however, only paper. It remained for the Allies to move from the conference table and provide a military victory to realize their dreams.

#### IV. THE BRITISH PRE-WAR STRATEGY

##### 1. The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence

It was obvious to certain members of the British General Staff that regardless of which European powers laid claims to territories within the Ottoman Turkish Empire, when the War would end control of these territories would be decided on the basis of possession as a fait accompli. If Britain could acquire Mosul (with its rich oilfields), a Mediterranean port capable of making this oil accessible to the West, and secure the defense of Suez against a land attack from the East, she would be satisfied. Thus, on paper Britain could afford to promise the Allied Powers almost everything they desired for the sake of unity in the European War. Seasoned diplomats realized that these agreements would be more or less meaningless at the actual termination of the War. The French were bogged down in the defence of France. The Russians were occupied with their defense of Poland, and the Italians, in the Austrian Alps. This left only Great Britain with a free hand to move against the coveted territories under the control of the weak and crumbling Turkish Empire. If the British moved fast enough in 1916 and 1917 they could complete their incursion into Ottoman lands without the help of Allied Powers, and then when the peace would finally come, they might distribute the spoils of war according to their own designs.

Early in February of 1914 (five months before the War began), Abdullah, the son of Sherif Hussein of the Hejaz, sought to probe the British in Egypt concerning the possibilities for supporting an Arab revolt in the Arabian Peninsula. Ronald Storrs, the Oriental Secretary under Lord Kitchener, discouraged Abdullah both in February and later in April. But in September, Kitchener instructed Storrs to inquire of Abdullah which way the Arabs of the Hejaz would turn if Turkey should enter the War with the Germans. Two facts are important with respect to this sudden change of attitude on the part of the British Foreign Office. First, the British suddenly reversed their position six weeks prior to the entrance of Turkey into the War. Secondly, at the time of Storrs' "inquiry and sounding," Lord Kitchener was in London helping to plan the decisive policy which was to alter the structure of Middle Eastern politics for decades.

Naturally, Great Britain preferred to attack Turkey without the assistance of European Allies. The British Expeditionary Force in Egypt was, however, in no condition for a major assault on Palestine. And there was little chance of transferring sufficient forces from the Western Front to strengthen the army in Egypt. Since the General Staff was of the opinion that Britain's first obligation was to France, Sir Edward Grey had to devise another means to achieve his ends. The Arabs of the Hejaz and Syria were restless after several abortive attempts at throwing off



their Turkish overlords. For centuries a deep enmity had developed between the Arabs and the Turkish administrators who governed in predominately Arab areas. The British were not slow to recognize the value which an Arab revolt in the desert would bring. In return for Arab military support on the southern and eastern flanks, the British were willing to grant recognition to certain demands for Arab independence. From the point of view of British strategy, an Arab revolt would cut Turkish communications with the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, and would pose an obstacle to Turko-German expansion southward. With Ibn Saud allied to Great Britain an unbroken belt of allied Arab tribes would stretch from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf - making both these waters safe for Allied traffic.

The Arabs were an ideal ally for Great Britain since their claims for nationalism would bar other European powers from usurping the fruits of the conquered territories. The British had many years of experience in tapping the resources of nationalist movements. They were well aware that the presence of a nationalist movement within a given arena did not preclude the conditions favorable to British Imperialism. Furthermore, Arab Nationalism could guarantee a front by which certain portions of the Ottoman Empire could be excluded from French and Russian "Spheres of Influence." An Arab revolt in the desert would be inexpensive in terms of life and money, but promised the same rewards as an extensive Anglo campaign.



Grey's first step was to replace the aging Kitchener in Egypt with someone who saw more clearly the advantages of an alliance with the Arabs. In January of 1915, Sir Henry McMahon took up duties as the High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan. It was within weeks after his arrival in Cairo that the Turks made their first attack on the Canal. Immediately following the attack the first reinforcements from Europe arrived under the command of Sir Archibald Murray.<sup>16</sup> It was McMahon's job to pave the way for a large scale British assault on Palestine and set forth the exact details of the alliance between the British and the Arabs of the Hejaz. The correspondence dealing with the latter function has become widely known as the "McMahon-Hussein Correspondence" - published in full by His Majesty's Stationery Office (Cmd. 5974 (1939)).

The purposes of the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence were, from the point of view of the British, to encourage the Arabs by promising them sovereignty in the future; and from the point of view of the Arabs, to get a clear idea of His Majesty's Government's intentions with respect to the Middle East. The British were interested in Arab participation, not only because they required assistance against the Turks, but because they wanted to counter the Djihad (Holy War) which was declared against the Allies by the Sultan in Constantinople. McMahon recognized that Sherif Hussein coveted the Caliphate, and if Britain could entice the Arabs into the war against the Sultan, the power of the Djihad

throughout the Middle and Far East would be diminished. It is worthy of note that England was faced with difficulties in mounting an Indian force to fight Turkey in Mesopotamia because many of the best soldiers in India were Muslims who refused to fight with the enemies of the Djihad.

The McMahon Correspondence was top secret and was not even revealed to Mark Sykes who was simultaneously negotiating with the French and Russians on the dissection of the Ottoman Empire. In defining the areas of Arab sovereignty, McMahon sought to exclude certain places in the Persian Gulf and along the Mediterranean Coast where there were complex European and Christian populations.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, he wanted to make certain that England's communications with and transportation from regions with valuable raw materials would not be included within Arab sovereignty. Great Britain desired a naval harbor at Haifa and a military base at Basra, such that no potential power in Bagdad could menace her oil resources or her communication with India. And in addition, because negotiations were simultaneously going on with France, His Majesty's Government did not wish to alienate the French by any promises of Arab independence in the Vilayets of Beirut or Western Syria. Lastly, McMahon was particularly ambiguous about the status of Palestine per-se. With the announcement of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 much misunderstanding was generated over the original intention of McMahon's letters. While the Arabs claimed that Palestine had already been

promised to them, Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, wrote a letter to the Arab Delegation in 1922 stating that McMahon had never intended to include Palestine within the dominion of Arab sovereignty. However, a careful reading of the correspondence will reveal that the wording of the July 14, 1915 letter was such as to deliberately deceive the Arabs into believing that Palestine was to be included within their independent sphere. Yet the wording was chosen to allow for a contrary interpretation should the necessity arise.<sup>18</sup>

On January 14, 1916, the series of exchanges between Hussein and McMahon were completed, and both parties had given provisional consent to the recommendations of the other. In Mecca, Sherif Hussein acted slowly and carefully. He had continuously failed to endorse the Sultan's plea for a Djihad, but he also failed to break with him by declaring allegiance with the Allies. A number of reasons can be given to explain his slowness. First, Hussein wanted to stall the British in the hope of forcing them to change their support for the French claims on Western Syria. Secondly, he was not certain that the Arab Nationalist Movement which had just begun to emerge secretly was, in fact, pledged to support his revolt.<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, he wanted to wait and see which way the War would go to throw his support on the side of the victors. The Turks themselves made attempts to woo the Arabs from alliance with the Allies. Mohammed Djemal, a leading

member of the Committee of Union and Progress who was also military Commander-in-Chief in Damascus, had explicit orders to go to the limits of forbearance in winning over Arab sympathies for the Central Powers.<sup>20</sup>

Along with Hussein's reluctance to jump into rebellion against the Turks was a certain sense of mortal fear involved with the consequences in the event of failure. Mohammed Djemal, though extending further guarantees of local autonomy and monetary inducements for loyalty to the Ottoman cause, ruthlessly suppressed all manifestations of Arab Nationalism. While the Turks had difficulty in discovering such movements in the Hejaz due to their dependence on Hussein's local authority, they caught and suppressed almost all Arabs who were connected with nationalist groups in both Syria and Palestine.<sup>21</sup> Involved therein were members of Syria's most prominent Arab families, such as that of Abdul Hadi in Damascus and the Mufti in Gaza. Suddenly, on May 6, 1916, Jemal Pasha executed over 100 Syrian Nationalists captured in Damascus. The news of this mass execution, along with the awareness of a new German military mission in Yemen influenced Hussein, on June 10, to lead a revolt against the Turks.

This revolt in the Hejaz, though later considered by some to be only a "side-show," was of great strategic advantage to the British. It has often been noted that the Arabs of the Hejaz were far less fighters for a national cause, than simple mercenaries who fought only

when paid by British gold at the rate of two British pounds per man per month, and four pounds per man with a camel.

The Government of India, which had hitherto controlled diplomacy with the Bedouin tribes in Central Arabia, had, though its emissary, Captain Shakespeare of the Royal Navy, contacted Ibn Saud as early as October, 1914.<sup>22</sup> For the price of 5,000 pounds per month the British persuaded Ibn Saud not to attack his traditional enemy, Hussein, and to withhold support from the Turks.<sup>23</sup> In April of 1915, the British, through the India Office, had made a treaty with the Idrisi, a powerful Bedouin tribe situated northeast of Ibn Saud, to support Allied efforts against the Turks. Militarily, the alliances with Ibn-Saud and the Idrisi insured the British that the Turks could get no supplies for their armies in Mesopotamia through the Persian Gulf.

Thus with the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula firmly lined up against the Turko-German forces, the British could free what soldiers they could muster for the master assault on Palestine from the West. The Indian Army was also free to push northward after the coveted region of Mosul and Kirkuk. The British had tactfully maneuvered themselves into a position to conquer the entire Middle East with relatively little expense or manpower. Furthermore with the promises to their Arab Allies regions which were of little strategic value, His Majesty's Government



had captured the sympathies of the Arab peoples. (1) The Arabs supported the British Government because it opposed the detested Turkish Empire (2) it moved to frustrate French influence in the Orient<sup>24</sup> and (3) it provided limited promises for Arab sovereignty in the Hejaz and Eastern Syria.

## 2. The Sykes-Picot Agreement

The Petrograd and London Agreements between Russia, France, Britain, and Italy were, by the first quarter of 1916, already inadequate to guarantee the interests of the various European nations. Though the French and British had recognized the Russian claim on parts of Anatolia, it did not appear as if Russia would be able to make her claims a reality. Further, even though France had claims on Syria, she had no concrete plan for a military campaign in that region. Britain, however, was interested to enter new negotiations with the Allies, for it looked as if only she would be able to make her claims good. The McMahon Correspondence with Sherif Hussein had been kept secret until Britain could take steps to secure her position. With the Egyptian Expeditionary Force building up in Egypt and with several strong Allies surrounding her, Great Britain's bargaining power was greatly enhanced. At this time she was ready to open new negotiations with the understanding that separate action of rival powers might not be as effective in the acquisition of new

territories as the creation of common interests in the Middle East.

As a basis for negotiation with the French, the British Cabinet decided in October of 1915 to grant French claims to Syria in return for corresponding recognition of British interests in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. The Cabinet also sought to inform the French of the negotiations which had occurred between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sherif Hussein. In a conversation between Sir Edward Grey and M. Paul Cambon on October 21, 1915, the subject of the McMahon Correspondence was broached to the French.<sup>25</sup>

Later, on November 23, 1915, Sir Arthur Nicolson (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) told M. George Picot (specially appointed Minister to M. Paul Cambon) that the Arab claims for the four towns of Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, and Homs had been granted. M. Picot replied, on December 21st that after much difficulty the French Government had accepted the Arab demands for this zone in Eastern Syria. The acceptance of such terms, however, were under the condition that while the Arabs would administer the zone in question, it would be considered as a part of the French "Sphere of Influence."<sup>26</sup> With both the Arabs and the French apparently content, the field was open for the British to make their claims.

In November of 1915, the famous Sykes-Picot Negotiations began. They were simultaneous with negotiations between Sherif Hussein and Sir Henry McMahon. The purpose



of these latter negotiations was to delimit the zones wherein the Arabs might expect to gain independence once the hostilities with Turkey were successfully ended. But the purpose of the Sykes-Picot Negotiations was to designate the respective "Spheres of Influence" wherein the European Powers would have ultimate control - irrespective of the promises for Arab Independence. Thus, while McMahon attempted to induce the Arabs into joining the Allied cause, Mark Sykes was negotiating to divide up the spoils of war between the English and French. There can be little doubt that the two sets of negotiations were not fully consistent - though they were not entirely inconsistent either (as some late commentators have attempted to show).

The Sykes-Picot Agreement, as such, was characteristic of 19th century political treaties to carve up the territories of vanquished foes. The resolution of this treaty may have been fulfilled in the spirit of 19th century colonialism had it not been for the entrance of the United States into the War. We shall see later how 19th century Imperialism underwent certain changes due to the participation of this "upstart nation" in the War effort. It was actually these modifications within the power structure of the imperialistic system which led to the Mandate type of colonial domination.

In brief, the Sykes-Picot Agreement made provision for four geographic territories. The blue and red zones were to be completely controlled by the British and French

respectively. Two additional zones were established in which the Arabs would find autonomy, but nevertheless, exist within the "Spheres of Influence" of the respective European nations. "The division of the contemplated Arab State or Confederation into two zones of influence, placed under the different Powers, amounted to nothing less than a death sentence passed upon it before its creation. Both in spirit and letter the agreement gives every ground for belief that the annexation of the blue and red zones was contemplated as a preliminary to the annexation of A and B zones by the Powers respectively entrusted with their 'protection'."27

The Brown Zone designated in the Sykes-Picot Agreement surrounded Jerusalem and was to be internationally controlled, with the consultation of the Russians and the Sherif of Mecca.<sup>28</sup> The British Government was forced to accept an internationalization of the Brown Zone since Mark Sykes knew that the Russians felt they had equal rights with France and England. In effect, however, the internationalization of the Vilayet of Jerusalem was Britain's second attempt at whittling down the original French claims for control in all of Palestine and Syria. France was in no position to resist the Anglo-Russian pressure to internationalize an area which was thought to be already promised to the Arabs. Moreover, England promised to recognize France's claim over all of Western Syria and the Lebanon along with the port of Alexandretta.

In exchange, the French agreed to allow the British the ports of Haifa and Acre which were officially within the Brown (International) Zone.

In a new series of notes (April 1916) with the Russian Government, Sykes and Picot agreed with M. Sazonov of the Russian Foreign Affairs Department on the future of Palestine. In a confirming letter from M. Sazonoff to M. Paléologue, the Russians accepted the Franco-British proposals in exchange for Erzerum, van Bitles, Trebizond, and some other areas north and west of the Blue and "A" zones. The future of Palestine was to be met "...with a view of securing the religious interests of the Entente Powers, Palestine, and the Holy Places by separating it from Turkish territory and subjecting it to a special regime to be determined by agreement between Russia, France, and England..."<sup>29</sup>

Naturally, the topics of the Sykes-Picot and Petrograd Agreements were guarded from the Arabs and Italians. The secrecy of these agreements was destroyed during the Soviet Revolution in 1917 when the Bolsheviks released to the press several documents stolen from the secret files of the Foreign Ministry of the Czarist Russia. Prior to the publication of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Turkish intelligence had been quick to reveal its contents to Sherif Hussein in an attempt to illustrate how the British were planning to "double-cross" Arab Nationalism. Though the Turks tried to destroy the Anglo-Arab Alliance,

Hussein refused to be convinced about the authenticity of the Turkish reports.

### 3. The War

In May, 1916, the British War Office learned of the German mission under Baron von Stotzingen in Yemen and of the two new Turkish regiments under Ghalib Pasha. In May, Port Said and Cairo were raided by German aircraft. Finally, after the second attack on the Canal, Sir Archibald Murray extended the defense lines of Suez about 50 miles to the east.<sup>30</sup> The War Office was, however, still reluctant to begin a major offensive. David Lloyd George favored a plan of forcing Turkey's hand before the French could muster enough force to participate in the Eastern campaign. The General Staff, remained intransigent and opposed Lloyd George's impatience. It was not until June of 1917, when General Edmond Allenby took command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, that Lloyd George's plan found sympathy among the military. Allenby launched the attack in October, 1917, and by December 9th had captured Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup> Within a year Emir Feisal's troops had entered Damascus, and on October 30, 1918, the fleeing Turkish army had agreed to the unconditional surrender of all non-Turkish territories in the Empire. The surrender to Field Marshal Allenby's invading army at Mourdos was accepted by the British, without representation by the French, Italian, nor Russian Governments. The French

Government long resented Allenby's impetuosity, but it could do nothing but recognize the armistice of Mourdos as a fait accompli. The British victory was complete and fruitful. With the help of the Hejazian Arabs and with a relatively small expeditionary force the British army had taken possession of thousands of miles of Ottoman territories. It would have appeared that Great Britain had only to honor the claims of their Arab allies to the East and those of the French in Western Syria to have their prize legitimized. But before such a prize could be digested into the United Kingdom, England would have to win a diplomatic victory at Versailles.

#### IV. THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

On November 2, 1917, the British Government issued the famous Balfour Declaration which made a promise by His Majesty's Government to assist the Zionists in establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. At the time of its issuance, the Declaration must have appeared strange to those who had been abreast of the internal planning of the Lloyd-George Government. Though it was claimed by influential members of the British Cabinet that the Balfour Declaration was in no way contradictory to the Petrograd-Constantinople, Hussein-McMahon, or Sykes-Picot Agreements, the Balfour Declaration posed, at least, some important problems in the light of these treaties.

In the first place, the Petrograd-Constantinople and Sykes-Picot Agreements were arrangements between England, France, and Russia, and the Hussein-McMahon Agreement was between the British and the Arabs. The Balfour Declaration, on the other hand, was a note of intention on the part of His Majesty's Government with respect to the "Jewish people" who claimed neither a national sovereignty nor the exclusive citizenship of any single recognized national body.

In addition, it was highly irregular, at the time, for the British Government to declare such an intention with respect to the "Jewish people" because (1) General Allenby's conquest of Palestine was not then completed (he entered Jerusalem on December 8, 1917) and (2) many of the



"Jewish people" to whom this Declaration was addressed, lived in and fought for the Central Powers. The question, therefore, is why was the Balfour Declaration issued and what part did it play in the over-all plans for British Imperialism in the Middle East?

Though it has been claimed by many British statesmen that the Balfour Declaration was the direct result of moral sentiment on the part of His Majesty's Government with respect to the Jewish people, a careful reading of British colonial policy, both inside and outside Palestine, would not lead to such a conclusion. In some respects the Declaration may have been the result of certain moral and sentimental feelings on the part of particular individuals within the Government. But there are, however, other explanations which are more concrete, realistic, and more coherent with the total scheme of British policy in the Middle East.

Prior to the beginning of World War I there was little or no interest on the part of British politicians in the possibilities of Zionism. Immediately after the start of the War, however, the idea of a Jewish National Homeland under British auspices did not sound so odd. The notion of transplanting a pro-Anglo Jewish population in Palestine became attractive when it became apparent that the establishment of a great European power, whether friendly or unfriendly, close to the Suez Canal would be a continual and formidable threat to the main artery of trade and

communications in the British Empire.<sup>32</sup> The notion became even less absurd when the Turkish troops attack Suez in December of 1915 and again in August of 1916. While it was initially thought by some that Suez would remain invulnerable so long as England retained mastery of the seas, it was proven that the Canal could be attacked through the desert. After the attacks, it was evident that the only protection to the Canal from a land attack would consist not only in occupation of the Sinai Peninsula, but its eastern flank in Palestine. Nor could Great Britain guarantee that France, with her strong intentions for territorial expansion in Syria would always remain a friendly power. The fact that France coveted Palestine made it imperative that when the Ottoman Empire would crumble, a vacuum in Palestine would not exist in which France would have an opportunity to realize her aspirations.

In late 1914, Herbert Samuel, a Jewish member of the Liberal Cabinet who occupied the office of Home Secretary, began to voice his opinion in favor of a British protectorate in Palestine. He argued that a British protectorate would be a safeguard to the British interests in Egypt - especially in the light of France's recognized claim to the Lebanon.<sup>33</sup> It was noted, at the time, that a British protectorate in Palestine would be of infinitely more value to Egypt's defense than a common frontier with France at Al Arish. The former would require easily supported military bases in Palestine and along the Mediterranean

Coast, while a single defense line at Al Arish would be forced to fight with its back to the Sinai Desert. One defeat would mean that the Canal would again be directly open to attack.

Great Britain had no reason to go seeking new friends in the East until the defeat at Gallipoli. After it, she required an entirely new policy. The idea of the "buffer state" was attractive to colonial thinking since it had worked so admirably with the establishment of Afghanistan as a "buffer" between the Russians, Turks, and British Indians. Throughout 1915, the British had been making contact with the Arabs to sound out the possibilities of creating a friendly Arab power in Arabia and Eastern Syria. But a vacuum still existed in the strategically located Palestine.

Palestine, at the time, was a barren and forbidding area of hills and swamps. Colonialization by Anglo-Saxons, as in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, was out of the question. Yet it would be to the advantage of the British to have a European, or pro-European population settled there. The most ideal population would be one sympathetic to Western Culture and Western modes of life. Indeed, the Zionists were probably the perfect people! A recognition of the Zionist aspirations was to be the means by which Great Britain might win the hearts of the peace conference in order to climax her territorial annexations. The Zionists might provide the British with

the strategem to win the necessary victory at the final negotiations.

There could be little doubt that the British had always considered the Jews as better allies than the Arabs. While the Arabs had only bands of mercenary Hejazian troops committed to the War, the Jews had fought well as troops of the 38th, 39th, and 40th Royal Fusiliers. The fact that Jewish soldiers were integrated within the British Army itself, albeit in separate battalions, was indicative of the British attitude towards the Jews.

Even more impressive was the fact that the Zionists expressed an observable desire to settle in Palestine. Those Eastern European Jews who had formed collective settlements had already demonstrated their valour and their irrepressible desire to make the land of Palestine prosperous. The Jews as a people were, furthermore, an adaptable and cultured nation - highly sympathetic to Western ways and very successfully assimilated into Western life. They had an admirable record in the West and would serve as colonists better than many Europeans. Still more ideal was the fact that the majority of Jews were anti-Russian due to the long history of persecution suffered at the hands of the Czarist regimes. Not only would the Jews be loyal subjects to the English Crown, but would always be sympathetic with English aims to keep the Russian Government from penetrating into the Middle East.

The timing of the British Declaration was influenced

by external events. In 1916 the British Government learned that Talaat Pasha, the Grand Vizer of Turkey, had approached two Zionist leaders with the idea of a Turkish supported "Jewish Homeland."<sup>34</sup> More important was the dangerous news that Baron Rosen, the German Ambassador at the Hague, had been in consultation with leading Dutch Jews about German support for a "Jewish Homeland" in Palestine. At the time, the Foreign Office feared a new German Blitzkrieg in the East which might gain the support of world Jewry if Germany were first to promise its support to the Zionists.

In November, 1917, while Feisal was fighting the Turks from his base at Aecaba, Djemal Pasha made a second appeal to Sheriff Hussein's sense of Muslim unity. Djemal Pasha promised assurances from himself and from the Caliph that Arab demands for autonomy would be granted by the Turks. But Djemal had overlooked certain facts which led Hussein to refuse. First, Hussein himself desired the title of Caliph of Islam (which he later assumed in 1922), and secondly, that the Arab Revolt was a striking success. Moreover, the fact that Russia had suddenly pulled out of the war because of the Revolution had completely changed the picture of Middle Eastern politics.

The thought of a Declaration of intention concerning the Jewish Homeland in Palestine was an attractive device in engendering world Jewish support for the Allied cause. Both France and England greatly needed the help of

America for the War in Europe. It was legitimately felt that American Jewry was reluctant to provide its support for American engagement so long as the Russian Government was allied to Britain and France. Gaining the American Jewish support by a proclamation in favor of Zionism would be a large step in winning the sympathies of Americans and inducing their participation in the War.

It must not be overlooked that in order to carry forth the War effort, the British Government was obliged to borrow large sums. Many potential loans were unavailable to the British Government from the large Jewish banking houses because of England's alliance with Russia. It was undoubtedly felt that a pro-Zionist proclamation would help persuade such banking houses to make certain funds available.

There was some scepticism about the loss of Arab sympathy with the publication of the Balfour Declaration. But when Great Britain proclaimed the Declaration the threat of losing Arab sympathy was nil. In the first place, the Palestinian Arabs, in contrast to the Arabs of Syria and the Hejaz, had never shown any love for the Allies and had continually fought for the Turks or remained totally passive. Even after the Arab Revolt showed signs of great success, the Palestinian Arabs remained loyal to the Turkish Sultan. Neither were the Arab leaders hostile to the Balfour Declaration when it was first announced. When we consider the Peace Conference at Versailles we shall



have a better opportunity to investigate the attitudes of Feisal and Hussein towards the Declaration. But it is to be noted that even in 1919 during the Peace Conference the Arabs made no claims to Palestine - on the basis of the McMahon Correspondence.

In short, the British in 1917 had everything to gain and little to lose by a declaration in favor of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine. If the statement could be worded properly it would not infringe on any national aspirations of the Arabs, nor would it alienate many influential Jews. The declaration might be so worded as to encourage Jewish sympathies but, as well, be so ambiguous as to leave legitimate "back-doors" out of British statesmen could scurry should the necessity arise.

At the end of 1915, the Liberal Asquith Government took light notice of Herbert Samuel's proposal which he had circulated to the Cabinet in March. In 1917, however, a note dated March 13, 1916 was found in the Soviet publications from the Czarist Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a memoir from Sir Edward Grey (Foreign Secretary) to Lord Asquith <sup>Grey</sup> wrote:

Concerning Zionism: "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 U.S.A., and other places whose present attitude towards the cause of the Allies is, to a considerable extent, hostile." 36

In London there was considerable feeling in 1917 that if the British Government would be forthcoming with a proclamation in favor of Zionism, the Jews who had been so active in the Bolshevik Revolution might be able to prevail on the Soviet Government to keep it in the War. The British politicians who were sympathetic with the idea of Zionism argued that the influence of Russian Jews would not only help to keep the Kerensky Government fighting at the Eastern Front, but prevent Russian wheat, which was largely under Jewish control, from reaching the Germans. Naturally, there was great fear of what would occur should the Soviets pull out of the War effort entirely - thereby releasing thousands of German and Slav troops to the Western Front.

The idea of a Zionist Declaration had been the talk of London circles since early 1916. A British Palestine Committee had been founded in 1915 whose function it was to strengthen the alliance between British interests and the Zionist Movement. It boasted of such names among its membership as Weizmann, Sidelbotham, Marks, Eder, and Sachse.<sup>37</sup> The Committee was unsuccessful in interesting Lord Asquith in Zionism because he considered it a "pipe-dream." Edward Grey and David Lloyd George thought otherwise. Yet the early Zionists were not aware of the Sykes-Picot Agreement which had been completed six months before they presented their proposals. The Balfour Declaration would serve the British in another capacity!

Through Herbert Samuel, the British Government was made to know that the Zionists would never accept a condominium in Palestine. It may be recalled that the Sykes-Picot Agreement designated the Villeyet of Jerusalem as an international zone. The British were eager to publish the Balfour Declaration and force the French to concede the point on Palestinian internationalization. If world Jewry called for a British protectorate in Palestine, the French Government could not easily refuse its approval. The Brown Zone would then be transferred to the British "Sphere of Influence." This was, of course, the third step in England's plan to squeeze France out of the Middle East.

First, Great Britain obtained a concession from France in the Petrograd-Constantinople Agreement for the recognition of an international zone in the Villeyet of Jerusalem (tantamount to what later became known as Palestine). Secondly, Britain forced France to relinquish her claim to Eastern Syria through the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence. Thirdly, His Majesty's Government made France recognize Britain's right to administer a Jewish protectorate under the auspices of the Balfour Declaration. From an original claim for all of Syria and Palestine, France's paper dominion had been reduced to a claim on the Lebanon and its immediate environs in Western Syria.

One of the most effective means of resisting French designs on Palestine and insuring that the Jewish Homeland

would not be administered as a condominium was to get the House of Rothschild to oppose French influence in Palestine. The House of Rothschild, whose banks had made available large sums for financing the War effort, in fact, strongly opposed the idea of condominium. James de Rothschild firmly demanded that only England should administer Palestine, though he allowed that the Holy Places might be left to the French Catholics as a concession.<sup>38</sup>

With Russia concerned only with the safety of the Holy Places and Italy ready to agree to the same provisions as France, Mark Sykes recommended that the Zionists approach M. Picot directly on the idea of accepting a British protectorate in Palestine. Thus, in March 1916 Nahum Sokolov was sent to Paris to negotiate directly with the French Government. With the pressures of world opinion and the influence of French Jewish banking houses, France had no alternative but to provisionally accept the concept of British control over Palestine - motivated by the precepts of the pro-Zionist Declaration.

In the meantime, the Asquith Government had fallen to that of David Lloyd George. Asquith had never seen the value of Zionism, but Lloyd George took an immediately and lively interest in the Zionist scheme. Asquith later wrote about Lloyd George:

The only partisan of the proposal is Lloyd George who, I need not say, does not care a damn for Jews, of their past, or their future, but he thinks that it will be an outrage to let the Holy Places pass into possession or under the protection of 'agnostic', atheistic France.<sup>39</sup>

Since the French opposed Arab independence in the Brown Zone, Lloyd George saw it would be easier to use the Zionists for the same ends. A British Protectorate in Palestine was really the last step in uprooting the French from a paramount position in Palestine. Allied support for a declaration was all His Majesty's Government needed to make the move complete. Lloyd George later stated in the London Times (October 25, 1930) that "The Balfour Declaration was prepared after much consideration, not merely of policy, but of its actual working, by the representatives of the Allied and Associated countries, including American and our Dominion Premiers." It is important to remember that the Lloyd George Government issued the Balfour Declaration only after prior consultation between the Governments of the United States, France, and Italy. With their tacit approval, Britain's plans to annex Palestine could not fail - so long as Allenby's Army was successful. Thus, on November 2, 1917 His Majesty's Government issued for the first time (in a letter to Baron Edmond de Rothschild) the Balfour Declaration. There was, however, an attempt to keep the publication of this Declaration from the ears of Arabs in the Hejazian Army because the General Staff desired to have Allenby complete his campaign with the full support of the Hejazian Army on his right flank. It was felt that knowledge of this Declaration might discourage the Arab Allies and cause a general mutiny among the officers and troops. But King

Hussein gave his approval for Jewish settlement in Arab lands on January 4, 1918. Only the Vatican withheld its approval.



## VI. THE OCCUPIED ENEMY TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION

Once Lloyd George found an alternative policy to the murderous offensives on the Western Front in an assault eastward, British public opinion began to crystalize behind the Government. After having no policy whatsoever in 1912 with respect to the Middle East, England suddenly found herself the dominant power. Not only had the French been forced to concede their claim to the greatest portion of Ottoman real estate, but in two swift blows the Ottoman Empire had crumbled before Allenby's Army - which pushed successfully through Palestine to Syria - and the Indian Army which drove northward through Mesopotamia. In the summer of 1916 Sir Archibald Murry's Egyptian Expeditionary Force had crossed the desert and occupied El Arish. But after two unsuccessful attacks on Gaza, General Murry was removed. Allenby, who was appointed to succeed Murry, realized that the time was to his advantage, and he swiftly captured Beersheba on October 31, 1917. He proceeded immediately against Jerusalem, which he took on December 8th. Within a year Damascus had surrendered. The victory was shortly followed by the capitulation of Turkish forces in the key Syrian cities of Beirut, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo.<sup>40</sup>

Not only had England's military units been eminently successful, but Britain had negotiated into a firm position politically. First, she had assumed the paramount

position which France had vacated. Secondly, she had made solid alliances with the native populations. Thirdly, she had won vast world sympathy for her colonial acquisitions with the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration. Moreover, Great Britain had skillfully hidden her objectives of conquest and territorial annexation in a guise of humanitarianism. She had, as well, succeeded in moving the Caliphate of Islam within her aegis and allied Jewish sympathy throughout the world. And in addition, she had taken control of the Christian Holy Spots, thus increasing her range of influence to include three of the world's great religions. In a single blow, England had succeeded in extending her wing over the entire Middle East. The effects of these maneuvers were felt throughout the world wherever Muslims, Jews, or Christians lived. The ultimate results of this action could only be truly evaluated with the outbreak of the Second World War.

With the signing of the Armistice at Mourdos a new phase of British Imperialism began in the Middle East. The War in Europe was still in progress, and no settlement of the political questions was in sight. General Allenby was faced with the problem of establishing a military government in the Ottoman territories which would survive until a peace conference could finalize and legitimize the new colonial acquisitions. Moreover, Allenby faced the immediate problems of rehabilitation and agricultural redevelopment. The Middle Eastern population, which was

poverty stricken before the war, suffered tremendously as a result of it.

Great Britain had committed herself to a certain post-war policy with respect to the French, Arabs, Italians, Russians, and Zionists. But Allenby felt that it was not the responsibility of the Military Government to make unnecessary changes in the status quo. The interested parties, on the other hand, were eager and impatient to jockey into position before the termination of the war. Each desired to solidify its claims before the Peace Conference in order to present the negotiators with a fait accompli. And although Great Britain had made definite promises to the French, Arabs, Italians, and Zionists, she no doubt felt that firm and complete control over the captured territories would be to her advantage in the peace negotiations. There was no guarantee that Britain would honor her pledges.

The Arab Army under Emir Feisal was anxious to capture as much territory as possible to insure its claims for independence. Generally, the Arab campaign against the Turks was limited to the extreme right flank of the Palestine Theater. This meant that the Arab military sphere was limited to the Hejaz, Transjordan, and later, Eastern Syria. The General Staff thought that the Arabs could have accomplished little more for the total war effort than to disrupt Turkish supply and communication lines. In fact, however, the Arabs were far more successful.

Though their warfare consisted of sporadic and undisciplined attacks, they drew large numbers of Regular Turkish troops from the Western Front. Turkish soldiers were unable to cope with Arab guerrilla warfare, and they could not maintain their transport facilities between Damascus, Trans-Jordan, and the Arabian Peninsula. Eventually, they surrendered to the Arabs in all these locations except in Medina.

Though Colonel T. E. Lawrence was attached to Feisal as an advisor, the British could not discourage the Arabs from forcing their way northward in a race to capture Damascus. General Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Force also attempted to take Damascus, but it ran into resistance, making the capitulation to the British an impossibility. Small French detachments had been assigned to both the Sherifian Arab Army and the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to protect French interests. Colonel Bremond had been stationed at Jidda to administer the allocation of French munitions which were supplied to the Sherif. With the British was a French Palestine-Syrian Détachment of approximately a brigade size.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, M. George Picot had been appointed French High Commissioner in the Levant in April, 1917, and had been constantly at Allenby's side to advise him of French rights in Syria.

It was to the British advantage to see that the war-time agreements with the Arabs and French were upheld. General Allenby's immediate responsibility was to see

that the status quo was maintained to insure that these agreements could be facilitated with the minimum of hostility and friction. From the British point of view, the balance of power had been perfectly aligned. It provided that the various allies were evenly divided both geographically and strategically such that both would be dependent upon the British Colonies for communications, trade and defense. Moreover, they were so evenly balanced that no question of British ascendancy in the Middle East could be challenged in the future.

As the war progressed northward, the friction over Syria between the Arabs and French increased. Because of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, when the Arabs entered Damascus they were temporarily allowed to install the Emir as ruler. Four days later Shukri-Pasha and a token force entered Beirut to support Feisal's claim for Arab government.<sup>42</sup> When, however, Allenby's troops arrived in Beirut, they forced the Arab Governor, Umar Bey Da'uq to lower the Sherifian flag and recognize the status of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration under the command of the British Commander-in-Chief. This event was later lamented by King Feisal who wrote to Lloyd George on September 23, 1919 - complaining that when the Arabs were asked to pull out of Western Syria after the defeat of the Turks, it was the British who took down their flag, not the French, and had promised that Allenby would remain the Commander-in-Chief until the final settlement. He protested that

the immediate installation of French troops in the Lebanon after the Arab withdrawal had been a violation of that agreement.<sup>43</sup>

Allenby immediately appointed Colonel de-Piepepe as Military Governor of Beirut - ignoring the strongly worded anti-French petitions from several sections of the public. The Arabs protested the presence of French Governors (attached to the *Détachement Français de Palestine-Syrie*). All through Syria there were outbreaks and disturbances by Arab Nationalists.<sup>44</sup> David Lloyd George emphatically assured M. Clemenceau (as Sir Edward Grey had assured M. Poincaré in 1912) that His Majesty's Government had no territorial ambitions whatsoever in Beirut, Damascus, nor Aleppo.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the British Government had entered upon a policy through the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence to recognize Arab claims in Eastern Syria. While there was never any doubt that both Poincaré and Clemenceau regarded Eastern Syria as within the "Sphere of Influence" of France, they had both underestimated the Arab Nationalist Movement. While they had given lip-service to the Arab demands in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, they never realized these claims might come to fruition. Further, the French had much to fear in the incipient Arab National Movement since the spread of nationalist fever might cause havoc in the French Colonies of Algeria and Tunis.

Commander-in-Chief Allenby divided the enemy territory into three parts, called the "Occupied Enemy Territories



Administration" of "O.E.T.A." The three divisions were the following: Southern Palestine under the control of the British, Northern Palestine (the Lebanon) and Western Syria under the control of the French, and Eastern Syria and the Hejaz under the control of Feisal's Arab Nationalists. Headquarters for the entire Military Administration were situated in Cairo, and Field Marshal Allenby retained supreme supervision over all three zones.<sup>46</sup>

## VII. THE PROBLEM OF SYRIA AND THE FRENCH

Immediately after the Armistice with the Turks, friction grew between the French and Arab Nationalists over control of Syria. Moreover, the French mistrusted the British from their support of Arab Nationalism and their refusal to recognize French ambitions in Eastern Syria. In addition, the Arab Nationalists began pressing His Majesty's Government for more explicit definition of their ambiguous statements with respect to Zionist objectives in Southern Palestine. The McMahon Correspondence had left many Arabs with the impression that Southern Palestine would be included within the sphere of Arab sovereignty, and that the British Government had no justified claim to it.

In the Western Zone of O.E.T.A. (the Lebanon and Western Syria) there was a severe outbreak of Anglophobia - stimulated by the French Government. The French had good reason to fear David Lloyd George's anti-Catholic sentiments. In the Bulletin de la Aise Francaise of July, 1919, and again in Le Temps of July 26, 1919, there appeared articles accusing the British of being involved in a subtle program to undermine French control in Syria. It was noted by the Earl of Derby in a letter to Earl Curzon in Paris, that the author of these articles was M. Robert de Caix who was reported in an article in the Journal Officiel (October 13, 1919) to have been appointed as

Secretary General to the Mission of the French High Commissioner in Syria. The article stated that he had been acting as an official technical adviser to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Further, in a note from the British Government to the French Ambassador in London, November 21, 1919, there is reference to the French accusation that the British had sent 17 field guns, 2 aeroplanes, 22 large and 20 small cars for the Damascus Government of Feisal.<sup>47</sup> The British reply to this accusation was that the cars were sent for the Red Cross and the arms were nothing but antiques. On August 12, 1919 Sir G. Grahame went to visit M. Pichon concerning the French accusations against the British activities in Syria. Pichon said that his dossier was filled with reports of anti-French propaganda carried on by Anglo-Syrian agents. He referred to a statement in Le Journal des Debats in which M. Gauvain claimed:

The British Government with singular imprudence has created a Panarabism in a new Panislamism of which England will be the first victim. England has been endeavoring, with an scrimonious zeal which has often been of an unpleasant character, to eject friendly states which a false political conception has induced her to regard simply as rivals. (translation from French)

Inspite of the fact that there is also substantial evidence that the French had been encouraging anti-British feelings in Palestine while the English engaged in anti-French propaganda and intrigue in Syria, both nations were faced with the problem of how to handle the Arab Nationalists.

In order to delay adverse Arab reaction to the Military Occupation, General Allenby and M. Picot agreed to publish a joint Allied Communiqué of an ambiguous nature. On November 9, 1918 the British and French Governments jointly stated that their aims were "... the complete and definite emancipation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national Governments and Administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations."<sup>48</sup> (The Anglo-French Declaration)

Regardless of French promises, the Arabs had no illusions. The French had difficulties in keeping order for they lacked sufficient numbers of troops to garrison their Syrian acquisitions. The French garrison in Syria had been hastily recruited, the majority were Armenians who had a long history of hatred for the Arabs. To help kindle the friction between the French and Arabs, Emir Feisal appointed Ali Riza Pasha, the president of the Nadi el Arab, an extreme nationalist society which openly demanded independence for all Arabs and advocated an anti-French policy, as chief administrator. Moreover, the British did little to help the French stop the brigandage and raids by Feisal's troops in the Christian villages on the Lebanese border.<sup>49</sup>

Though the French paid a subsidy to the Sherifian Administration in Eastern Syria, they argued that Feisal's occupancy of Damascus was wholly unnecessary. But at the

time, the British Government could not allow the French to usurp Arab Damascus. M. Picot was convinced that the British were frank supporters of Arab aspirations, and there was no doubt that if the Arabs would succeed in uprooting the French in Western Syria, the English position would be all the stronger. At least one of the reasons Great Britain chose Palestine over Syria at the outbreak of the War was the absence of strong and influential Arab nationalist groups in that zone. What little national sentiment existed in Palestine during the early Twenties was not an expression of anti-colonialism. Rather it was militantly anti-Zionist. Hence, in 1918 and 1919 when the French were having their difficulties with the Arabs, the British could afford to encourage the Nationalists without fearing for its own position in Palestine. On the other hand, there is evidence to believe that the French engaged in an anti-Zionist campaign in Palestine in order to (1) win the sympathies of the Arab Nationalists and (2) create trouble for the British in their own zone. The operation of this anti-Zionist campaign will be illustrated later.

The War in the East, while eminently successful for the British, cost the British taxpayer more than public opinion would warrant. With tremendous war debts to pay, Great Britain was faced with a critical financial problem - one which demanded a decrease in military spending. Naturally, the taxpayer balked first at large expenditures

for military purposes in the Middle East - in many cases 3,000 miles from England. With the termination of the war there was a concerted drive to cut back on military spending in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt.

While the British still occupied Western Syria, they had installed the Detachement Francais de Palestine-Syrie and its concomitant political officers to take over administration. There were not, however, sufficient French troops to maintain order - especially in the light of the vitriolic anti-French feeling. There can be little doubt that the British, for the sake of economy in the Middle East, would have welcomed the opportunity to suddenly pull their troops out of Western Syria and the Lebanon - leaving the unprotected French to the mercy of the Arab Nationalists. Such a policy would have, however, caused much animosity on the part of the French, and it was felt, therefore, to be impractical. Even though the Arabs might temporarily defeat the scanty French garrisons in Syria, it was certain they could not withstand a full-scale French invasion from Europe. In such a war the French would surely not hesitate to capture Eastern Syria and force their way into Transjordan, thus backing the British in Palestine up against the Mediterranean.

Nor was Faisal foolish enough to risk fighting France over Syria. In June, 1919, he appealed to Allenby for security that the Peace Conference would act on the findings of the King-Crane Commission sent by the United



States to determine the feelings of the native populations in the conquered Ottoman Territories. What Feisal did not know, however, was that the European Powers had secretly agreed to use the findings of this Commission only in an advisory manner.<sup>50</sup> On May 31, 1919, General Clayton, Chief Political Officer assigned to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, recommended to Lord Balfour in London that whatever the findings of the King-Crane Commission, nothing be made public in order to avert trouble.<sup>51</sup>

Great Britain had other reasons for not wanting an armed confrontation between the Arabs and French. By 1919 representatives of His Majesty's Government and France were under way to insure England the oil rights in the Vilayet of Mosul. England felt she would cooperate better with a fellow imperialist nation like France in tapping the petroleum resources of the Middle East than with an upstart and primitive Arab Federation which would soon be recognized by the delegates of the Peace Conference. So long as Britain cooperated with another colonial nation, she could be guaranteed that at least a percentage of the resources would be hers. But dealing with the Arabs directly was dangerous. A national government might demand complete control over the oil once England had gone to great expense in developing it. The presence of France in Western Syria would be a great advantage in overcoming the technical difficulties in pumping and transporting the crude oil from Mesopotamia to a seaport on the Mediterranean.

Britain had much to gain by jealously guarding France's right to exist in Western Syria.

In order to allow British troops to withdraw from Syria, His Majesty's Government tried to get France to reinforce its garrison. Since the occupation, the English had been gradually replacing their soldiers with those that slowly trickled in from France. But the French Government, pressed with problems in Europe, was slow to meet the shortages. On May 29, 1919, after Feisal heard of the British plan to replace their entire garrison with Frenchmen, he threatened war. Feisal was quite aware of the fact that without British support his position both from a future military and political point of view would be untenable. Without British support the Peace Conference would not recognize his claim for an Arab Federation in Eastern Syria.

As an alternative to the complete withdrawal of British soldiers from Western Syria, Emir Feisal proposed to Colonel Cornwallis (Assistant Chief Political Officer of the E.E.F.) on September 25, 1919 that (1) Allenby be put in charge of all forces in the Middle East and be retained in that position (2) that British forces remain with French troops to keep the peace between the French and Arabs and (3) that the Peace Conference consider without delay the problem because it was not necessary to await a treaty with Turkey.

But the British had always intended to move out once

the French had secured their position in Syria. On September 11, 1919, Lloyd George sent a telegram to Clemenceau stating that "... the British Government cannot any longer undertake to maintain any army of over 400,000 men to garrison the Turkish Empire." Because the British were eager to reduce their military spending, they made an agreement with Clemenceau on September 27th - whereby they were to evacuate Cilicia and Syria. The evacuation began on November 1st. By December British control over all Allied areas in Syria had officially ended. At that time the French were free to make their move towards increasing their territorial gains.<sup>52</sup>

### VIII. THE PETROLEUM CONCESSIONS

The price for British recognition of the French claim to Western Syria as well as the military support for France was the French agreement to Britain's rights in the oilfields of Mesopotamia. Both the French and British realized that mutual cooperation for respective colonial interests was to each other's benefit. France and England could cooperate to take the Western Syria and Mesopotamia from the proposed Arab Federation. This Arab Federation, yet in its embryonic stage, had nothing to trade, but much to lose. It was young and immature, and its leaders were naive with respect to the machinations of imperial policy. Emir Feisal, who had taken the reins of leadership from his aging father, Hussein, was a peaceful and meditative man who knew that his only chance of saving his federation was by playing the colonial nations against themselves. His sole alternative was to try and win their sympathy, not their enmity. He planned to plead for the sympathy of those at the Peace Conference - taking what he could until his Federation would be powerful enough to bargain from a stronger vantage point.

A month after the Turks signed the Armistice at Mourdos on October 30, 1918, George Clemenceau went to London for a secret conference with David Lloyd George. Both England and France were faced with the problems involved in reconciling their imperialistic objectives

with the goals of the Arabs and Zionists. More important, however, was the fact that the United States had become a major combatant in the War, and the State Department was not likely to agree to the old forms of territorial annexation which the Europeans had hitherto enjoyed. The Articles of the League of Nations, Wilson's Fourteen Points, and the dynamic idealism of President Wilson's leadership all pointed to the fact that Britain and France were not going to be able to blatantly annex territories with the Ottoman Empire as set forth in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. Once again the French and British would have to resolve their difference in order to salvage as much of the conquered territory as possible. Furthermore, they would have to support each other's claims, for they would both benefit or lose together.

It was agreed at a secret London meeting that if some form of trusteeship under a League of Nations were substituted by the Peace Conference for the old system of annexation and protectorship, then such trusteeship should include not only Western and Southern Palestine, but Eastern Syria as well. Under such a stipulation, the French would acquire a trust zone in which Hussein had thought to center his independent Arab Federation. England's agreement to this was in direct violation of the Hussein-McMahon Agreement of 1915 which the French had ratified. Also the design for an internationally controlled Palestine (as stipulated by the Sykes Picot Agreement of

1916) was dropped in favor of a British controlled zone in which England was committed to fulfill the precepts of the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

Secondly, His Majesty's Government agreed to support France in all other rights defined in the Sykes-Picot Agreement if the British could claim the Mosul Oil Fields. Lloyd George agreed to present France with a fair share of the petroleum resources and revenue. Britain's claim to the oil fields stemmed from a pre-war contract with the Turkish Government for a percentage interest in the Anglo-Turkish Petroleum Company. The fact that all of Mesopotamia had been captured as a prize of war was not the least of the reasons why England was in no mind to turn it over to any other European nation. It would serve, as well, as a fine buffer region between India and the Soviet Union. In 1919 the Soviet Union was both unallied and unpredictable. It was a nation, the nature of which, posed formidable problems for capitalism and colonialism.

On December 23, 1919, there was another secret meeting between the French and British representatives at the Foreign Office in London. M. Berthelot agreed that the French would not claim the Mosul Area, as the Sykes-Picot Agreement entitled her, if their demands for a percentage of the resources and revenues of the British Petroleum Company would be met. Further, it was strongly suggested that if France was not to make her claim according to the Sykes Picot Agreement, then Britain would have to keep her



hands off Syria. England would have to give France a free hand to do as she wanted in both Western and Eastern Syria. There is little doubt that at this point Lloyd George sold out the Arab cause in Eastern Syria for British rights to Mosul oil. In December, 1919, the last British troops evacuated Syria. The only thing left to prevent the French from mounting an attack on Feisal's Damascus Government was the force of British persuasion. The trump cards had all been played.

The background for the December 23rd Agreement can be illustrated by a memorandum from Lord Balfour to the British Foreign Office dated September 9, 1919:

The French will not be impressed by our claim to the direct access to Mosul based on the ground that as they have given us Mosul they must clearly give us that, without which Mosul would be useless. They will reply with perfect logic that the gift of a great oil and wheat district is a great gift even if all its produce must be sent through Suez, and they don't see why it couldn't come through Syria (The British would not want to pay royalties to the French) to an international port at (Beirut or Palmyra) Tripoli... It is quite true that the Sykes-Picot Agreement ought never to have given Mosul to the French. But it did and that through no fault of the French, but in consequence of a miscalculation of Lord Kitchener who was unwilling to have territories in which Britain was interested coterminous with a military monarchy such as Russia then was. I remember agreeing with him...<sup>54</sup>

After the War there was some disagreement between the British and French as to whether the Sykes-Picot Agreement was valid. Lloyd George wanted to annul it completely because he pleaded that Czarist Russia, an important

party to the Agreement, was no longer in existence. Clemenceau argued that the sections which were between Britain and France were, nonetheless, valid.

In another memo to the Foreign Office, Balfour later wrote on August 11, 1919: "(1) the British know that they cannot count on the use of Alexandretta as a port so long as it is in French hands. We know enough of the French methods to be aware how successfully the most 'open door' can be half-closed by the ingenious zeal of local officials. (2) A sea route is too costly to protect us from this species of (French) blackmail. There, no doubt, French traders have a strong interest in hampering their foreign rivals, and their malpractices, aided by official methods, are extremely difficult to check. (3) But this does not mean that we shall refuse to consider alternative methods of connecting Mesopotamia with the Mediterranean by rail and pipe-line through all British protectorates." In the end, the British gained Mesopotamia by a promise to share its oil with the French and to allow them to annex Eastern Syria.

With respect to determining Anglo-French equities, a series of new negotiations began between Mr. Walter Long, His Majesty's Minister in Charge of Petroleum Affairs, and Senator Bérenger, Commissioner-General of Petroleum Products in France. The original Long-Bérenger Agreement allotted 70% to British interests and 20% to the French, while 10% was to be given to the native population, if

desirable. If not, then the remaining 10% was to be equally divided between Britain and France. Later, on February 1, 1919, a note from Sir John Cadman, Representative of the Petroleum Executive in the Economic Section of the British Peace Delegation, stated that England was willing to consider a new proportion of between 20 to 30% French interest in the old Turkish Petroleum Company. England's willingness to boost the French interest was due to a current rumor that M. Bérenger would urge that the French participate in oil industry not only in Mosul, but as well in Southern Russia, Mesopotamia, Kirkuk, Roumania, and within the Persian Gulf.<sup>56</sup> In short, the French wanted to be cut into British petroleum industries wherever they operated. Sir John Cadman's eagerness to concede the 10% originally designated to the Arabs could be hardly significant when weighed against this alternative.

In January of 1920, another set of oil negotiations began, and from these discussions the "San Remo Oil Agreement" was signed on April 24th. It was agreed that the British Government would undertake to grant the French 25% of the net output of crude oil which His Majesty's Government was to secure from the Mesopotamian oil fields (Article 7). Moreover, it was agreed that in consideration of the above mentioned arrangements, the French Government would agree to construct two separate pipelines and railways necessary for the construction, maintenance and transport of oil from Mesopotamia and

Persia through French "Spheres of Influence" to a port or ports on the Eastern Mediterranean. (Article 10).

Further, France agreed to give every facility for the rights of British transport without any royalties on the oil commerce. (Article 11).

The final stage of the Franco-British negotiations took place in the Franco-British Convention of December 23, 1920. At this convention a piece de résistance of imperial and mercantile cooperation was mapped out in which both France and Britain could successfully tap their new territories in the Middle East for tremendous wealth from oil and wheat. The relevant articles of this convention are:

Art. 3: the British and French agree to a convention and commission on France's plan to divert waters of the Tigris and Euphrates at a point where they enter the area of the British Mandate in Mesopotamia.

Art. 4: Since Cyprus is off the Gulf of Alexandretta, the British agree not to open any negotiations for the cession of alienation of the said island of Cyprus without the previous consent of the French Government.

Art. 5: (1) France agrees to facilitate by a liberal arrangement the joint use of existing railway between Lake Tiberias and Mosul.

(2) The British will be allowed to run their own trains in both directions on this track - other than for local traffic within the territory under French Mandate.

(3) The British Government may carry a pipeline along the existing railway track and shall have in perpetuity and at any moment the right to transport troops by this railway.

(4) The French Government agrees to let the British construct a railway and pipeline to connect Palestine with the Hejaz Railway and the Valley of the Euphrates, and running entirely within the limits of the area under British Mandate. If it will be necessary to enter French territory, then the French Government agrees to let British experts have easy access with extra-territorial rights.

Art. 6: The preceding articles imply the maintenance of the benefits for France of the provisions of the French, British Agreement of San Remo regarding oil (c.f. the January, 1920 Agreement).

Art. 7: There shall be no customs on the stores for the railroad passing between the Mandates.

Art. 8: Surplus waters from the Upper Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers and their tributaries will go to Palestine.<sup>58</sup>

(c.f. Map 1)

## IX. THE PEACE CONFERENCE

The next obstacle to British Imperialism in the Middle East after the defeat of the Turks and Germans was to successfully negotiate a settlement at the Peace Conference at Versailles and Paris in 1919. The peace settlement had, however, been anticipated several years before the termination of the War. The British had already made promises to the Allies which were not altogether consistent. However, they could not have anticipated the fall of the Czarist Government of 1917 - thus eliminating one of the major combatants in the War. On the other hand, the United States, the Zionists, and the Arabs (while relatively late participants in the War) nonetheless, claimed recognition at the Conference. If Great Britain was to profit from the War in the East, she would have to pacify and consolidate these Allies.

The major arena of conflict among Britain's Allies became that of Eastern Syria. The Sherifian Army claimed it by right of military conquest, the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, and M. Clemenceaus's wartime agreement to recognize an Arab administration in O.E.T.A East. Three additional promises served as the foundation for Arab claims: (1) statements made on behalf of His Majesty's Government during the year 1918 in regard to the future status of certain parts of the Ottoman Empire (The Hogarth Message, c.f. British White Paper, Cmd. 5964) (2) The



"Declaration to the Seven" made to seven Arab notables on June 16, 1918 (c.f. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 117) and (3) certain assurances given by General Edmond Allenby on October 17, 1918 (c.f. The Royal Institute, p. 118).

The French, on the other hand, made a claim to Eastern Syria on the basis of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and subsequent agreements of a secret nature made with Great Britain during 1918 and 1919, i.e. the London Agreement followed by oil and commercial treaties. The French argued that Clemenceau's consent to allow Emir Feisal to administer Eastern Syria was given during the hostilities with the understanding that it would not prejudice the ultimate settlement of mandates or boundaries.

The British attempted to mediate a middle ground between the claims and counter-claims of the Arab Nationalists and the French. Since the Arabs claimed Western Syria and the French, Eastern Syria, the British could do no more than try to keep both nations within their respective zones. Because of lucrative commercial agreements, it was to Britain's advantage to have the French administer Western Syria, with an allied National Government in Eastern Syria and Transjordan. The British Cabinet realized that a loose federation of Arab States - still primitive and of no military threat - would be quite dependent upon British trade and protection from Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Britain operated on the theory

that it was better to have her neighbors weak and dependent, rather than strong and competitive. Thus the status quo best served England's interests.

In return for Mesopotamia, the British had promised to give France a free hand in Syria. Even though the status quo was to her advantage, Great Britain would not intervene in favor of the Arabs should hostilities begin with France. The United Kingdom would take no chances at losing the diplomatic and commercial gains of the Cadman-Long-Béranger Treaties. It was felt that if France took a strong stand before the Arabs, they could be appeased in other ways. Lloyd George thought that if the Arab demands were met in Arabia and Transjordan, then Feisal would be satisfied to allow France to take over Eastern Syria. In July, 1920, Lloyd George's premonition was proven correct. When French troops, under General Gouraud, forceably entered and occupied Damascus, King Feisal could do no more than wimper and protest. His fate had been determined in the eyes of the French as early as the London Conference between Lloyd George and Clemenceau in 1918.

The Peace Conference in 1919 encompassed more far reaching decisions than the future of the Middle East alone. The establishment of the League of Nations added a further complication to the mechanism of settling the peace between recalcitrant nations. The unique position of the United States with respect to the League added still another dimension. While the United States had been one of the

major combatants in the War it was not a member of the League; nevertheless, its president was the most influential person leading the peace discussions. The lines of power were not clearly defined. And to add to the complexity, the Peace Conference and the General Council of the League met with numerous delegations from the respective conquered territories which had neither political nor official status.

On November 30, 1918, George Clemenceau and Lloyd George had come to an essential agreement over the future of the Middle East. The only area open to differences of opinion lay in the question of what would become of Eastern Syria, principally Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, and Hama. At the beginning of 1919 both Lloyd George and Lord Curzon had assured Feisal that the French would respect the independence of the Arabs in Eastern Syria. In January of that year, the Zionist Organization submitted its proposal directly to the Secretariat of the Peace Conference. Shortly after that King Feisal and Chaim Weizmann reached agreement on the Zionist and Arab Nationalist aspirations in the Middle East. They signed a treaty called the "Feisal-Weizmann Agreement." On February 6, 1919, Feisal appeared in person before the Peace Conference to make his appeal for Arab independence. Then, France submitted to the Conference her memorandum explaining French designs over Syria. Chekru Ganem, an Arab who resided in Paris, pleaded on behalf of Le Comité Central Syrien that the

Syrian Arabs desired French rulership, and not that of Feisal or the Hejazian regime. Suddenly, on February 20th, Philippe Berthelot replied to the Supreme Council that the French Government and the Arabs had finally agreed on a solution to their differences.

During the negotiations Feisal's political advisor and interpreter was Colonel T. E. Lawrence, who had long before demonstrated support for all measures of Arab independence. Lawrence proved to be a gadfly to the British. After Feisal's first appearance in Paris, the British Government was determined to isolate Lawrence from the Arab delegation. A telegram from Earl Curzon to Balfour on July 17, 1919 reflects this intention. It ordered Lawrence to stay away from Paris altogether.<sup>59</sup> On August 21, 1919, Clark-Kerr telegraphed to Mr. Vansittart in Paris:

While fully appreciating the value of Lawrence as a technical advisor on Arab affairs, we regard the prospect of his return to Paris in any capacity with grave misgivings. We and the War Office feel strongly that he is to a large extent responsible for our troubles with the French over Syria and you know well enough what their present temper is.<sup>60</sup>

Mr. G. Kidston in a secret message to Mr. Vansittart, British diplomat in Paris, stated: "Lawrence told me quite frankly that he has no belief in an Anglo-French understanding in the East; that he regards France as our natural enemy in those parts and that he has always shaped his actions accordingly."<sup>61</sup>

Lawrence's views on the Arab situation were made quite clear and unequivocal in a letter to Earl Curzon on September 25, 1919 in which he mentioned that "...my ambition is that the Arabs should be our first brown dominion, and not our last brown colony." He suggested that the present Arab administration should become a civil one, that the local government should be recognized according to the Anglo-French Declaration of 1918, that the British give the Arabs the use of Haifa's port in exchange for British use of the ports at Alexandretta and Tripoli, that a railway concession be drawn up to give effect to the "free port" concession, and that both the British and French advisors currently attached to Feisal, evacuate along with the 200 French troops stationed in Damascus.<sup>62</sup> From their dealings with Colonel Lawrence, it was clear that the British Government had no intentions of allowing to disintegrate their understandings over the Middle East. Within the framework of British policy in 1919-20 both the Arab cause in Syria and Colonel Lawrence were expendable.

On March 30, 1919, the disagreement over the Syrian Mandate came into open meeting between British, French, Italian, and American Heads of States. Stephen Picon, representing the French Government, announced that his Government had no desire to control Palestine, but insisted upon receiving a mandate for an otherwise united Syria.<sup>63</sup> The disagreement with His Majesty's



Government, which sought to salvage Faisal's Damascus regime without cost to the British alliance with France, was unsolved in October. Clemenceau sent Lloyd George a strongly worded telegram protesting British obstructionist activities with regard to French claims in the Levant. On November 27th, Faisal met with Clemenceau - pending a final solution by the Peace Conference in which he agreed on behalf of the Arab Government to respect the French occupation on the Syrian Coast and to turn to France for any foreign assistance that might be required.

Because of the different claims of those at the Peace Conference in February of 1919, the American Government proposed to send an inter-Allied Commission to the conquered Ottoman Territories in order to determine the wishes of the natives populations. President Wilson suggested that the people concerned should have a voice in the governments which would be imposed upon them. This meant not only in Syria, but in Armenia and Mesopotamia as well. At the time Wilson was quite aware that Great Britain was busy in Mesopotamia suppressing a general insurrection, that France was fighting to subdue Syria and Armenia, and that Italy was unpopular in Anatolia.

With Wilson's Fourteen Points and the dynamic influence of American Democracy, the European nations had to settle for grants of "Mandates" from the League of Nations. These mandates were something entirely new to the political scene, but were invented to replace the



older forms of colonial domination, such as the "colony" or the "trusteeship." In theory, the mandates were agreements between the League members and the mandatory nations wherein the "mature and sophisticated governments" were to act as foster parents for the "younger and more immature nations" which were newly arising from the bonds of imperial domination. In fact, the mandates turned out to be little more than new names for the older forms of colonial control.

There could have been little question in Wilson's mind that the proposal for the inter-Allied Commission would greatly embarrass both France and England. For the sake of public opinion neither of these nations could oppose Wilson's proposal in principle. But Wilson knew that neither France, Italy, nor England would actually participate. First, it was quite clear that if the native populations were given an opportunity to voice their opinions none would voluntarily chose French, British, or Italian colonialism. Secondly, it was known that France feared large publicity of the anti-French feeling in Syria and that Britain feared the propaganda value of the Anglophobia in Mesopotamia. M. Picot openly stated on June 18, 1919, that a French commission to the Middle East was unnecessary because France admitted her unpopularity in O.E.T.A. East, but felt that Feisal's Government would not last. Furthermore, he added that French policy was decided in Paris and would be unaffected

by the results of recommendations by any Inter-allied Commission.

The Italians realized that they were not popular in Anatolia, and that their position would be no more secure than that of France. Indeed, without France in Syria, Italy could neither claim nor hold territory carved from Anatolia.

No European Power could afford adverse public opinion if it opposed the idea of a fact-finding commission in the conquered territories. But, in practice, only the American delegation went. For Wilson this was a great victory because the American Commission was free to conduct its survey in the manner most favorable to American interests. After little publicity in the European press, the American Commission (known as the "King-Crane Commission") arrived in Syria on June 10, 1919. The Arabs were pleased with the presence of this commission for it allowed them an opportunity to express their nationalistic designs and anti-colonial feelings. Moreover, it gave them a chance to exhibit negative feelings about plans for Zionism. Since very few Zionists actually lived in Palestine at the time of the interviews their voice was diminutive. The King-Crane Commission's activities were largely a popularity contest; it was not difficult to find a majority of Arabs who expressed negative attitudes towards Zionism.

Because of the significance of the King-Crane Commission, General Clayton, Chief Political Officer for

the E.E.F., sent an urgent and secret telegram to Earl Curzon in Paris. He recommended on June 24, 1919, that ... "In view of the importance attached by the people of Syria and Palestine to the Mission of American Commissioners, I consider it important that no decision regarding the future status of Syria and Palestine should be published until the Commission has made its final report." Clayton's telegram implied that Britain and France had already decided on who was to receive the Mandates. Still, it is evident both governments feared the results of the Commission.

The American reason for sending the King-Crane Commission to the Middle East was clear. The Mandates which would be awarded to the European nations would be administered by a League of Nations Commission. The United States was not a member of the League, and therefore it would have little to say in the determination and administration of the Mandates. It was apparent to Woodrow Wilson that the American Senate was not going to emerge suddenly from its confirmed plan of isolation. Besides there was an advantage in not being a member. Non-members would not be bound by the rules and standards of conduct established in the League charter.

Wilson also realized that in spite of the fact that the American Congress would not accept a League Mandate, American interests in the Middle East would increase. The presence of an Anglo-French oil monopoly in Mesopotamia

provided a definite threat to the American position of world leadership in the oil industry. But whichever nations administered the Mandates would have enormous power in controlling the resources of the respective territories. While the United States could not obtain Mandates herself, she wanted to be certain that when she would bargain with England and France over natural resources, it would be from a position of strength.

The King-Crane Commission took full advantage of the pro-American sympathies which existed after the War. From the point of view of the average Arab, it looked as if the United States Government had entered the War for purely idealistic reasons, and the fact that it claimed little or nothing of the spoils commended it for his admiration. If the Commission could prove that the native population desired an American Mandate and not a French or English one, then the United States could force its influence on the Mandate Commission of the League. The American Government was interested in sharing control of the mandated territories, though it did not wish to assume either the mandatory expenses or responsibility. In February of 1921, the United States protested to the League of Nations that it was entitled to equal rights with respect to the Mandated territories. It demanded that the American Government had the right to review the "C" Mandate awarded to Great Britain for Mesopotamia. After many years of bickering, the British and American Governments

came to an agreement on December 3, 1924, in which the United States Government could have full participation and assent to any changes in the Mandate - especially to see that no Mandatory power could violate the League Mandate. The League Mandate stated that the Mandatory nation should not favor any other nation or itself with respect to the commercial and industrial production of the countries under mandate.<sup>64</sup> We shall see how this struggle for power emerged later in a chapter dealing with American interests in the Middle East.

The King-Crane Commission found exactly what it wanted. The final report stated that the native populations desired neither the French nor the English as their rulers, but if a colonial mandate was to be forced upon them, they prepared an American Mandate. Not in one zone alone, but the people voted for an American Mandate in all three zones. The fact that General Allenby himself testified before the King-Crane Commission that he personally preferred an American administration in Syria did not injure the Commission's position.<sup>65</sup>

The Commission found, on the other hand, that if the Syrian Arabs would get a choice between the French and English, they would prefer an English Mandate. The presence of the Commission played into the Arab hands, for it gave them an opportunity to demonstrate their Franco-phobia and to declare once again their desires for an independent Arab Federation. During the Commission's

visit to Syria the Arabs demonstrated furiously. The General Syrian Congress of Arab Nationalists provided the Commission with the "Damascus Programme" which stated in Article 6, "We do not recognize any right claim by the French Government in any part of our Syrian country, and we refuse to have the French assist us and have a hand in our country under any circumstances and in any place."<sup>66</sup> The Arabs had good reason to fear French occupation in Syria because it would mean French Colonists, French Citizenship, and a Christian hegemony. The method and practice of French Colonialism in Africa, viz. the policy of regarding the Colonies as intrinsic portions of the mother-country and inducing French citizens to settle, is to be contrasted with the method and practice of British Colonialism which normally brought none of these things. The Arabs certainly had more to fear from the former than the latter.

On January 28, 1920, the Peace Conference lost much of its authority and initiative with President Wilson's sudden departure to the United States. At the time nothing had been concluded with respect to the Mandates; nor had the Peace Conference decided anything definite concerning the future of Zionism in the East.

With the July 2nd Declaration of the Syrian Congress asking for "complete political independence for a united Syria and Palestine" the Arab Nationalists began to oppose King Feisal himself. Against his own wishes and those of



Sherif Hussein, the Syrian Congress (which claimed to represent all of Syria and Palestine) proclaimed Feisal as "King of the Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine in Damascus."<sup>67</sup> Feisal feared to alienate Great Britain - without which he could not stand up against France. The Peace Conference paid no deference to Feisal's appointment, which he had no alternative but to accept. In April, the Mandate for Syria was awarded to France. In May, the newly formed Damascus Government rejected the Mandate on the grounds that it opposed the majority of the wishes of the people according to the King-Crane Commission.

Meanwhile, Britain took advantage of the lag in time while the King-Crane Commission was in the Levant. If the Mandate was to be awarded to England anyway, there was much to be done. Though the problem of what to do with Syria was in everybody's mind, Lord Robert Cecil, Ronald Storrs, and Chaim Weizmann decided to take a chance and go ahead with the drafting of the Palestine Mandate. They incurred severe criticism by the "do-gooders" and anti-Zionists in London, but nevertheless accomplished their objective. Sir E. Crowe complained in a letter addressed to the British Peace Delegation on July 25, 1919: "I cannot believe that it is proper or politic that the mandate commission, which I understand is a body responsible to the Council of Five, should draw up - still less published - a mandate for Palestine before the question has been decided whether there is to be a separate mandate for Palestine or not, and who is to be the mandatory."

As the months went by and nothing good came to the Arabs as a result of the King-Crane Commission, a Committee of National Defence was formed in Damascus which recruited soldiers for the King's Army. This Committee built up the Damascus Government's forces to the strength of three divisions. They were placed under the command of Yasin Pasha, who had designs on capturing the coastal areas from the French.<sup>68</sup> By the summer of 1919 the Kemalist Movement was alive and thriving in Turkey, and it bolstered the Arab spirit of nationalism. Of course, the birth of this movement greatly annoyed the French who had claims to Anatolia property in Southern Turkey. It was greatly feared that France would have to fight for possessions in Cilicia. If she had to fight the Turks in the North, her eastern flank would be exposed to hostile Arab Nationalist attack in Syria.

By September the British had washed their hands of the entire problem of Franco-Arab relations, and King Feisal learned from Lloyd George on September 19th that the British had agreed to remove all English troops from Syria giving the French a free hand. Great Britain had bowed to the French demands and left the fate of the Arabs in Damascus to the Millerand Government which proved to be more unappeasable and intransigent than that of Clemenceau. Feisal was advised by several British representatives in London to go to Paris and accept the best terms he could get from the French.

Shortly after, Feisal turned up in Paris to negotiate directly with the French Government, and by the beginning of October he had signed the Feisal-Clemenceau Agreement which provided:

- (1) that the French guarantee the independence of Syria and promise their assistance within boundaries to be defined by the Peace Conference.
- (2) that Feisal agrees to ask France alone to furnish the counsellors and technical experts needed for the organization of the civil and the military administration.
- (3) that if the country is to be given any concessions or to make any loans, France should have the priority.
- (4) that French is to be taught as the first foreign language in the schools.
- (5) that the independence of Lebanon should be recognized within limits to be fixed by the Peace Conference.
- (6) that military forces can be called to defend Syria only at the demand of the head of the Syrian state and in agreement with the French High Commissioner.

But prior to the promulgation of the Feisal-Clemenceau Agreement the Arab Nationalists had begun public demonstrations in Damascus. As soon as it was signed it was considered a "dead letter." Feisal later stated to General Clayton that he never intended to carry out the arrangement because Syria was bitterly opposed to French penetration in any form whatever. He was biding

for time to build up his Arab Army. It is doubtful whether the French had any better intentions towards the Feisal-Clemenceau Agreement.

On November 5, 1919, the French Government published a statement in the Temps to make a distinction between the parts of Syria which it acknowledged to be "purement arabes" and those which it did not. In addition, it stated that neither Britain nor France had any pledges to establish the Emir Feisal as the authority even in the regions designated as "purement arabes." It said:

La Grande Bretagne a toujours exclu des régions dites purement arabes non seulement le Liban mais la région côtière syrienne située à l'ouest des quatre villes, c'est à dire précisément la zone blanche où doit s'opérer la relève des troupes britanniques par les troupes françaises... Ne la Grande Bretagne ni la France ne se sont engagées à imposer aux régions dites arabes l'autorité personnelle de l'émir Feisal, fils du roi Hussein, qu'il s'agit des quatre villes out de la Palestine out de tout autre pays de langue arabe."

On December 19, 1919, when the British troops withdrew from Syria, the French took control of Bekaa and proceeded to Balbak. Though Bekaa was supposed to be a region to be later determined by the Peace Conference, the French were fast to fill the vacuum on the falacious grounds that there was a scramble there between a French officer and some Arabs. Feisal telegraphed immediately to the British Government in protest, but it was evident that England was going to make no move to defend her Arab Allies from the force of the French.

In November of 1920, General Gouraud was appointed High Commissioner for Syria and shortly after he sent an ultimatum to Feisal which included the following demands:

1. that the Arabs accept the French Mandate
2. that the Damascus Government abolish its conscription of men for the Army.
3. that the Eastern Zone accept the Syrian currency.
4. that France have absolute disposal of the railway from Rayak to Aleppo which involved control of traffic in both the Syrian and Arab zones.<sup>69</sup>

The "Gouraud Ultimatum" was in direct contradiction to the Clemenceau-Feisal Agreement signed in January, 1920. But at the time it was delivered, neither party considered this agreement valid. The Gouraud Ultimatum was justified from the French point of view by the assertions (1) that Feisal was directly responsible for the Syrian Revolt, while the Syrian Cabinet secretly wanted to negotiate with the French and (2) that the Cabinet had dismissed both the Army and the Syrian Congress. Obviously, the turn of events did not substantiate these charges.

King Feisal realized that the Arab Nationalists in Damascus would not accept even conditional supervision by the French Government. By the time he had returned to Syria the Syrian National Congress had taken steps to make even the publication of the Clemenceau-Feisal Agreement dangerous. The French made it clear that their understanding not to occupy the Four Towns of Eastern Syria was conditional on the ability of the Damascus



Government to keep order and suppress anti-French propaganda which emanated from both Arab and British circles.<sup>70</sup> There could have been little doubt, however, that Feisal was impotent in Arab circles, nor that he could suppress British efforts to antagonize the Arabs over French rule. Clemenceau knew that the Agreement with Feisal was a paper-victory for the French because it meant the same thing as eventual French control in Eastern Syria. He told General Allenby in Paris that the French Government could not accept, under any conditions, the Aide Memoire which the British Government had published, and which gave virtual control of the Four Towns to Feisal. Clemenceau expressed at the same time a sentiment that the final solution must include French occupation of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo. In April, 1920, informal meetings had begun at San Remo in which the Supreme Council of the League of Nations would decide the future of the Mandates for the occupied Ottoman territories. The French had to act quickly, or not at all. Once the Supreme Council would recognize Arab claims, the French Government would have to come in conflict with world opinion, and the Arabs would no doubt find much sympathy for their Arab Nationalism. Moreover, the Arab Nationalist Movement might grow. It was feared that an Arab National Government would acquire a merchant marine and navy which might visit North African ports. The presence of such ships would be detrimental to the French interests in Tunis and Algeria,



and it might precipitate the growth of Arab Nationalism in North Africa.

When General Gouraud sent his ultimatum, Feisal knew he could do nothing but accept, just as he had accepted the unfavorable terms of the Feisal-Clemenceau Agreement. Without British support he could only strive after the best terms, and then attempt to placate the members of the Syrian National Congress. The latter task proved to be the most difficult. Feisal postponed answering the Gouraud demands until five hours before the deadline. He tried desperately to convince his Arab adversaries that the movement for Arab Nationalism would die if he did not accept Gouraud's terms. In December 1919, Feisal had dissolved the Syrian National Congress, but in February, 1920, he had reformed it into The Palestine Conference. Hoping to turn the attention of the Syrian Nationalists away from their original objectives in Western and Eastern Syria, Feisal tried to refocus attention on the question of Palestine. This was particularly manifest on May 5, 1920 when the San Remo Conference announced its decision concerning the Mandates. At San Remo the Supreme Council had decided to give France the Mandate over Central Syria and Britain, that of Palestine. The former Mandate did not, however preclude the existence of some sort of Arab States in Inland Syria.<sup>71</sup>

Within the Damascus Government changes took place which made Feisal's position untenable. In January, the

Arabs had clashed with the French over the use of the Ayaq-Aleppo Railway which was essential for the French supply in their war with the Turks in Cilicia. The Arabs had blockaded the French zones in an effort to help the Turkish Kemalists. In addition, French and Arab forces clashed at Hamman and Harin. The Northern Syrians were in contact with Kemal Pasha, and they threatened to revolt with the Turks. (c.f. British Documents, No. 378: Letter from Allenby to Lord Curzon). Feisal had succeeded to appoint a moderate Cabinet under Rida Pasha al-Rikaba, but by May, 1920 it fell to a militant coup under Hashim al Atasi.<sup>72</sup> In May, an armistice was signed between the Kemalists and the French. Soon after, the alliance which the Arabs had made with the Young Turks was broken, and the Damascus Government once again stood alone. The French had no more worries over the thought of fighting on two fronts, and they were free to move against the Arabs.

After Feisal had sent his acceptance to General Gouraud, mobs developed in the streets of Damascus to protest. The Syrian Nationalist Congress attacked the Cabinet. But Feisal stood firm and began an immediate general demobilization. French troops, on the other hand, had "jumped the gun" and had begun to move into the Anti-Lebanon - knowing that Feisal's Government was split and that it could only mount limited resistance under any conditions. Suddenly, the Council of Lebanon, hereto loyal to France, dissolved itself and demanded a sovereign

and independent Lebanon. It immediately dispatched ministers to Europe to argue its cause in Paris. General Gouraud was determined to snuff the sparks of Lebanese Nationalism at their source. He arrested as many recalcitrant ministers as he could round up. The remainder were captured on route to Damascus - their first step in the journey to Europe. In the last moments of Arab independence, Colonel Cousse, the French liaison officer attached to the Damascus Government, brought General Gouraud a note from Feisal stating that the Ultimatum was too strong and that it would cause civil war. But anarchy had already broken out in the ranks of the military.

Yusif al Adhma, Feisal's war Minister, with a small band of regular Arab forces went to meet the approaching French army on route to Damascus. At Maysalum Pass the two armies met and fought until the Arabs were routed by combined attacks from French artillery and aeroplanes. The King and his ministers were withdrawn from Damascus on the 25th. At Kiswa, on the Damascus-Hejaz Railway, Feisal awaited French approval for the new Cabinet which he had appointed. With his new Prime-Minister, Ala-al Din al Durubi, Feisal returned to Damascus to negotiate with General Gouraud, but after a few hours was ordered to leave for Dar'a. Two days later the King received the following telegram from Gouraud:

I have the honour to communicate to Your Royal Highness a decision of the French Government requesting you to leave Damascus as soon as possible by way of the Hedjaz Railway with your Royal Highness' Family and Suite.<sup>73</sup>

Feisal was summarily informed that if he remained in Syria the French would bomb his quarters and retinue. He, therefore, withdrew immediately towards Haifa.

Despite the emergency telegrams from Feisal to the major capitals of the world, no nation protested the right of the French Government to move against the Arabs. It was said of Feisal that "he really believed, when he withdrew before General Gouraud, that Lord Allenby would intervene or even support him against the French and that he was so disillusioned after so glorious an entry into Damascus a bare 12 months earlier...(He felt) the new situation was a pathetic, almost tragic, episode."<sup>74</sup>

But the British Government was quick to formally recognize the French claims and acquisitions. On December 23rd an Anglo-French Convention was signed which laid down, in general, the frontiers between Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine.<sup>75</sup> No mention was made in the December Convention granting Arab independence in Syria nor of the unfulfilled promises which the Allies had made with respect to either the Zionists or the Arabs. A final settlement had been reached which was legitimized by the Supreme Council of the League. Essentially, the final settlement had resembled that of the Sykes-Picot Agreement because it allowed for the "Spheres of Influence" between

France and England. In brief, it finalized a "hands off" policy for all nations, and it gave the Mandatory Powers full control within their respective "spheres." So long as Britain would not openly mingle in Franco-Arab problems in Syria, the French would not mingle in Anglo-Arab-Zionist problems within Palestine and Mesopotamia. We shall see, however, that while a kind of moratorium was declared on overt politics, clandestine intrigue still stirred Anglo-French relationships in the Middle East. While France and Britain appeared to settle their mutual problems, a state of "cold war" existed between them.

## X. THE DIVISION OF TRANSJORDAN

The termination of the Arab Federation's Damascus Government caused a sharp alteration in the balance of power in the Middle East. The two major European Powers had firmly proven that their claims to Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia would stand regardless of the nationalist aspirations of either the Arabs or the Zionists. There could be only two claims by these nationalist movements - either for those areas to which Britain or France did not lay direct claims, or for a type of "trusteeship" within one of the imperial zones. The Zionist claim for a British protectorate within the Palestine Zone proved to be, in effect, more difficult to fulfill than the Arab claims on territories outside the Mandated Zones.

Since the Arabian Peninsula was not within any "Sphere of Influence" which the Allies had mapped off for themselves, Arab aspirations there could be realized. It became evident that the English were not interested in the Eastern section of the Palestinian Mandated Zone, and that the Arabs might claim this desert wasteland as well. But in addition, since the idea of a mandate had been devised, Britain could not completely overlook the wishes of the native population. Thus, if the Arabs made a strong case against Jewish immigration, it would be possible to keep Eastern Palestine free from Zionist colonization.

When King Feisal fled from Damascus it was obvious



that the British would have to fill the vacuum in Transjordan. The prospects of French influence in this wasteland to the east of the Jordan River was not pleasant for the British. Hence it became evident that the British intended to solve the Zionist-Arab Problem by giving Transjordan to the Arabs and Western Palestine to the Jews.

After the Damascus Government had been forced out of Syria, the Arab Nationalist Movement did not die. Throughout the Arab world there were demands that a member of the Hashemite Family replace Feisal.<sup>76</sup> Emir Abdullah, Feisal's brother realized the opportunity which presented itself, for he knew that the proper action could bring him and the Arab Nationalist Movement grand success while risking little. Abdullah knew that while Churchill, then Colonial Secretary under Lloyd George, turned a cold ear to Arab protests over Syria, he would take the bait if forced to protect the mandated area in Palestine. Abdullah proclaimed himself vice-king of Syria, sharing the title with his brother who was then in Europe, and proceeded to Ma'an where he pretended to muster an army in order to attack the French. He knew, however, that the shieks of the desert would not support him.<sup>77</sup> But the threat of an army in Transjordan would force the British to either sponsor an Arab attack on Syria or grant Abdullah concessions. On the other hand, if Abdullah could interest Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Young Turks in an attack on the French from the North, the Arab cause need not be lost. At any rate,

the presence of an army in Ma'an would force one or more of the European nation to make a move in his favor.

The British Government and its representative in Jerusalem, Herbert Samuel, quickly took Abdullah's bait. Regardless of Abdullah's true intention, the British did not want a skirmish between the Arabs and the French over Eastern Syria. Firstly, they did not want Abdullah to precipitate hostilities from Transjordanian soil which was under control of the Mandatory Power. Such action would lead France to feel that the British were intriguing in an anti-French policy in the Levant. This policy might endanger their commercial agreements. Secondly, England did not want a war between the Arabs and French because should the Arabs fail, the French would be justified in counter-attacking in Transjordan. French control of Transjordan would not only endanger Western Palestine but serve as a natural base from which to mount a land attack on Suez.

The division of Transjordan from Palestine was also related to the growing problem of Arab-Zionist antagonism. Directly after the War it looked as if the aims and aspirations of the Zionists and Arabs were not incompatible and that the two nationalist groups could work out their differences. But the "cold war" between France and England made an equitable solution impossible. Just as the British had been instrumental in creating animosity between the Syrians and French in 1919, so the French

manifested a decisively anti-Zionist attitude in order to engender trouble for the British.

In order to gain the favor of the Arabs, both Christian and Muslim, the French engaged in a program of anti-Zionist propaganda. In addition, they supported majority parties against the combined minorities. In Lebanon, for example, the French supported the Maronite Community against the Druze, Muslim, Protestant, and Greek Orthodox factions. In their effort against the Zionists, the French Government sponsored the Muslim-Christian Association in Beirut and Damascus. When open hostilities began in 1920 leading members of this association were convicted by the British Mandatory Government of being instrumental in anti-Zionist murders and riots. We have evidence of French complicity in anti-Zionist demonstrations in various communiques. In a letter of June, 1919 to Lord Curzon in Paris General Clayton wrote: "The people of Palestine think Great Britain is more systematically committed to the Zionist programme than either the United States or France, and both Arab and French propaganda have been actively engaged during the past few months in fostering this view." In another communique to Curzon, General Clayton said: "The unity of opinion of the Allies has been emphasized in responsible quarters in Palestine, although I am not sure that local French and Italian representatives have always acted entirely in accordance with the spirit of the (Balfour) Declaration

(as confirmed) by their respective Governments." On September 12th, Colonel Meinertzhagen wrote to Curzon complaining that "...the French in Syria foster contempt for Arabs, distribute active propaganda against Zionism and the Arab Movements."<sup>78</sup>

In 1920, there were a series of Arab attacks on lonely and isolated Jewish collective settlements in Northern Palestine. During O.E.T.A. the areas in which these settlements were located remained under British control. When, however, the Mandates were parcelled out these Zones were included in the Syrian Mandate given to France. There is good reason to believe that these murderous attacks on such settlements as Tel Hai, where Joseph Trompador was killed, were linked with French interests. Even if the Government was not directly responsible, it was certainly aware of the dangers to these settlements and did nothing to protect them. Herbert Samuel went before the heroic leaders of these stalwart communities to plead for their withdrawal into safer territories further south in the British Zone.<sup>79</sup>

Reference to other French anti-Zionist activities in Palestine was noted during the disturbances between Arabs and Jews in May, 1921. Immediately after these riots which claimed between 95 to 104 lives, Herbert Samuel appointed Sir Thomas Haycraft, Chief Justice of Palestine, as head of a special Commission to inquire into the disturbances. In the conclusion to Sir Thomas' report the following

statement is made:

It has been said to us by Jewish witnesses that there was essentially no anti-Jewish question at that time, but that a movement against the Jews was engineered by persons who, anxious to discredit the British Government, promoted discontentment and disturbance of the peace by stirring up the common people against the Jews. It is argued by them that all the trouble is due to the propaganda of a small class whose members regret the departure of the old regime, because British administration has put an end to privileges and opportunities of profit formerly enjoyed by them; that in cooperation with them are certain foreigners, principally French agents, who are ready to make mischief for political reasons, and to encourage any sort of disturbance calculated to embarrass the British Government. These witnesses asseverate that Zionism has nothing to do with the anti-Jewish feeling manifested in the Jaffa disturbances.<sup>80</sup>

By 1921, it became evident that the French had succeeded in sufficiently antagonizing the Arabs against the Zionists. Hatred between the two groups was already so deep that there was no immediate resolution. The British felt, nevertheless, that the division of the Palestine Zone into distinctly Arab and Jewish areas could achieve a settlement which would be acceptable to both the Arabs and the Jews. Further, by dividing Palestine into two zones marked off by the Jordan River, it was thought that England could fulfill her promises to the Arabs in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence without violating the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. In both zones the British intended to maintain essential control so that neither the Zionists nor the Arabs could mount sufficient forces to attack the other.

In addition, Winston Churchill reasoned that if Transjordan was offered to Emir Abdullah, he could be induced not to make any military advancements on French territory in the North. A carefully protected and guided Arab kingdom would be invaluable protection for Palestine. In brief, an Arab "buffer state" in Transjordan seemed to be the solution to several of Britain's colonial problems in the Middle East. England had only to revise the original draft of the Mandate for Palestine which was issued by the League. In this draft Article 25 was amended to read:

In the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined, the Mandatory shall be entitled to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of the Mandate as he may consider inapplicable to the existing local conditions, and to make such provision for the administration of the territories as he may consider suitable to those conditions, provided no action shall be taken which is inconsistent with the provisions of Articles 15, 16 and 18.<sup>81</sup>



## XI. THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE OF 1921

Once the Supreme Council of the League awarded the Palestine and Mesopotamian Mandates to Great Britain, the English no longer had to disguise their intentions in the Middle East. Almost immediately after receiving the Mandates, the supervision for the new territories was transferred from the Foreign to the Colonial Office. This transfer was made for reasons of economy and efficiency, but it, nevertheless, reflected the attitude with which the British Government regarded the newly acquired Ottoman lands. As soon as the Colonial Office received responsibility for the Mandates, Winston Churchill was determined to solve the major problems arising from them with "summit conferences" to be held in Jerusalem and Cairo. These conferences were classified as "top secret" and were held in conjunction with other top level policy meetings dealing with the British position in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

When Churchill presided over the Middle East Conferences in February, 1921, a number of key issues presented themselves to him. First, it was Churchill's responsibility to see that both the Colonial and War Offices reduce expenditures for their colonial and military missions in the Middle East. During the War Great Britain had incurred large debts, and the Conservative Lloyd George Government had promised the British taxpayer to reduce the costs of assuming civil administration over the

the conquered territories. Secondly, Churchill was pressed to find a solution to the growing tensions between the Arab and Zionist populations in Palestine. Thirdly, he needed to find some form of alternative policy to pacify the various Arab dignitaries who claimed authority over the Arab peoples who had suddenly come within the purview of His Majesty's Government. Fourthly, Churchill was intent to find a policy which would eliminate the dangers of a conflict with the Allies, particularly with the French. Fifthly, the Colonial Office was interested in coordinate various departments and activities so that a maximum of efficiency could be obtained with respect to the different economic, military, and communication goals.<sup>82</sup>

The problem of reducing expenditures in the newly conquered Ottoman Territories was made more complex by the large areas which came under the British rule and the long lines of communication which had to connect them. The changeover from Ottoman to British administration could not be expected to be smooth; nor were the hostile tribesmen or Muslim urban populations particularly tractable to British subjugation. The long lines of communications and logistics demanded rather large military installations for defense, and though the majority of the manpower for defense and gendarmerie could be recruited from the local populations, the presence of British personnel was always required. The most immediate goal was to reduce the military strength in Mesopotamia which cost the British

taxpayers from 25 to 31.5 million British pounds per annum.<sup>83</sup> The original plan was to reduce the garrison down to 22 battalions which would mean a reduction of 1/3rd the manpower, but only a saving to the British Exchequer of 1/7th the original expenditure.<sup>84</sup> General Radcliffe suggested that with the reduction of British forces from the Black Sea, Mesopotamia, and Constantinople it would be wise to occupy Transjordan as a spring board for military operations in a 360 degree circumference. It was decided, however, that British Troops would be better stationed in Palestine, for as Herbert Samuel reminded the General Staff, "...the garrison in Palestine was not merely intended to maintain order in that country, but should be regarded as an Imperial reserve and as a protection for the Suez Canal."<sup>85</sup>

Great Britain embarked on a new and dramatic form of defense which would enable her to economize on the size and number of her garrisons while obtaining maximum security. Learning of the great use to which the aeroplane might be put, Churchill decided to concentrate the reserve forces in Egypt and Palestine and establish a series of aerodromes which would be equipped to service large numbers of planes from Palestine and Egypt through Transjordan to Mesopotamia. These aerodromes were to be guarded by local militia and inspected periodically by service aeroplanes. Such airports were to be initially located at Amman, Kirkuk and Irbid, with others to be erected as the need

came and the allocations were made. The establishment of a series of aerodromes would, further, reduce the air-distance between Europe and India by 8 to 10 days. A motor track was ordered erected which would connect these aerodromes and allow them to be supplied with fuel, munitions, wireless apparatus. (See Map I) General Congreve agreed immediately to loan the Royal Air Force an armored car detachment for two months to form a reconnaissance party which would survey the routes and locations for the prospective air strips.<sup>86</sup> The opening of a well-defined air route between Egypt and Mesopotamia was not only essential for the air control of the regions between, but assisted the Arab Legion in its efforts to maintain internal order against Bedouin invaders. It also enabled the Air Force to answer requests for men, supplies, and air support with a speed previously unavailable in distant colonial domains.

With respect to the division of Palestine and Transjordan, it was decided that the British Government should establish the Emir Abdullah as ruler of Transjordan. Palestine would be maintained and operated with the spirit of the Balfour Declaration; but Transjordan would be closed to Jewish immigration. In February, the British Government issued a statement to the effect that due to Article 3 of the Mandate for Palestine, the Mandatory was obliged to encourage the widest measure of self-government for individual localities. The British Government,

therefore, considered itself justified in setting up in Transjordan a political system somewhat different from that in force on the other side of the Jordan River. Consistent with the British promises set forth in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, Transjordan must be Arab in character.

Churchill considered that Transjordan should be centralized under an Arab ruler acceptable to His Majesty's Government and acting in important matters under British advice. "This would facilitate the appointment in Transjordan of a responsible British Adviser acting under the orders of the High Commissioner for Palestine and reporting through him to His Majesty's Government."<sup>87</sup> At the time of the Conference, Herbert Samuel agreed that it was necessary that Trans-jordania should be regarded as territory administered on a different line from Palestine, partly owing to the question of Zionism. Nevertheless, this area should be included under the British Mandate, and should not, in his opinion, be regarded as an independent Arab State."<sup>88</sup> Colonel Lawrence feared at the time that the French might offer the crown of Transjordan to Abdullah, and thereby create a Franco-Arab State in Eastern Palestine. This possibility, along with current thinking of Churchill and Samuel, led the British Government to offer the crown to Emir Abdullah. In addition, the British offered a monetary subsidy to King Hussein and Ibn Saud. In return, Saud promised not to



attack Transjordan, and Abdullah was made to understand that he was to use his influence to prevent anti-French and anti-Zionist propaganda in Transjordan.

The Zionists considered the division of Transjordan as a mortal blow. Since Transjordan was excluded from the administrative system of Palestine, the Zionist clauses in the Palestine Mandate suddenly became inapplicable east of the Jordan River. On September 16, 1922 the League of Nations accepted a memorandum from Lord Balfour proposing that the territory east of Wadi-el Arabs, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers should be freed from the application of the Jewish National Home clauses embodied in the Palestine Mandate. Thus, the local government under Abdullah would not be expected to adapt any measures to promote Jewish immigration, trade, or colonization.<sup>89</sup>

Though Sir Herbert Samuel firmly rejected Abdullah's plan to take all Transjordan and Palestine under his personal control, he said before the Middle East Conference that he wished to take an opportunity to explain British policy in Palestine. (March 27, 1921) "There is no question," he said, "of setting up a Jewish Government there. The Balfour Declaration made two promises - to the Jews and to the Arabs. The Government is resolutely determined to fulfill both these promises." Samuel further stated that he was confident that in thirty or forty years it would be found that exactly the same policy



would be pursued. He stated that he had always been sympathetic with Arab aspirations, and he much regretted the developments in Syria which led to the expulsion of Emir Feisal. He had often urged the French both before and after he had become High Commissioner for Palestine to come to an agreement with the Emir Abdullah's brother.<sup>90</sup>

The British Government was guaranteed of Abdullah's cooperation because before he was brought to Jerusalem to meet with Winston Churchill, Samuel sent T. E. Lawrence to a secret meeting with Abdullah at Es Salt. There, Lawrence informed Abdullah of Churchill's designs - making it firmly understood that England would brook no suggestion that Feisal ever return to Syria.<sup>91</sup>

In return for Abdullah's promise not to initiate trouble with the French, Churchill agreed to provide the new Transjordan King with a British Political Officer, money, and troops for a trial period of six months. Initially, the cost of the defense force in Transjordan was to be paid for by the Colonial Office. Later, it was to be paid by the revenues from customs and duties levied in the Palestine Zone. On April 1, 1921, 14,000 British pounds sterling were paid to Captain Peake who was to administer the money for Abdullah. He was also attached as Abdullah's Advisor, Commanding Officer of the British Forces, and second in command of the Arab Legion. The remainder of the 50,000 pounds sterling originally promised was to be met from duties and taxes.<sup>92</sup> All in all,

it appeared that the division of Transjordan and Palestine was a cheap and effective maneuver to solve several of Britain's ailing Palestinian problems with a single blow.

In Arab Command Major C. S. Jarvis described the tailoring job performed on Transjordan in the following manner:

The country in those days might have been likened to a quite sizeable and useful piece of material, left over from a roll of cloth by the tailor's cutter when fashioning four new and fashionable suits. Such a thing, of course, would not occur in an efficient tailoring establishment, but when there are four tailor's cutters from rival firms shipping out hurridely cut lengths to make four over-sized suits, some confusion and waste is bound to occur; and misfits are inevitable. 93.

In June of 1925, the British allowed Abdullah to extend his protectorate southward and open into the Gulf of Accaba. Great Britain signed its approval of Abdullah's Emirate by securing it against invasion from the dreaded Wahabis under Ibn Saud. In conjunction with his annexation of Ma'an and Accaba, Abdullah declared:

On behalf of the authority of His Hashemite Majesty King Ali of the Holy Hejaz, we declare the districts of Ma'an and Accaba to be part of the Amirate of Transjordan. On behalf of our own people and government, we express our heartfelt thanks to His Holy Majesty. 94.

By the Treaty of 1925 not only had the Arabs gained Ma'an and Accaba, but the British assured themselves of control over the strategic ports on the Red Sea. 95.

The successful tailoring of Transjordan became manifest in an Agreement between the United Kingdom and

Transjordan signed in Jerusalem on February 20, 1928.<sup>96</sup>

In this treaty the Government of Transjordan agreed to pay for a British Resident in Amman, to accept the boundaries established between Palestine and Syria, and to eliminate all customs between Palestine and Transjordan. The British maintained the right to garrison British forces in Transjordan and the right to raise an army from the Transjordanian population for national defense. (Art. 10)

Transjordan was to pay 1/16th of all costs for the Frontier Force, and as soon as the financial resources of that country would permit, it would pay for the excess costs of the British Forces stationed in Transjordan.<sup>97</sup>

By 1924, His Majesty's Government had at Amman a considerable Royal Air Force unit which supplemented the Arab Legion of 40 officers and 950 men.<sup>98</sup> In July of 1924 Emir Abdullah made an extradition treaty with French Syria to answer British demands that Transjordan make peace in the North. From the date of the original meeting between Churchill and Abdullah in 1921, almost all brigandage between Transjordan and Syria ceased.

The French approved of Churchill's choice for a puppet-government in Transjordan. During the Jerusalem meeting, M. Robert de Caix, the French Oriental Affairs Expert, had been invited to observe. Both de Caix and Churchill agreed that Abdullah should be given latitude in the volte-face which he was required to make before the Arab public. Churchill reminded Abdullah that he would

not hold it against him if he were to speak less moderately than he were to act with respect to Syria. So long as Abdullah took no overt action against France, both de Caix and Churchill approved any measures Abdullah thought expedient to keep the Arab populace under control.

Though the creation of Transjordan fitted neatly into British plans, the problem of Mesopotamia still remained unsolved. Great Britain could not consider Anglo-Saxon colonization in Mesopotamia, and therefore she considered establishing a native government to be controlled from London. The Third Afghan War broke out in May 1919, and Britain feared its spread into Mesopotamia. Churchill thought it would be best to put Feisal on the throne of Mesopotamia, and force the native population to accept his leadership. With Feisal in Mesopotamia, Abdullah in Transjordan, Hussein in the Hejaz, and Ibn Saud in Central Arabia, Great Britain could insure general peace among the Arab communities.

The crowning of Feisal as King of Iraq was not as easy as the establishment of his brother in Transjordan. In Mesopotamia the news of the decision by the Allied Powers in San Remo was not welcomed. Indeed, the India Office, which was responsible for administration of the Mesopotamian Zone, had met resistance from the local population since 1919. On June 17, 1920, al'Ahd, a nationalist organization, called upon its members to resist British dictation by force of arms. From July to

October of that year general rebellion spread throughout Mesopotamia. In an effort to subdue the sedition the British incurred over 2,000 casualties and paid out more than 40,000 British pounds sterling.<sup>99</sup> It was estimated that the British slew more than 8,500 Arabs. It was no wonder that the local population in 1921 would have found little sympathy for any candidate whom the British proposed. Further, the prospects of a Hejazian monarch ruling Mesopotamia did not find favor in the eyes of the local population. The British, therefore, set Feisal on the throne of Iraq only after an expensive and concentrated propaganda campaign.

With respect to Churchill's fifth and last objective at the Middle East Conference, the matter of building and defending the Mesopotamian-Palestine Railway and Pipeline was discussed. It was noted by General Radcliffe that the provision for building such a railway, which was currently in negotiation with the French Government, would save the Anglo-Persian Oil Company approximately 1,000,000 British pounds per year. The pipeline was scheduled for completion in 1923. By 1924, General Radcliffe speculated, the British Commonwealth would begin to feel the beneficial economic effects of British policy in the Levant.



## XII. ARAB-ZIONIST PROBLEMS AND THE BRITISH POLICY

To what extent Zionism was an important factor in the determination of British policy is, indeed, difficult to assess. In retrospect, it appears that the idea of Zionism was appealing to the British from 1916 until the outbreak of hostilities in 1920. The idea to colonize Palestine with a friendly, sympathetic, and tractable Western population made, evidently, more sense in theory than it did in practice. During the negotiations before and after the War, the Zionists were useful to the British. But their actual presence in Palestine was nothing but a source of trouble for British Imperialism. Thus, while the Zionists had been useful during the transition phase, they become more and more expendable as time went on. But once the British had committed themselves to the Balfour Declaration it was impossible to completely eliminate the Zionists. While reading about the events from 1916 to 1925 one might note a definite pattern in which the British Government attempted to delicately withdraw itself from full commitment to the Zionist program. The process of gentle and unflammable distancing or detachment from the Zionist program was not unique with the Jews. England carried through a similar policy with respect to the Arab Federation and the various Arab Shiekhdoms.

When the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917 there was great enthusiasm since both Englishman and



Zionist felt that the Arabs and Jews could live and work together. But as time went on the British Government found that the tension between the Arabs and Jews was not as easily dissolved as many in the early years had thought. Moreover, the presence of the French in Syria created a "cold war" in which the Zionists and Arabs were inevitably the pawns. Both the French and English capitalized on the natural animosity which lingered in the hearts of the Arabs and Jews, and they did their part to see that these enmities were fostered, cultivated, and expressed in manners which would be to their mutual benefit.

In the "cold war" Great Britain could more easily manipulate the Arab Nationalists and Zionists than the French or Americans. Thus, from the time of the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence and the Balfour Declaration, the relationships between the Arabs, Zionists, and British did nothing but decline. We have already seen how Arab Nationalism was compromised for a quid pro quid agreement with the French in Syria. Now let us review the disintegration of the British-Zionist relationship.

There were a number of stages by which the British Government attempted to renege on the ambiguous promise initially made in the Balfour Declaration. The first uncamouflaged attempt was in the division of Transjordan in 1921-2 whereby the entire Eastern sector of the Palestine Mandate was declared "out of bounds" for Zionist immigration. The second step was the Government's refusal

to adequately protect Jewish settlements in 1920, '23, and '24, and subsequently reducing or altogether eliminating the quotas for Jewish immigration to Palestine. The third step in this process was the proclamation of the Churchill White Paper of 1922 in which Government intended to define the ambiguities of the Balfour Declaration. The result of this definition was unfavorable to the Zionist cause.

From the outset of the Occupied Enemy Territories Administration, there were accusations that the Military Government was not following the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. General Allenby staunchly maintained that it was not the responsibility of the Military Administration to make the types of internal changes in the life or politics of Palestine which the Balfour Declaration demanded. He pointed out that The Hague Convention forbade military occupiers to make unnecessary changes in the status-quo. He was set against Jewish immigration into Palestine until the Mandate was decided - knowing that the future of the French Mandate would be a great factor in the harmony or discord of Arab-Jewish relations.

During this period the Zionists in London received permission to send a delegation to Palestine to meet with British Military Administrators and discuss the problems of carrying forth the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. Attached to this Commission were Chaim Weizmann and Colonel Ormsby-Gore, the British Government Political Representative. Upon arrival in Palestine the Commission found that

the Military Government was not in sympathy with the aims of Zionism. To the distress of the Zionists, it was determined that several high ranking officers in Allenby's Staff had never heard of the Balfour Declaration. The publication of the Declaration, furthermore, had been prohibited in the Levant until the middle of 1918. Moreover, what was of particular distress to Weizmann was the prevailing spirit of anti-Semitism. This was encouraged in part, by the many copies of the Protocols of Zion which the British officers had brought with them from the Caucasus.<sup>100</sup>

The Military Administration answered the protests of the Zionist Commission by stating that it had not been given clear lines of operation by the Foreign Office in London. The Zionists expressed their grievances about the appointment of several high ranking officers who had been known to be anti-Semitic. Certain names continually appear in connection with anti-Zionist activities, among which are: Edmond T. Richmond, Ronald Storrs, Colonel Vivian Gabriel, and Colonel Waters-Taylor. Richmond was appointed because of his intimate knowledge of the Palestinian-Arab situation and his concern for Arab welfare. But he was finally dismissed for his complicity with Haj Amin el Hussein.<sup>101</sup> Storrs, the Governor General of Jerusalem, was never thoroughly convinced of the merits of Zionism, but in actuality was not an anti-Semite. Colonel Vivian Gabriel, Assistant Administrator

of O.E.T.A. South, was outspoken in his distaste for the Balfour Declaration.<sup>102</sup> Waters-Taylor, Assistant Political Officer in O.E.T.A. South, was finally dismissed for his anti-French activity in Syria. He was openly accused by Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen for complicity in assisting Feisal with an anti-French and anti-Zionist campaign.<sup>103</sup>

Because of his strong pro-Zionist sentiments and bitter opposition to the aims of the Military Administration, Meinertzhagen was asked to resign his post as Assistant Political Officer attached to the E.E.F. Meinertzhagen was not alone. Herbert Samuel, though not a member of the Zionist Organization, complained with Weizmann to Sir R. Graham that those who administered British Military policy had openly declared that they would take every opportunity of injuring Zionist interests in Palestine. Samuel referred then specifically to Ronald Storrs, whom he later appointed as his Civil Governor of Jerusalem. Moreover, Samuel complained that the officers spread the idea that the Government had no intention of fulfilling the Balfour Declaration, and that while Allenby was occupied with matters in Egypt and Syria, the local officers refused to view Zionism with anything but a prejudiced eye.

In addition to the specific grievances brought against some officers serving O.E.T.A. South, the Zionist Organization presented General Clayton in London on July 9,

1919, with a series of recommendations. The Zionists asked that the Military Administration (1) assist in making facilities for Jewish immigration (2) assist in the settlement of Jewish owned land (3) terminate the embargo on the selling of land to Jews (4) use Hebrew in official documents (5) introduce a scheme for agricultural loans (6) treat the Jewish Battalions in the British Army as equals (7) allow Jewish schools to receive support from taxes paid by Jews and (8) terminate the discrimination against Jews in Nabulus.

As early as 1910 the Palestine Land Development Co., Ltd. had been purchasing tracts of land in the Emek Israel, Merhaviah, Gaza, and Kefar Uriah. After the War this company along with the Zionist Organization had hoped to increase Jewish lands by purchasing real estate previously owned by the Turkish Government, the Djiftlik. Suddenly the Military Administration closed the Land Registry and prohibited all acquisition of land by private contracts because the Mandatory had hoped to remove some Arab apprehensions that Palestine would be "bought out from under their feet." The sale of land, however, was so profitable for the Arabs that they pressured the Military Government to reopen the Land Registry on October 20, 1920. At that time plots of less than 300 dunams and a value less than 3,000 Egyptian pounds could be sold with the confirmation of the District Governor. Plots of more than 300 dunams required the signature of the High Commissioner.

Companies could, thereafter, act as legal bodies and register for land in their own names.<sup>104</sup>

The demands from the Zionists and from high officials in London put pressure on the local Palestine military officialdom. Antagonisms reached the boiling point during the riots in the early months of 1920 when the last military governor resided in Jerusalem. Colonel Gabriel had been engaged in agitating the Arabs against Jewish immigration. It was reported that inflammatory speeches calling for the elimination of Zionism were delivered from the steps of the Military Governor's Office in Jaffa. The following is an extract from a letter written to Lt. Colonel Patterson on April 10, 1920:

Anti-Jewish demonstrations were allowed to take place, and inflammatory speeches were allowed to be made against the Jews. The evil men amongst the Arabs openly declare that they would slaughter the Jews at the Festival of Nevi Musa...<sup>105</sup>

During the riots, which did in fact occur during Nevi Musa, the Government closed the gates to the Old City of Jerusalem in order to keep out the self-organized vigilante defense force under Platimor Jabotinsky. No help arrived from either the Government or the Haganah. The Arabs raped, plundered, and murdered the Jewish population within. It was reported that the call to arms of the Arab rioters was "El dowleh ma'ana!" ("The Government is with us!")

Once the hostilities had quieted down the British



attempted to make minor arrests. The major conviction, however, was passed out to Jabotinsky for his "illegal act in raising unauthorized defense force." The military tribunal which sentenced Captain Jabotinsky with 15 years of hard labor was later deemed a "kangaroo court" and the charge against Jabotinsky dismissed. The case was debated in the House of Commons. Major-General Sir Louis Bols, the Military Governor of O.E.T.A. South, came under heavy criticism both from Members of Commons and from the Zionist Organization. The bitterness which he felt is adequately expressed in an excerpt from his final report:

I cannot allocate the blame (for the riots) to any section of the community or to individuals while their case is still subjudice, but I can definitely state that when the strain came the Zionist Commission did not loyally accept the orders of the Administration, but from the commencement adopted a hostile, critical and abusive attitude. It is a regrettable fact that with one or two exceptions it appears impossible to convince a Zionist of British good faith and ordinary honesty. They seek, not justice from the military occupation, but that in every question in which a Jew is interested discrimination shall be shown in his favour. They are exceedingly difficult to deal with. In Jerusalem, being in the majority, they are not satisfied with military protection, but demand to take the law in their own hands. In other places where they are in a minority they clamour for military protection.<sup>106</sup>

Those who were responsible for the actual implementation and occupation of British policy in Palestine evidently did not visualize the opportunities which Zionism posed for Britain. During the days of O.E.T.A. South, the Jewish population in Palestine was a relatively small fragment of the Arab population. The majority of the

people were obviously not enthusiastic about Zionism - in theory or practice. The Arabs had recently undergone frustration in Syria and Mesopotamia. And to add to their plight, Great Britain had promised what was left of the Levant to a foreign people. The Arabs asked what right England had to support the Zionists, since their decision to do so opposed the general will of the Arab public. The local British officials tended to sympathize with the Arab argument. To them, it seemed that support for the Zionist program was doomed to failure. What little respect England still retained in the eyes of her Arab Allies she could not hope to increase through her friendship with the Jews.

In London, however, the attitude was quite different. Though the Cabinet realized that support for the Balfour Declaration might cause an open rebellion among the Arabs, the possible rewards were worth the gamble. And there were several indications that Arab-Zionist cooperation was not altogether impossible - even during the "cold war" with France. It was hoped that moderation and fair-play would lead both parties to realize the value of the other. It was argued that the two peoples were not intrinsically incompatible because the Jews and Arabs had enjoyed many years of mutual cooperation. Moreover, there were influential Arab leaders who realized that the presence of the Zionists would bring necessary capital, trade, and skill into the underdeveloped East. In addition, the Arabs basically feared the Church and Christianity. The Jews, it was

noted, brought with them no missionary movements, schools, or charitable institutions controlled from the Vatican, Paris, or London. The presence of Jews in Palestine was far more appealing to the Arabs than Christian Europeans. Finally, the Jews wanted to come to Palestine to settle and live, not to tap it for natural resources which would be consumed in Europe. The Zionists promised to bring wealth to Palestine, not to take it away.

Prior to the fall of the Damascus Government, Chaim Weizmann took advantage of Feisal's brief optimism to complete a treaty of friendship and understanding between the Arabs and Jews. Weizmann traveled from London to meet with Feisal outside of Accaba. In brief, the treaty which they signed in January, 1920, included the following points:

...the parties are mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and Jewish people, and realize that the surest means of working out the consummation of their national aspiration is through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine. (Art. 1 provides that) The Arab State and Palestine in all their relations and undertakings shall be controlled by the most cordial good will and understanding, and to this end Arab and Jewish accredited agents shall be established. (Art. 3 provides that) In the establishment of the Constitution and Administration of Palestine all such measures shall be adapted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government Declaration of the 2nd of November 1917. (Art. 8 stated) The parties hereto agree to act in complete accord and harmony in all matters embraced herein before the Peace Congresses.<sup>107</sup>

The London Times further reported an interview between the Reuter's News Agency and Faisal on December 12, 1918, in which the Emir stated: "...the two main branches of the Semitic family, Arabs and Jews, understand one another, and I hope that as a result of interchanges of ideas at the Peace Conference, which will be guided by ideals of self-determination and nationality, each nation will make definite progress towards the realization of its aspirations. Arabs are not jealous of Zionist Jews and intend to give them their fair play..."

Again, on March 1, 1919, Faisal wrote his famous letter to Felix Frankfurter in Washington:

We feel that the Arabs and Jews are cousins in race, have suffered similar oppressions at the hands of Powers stronger than themselves, and by a happy coincidence, have been able to take the first step towards the attainment of their national ideals together. The Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist Movement. Our Deputation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted yesterday by the Zionist Organization at the Peace Conference, and regard them as moderate and proper. We will do our best, so far as we are concerned, to help them through; we wish the Jews a hearty welcome home...The Jewish Movement is national and not imperialist. Our Movement is national and not Imperialist, and there is room in Syria (Faisal used the term "Syria" to refer to Greater Syria, i.e. Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Syria) for us both.<sup>108</sup>

Faisal's attitude towards Zionism began to deteriorate when it became evident that the decisions at San Remo would go against the Arab Movement in Syria. It might be asserted that the key to the understanding of

the deterioration in Arab-Zionist relations was a postscript found at the bottom of the original Feisal-Weizmann Agreement. This handwritten postscript was a reservation which stipulated that if any changes would occur in the projected Arab State in Syria, then Feisal would not be responsible for failing to carry forth the terms of the Feisal-Weizmann Agreement.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the disappointment at the Peace Conference over Syria and Mesopotamia was reflected in an about-face with respect to the Zionists. Had the Damascus Government survived, the Arabs would have had an outlet for their Nationalist ardor and they would not have come into conflict with the French. W. W. Temperley wrote in The History of the Peace Conference: "Had the Emir not been ejected from Syria by the French, much less might have been heard of his father's claim to Palestine."<sup>110</sup> Whatever may have been the doubts of the Emir after the Peace Conference, it is clear that Feisal was initially prepared to accept a Zionist program in Palestine under British control.

Some suspicion has been raised to the authorship of the famous postscript. The handwriting matches that of T. E. Lawrence who acted as Feisal's sole interpreter during the Weizmann meeting.<sup>111</sup> It is clear that Lawrence wanted to threaten his British colleagues into recognizing Feisal's claim for Arab independence. Lawrence, however, did not underestimate the motives of his fellow Englishmen, nor did he fail to see the French as a real



enemy. Knowing that his Government firmly supported the Balfour Declaration in 1918, Lawrence felt that the Foreign Office might reverse its direction vis-à-vis the French if the future of Arab-Jewish relationships rested upon it.

The fact that Arab-Zionist relations had potential to develop in a friendly manner was manifested not only in the public statements, but by prominent local Arabs in Palestine. Two Arab parties arose in Palestine which publicly proclaimed sympathy with the Zionist program. The Arab National Party and the Jerusalem Muslim National Club were both considered to be "peoples' parties" in favor of cooperation with the Zionist Organization and in vehement opposition to both the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Muslim-Christian Association.<sup>112</sup> The members of the moderate parties which favored cooperation were realists who saw the economic advantages connected with the presence of Jews in Palestine. More important to them, cooperation with the Zionists meant opposition to the Mufti, the strong Muslim Christian Association, and the feudal landowning Effendi class.

The Nashashibi Family stood in opposition to the fanatical Family of el-Husseindi. Ragheb Nashashibi, who worked closely with F. H. Fisch, Director of the Political Department of the Palestine Zionist Executive, attempted to support the Government and its "middle ground" between the Zionists and Extremist Arabs. He complained, however, that the Mandatory Government did nothing to facilitate



cooperation between the Jews and Arabs, for the Government continued to support the Extremist personalities who were both stern adversaries to the Nashashbi Family and any who proposed compromise with the Zionists.<sup>117</sup> When Sir Herbert Samuel organized the Advisory Council and the Arabs boycotted it, Ragheb Nashashbi blamed him for allowing E. T. Richmond freedom to engage in complicity with Arab Extremists who opposed the Council. He, moreover, blamed Samuel for releasing Haj Amin el Husseini after he was convicted of being instrumental in the March, 1920, disturbances. Though there was no question about his guilt, Samuel released him as a part of the general amnesty which he declared upon taking the office of High Commissioner. Samuel went further, nevertheless, and appointed el Husseini as "Mufti of Jerusalem" and President of the Supreme Muslim Council. The Mufti controlled all Muslim appointments and religious funds (Waqfs) and was ultimately the most influential and powerful Arab aristocrat and bureaucrat in Palestine.

Not only in the urban centers, but as well among rural populations were there Arabs who favored friendship with the Jews. Colonel Kisch testified several times of the hospitable treatment he received by the Shieks when he visited them as an official of the Zionist Organization. In addition, Fakhri Nashashibi, the cousin of Ragheb, said that opposition to the principles of the Mufti was growing in the forms of the National Party and New Muslim

Society of Nabulus.<sup>114</sup> And when King Hussein came to visit Abdullah in Amman, Kisch visited with him. He told Colonel Kisch on January 23, 1923, that he was no longer very interested in Palestine and that his main concerns were (1) fear of Ibn Saud and the Wahabis in Eastern and Central Arabia and (2) the growing independent National parties in Egypt. In this private interview Hussein was purported to have said:

I would like to help the Jews, but must do nothing which would result in my losing the confidence of those for whom I am responsible, or my power to be of use to anybody would disappear.<sup>115</sup>

In Palestine the Muslim National Society became known as a moderate and realistic group which desired to elect members to Samuel's famous Legislative Council. Its attempt aborted, however, because of the general Arab boycott on the elections. Still the moderates were not altogether discouraged. Under the leadership of Suleiman Bey Nasif, a prominent Arab capitalist, they tried to encourage the Government to further the prospects of Jewish-Arab unity in economic fields. Colonel Kisch summed up the situation in Palestine with the following remark:

...and I still believe, that a large body of moderate Arab opinion which would have been ready to follow a lead from the Mandatory Government in coming to an understanding with the Jews on the basis of the policy embodied in the Mandate.<sup>117</sup>

## XIII. THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN PALESTINE

The termination of the Military Government and the beginning of Civil Government marked a new era in British politics. There was a renewed attempt to find some solution to the growing tension between the Arab and Jewish communities. The Zionists had won the sympathies of British statesmen in London; the Arabs, that of British administrators in Jerusalem. The problem of beginning a Civil regime was to find the proper man to take control in Jerusalem. David Lloyd George wanted a man who would capture the respect of both the Zionists and the Arabs.

The man chosen to fill this position was Herbert Samuel, who had served in Asquith's Liberal Cabinet in 1910 and who had held several top governmental offices since 1902. Though such men as Field-Marshal Allenby opposed his appointment, Lloyd George had many reasons for his selection. He, by no means, decided either arbitrarily or in total deference to the Zionists.

Samuel was a Jew and a sympathizer with the concept of British supported Zionism. But he was not a member of the Zionist Organization. He had a working knowledge of Hebrew, and had begun learning Arabic because he was convinced that the future of the Jews in Palestine was closely related to the problems of the Arabs.<sup>118</sup> Samuel viewed the fulfillment of Zionist aspirations in a purely cultural, non-political, non-nationalistic, non-socialistic

manner. There was no question in his mind that cultural Zionism in Palestine could survive only under strong British tutorship. Samuel believed that national Zionism was only a dream for the very distant future.

Though Samuel was not a member of the Zionist Organization, he had deep friendships with its leaders. He had even been appointed as Chairman of a Committee to draw up a statement of proposals for the Government, and he had, further, an inside knowledge of the Organization's financial position.

Preparatory to Samuel's appointment as High Commissioner of Palestine, he was sent to Jerusalem to report on the financial and administrative conditions within Major-General Louis Bols' Military Government. The reasons for this trip a month before his appointment were twofold: to sound Samuel out on the manner in which he would run the Government, and to allow him to make proper contacts before assuming his official duties. The report which Samuel made at the end of this March, 1920, visit foretold of Samuel's plan to distribute the power of administration in order to tread a "middle path" between the Arabs and Zionists.

Samuel proposed that the Levant be organized into a loose confederation of states for economic reasons. He recommended that an independent Arab State be formed in Eastern Syria (then in the hands of the Damascus Government), and that France receive a Mandate for Western Syria.

He also advised that Sherif Hussein be given independence in the Hejaz, while Mesopotamia and Palestine remained under British Mandate. The Balfour Declaration would apply only to the Palestine Mandated Area.<sup>119</sup> With these recommendations, certainly both the Arabs and Jews could look upon Samuel as a friend. In brief, Samuel's attitude might be summed up in two statements extracted from the final report he made to the Colonial Office:

The measures to foster the well-being of the Arabs should adapt to Palestine as if there were no Zionist question and as if there were no Balfour Declaration...In a word, the degree to which Jewish national aspirations can be fulfilled in Palestine is conditional by the rights of the present inhabitants.<sup>120</sup>

Though many questioned Lloyd George's wisdom in choosing Samuel, there was little doubt that Samuel the best man for the position. A Jew who was sympathetic to the Arab cause stood the best chance to unite the Arab and Jewish communities. Samuel was available, a strong British Imperialist, and had proved himself an able administrator.

When Samuel arrived in the Holy Land to assume duties as the first High Commissioner, he brought with him a letter from the King of England to the people of Palestine. This letter announced "...the gradual establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people,"... with assurances that "these measures will not in any way affect the civil and religious rights or diminish the prosperity of the general population."<sup>121</sup> It was evident that Samuel was in Palestine to mollify and placate the

passions of the native populations, without endangering British communications and defenses in the Middle East. Everything he did during the five years of his administration was geared towards these ends. In the final evaluation, it is difficult to accuse Samuel of being either pro-Arab or pro-Zionist, anti-Arab, or anti-Zionist. It is eminently true, however, that in any case he was a strong British colonialist, and he devoted his primary attentions to the development and maintenance of British Imperialism.

It is important to keep in mind that even though the Mandatory Government may have been self-interested, rather than altruistic with respect to the Zionists and Arabs, it may nevertheless have fostered these two national movements. The Samuel's Administration was criticized for running on "*la rue intermédiaire*" between the two communities, and not being able to distinguish objectively between them. Since neither community was entirely satisfied, the Samuel Government took the blame.

There were many legal and technical complications to plague the new regime. When Samuel took office on April 1, 1920, the League of Nations had not yet ratified the Mandates for Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Syria. It was not even until August 10, 1920, that a peace treaty had been signed by the defeated Turks. And then, the Turkish Representatives signed only under duress. Finally, on September 28, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne



ratified the Mandates for Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia. What had delayed the confirming of Mandates immediately following the Treaty of Sevres (the Peace Treaty with Turkey) was that France refused to ratify Great Britain's Mandates until her own in Syria was confirmed. The delay in the confirmation of the Syrian Mandate was due to disagreement between the Vatican, Italian, and French Governments over the protection of Christian Holy Spots. In addition, France had difficulty in composing a Mandate to guarantee the national and religious rights of the Druses, Turkish Muslims, and Lebanese Christians. The United States, furthermore, was slow to recognize the various Mandates since she was not a member of the League. She, nevertheless, insisted on obtaining commercial and legal rights within the Mandated Areas.

The actual administration of the Palestine Mandate proved to be as complex and difficult as the politics which led to its establishment. The Mandatory was faced with a frustrated Arab population which had seen defeat in Syria, had been the object of French propaganda, and had experienced oppression by the Effendi class landowners. Generally, the Arab peasants, the Fellachim, were a depressed and uneducated <sup>class</sup> people who were easily inflamed and agitated for political purposes. In an area which seemed to provide limited natural resources, the demand for capital exceeded the supply, and the various powers engaged in a struggle over what little existed. The influx

of immigrants from Europe added to the dilemma, for it was feared that they would lower the living standard and raise unemployment. The British were not expendible; the Zionists were. For they appeared particularly dangerous since by 1925 the Zionists had purchased over 186,000 dunams of land.<sup>122</sup>

Once the Civil Administration took control of Palestine on July 1, 1920, Great Britain could no longer be indifferent to the articles of the Mandate. The Government had to work with both the Arabs and the Jews. In general, Samuel's Administration might be termed one of compromise and definition. Samuel himself was personally convinced that Zionism could only be a "cultural movement;" therefore, Britain was not responsible to answer Jewish political or national aspirations. If it could be possible to limit the Zionist program purely to cultural and economic activities, then surely, Samuel reasoned, the Arab population would have no reason to fear. It was his task to prove to the Arabs that Great Britain would not sell out Palestine to the Zionists as she had sold out Syria to the French. Samuel planned to reduce the sources of Arab-Zionist friction by listening to the demands of both parties, and by trying to create a healthy economic environment which would be conducive to peaceful cooperation. He attempted, also, to imbue both Zionist and Arab leaders with a sense of his personal integrity. Samuel wanted both communities to know that Britain would

stand by the dual promises of the Balfour Declaration.

After the Riots of March, 1920, it became obvious to Samuel that Great Britain could no longer play on the vague conditions of the Balfour Declaration. The Declaration had served its purpose at Versailles. But it had only a negative effect after that. The Balfour Declaration was purposefully ambiguous. It did not satisfy the ardent Zionists because it substituted "the Jewish National Home" for "a Jewish National Home." The duplicity of the intention stated in the Balfour Declaration is evidenced by a secondary pledge to protect the majority population. But the definition of how Britain intended to assist the Zionists or protect the Arabs was not clear. The constant dissension between the two communities made it imperative that Great Britain specify her commitments to both. Once the lines of commitment were fully delineated, then the Samuel's Administration could proceed with a policy to increase the economic production and raise the standards of living and education. Since each party was under the illusion that Britain either favored or ill-favored it, the time was propitious for a new pronouncement of British aims and objectives, so that all would be clear as to how Britain intended to treat the Zionist and Arab question in the future.

Before England had an opportunity to specify its

position, Samuel found himself involved in a large scale political intrigue. Within months of Samuel's arrival in Palestine King Feisal was forced to leave Damascus. On route to Europe, Feisal's train passed through Lod (Lydda). The story is told that Ronald Storrs and Herbert Samuel rushed down from Jerusalem to greet their royal guest. When Feisal saw the honor guard waiting for him, he was under the impression the British would arrest him. When he learned the truth, he broke down in tears.<sup>123</sup>

Feisal's presence - along with the fall of the Damascus Regime - revealed the Franco-British conspiracy with respect to Eastern Syria. It increased the suspicion that France and England were committed to a policy in which Arab independence would be ruined in all places except the Hejaz. Britain's attempts at supporting pan-Arab unity often seemed somewhat ridiculous. In 1920, for illustration, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, who was supported by the India Office, renewed his attacks upon King Hussein of the Hejaz, the Protégé of the Foreign Office.<sup>124</sup> Thus, in the midst of Samuel's campaign to prove Britain's integrity, he was caught in the conspiracy with the French and Ibn Saud. These conditions made it all the more necessary that England boost the morale of her frustrated, but volatile Ally.

The British Government itself was not altogether of one mind with respect to the Palestine Mandate. The internal politics of handling the new Mandates slowed up

Churchill and Samuel. Indeed, they had to team up against Lords Curzon and Balfour who fought to keep Palestine under the aegis of the Foreign Office. Once Churchill and Samuel were successful in transferring Palestine into the Colonial Office, they were ready to settle the Palestine problem as a part of a new distribution of power in the entire Middle East.

The stratagem to dissect Transjordan from the general domain of the Balfour Declaration was only the first step. This was strongly protested by the Zionists. They argued that the policy of excluding Jews from entering Transjordan was a violation of the Articles of the Mandate Areas - irrespective of the faith or race. Their position was reflected in the famous Peel Report on the Division of Transjordan: "The field in which the Jewish National Home was to be established was understood at the time of the Balfour Declaration to be the whole of historic Palestine, and the Zionists were seriously disappointed when Transjordan was cut away from that field under Article 25." (The Amendment to the Mandate for Palestine.)<sup>125</sup>

The second step which Churchill took to restrict the application of the Balfour Declaration was the promulgation of the White Paper of 1922. The Division of Transjordan had effectively stopped all Jewish immigration and transport east of the Jordan River. The promulgation, however, effectively limited Jewish immigration into regions west of the Jordan. It stated that the extent

of Jewish immigration to Palestine would henceforth be determined on the basis of the economic capacity and absorption.<sup>126</sup> In the future, England would allow only such Jewish immigration to Palestine as the Mandatory Government decided was healthy for the economy. Furthermore, only Jews who were skilled in necessary occupations could hope to gain citizenship.<sup>127</sup>

Paralleling the duplicity of the Balfour Declaration, the White Paper hastened to add that Great Britain recognized that Jewish people were in Palestine by "right and not by sufferance."<sup>128</sup> Yet the Paper declared that Balfour Declaration only intended that the Jewish National Home be formed in Palestine, and not of Palestine.<sup>129</sup>

It is clear what Churchill had in mind with his White Paper. Surely, Great Britain could have devised no more effective way to wish Zionism its blessing, and then stab it in the back. On the other hand, it succeeded in reminding the Arabs that England had not totally ignored her wartime promises of the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence. His Majesty's Government had, indeed, fulfilled its promise to assist in the formation of an independent Arab State east of the Jordan River.

The Churchill White Paper of 1922 did not, however, accomplish what the Colonial Office had expected. Arab animosity proved to be stronger than anticipated. On March 28, 1921, the Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress wrote to Churchill a series of stiffly worded



letters complaining that "England disregarded the feelings of the inhabitants" and had appointed a Jew as High Commissioner. The letters expressed much anti-Semitism and accused the British of collusion with the Zionists. When the Arabs sent a delegation to Cairo to have an audience with Churchill, he refused to see it because he maintained that Britain would make no more concessions at the expense the Zionists. In an official reply to Musa Kazim al Husseini of the Executive Committee of the Arab Palestine Congress, Churchill stated forcefully that His Majesty's Government would not rescind its loyalty to the Balfour Declaration. On the other hand, he stressed that England would strive to uphold the fullest protection of the civil and political rights of the Arab inhabitants. Churchill further defended the appointment of Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner on the grounds that he had many years of experience in Parliament and Cabinet life, and was a Jew who valued the philosophy of holding the balance and securing fair treatment for all.<sup>130</sup>

While in several important ways the Middle East Conference and the proclamation of various decrees and policies which ensued from Churchill's visit to the Middle East had achieved electrifying effects, the populations of Palestine were not pleased. Both the Arab and Jewish public remained unhappy. Domestic tranquility had been sacrificed, but Great Britain had achieved her strategic goals. Thus, while Samuel and Churchill had

failed to bring peace between the Arab and Jewish populations, they did manage to fortify Britain's position in the Levant, secure English interests in Mesopotamia, and adequately provide for future defense of Britain's trade routes and colonies in both the Indian Ocean and Eastern Mediterranean. This had all been accomplished at a minimum expense.

#### XIV. COLONIAL FINANCE IN PALESTINE

In an attempt to evaluate the early period of British Mandatory occupation in Palestine, one must keep in mind a sense of balance between the goals pursued and the cost of pursuing them. England felt that expenses incurred as a result of her Imperial policy in the Levant would be compensated by economic gains. Aside from its strategic military location, Palestine proved to be an economical investment as well. When, in the late 1940's, Great Britain began to reevaluate the benefits she gained from the Palestine Mandate, she found that the expense had been too great. But in the early 1920's this had certainly not been the case.

After the First World War, there were strong forces in London which demanded that the Liberal Government of Lord Asquith reduce spending abroad and restrain domestic expenditures. The Exchequer had suffered from the tremendous costs of fighting a large scale war, and there could be little doubt that the Colonies would have to be operated on a limited budget. Ideally, the Colonies were expected to support themselves and provide additional revenue for the English Exchequer.

The expenses which Great Britain incurred in Palestine might be classified into two groups: those which covered the cost of running the Civil Government, and those which covered the expenditures for the military. In terms of

the latter, one could justifiably distinguish between the expenditures which Great Britain spent on a gendarmerie and an army for local defense, and that which was spent upon a larger military body stationed in Palestine for the defense of British installations and interests beyond the boundaries of Palestine.

During the Military Occupation under General Allenby, the costs of operating the territories taken from the Turks were assumed by the Foreign and War Offices. With the withdrawal of the Turks, the Military Government was able to collect certain revenues to pay for the costs of their administration and relief. Certainly, during the early years, Palestine was not sufficiently industrialized to balance the expenditures which the Military Government incurred. There was much agricultural reform and relief for the British to do. Additional aid for these endeavors came from many philanthropic organizations from Europe and America. Nevertheless, the Military Government was hard pressed for funds. Once, however, the large war-time garrison was reduced and the Mandates officially allotted to the respective Powers, the picture of English finance in Palestine became clearer.

Revenues accruing to the Mandatory Government between 1920 and 1925 were derived chiefly from customs and tithes. In Turkish days, the tithe on all agricultural produce (except tobacco and liquor) was  $1/8$ th or 12.5% of the gross value. In 1925, Herbert Samuel's Administration

reduced this title to 1/10th or 10% of the gross value.<sup>131</sup> The revenue from import duties, petrol, and license fees was enough to pay for the cost of maintaining the roads. The railway system, which was a direct subsidiary of the British Government, netted 168,000 Egyptian pounds, from which 124,000 pounds were added to the Palestine Treasury.<sup>132</sup>

It is noteworthy that aside from the maintenance of large military garrisons placed in Palestine for defense of Suez and for the implementation of British policy beyond the borders of the Mandate, the British Government did not spend a shilling in Palestine. The actual cost of these garrisons was, of course, a military matter. But in gross figures, it is apparent that the British involvement in Palestine was not altogether an uneconomical endeavor. Whatever advantages accrued to England by her presence in the Levant, they cost her almost nothing. At the end of her first fiscal year under the Civil Government she reported revenues on March 31, 1921, of 1,108,528 Egyptian Pounds. Expenditures for that year were only 1,1228,097 Egyptian Pounds. In 1922, the Mandatory reported taking in 2,312,243 Pounds, while spending only 1,881,108 Pounds. In 1923, because of wide spread depression which hit not only in the Middle East but in Europe as well, the Mandatory incurred its first substantial loss. The revenues for the fiscal year, 1922-23, dropped to 1,764,585 Egyptian Pounds, while expenditures were 1,837,173 Egyptian Pounds. Hence, the Palestine Mandate incurred a

deficit of 72,588 Egyptian Pounds. But in 1924-25, the Government showed a surplus of 265,000 Egyptian Pounds.<sup>133</sup>

During the period of nearly 5 years from the initiation of the Civil Administration on 1st July, 1920, to the end of the financial year on 31st March, 1921, to the end of the last financial year on 31st March, 1925, the total revenue of the Palestine Government was 8,900,000 Egyptian Pounds, and its total expenditure 8,397,000 Egyptian Pounds. Included in these expenditures were several capital expenses, such as the cost of purchasing the railway between Jaffa and Jerusalem from a French Company. It also included the first installment of 69,000 Egyptian Pounds on account of the annuity under the Treaty of Lausanne in respect of the Ottoman Pre-War Debt.<sup>134</sup>

Not only was the Mandatory able to run the Colony with no expenses to the British taxpayer, but it was enabled to reduce the size of the garrison stationed in Palestine. In round figures, the Government estimated that the garrison cost the British taxpayer 24,000,000 Egyptian Pounds in the fiscal year 1921-22. But it cost only 2,000,000 in 1922-23. It was further estimated that the expense was reduced to 1,500,000 Pounds in 1923-24. In 1924-25, the cost dipped below 1,000,000 Pounds.<sup>135</sup>, <sup>136</sup>



## XV. AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

When one attempts to reconstruct the current of events and motives which ran through British foreign policy in the Middle East, it is useful to trace the rather odd and unexpected role played by the Government of the United States. The United States figured importantly four times between 1915 to 1925. Firstly, the American Government was instrumental at the Peace Conference. Secondly, it demanded equal rights in the Mandated Territories in order to secure American investments and to see that these areas would remain open for further American development. Thirdly, the United States engaged in a policy to foster the national aspirations of the native populations in order to counter the Imperialist Nations. And fourthly, the American petroleum industry moved rapidly into the conquered Ottoman Territories in order to maintain its strong hold on the world oil supply.

American participation in the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire began with the publication of President Wilson's Fourteen Points. The Twelfth Point stated that "The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an irrefragable opportunity of antonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free

passage to ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantee."

The Fourteen Points were seized upon by many of the participants of the Peace Conference, for they suddenly provided a ray of hope for peoples long under the domination of imperial nations. The spirit of the War and the predominant influence of American democracy made it evident that even France and England could not ignore them. Once America had entered the War, bringing with her the ideal of democracy, the modes of imperial annexations and rule were forced to change. The Americans, who had themselves thrown off the bonds of colonialism, promised to help others eliminate European imperialism. But the process was to be slow. Meanwhile, Britain and France bowed to the force of the times, and they attempted to cloak their old imperial ambitions in the form of a Mandate System.

The dissension<sup>s</sup> between the French and English at the end of the War enabled the American Government to subtly enter the arena of Middle Eastern politics. It was obvious to President Wilson that while the Senate would not ratify the Covenant of the League of Nations, America might, nevertheless, assume an increasingly important role in world politics. Indeed, the refusal to join the League provided the United States with a freedom not enjoyed by the members. On the other hand, the non-membership in the League had some disadvantages. As the Mandate System

developed it was evident that the League would assume responsibility for the new territories taken from Turkey. Those governments which were awarded the Mandates would obtain tremendous advantages in developing trade and natural resources within these areas. Moreover, the Mandatory Governments would be able to set up the kinds of controls which would favor their own national industries and give them first priority for development and investment.

As a major belligerent in the War, the United States considered it should have equal rights in the Mandated areas which Britain governed. In the first place, the American Government had fought successfully on the Western Front - allowing the British and French to utilize their troops and material for the war in the East. Had the United States not employed her armies and navies in the War, it is doubtful whether Britain or France would have been victorious or even allies. These nations might have been conceding territories rather than gobbling them up.

The American Government consistently supported any and all movements to recognize the national aspirations of the native populations in the Ottoman Empire. Where ever Great Britain, France, or Italy held colonies, American commercial ventures were either completely barred, or restricted, or could not compete with government sponsored monopolies. It is quite clear that the United States had more to gain by the ~~the~~ emergence of national

governments than by the extension and continuation of colonial ones. In these newly created nationally governed areas, the Americans would stand equal (if not better) chance of establishing commercial relations and tapping the natural resources. Realizing, however, that the total elimination of imperialism in the Middle East was impossible at the moment, the American Government settled for a scheme of mandates. At minimum, the Mandates would entail a certain degree of international control, where American rights and interests could not be altogether flaunted.

The disagreement among the Allies at the Peace Conference provided the United States Government with its first opportunity to discredit imperialism. At a secret conference held in David Lloyd George's flat on la Rue Nitot (which R. S. Baker, Wilson's private secretary, dates March 20, 1919), President Wilson proposed an interallied commission to visit the Middle East and determine the sentiments of the native peoples. It has already been mentioned that the Allies refused to participate, and the Americans alone sent a delegation. The result of the King-Crane Commission was, of course, obvious before it ever arrived in the Levant. First, the presence of the Commission inspired numerous anti-imperialist demonstrations. Second, the Commission determined that the Arab peoples wanted complete independence and rejected any form of colonial domination. Third, they agreed that if any nation was to administer mandates the American Government

was most preferred.

The American State Department was not, however, satisfied with the propaganda victory it had achieved with the King-Crane Commission. It wanted a guarantee of representation in the affairs of the Mandated Areas. The Military Administration of O.E.T.A. made it difficult if not impossible for American companies to begin exploration for petroleum in the newly conquered territories. In correspondence between the Chief Political Officer of the E.E.F., Colonel Meinertzhagen, and Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, there is evidence that American companies had been discriminated against by the administrators of O.E.T.A. South and East.<sup>137</sup> The Americans were aware that so long as Great Britain controlled the Mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia, discrimination against American industrial expansion would exist.

On May 12, 1920, the American Ambassador, John W. Davis, wrote to Curzon in London protesting that the British were violating the Articles of the Mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia which stipulated equal treatment in law and commerce for all nations. The letter complained that the British Administrators favored British oil companies. The British, Davis protested, were constructing large pipelines, railways, and refineries, while operating certain oil wells, acquiring dockyards, and making investigations into cotton investments. All these activities were closed to American companies. Moreover,



the letter stated that certain individuals were permitted to do research in areas which were said to be solely on behalf of the Civil Administration, but which were attended by circumstances which created the impression that some benefit accrued to the British Oil Companies. "The United States Government," Davis wrote, "believes that it is entitled to participate in any discussions relating to the status of such concessions, not only because of existing vested rights of American citizens, but also because the equitable treatment of such concessions is essential to the initiation and application of the general principles in which the United States Government is interested."<sup>138</sup> In Article 7 the communiqué continued: "No direct mention has been made herein of the question of establishment of monopolies directly or indirectly by or in behalf of the Mandatory Government. It is believed, however, that the establishment of monopolies by or in behalf of the Mandatory Government would not be consistent with the principles of trusteeship inherent in the mandatory idea."<sup>139</sup>

Before the conclusion of the San Remo Conference in 1920, the American Government began to voice its protest against the assumed benefits which would accrue to Great Britain. It was not without reason that the United States Government feared the Long-Beranger Agreement between England and France. Since the United States technically was unable to participate in the San Remo



Conference which awarded the Mandates on April 5, 1920, her only alternative was to bargain with the individual nations involved. Through diplomatic pressure the American Government forced its wording of essential articles into the Mandates. Article 18 of the Mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine stated that the Mandatory Power would have to respect the equality of treatment for other nations with respect to economic development within their Mandated Zones.

The publication of the Franco-British Agreement concerning the distribution of Mesopotamian petroleum appeared to be a direct violation of this equity. On July 28, 1920 Davis wrote to Lord Curzon:

The Government of the United States has noted the publication of an agreement between His Majesty's Government and the French Government making certain provisions for the disposition of petroleum produced in Mesopotamia, and giving to France preferential treatment in regard thereto. It is not clear to the Government of the United States how such an agreement can be consistent with the principles of equality of treatment understood and accepted ruling the peace negotiations at Paris.<sup>140</sup>

On August 9th Curzon answered Davis in a lengthy note. Point 9 stated that the British oil interest in the world amounted to only 4.5% while the American interests were as much as 80%. Point 10 mentioned that the Americans had successfully cut the British out of oil interests in Haiti and San José, Costa Rica in 1913. Under the circumstances the Americans had no right to plead that her privileges were being infringed upon in Mesopotamia and Palestine. Curzon curtly added that the American

Government could never be considered as a model of "oil altruism." In Point 15 Curzon continued to argue that since the Commission on Mandates of the League gave up the discussion of the draft for the Palestine "A" Mandate in 1919 and since the members would reconvene in the future, the British Government thought only the signatories of the League should be participants in the discussions concerning the terms of the Mandates. Finally, in Point 18, Curzon argued that in view of the fact that France had given up her interests in Mosul, she should receive 25% of the shares and rights to buy 25% of the oil produced in Mesopotamia as compensation. Curzon felt that the United States could justify no claim against France for the preferential treatment she received, since the United States was not considered a "most favored nation" in this respect.<sup>141</sup>

Later in November, Brainbridge Colby, the American Secretary of State, continued the battle to obtain American recognition within the Mandated Territories. He wrote to Curzon that the United States understood Great Britain had set up oil monopolies not only to tap the Middle East for its petroleum but to help pay the expenses of operating the Mandates in Palestine and Mesopotamia. Colby argued that this also was a violation of the Mandate ideal which was conceived at the Peace Conference.

The matter of distribution of the petroleum and the rights which America should obtain came to open conflict during the Lausanne Conference of 1923. At this con-

ference the drafts for the Mandates came up for ratification. The United States formally protested.

The United States dissent with respect to the drafts of the Mandates because such powers as the Allied and Associated nations may enjoy or wield in the determination of the governmental status of the mandated areas accrued to them as a direct result of the war against the Central Powers. The United States as a participant in that conflict and as a contributor to its successful issue cannot consider any of the Associated Powers, the smallest not less than itself, debarred from the discussion of any of its consequences, or from participation in the rights and privileges secured under the mandates provided for in the treaties of peace.<sup>142</sup>

The result of American protests and pressure was that the United States successfully argued for an "Open Door Policy" in the Arab areas of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan. Consequently, two American Oil Companies, Standard Oil of New Jersey and Scony-Vacuum, were admitted a slightly less than one quarter interest in the Iraq Petroleum Company, which was reorganized out of the old Turkish Petroleum Company. The remainder of the company remained within the hands of the French, British, and Dutch.

There was no question that the Iraq Petroleum Company was a monopoly. The American protests against the monopolistic nature of this company ceased, however, as soon as the Americans were allowed to participate. It was better for Britain to allow the Americans to buy a minority percentage of the shares in this company, rather than allow them to destroy the framework of the Mandate

System which gave Britain the front to control the Mesopotamian oilfields. Just as Britain had realized the advantage of mutual cooperation among the imperial nations, so she was willing to recognize some American claims. It was better to divide the spoils, than receive nothing at all. But it is important to remember that merely because the United States had entered the War and caused certain changes within the imperial system during the Peace Conference, Britain's colonialistic aims had not changed. Her adaptability in meeting the challenge of the American Government was, at least, a credit to her leaders' sense of historical sequence.

As early as April 5, 1922, the Americans had insisted on knowing what the British were doing in their Mandated Areas. Ambassador Harvey requested that the British Government provide the United States with a duplicate, not a copy, of its annual report to the League of Nations relating to the treaty and mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia. The British Government agreed to the American request. The final concession to the American Government came in a treaty signed by Austen Chamberlain and Frank B. Kellogg on December 3, 1924. In this treaty Article 2 recognizes "The United States and its nationals shall have and enjoy all the rights and benefits secured under the terms of the mandate to members of the League of Nations and their nationals, notwithstanding the fact that the United States is not a member of the League of

Nations." Article 3 stated: "Vested American property rights in the mandated territory shall be respected and in no way impaired."<sup>143</sup>

The American Government finally confirmed the Mandates in which American rights were firmly guaranteed. In the Convention between the United Kingdom and the United States, the American Government restated Article 18 of the Mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia:

The Mandatory shall see that there is no discrimination in Palestine against the nationals of any non-State member of the League of Nations (including companies incorporated under its laws) as compared with those of the Mandatory or 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 areas.<sup>144</sup>

With the conclusion of this treaty the Americans had gained what they had initially lost by not participating in the League. There is no question that the Americans had achieved a diplomatic victory. They had defended their isolationism, but had protected their industrialists' rights to invest in the Middle East. Moreover, the United States had taken its first concerted step in destroying the imperial system enjoyed by the European nations for so many years.



## XVI. FRENCH REACTIONS

As a footnote let us examine the reaction of the French Government to the final distribution of powers and responsibilities in the Levant. The following brief summary is included to provide the reader with some idea of French thinking. It is important to note that the French attitude was greatly affected by developments in Europe at the end of World War I.

On several occasions the French Government was attacked before the Chamber des Deputes for not sticking to its original Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. M. Briand, who was incidentally the Prime Minister during 1916, openly blamed M. Clemenceau on June 25, 1920, for having lost Mosul and Palestine while France received the "short end" of the monnaie d'échange. M. Tardieu defended the French policy by stating that French losses in the East had been compensated for in the West. In the first place, France had negotiated with the United Kingdom for French occupation of the left bank of the Rhine River and had gained major concessions for the rights of the coal production in the Saar Region. Secondly, the oil of Mosul had never belonged either to the French Government nor to French interests, but had been partly owned by the British through the Turkish Petroleum Company prior to the War. Moreover, it was considered a French victory when France had negotiated for the 25% interest in the Turkish Petroleum



Company which had previously not belonged to the French, but the Germans. M. Berard is quoted to have said in the Debats du Senat (taken from the Journal Officiel de la République Française) July 29, 1920, that "...I do not hesitate to say that the day M. Clemenceau abandoned Mosul, Palestine, and Kurdistan, in order to have Metz and Stassbourg without a plebiscite, the Saar basin, occupation of the Rhineland, complete security for coal without advance payment, he fashioned a great French policy."

In retrospect, it may seem to the casual observer that the French were "outfoxed" by British diplomats with respect to designs in the Middle East. In some respects this observation is true, but it must be remembered that France was bidding, directly after the First World War, for territories beyond the fringes of the Middle East proper. Even prior to their commitments in the Middle East, France was interested in securing her position in North Africa. There is some reason to believe that French politicians believed that if France would give Great Britain a free hand in the Middle East, England would give her a free hand in North Africa. In the original London Agreement, it was decided that Britain would acquire Mosul in lieu of French occupation of Damascus and Eastern Syria. Since it became evident that Britain would not simply abandon Feisal's Damascus Government, the British attempted to give a quid pro quo. In return

for Mosul the British lent France her support in acquiring Tangiers from the Spanish.

In some notes forwarded by Sir E. Crowe (Paris) to Earl Curzon which were in the form of minutes taken from a conversation between M. Millet and Lloyd George, Oct. 10, 1919, there is evidence of concern over the Mosul concession given to the British. M. Millet stated that France had never conceded to give England Mosul without the French occupation of Eastern Syria. Since the British refused to add any physical support to French claims against the Damascus Government, Clemenceau considered the London Agreement null and void. In that light, however, France was willing to consider an alternative.

(3) Tangier is, he says, the quid pro quo they really want (on one occasion he hinted that the French might consider the 'offer' of a mandate for Constantinople and the Straits), and he believes that the French could come to an agreement with Spain about a cession to them of Tangier if only we, without actually supporting the French, would stand aside and tell the Spaniards we would accept any arrangement they might reach with the French. He claims that the Spaniards are in a bad way in the Spanish zone from the point of view of both men and money and that the French Foreign Office believe that a time will soon come when they will 'offer' to cede the zone to France for a sum down. Then the French will be in a stronger position to secure Tangier, i.e. our acquiescence in a Franco-Spanish agreement about Tangier would now be a useful bargaining counter but will soon cease to be.<sup>145</sup>

That Britain was intent upon using the French ambitions in Tangiers as a bargaining point is also evidenced by a communiqué sent from Sir G. Grahame in Paris to Sir R.

Graham about two months prior to M. Millet's proposal to Lloyd George. (Aug. 14, 1912)

The French, as you know, are very wily diplomats. I think it just possible that there may come a moment - when that moment may be it is impossible to foretell - when the French Government may give us to understand that if we will be amenable about the question of Tangier, they will abate some of their pretensions about Syria. It seems to me that if, as I understand they do, His Majesty's Government feel the importance to us of preventing a French 'main mise' on Tangier, we should be in a better diplomatic position were we to forestall the French by giving them to understand that if they want our continued support in Syria, the price will be an abatement of their pretensions about Tangier and a strict application to that town of plain Treaty rights.<sup>146</sup>

## XVII. CONCLUSIONS

As we look back, there can be little doubt that the Lloyd George Government traded upon the forces of Zionism and Arab Nationalism. By skillful use of treaty, England succeeded in obtaining both Jewish and Arab support for her war against the Central Powers. Later, His Majesty's Government adroitly capitalized on Zionism and Arab Nationalism to precipitate the "cold war" against the French.

When it became clear, however, that her wartime promises could not be fulfilled, Great Britain inaugurated a policy to undermine her commitments. Zionism and Arab Nationalism, in Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, were expendable. Once England had obtained her wartime ends, it became evident that the Jews and Arabs would have to be satisfied with less than originally promised. But Great Britain could not altogether ignore either the Zionists nor the Arab Nationalists.

The internal fighting between the Jews and Arabs and the "cold war" between the British and French caused the English Government to assume a moderate role between the factions. Her conflict with the French was turned into a commercial understanding, where each imperialist nation agreed to recognize the interests of the other. Moreover, she was determined to favor neither the Zionists nor the Arab Nationalists in their struggle over Palestine. Her

last step was to include the United States as a Most Favored Nation with respect to the commercial and natural resources of the Ottoman Empire.

In retrospect, now that the States of Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt have been formed out of the national aspirations of local populations, it is easily seen that Great Britain greatly underestimated the force of Nationalism. When England inaugurated her wartime policy in the Middle East she could not have known exactly how the power structure would change. In 1915, one may enumerate as many as eight major world powers, two of which were not of the traditional European group. By the termination of hostilities in 1945 six of these nations had been reduced to secondary powers. The drastic alteration in the power structure was to have an important effect on British Imperialism throughout the world.

It is further obvious that changes took place in technology which changed Britain's initial motives for an Imperial policy in the Levant. After the Second World War it became apparent that Palestine was no longer essential for the defense of Suez and India. Nor was it necessary for the protection of British interests in Mesopotamia or the Persian Gulf. Moreover, France was no longer a threat to British ascendancy in the Middle East, and it was henceforth impossible to "bottle up" the Soviet Fleet in the Black Sea. Most important, the Government of the United States became opposed to European Imperialism

of all types. The policy of that Government was henceforth geared to undermining British colonial interests.

To one living after the Second World War, it might seem that Britain's advent into the Middle East came just prior to the general collapse of Imperialism throughout the world. It is true that in terms of centuries, England's conquest of the Middle East was among her last overt colonial ventures. And it is also true that Britain's success during and after the First World War coincided with the birth of Nationalism. There is little doubt that from that point in history the great imperial nations began to either reduce or alter their colonial possessions. They did not, however, suddenly cease to invest and profit from the foreign markets and sources of supply which had been developed in their Empires.

Our interest in British Imperialism in the Middle East is not based solely upon historical curiosity. The fact that this imperialism flourished and died within a period of thirty years commends itself to our attention. Within this relatively short period of time one might be able to trace the policy and events which led to Britain's eminent success in this region. Later, he might be able to hint at the factors which led to her downfall. Because this thesis attempted to treat British policy only until 1925, it was concerned solely with analysis of the rise and growth of British Imperialism and not with its downfall. There are, however, numerous and definitive



works which trace the history after 1925.

The effect of this thesis, it is hoped, is to show the genius of British Imperialism in the Middle East during its formative phase. Regardless of the ultimate result of British Colonialism in Palestine during the 1940s, it was an eminently successful policy in the 1920s and early 1930s. The manner in which England moved into the Middle East during the First World War and her diplomatic victories succeeding it were the result of careful and imaginative planning. In spite of the fact that British Imperialism in the Levant finally fell before the powers of the United States, the Soviet Union, Zionism, and Arab Nationalism, Great Britain's entry into the Middle East was the result of brilliant strategy and masterful planning.

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