

Seven and a half million Muslims fled India for Pakistan, and ten million Hindus went in the opposite direction. Leaders also perished: a Hindu ultranationalist angered by his victim's solicitude for Muslims assassinated Gandhi; and Pakistan's first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan (1895–1951), died at the hand of an Afghan Pashtun nationalist.

Crises developed almost immediately after independence over Kashmir, a northwestern region populated largely by Muslims and claimed by both Pakistan and India. Kashmir's Hindu ruler turned the province over to India and a war ensued, leading the United Nations to divide Kashmir between the two contending countries. Since 1948 conflicts have repeatedly erupted over the divided province, and recently Muslim activists from Kashmir have made deadly cross-border raids into India. India has accused Pakistan of collusion with the Kashmiris. This territorial dispute has taken on new seriousness since the late 1990s when both India and Pakistan exploded nuclear weapons.

Pakistan itself was divided at the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent into two predominantly Muslim regions a thousand miles apart: one territory curled around Afghanistan in the northwest that became West Pakistan with its capital at Karachi, the other in East Pakistan with its capital at Dacca. The mostly Bengali population in the east came to resent its subordination to West Pakistan, and a war resulted when the Indian army intervened on the side of the independence-seeking Bengalis. East Pakistan became Bangladesh, an independent country, in 1971.

Neither India nor Pakistan has maintained stability since independence. In Pakistan widespread political corruption, weak civil institutions, and seemingly insoluble territorial disputes have rendered it vulnerable to periodic takeover by military dictatorships. In India the National Congress Party has ruled for most of the first half century after independence, for much of that time under the Nehru dynasty. But Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi (1917–84), revealed a dictatorial streak during the so-called emergency period, from 1975 to 1977. After favoring a secular, multicomunal India hospitable to Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv (1944–91), who ruled after her, began catering to xenophobic Hindu nationalism. Religious nationalists (Sikhs in the case of Indira, Hindus in the case of Rajiv) assassinated both these members of the Nehru dynasty. These killings, and the political splits that preceded them, opened the way to political power for rightist Hindu groups such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which defeated the Congress Party in elections in 1989 and 1998. At this writing BJP has emerged as the dominant political force in India, managing the tense confrontation with Pakistan over Kashmir as communal disputes over Hindu and Muslim holy sites roil domestic politics. Peering into the future of the Indian subcontinent and in such regions as Afghanistan and other populous Muslim nations in the Indian Ocean basin and East Asia's Pacific rim, we witness the growing incidence of communal strife, which, in a global age, increasingly affects all people in the world.

13. Conflicting Promises During World War I

All the documents in this reading are from the World War I period and they reveal the depth of the *Entente* powers' concern with the postwar settlement. They show Britain, France, and czarist Russia planning the division of the Ottoman empire and distribution of its parts to the victors. Those Arabs who had allied with Great Britain and France against the Turks willingly accepted great power protection, hoping to establish their own new states.

Selections a and b, excerpts from an extensive set of letters that defined delicate negotiating positions, were exchanged between an Ottoman official in Arabia, the *Sharif* Husayn ibn Ali, and the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon. Husayn wanted a large Arab state encompassing Greater Syria (including Palestine) in exchange for sending his troops to fight against the Ottomans. Remaining vague about future commitments, McMahon sought to assure Husayn of British friendship. He makes clear that the British could not include in any hypothetical Arab state coastal Syria (including Lebanon), which the British were about to promise to the French in the secret Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916 (see this Reading, part c). Nor could he offer Husayn Iraq, where the British had already discovered oil, although eventually one of Husayn's sons did ascend the throne of a newly established British-controlled state in Iraq (see Reading 17).

Meanwhile Zionism became entwined in the decisions over Arab lands. In 1917 the British government issued the Balfour Declaration (Reading 19a), endorsing the establishment in Palestine of a "national home for the Jewish people." Part V will further explore Palestinian/Arab and Zionists' responses as the great powers hammered out a postwar settlement.

A. *Sharif* Husayn ibn Ali, Desire for Arab Independence (1915)*

In this letter to Sir Henry McMahon, *Sharif* Husayn ibn Ali, Ottoman governor of the Hijaz, the region in Arabia containing the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Madina, promised to support British war efforts and rebel against the Ottomans. In exchange he requested the creation of an Arab state in Middle Eastern territories that the Ottomans then controlled. In part b of this reading we give McMahon's reply.

*From Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Command No. 5957, House of Commons *Sessional Papers*, 1939, pp. 3–4. American spellings adopted.

July 14, 1915

To his Honor:

WHEREAS the whole of the Arab nation without any exception have decided in these last years to live, and to accomplish their freedom, and grasp the reins of their administration both in theory and practice; and whereas they have found and felt that it is to the interest of the Government of Great Britain to support them and aid them to the attainment of their firm and lawful intentions (which are based upon the maintenance of the honor and dignity of their life) without any ulterior motives whatsoever unconnected with this object;

And whereas it is to their (the Arabs') interest also to prefer the assistance of the Government of Great Britain in consideration of their geographical position and economic interests, and also of the attitude of the above-mentioned Government, which is known to both nations and therefore need not be emphasized;

For these reasons the Arab nation see fit to limit themselves, as time is short, to asking the Government of Great Britain, if it should think fit, for the approval, through her deputy or representative, of the following fundamental propositions, leaving out all things considered secondary in comparison with these, so that it may prepare all means necessary for attaining this noble purpose, until such time as it finds occasion for making the actual negotiations:

Firstly—England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries, bounded on the north by Mersina and Adana up to the 37° of latitude . . . [and] up to the border of Persia; on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the west by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina. England to approve of the proclamation of an Arab *Khalifate* of Islam.

Secondly—The Arab Government of the *Sherif* to acknowledge that England shall have the preference in all economic enterprises in the Arab countries whenever conditions of enterprises are otherwise equal.

Thirdly—For the security of this Arab independence and the certainty of such preference of economic enterprises, both high contracting parties to offer mutual assistance, to the best ability of their military and naval forces, to face any foreign Power which may attack either party. Peace not to be decided without agreement of both parties.

Fourthly—If one of the parties enters upon an aggressive conflict, the other party to assume a neutral attitude, and in case of such party wishing the other to join forces, both to meet and discuss the conditions.

Fifthly—England to acknowledge the abolition of foreign privileges in the Arab countries, and to assist the Government of the *Sherif* in an International Convention for confirming such abolition.

Sixthly—Articles 3 and 4 of this treaty to remain in vigor for fifteen years, and, if either wishes it to be renewed, one year's notice before lapse of treaty to be given.

Consequently, and as the whole of the Arab nation have (praise be to God) agreed and united for the attainment, at all costs and finally, of this noble object, they beg the Government of Great Britain to answer them positively or negatively in a period of thirty days after receiving this intimation; and if this period should lapse before they receive an answer, they reserve to themselves complete freedom of action.

B. Sir Henry McMahon, Qualifying British Pledges (1915)*

A month after receiving *Sharif* Husayn's letter, McMahon responded cautiously to the demands for an independent Arab state. Speaking for Great Britain, and aware of conflicting promises made or about to be made to allied states, he committed British support to Husayn in establishing a vaguely defined desert kingdom, carved out of greater Syria.

Although two of Husayn's sons did become monarchs in the Hashemite kingdoms of Iraq and Transjordan, both under British mandates, the *sharif* ended up losing control of Arabia to the Saudis who, as we have mentioned, with British backing, forcibly conquered the Hijaz in 1924 and established their kingdom eight years later. The British sought and found an even more compliant set of rulers in these desert-based Saudi tribal *sheikhs*.

The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded [for these sites, see the map, p. 117].

With the above modification, and without prejudice to our existing treaties with Arab chiefs, we accept those limits.

As for those regions lying within those frontier wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following assurances and make the following reply to your letter:—

(1) Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within limits demanded by the *Sherif* of Mecca.

(2) Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognize their inviolability.

*From Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Command No. 5957, House of Commons *Sessional Papers*, 1939, pp. 7–9. American spellings adopted. Bracketed material added by the editors.

(3) When the situation admits, Great Britain will give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government in those various territories.

(4) On the other hand, it is understood that the Arabs have decided to seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as may be required for the formation of a sound form of administration will be British.

(5) With regard to the *vilayets* [provinces] of Baghdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognize that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special administrative arrangements in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests. . . .

I am convinced that this declaration will assure you beyond all possible doubt of the sympathy of Great Britain towards the aspirations of her friends the Arabs and will result in a firm and lasting alliance, the immediate results of which will be the expulsion of the Turks from the Arab countries and the freeing of the Arab peoples from the Turkish yoke, which for so many years has pressed heavily upon them.

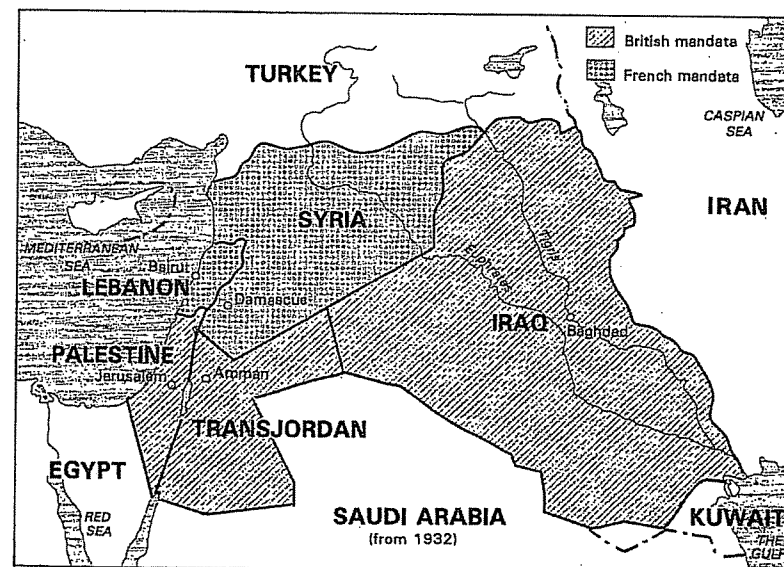
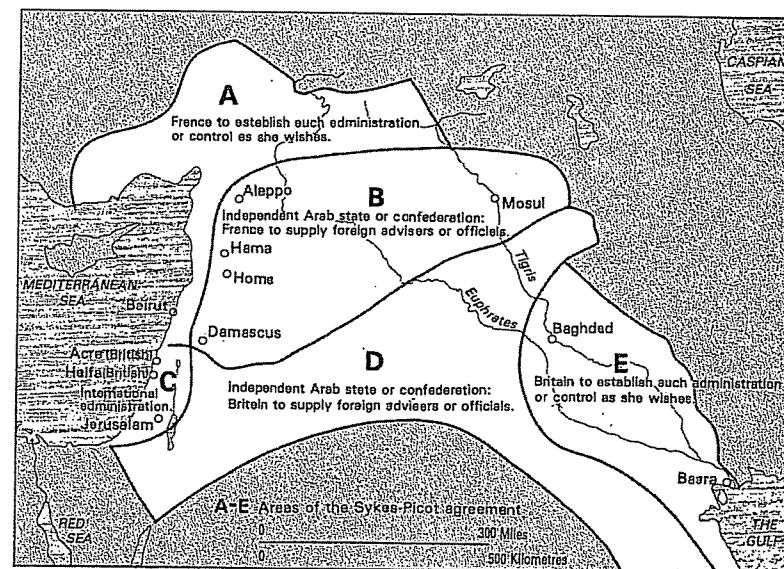
C. The Sykes-Picot Agreement on Dividing up Arab Lands (1916)*

Sir Mark Sykes, a British colonial official, and François George Picot, his French counterpart, met secretly in wartime London over the course of several weeks in late 1915 and early 1916. Their negotiations concerned division of the postwar Middle East among the Allies at the war's end. Since czarist Russia was part of this alliance, both parties had to obtain the agreement of the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Sazanoff.

When in 1917 the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, they found the secret documents that revealed the imperialist origins of World War I, a conflict decried officially by the Allies as inspired only by their noble aims. The Bolsheviks published the full texts.

Here we present a contemporary summary of the key clauses of the Sykes-Picot agreement and a map that illustrates it. British Foreign Secretary Sir Earl Grey sent these in a letter in May 1916 to Paul Cambon, French ambassador to Great Britain. The terms of this agreement ran counter to some of the assurances only recently made to the Arabs by the Allies.

*From E. L. Woodward, ed., *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, First Series, vol. IV (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), pp. 245-47. American spellings adopted. Bracketed material added by the editors.



The Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Mandates

(Secret.)

Foreign Office, May 16, 1916

Your Excellency [Cambon],

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's note of the 9th instant, stating that the French Government accept the limits of a future Arab State, or confederation of States, and of those parts of Syria where the French interests predominate, together with certain conditions attached thereto, such as they result from recent discussions in London and Petrograd on the subject.

I have the honor to inform your Excellency in reply that the acceptance of the whole project, as it now stands, will involve the abdication of considerable British interests, but, since His Majesty's Government recognize the advantage to the general cause of the the Allies entailed in producing a more favorable internal political situation in Turkey, they are ready to accept the arrangement now arrived at, provided that the co-operation of the Arabs is secured, and the Arabs fulfill the conditions and obtain the towns of Homs, Hama, Damascus, and Aleppo.

It is accordingly understood between the French and British Governments—

1. That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States . . . [see Map on p. 117] under the suzerainty of an Arab chief . . . France and . . . Great Britain shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. . . . [They] shall alone supply advisers of foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab State or confederation of Arab States.

2. . . . Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States. . . .

3. . . . [In Jerusalem and the region surrounding it] there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other Allies, and the representatives of [Husayn] the *Sharif* of Mecca.

4. That Great Britain be accorded (1) the ports of Haifa and Acre, (2) guarantee of a given supply of water from the Tigris and Euphrates. . . . His Majesty's Government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time enter into negotiations for the cession of Cyprus to any third Power without the previous consent of the French Government.

[Grey]

14. Vahakn N. Dadrian, The Fate of the Armenians in World War I*

Scattered for centuries among the Ottoman and the Persian Safavid and Qajar Empires, the Armenians (a Christian population) had usually served as useful subjects of sultans and shahs, managing much of the long-distance trade between Europe and the Middle East. But in the twentieth century Armenian aspirations for nationhood clashed with Ottoman aims. The Turks accused the Armenians of backing their enemy, czarist Russia. In this reading, Dadrian, director of genocide research at the Zoryan Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, argues on the basis of new data that the Turkish repression amounted to a conscious policy of genocide. Other scholars claim that the Armenians brought much of their suffering on themselves.

The historical debate over the "Armenian question" will doubtless continue as a hotly contested issue. Many Armenians who survived the wartime and post-war repression, expulsions, and killings ended up as citizens of the Soviet Armenian Republic, which became an independent country in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed.

The wartime fate of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian minority continues to be controversial. The debate in the main revolves around the causes and nature of that fate. Some historians have alleged that what is involved is centrally organized mass murder—or, to use contemporary terminology, genocide. This school of thought maintains that the Ottoman authorities were waiting for a suitable opportunity to undertake the wholesale liquidation of the empire's Armenian population, and the outbreak of World War I provided that opportunity. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, or Unionists), who controlled the Ottoman government, they argue further, did in fact undertake this liquidation under cover of the war. Others, however, dispute these assertions, especially that of genocidal intent. This group maintains that Armenian acts of disloyalty, subversion, and insurrection in wartime forced the central government to order, for purposes of relocation, the deportation of large sections of the Armenian population. According to this argument, apart from those who were killed in "inter-communal" clashes—that is, a "civil war"—the bulk of the Armenian losses resulted from the severe hardships associated with poorly ad-

*From Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Armenian Question and the Wartime Fate of the Armenians as Documented by the Officials of the Ottoman Empire's World War I Allies: Germany and Austria-Hungary," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1 (February 2002), pp. 59 and 71–77. Notes and German and Turkish texts deleted. Bracketed material added by the editors. American spellings adopted. By permission.

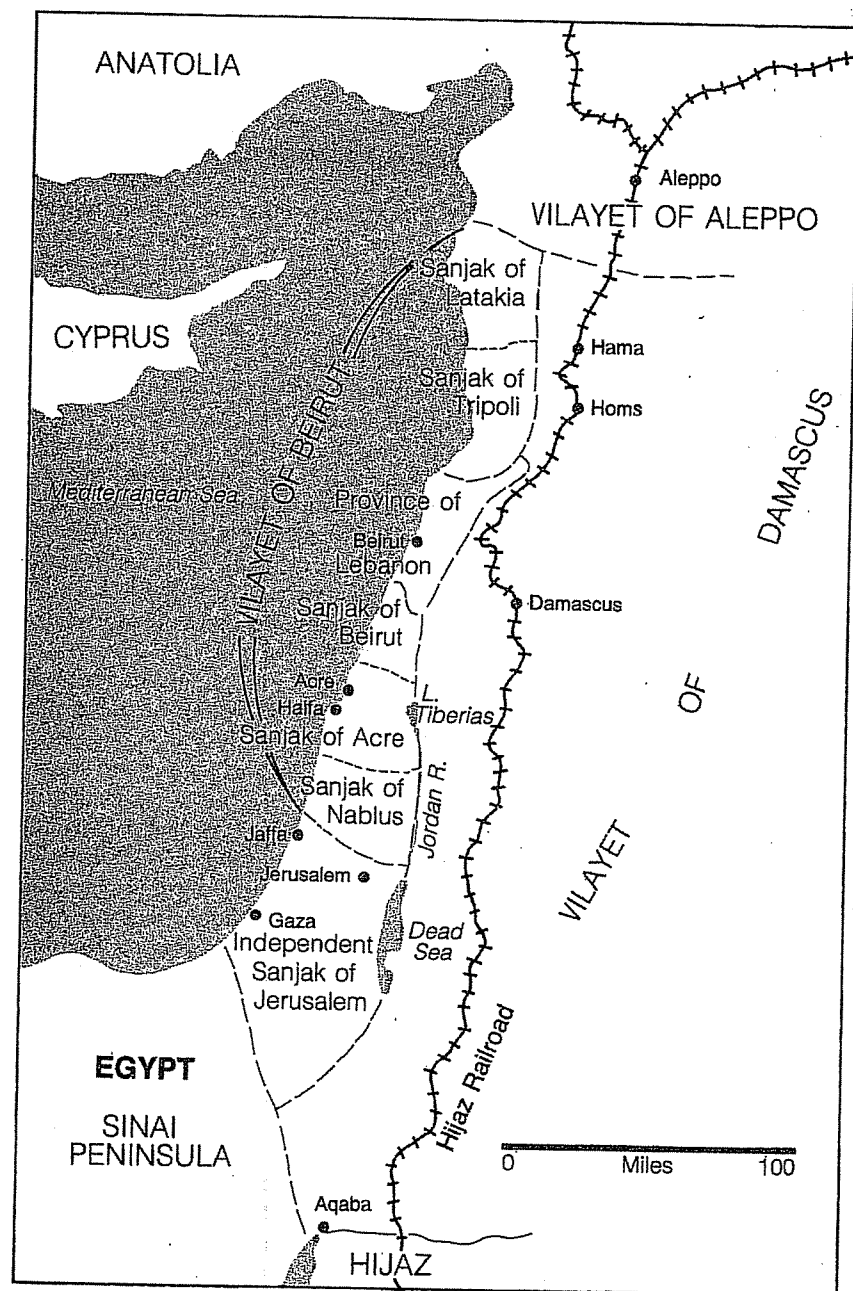
Introduction

The struggle between Palestinians and Zionists began in the 1890s, when the Ottoman empire controlled the Fertile Crescent, a region that encompassed Iraq and Syria and included Palestine. In this chapter we begin with the situation in Ottoman Palestine, and then describe the origins of modern Zionism. World War I gave control of Palestine to Great Britain, which allowed Zionist settlers there to create a "national home" much to the distress of the Arab residents. Unrest and rebellion in the interwar years impelled Britain to abandon Palestine after World War II. We then narrate the establishment in 1948 (during a war between Zionists and Arabs) of the state of Israel and the more than half a century of conflict that followed and still rages.

Palestine's Land and People

Ottoman authorities, determined to prevent communal strife at Palestine's holy sites (sacred to Muslims, Jews, and Christians), placed portions of Palestine under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman interior ministry in Istanbul, while the Nablus and Acre districts came under the control of the governor of Beirut. The sultan and wealthy local families owned about one-third of the land on which Arab cultivators worked. Peasants also farmed collectively owned fields, allocated to them by village elders. In the mid-nineteenth-century reform period (see Reading 10) Ottoman rulers attempted to distribute land, but many peasants, fearing the burden of taxation that came with ownership, preferred to have land registered in the names of trusted local notables who could bargain with tax collectors. Much of this land eventually passed into the hands of the heirs of the old local notables, who hired landless day laborers or sharecroppers. Land grievances thus predated twentieth-century problems in Palestine.

Muslim and Christian Arabs made up 80 percent of the 738,000 inhabitants of prewar Palestine. About 85,000 Jews, mostly elderly, lived mainly in Jerusalem. There they kept alive the religious yearning, exemplified in many Jewish pious texts, that one day Jews living in the Diaspora outside of Palestine would return to Zion, the Holy Land, to await the arrival of the Messiah. This small community kept a presence at the city's Western or "Wailing" Wall, the remnant of the ancient biblical temple that the Romans destroyed in the first century C.E. They prayed there and lamented their dispersal. From Palestine they sent emissaries yearly throughout the Diaspora to collect funds to support the community and to pray with the Jews they met for their return to Zion.



Ottoman Palestine and Syria

After remaining stable for centuries, the population of Palestine increased by several thousand as Jews established new Zionist settlements there during the last decades of the nineteenth century. By contrast, over 90 percent of the Palestinian Arabs descended from families residing there for centuries and only about 8 percent arrived recently. Migration or death during World War I reduced the Jewish population by a quarter, the Muslims by 6 percent, and the Christians by 13 percent.

Having little connection to the older Jewish community in Palestine, modern Zionism arose in response to the upsurge of European anti-Semitism and had few roots in the Middle East. Its founder, Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), a Viennese journalist, became incensed when a powerful anti-Semitic political movement took power in his city. He also reacted strongly against government-sponsored anti-Jewish riots (pogroms) in eastern Europe and the French government's false accusation of a Jewish army officer, Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), of selling military secrets to the Germans. Herzl believed that for the protection from such persecution, European Jews had to migrate to a land of their own. In 1896 he published *The Jewish State* (see Reading 18a), and created the World Zionist Movement. After Herzl's early death, the British Zionist Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952) and others carried on Herzl's work. Palestinian Arabs and Muslim intellectuals followed this movement from its inception in the late nineteenth century and vocally opposed land sales to Zionists and Zionist settlements (see Readings 18b and c).

Modern Zionism arose in an age of nationalism, but it differed from other nationalist movements in that the Jewish Zionists wished to create a state where thousands of years earlier Jews had ruled over a kingdom. Expelled by the Romans, the Jews lived scattered in a Diaspora where they possessed no territory to establish a Jewish nation. They therefore had to first locate and claim such territory and then build a state on it by the ingathering of Jewish people scattered throughout the world. All other nationalisms consolidated fragmented national territory and constructed states where the population already lived; the main task for them consisted of mobilizing national sentiment and consolidating small political units into a more or less unified central state, as Italy, Germany, and Japan had recently done.

Since the Jews could not follow this route, Herzl's *Jewish State* showed them an alternate path: first, to gain the backing of a great power, which would grant them sovereignty over a territorial base somewhere on earth. That power would then protect the fledgling community as it grew and developed. (As it turned out, Britain, and later the United States, provided the Zionists these services.) Secondly, they had to operate gradually. Since Jewish migrants would come from distant lands, to regions where they would meet hostile populations, they had to proceed slowly without revealing their long-range goal. Mainly they had to build the institutions of their settlements piece by piece, until their communities could leap into statehood.

Great Britain, Zionism, and the Arabs

Herzl had tried unsuccessfully to convince the Ottoman sultan to allow Jewish immigrants to settle in Palestine and began seeking a Jewish homeland in South America or Africa. But the Zionist movement he founded refused to consider any alternative to Palestine. Before World War I many thousands of Zionist immigrants did reach Palestine, as we have mentioned. But when that war pitted Great Britain against the Ottoman empire, geopolitical considerations moved Zionist plans much closer to realization.

When Ottoman forces attacked the British stronghold at the Suez Canal from bases in Palestine, the London government realized Palestine's strategic importance and sought ways to retract an earlier promise to the French to allow them to include most of Palestine within a future Syrian state. Also, Britain's ally, czarist Russia, faring badly against the German assault, seemed on the verge of pulling out of the war. The British Foreign Office conceived of attempting to win backing from Russian Jews by promising them a "national home" in Palestine, hoping that they would use their influence to keep Russia fighting. That hope never materialized, since czarist Russia ceased to exist in 1917, when the Bolshevik revolutionaries triumphed and made a humiliating separate peace with the Germans—who eventually lost the war because of defeats elsewhere.

The British promise took the form of the November 2, 1917, letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur James Lord Balfour (1848–1930) to British Zionists assuring them that the government viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" (Reading 19a). Britain did not consult Arab leaders about this momentous shift in policy, known as the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs remained skeptical of the phrase in that declaration saying "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities," and did not accept British assurances that a "national home" would not become a Jewish state.

After the war, when the victors translated the Sykes-Picot agreement (Reading 13c) into League of Nations mandates, the Balfour Declaration became a formal part of Britain's Palestinian mandate. However, when the British quickly severed the desert area east of the Jordan River (Transjordan) from the Palestine mandate, they stipulated that the Balfour Declaration did not apply to Transjordan, which the British gave to one of the sons of the *Sharif* Husayn of Arabia.

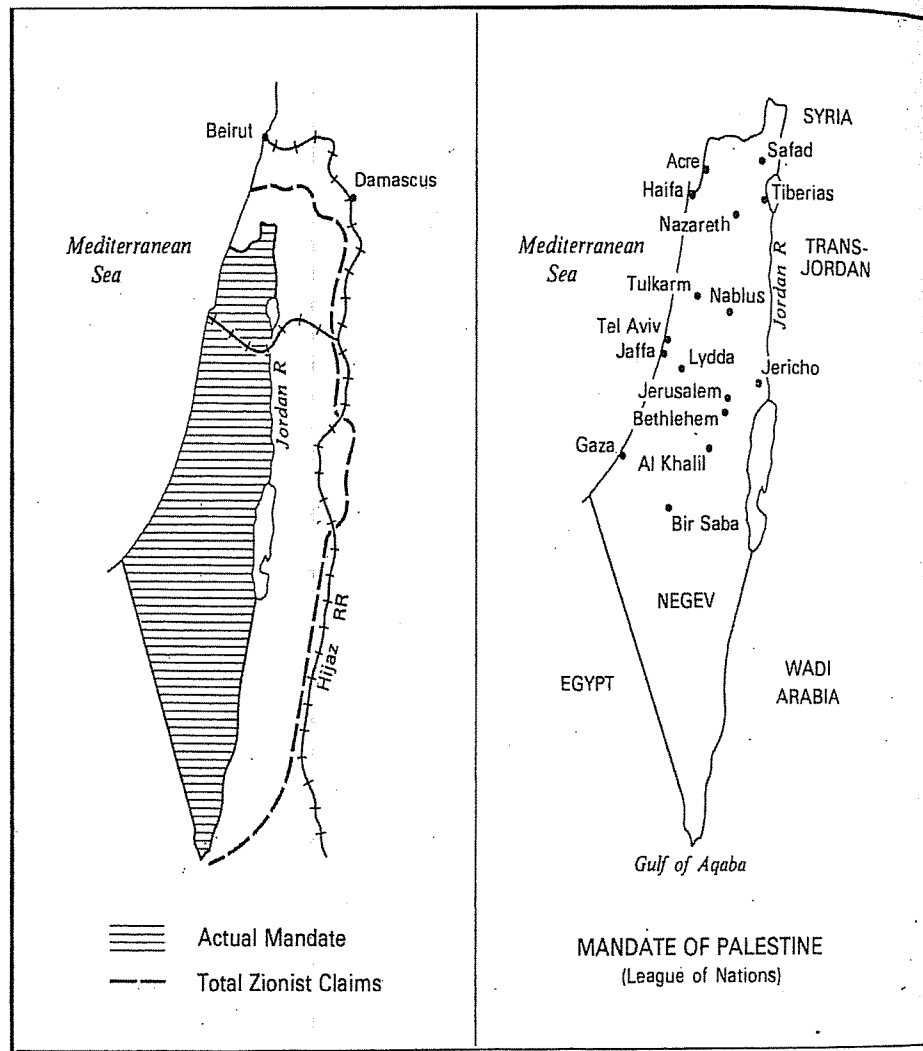
Arabs categorically opposed the Balfour Declaration and British control of Palestine, but the Zionists welcomed both. Mandate regulations provided little opportunity for the Arab majority lawfully to protest or resist establishment of the Jewish home, or for the Zionists to transform that home into a nation, except by extralegal methods. Zionists and the Arabs eventually resorted to war against each other and against the British as well.

Zionists and Palestinians Under British Authority

To Herzl's two strategic principles (great power backing and gradualism) another Zionist, David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973), provided a third requirement: that everyone coming into the new state-in-the-making had to learn and speak Hebrew, the national language. This requirement put everyone at the same disadvantage since they all, including religious scholars and rabbis, had to learn the living language, not only its liturgical form. Ben-Gurion also understood, following Herzl, that the new migrants also had to build institutions for statehood and social solidarity in order to succeed when the moment for creating the state arrived. A Polish Jew, Ben-Gurion migrated to Palestine in 1906 and rose to power in two of the major institutions Zionists created—the *Histadrut* Labor Federation and the Jewish Agency, responsible for bringing Jewish immigrants to Palestine. (In 1948 he became Israel's first prime minister.) A third agency, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), working closely with the other two, handled land purchases.

Arab opposition to Jewish settlement developed early. Prior to World War I and in the postwar mandate years, the land question became the main point of contention between Zionists and Arabs. Financed by Diaspora Jewry, the JNF bought up land in Palestine under regulations that provided that it would forever belong to the *yishuv*. Arabs saw Jewish land purchases as expropriation of territory rightfully theirs. Furthermore, wishing to depend only on Jewish labor, settlers ejected Arab rural workers, provoking strikes and accelerating Palestinian dispossession and proletarianization. As the Palestinian rural economy weakened in the 1920s, the *yishuv* acquired more land. After 1929 the JNF increasingly obtained fertile tracts from local Palestinian landowners who needed money to transform wheat fields into orchards. Yet the Zionists never controlled more than 8 percent of the total mandate territory—about 20 percent of its fertile land.

When Palestine's British-controlled administration took shape, initial Arab unwillingness to participate ensured the smaller Jewish community of disproportionate influence on how to spend tax revenues, the bulk of which came from the far more numerous Arabs. Palestinians received fewer jobs and less credit, agricultural aid, and welfare benefits. Economic hardship in the 1920s and '30s inflamed Arab resentment toward the British, the Zionists, and the Arab landlords who continued selling land. But class divisions and clan rivalries often inhibited the Palestinians from acting collectively on their grievances. Two leading Arab families of Jerusalem, the Nashashibis and the al-Husaynis, competed for dominance, and the British attempted to co-opt one prominent militant, Muhammad Amin al-Husayni (1895–1974), whom they appointed *mufti* (head religious official) of Palestine in 1921. Eventually al-Husayni enjoyed a large budget and wielded considerable power, but he never abandoned his pursuit of Palestinian goals.



Zionist Claims and the Palestinian Mandate

Flare-ups and Revolt

In 1929 a flare-up took place when *yishuv* members attempted to bring chairs, benches, and screens (the latter to separate men and women worshippers) to Jerusalem's Western Wall. Arabs opposed this violation of established custom,

and deadly battles raged in Jerusalem and nearby towns. The British dealt with this and other incidents of unrest by cracking down, and by sending royal commissions to investigate. Reports of two of these commissions in 1929 and 1930 sought to remedy the underlying causes of the conflict, calling for an end to the eviction of Arab agriculturalists and a recognition of the limited "absorptive capacity" for further Jewish immigration to Palestine. Zionists rejected these recommendations and early in 1931 British Socialist prime minister Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937) sided with them (see Reading 19c).

The 1937 Peel Commission report, issued in response to a major Arab revolt, recommended eventual partition of Palestine, with Zionists receiving enough territory to form a Jewish state after the termination of the mandate. (See Map p. 152) The Arabs repudiated the commission's conclusions (Reading 20b), while Zionists reluctantly agreed to them but hoped to increase the territory allotted to them. In his account of the Arab revolt (Reading 20a), Ted Swedenburg shows that the insurgents mobilized poor urban dwellers and *fellahin* (peasants) around issues of social justice. Palestinians also attacked British pipelines that terminated at Haifa. Some Arab notables also joined the revolt, while others (especially the Nashashibi clan) collaborated with the British. Lacking weapons, its leaders killed early in the struggle, the movement went down to defeat in 1939 as Jewish militias joined British forces in crushing it. The British deported most Palestinian militants who had not died in the fighting. Some escaped, as did the *mufti* who spent much of World War II in Nazi Germany, where his radio broadcasts opposed the Allied efforts to defeat the Axis powers.

As war approached, the British, fearing further sabotage of Middle Eastern oil installations, issued another report—the 1939 White Paper (Reading 20c), which rejected partition and promised free elections and independence to Palestine after ten years. The British also imposed new restrictions on both Jewish immigration and Zionist land acquisition. Given the much larger Arab population, Palestinians would have dominated any unitary state. The Zionists, fearing this, demanded partition and greater immigration. Their determination greatly intensified as the Nazis murdered European Jews. They refused to countenance any other solution than unrestricted immigration and a Jewish state (see Reading 20d). They and the Palestinians (who refused to wait another decade for independence) and other Arabs rejected the White Paper.

Zionist Nation Building, War, and Statehood

Despite British attempts to limit Jewish immigration, Zionists circumvented barriers and smuggled thousands into Palestine. The *Histadrut* (General Federation of Jewish Workers) assisted this process in several ways: by founding settlements for the illegal immigrants, inculcating Zionist ideology and providing Hebrew instruction, managing cooperative enterprises, and directing a clandestine militia, *Haganah* (defense). The *Histadrut* did not admit Arab workers

to membership nor arrange for equal pay scales (although it did establish an Arab affiliate). One of the organization's most active members, Ben-Gurion, also founded the *Mapai* political party, the ancestor of the Labor coalition and the dominant Zionist political force.

Labor Zionists faced an opposition "Revisionist" movement led by Russian-born Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880–1940), who wanted to establish a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River (see Reading 19d). Although Jabotinsky never broke with Great Britain, some of his militant followers founded illegal militias, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (National Military Organization) and *Lehi* (acronym for Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, or the Stern Gang), which attacked Arab civilians and British troops and officials. After Israeli statehood the Revisionists became the *Herut* (freedom) movement, a component of the rightist *Likud* (unity) bloc. Two *Likud* leaders, former *Irgun* commander in chief Menachem Begin (1913–92) and Stern Gang member Yitzhak Shamir (1914–), became prime ministers of Israel.

World War II brought a measure of prosperity, and also repression and an uncertain future to Palestinian Arabs. Labor scarcity and the need for supplies in nearby battle zones raised prices for agricultural goods and wages so that poor Arabs could improve their material condition. Much wealth went into educational opportunities for Palestinian youth, transforming them into the most educated of all Arabs. The British prohibited political organizing during wartime and kept many Palestinians in exile. Those allowed back had to abide by a ban on politics. Soldiers and other law enforcement officers searched homes at will, confiscated evidence, and arrested and held Palestinians indefinitely. Harsh laws remained in effect even after the creation of Israel. Continuing divisions among Palestinians prevented agreement on common plans for the postwar struggles ahead and allowed neighboring Arab states (organized since 1945 in the Arab League) to represent Palestinian positions. Since many of the Arab regimes still had colonial overlords dictating security and economic policy, Palestinians often nurtured suspicions of their Arab neighbors' good intentions.

The immigration question moved to the forefront in wartime as British authorities attempted to placate the Arabs by limiting land sales and curtailing the influx of Jews. Would-be immigrants faced mortal danger if they remained in Nazi-dominated Europe, but as persecution of Jews increased, so did British and Arab opposition to the augmented immigration stream. Great Britain, Canada, and the United States refused to accept Jewish refugees, increasing the focus on Palestine. Anguish over the Nazi extermination of six million Jews swung global opinion behind the Zionist cause and away from Arab plight. Arabs could find no compelling reason why the world community believed that Jewish suffering had to be rectified at Palestinian expense, and they searched unsuccessfully for ways to present their situation to a mostly unsympathetic world. Palestinians remained quiescent during the war, retaining the illusory hope for their own state once hostilities ended.

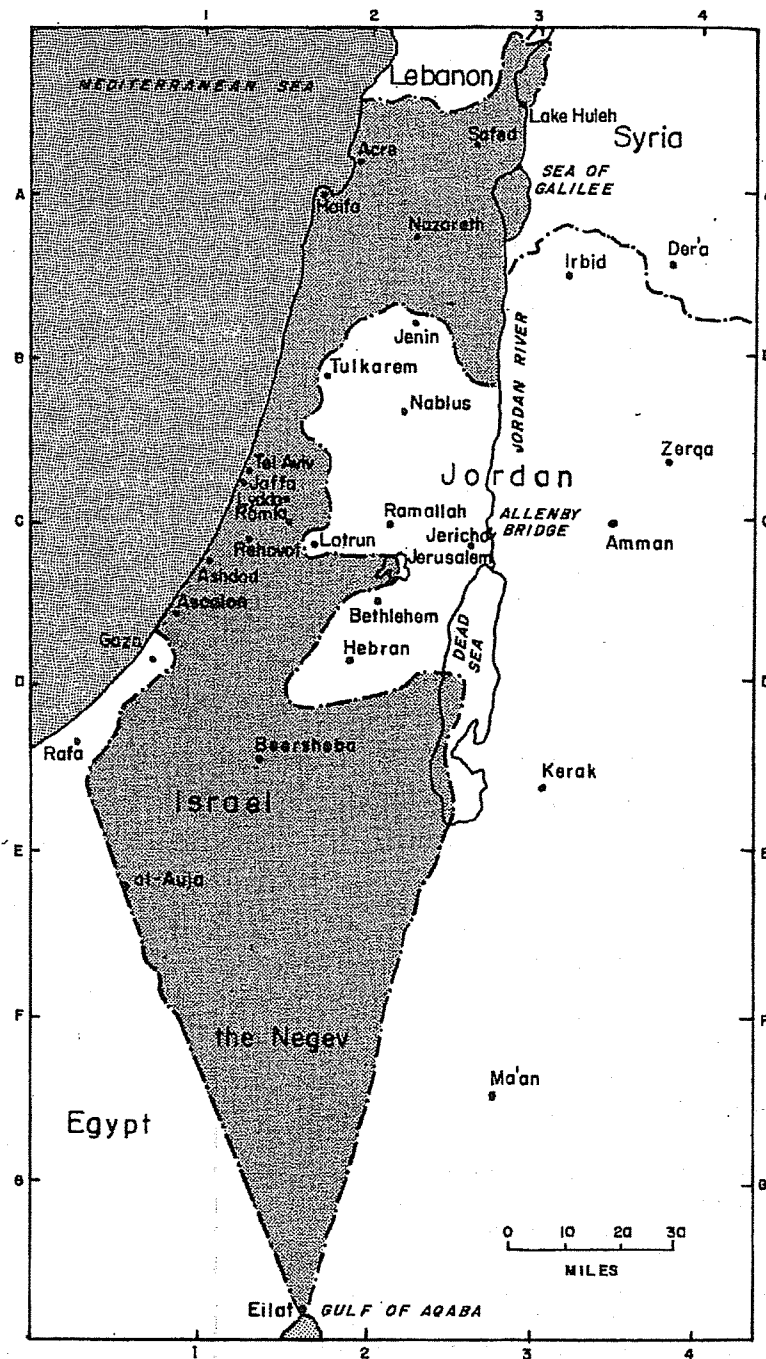
Jews worldwide backed Great Britain against Germany. About 30,000 Palestinian Jews fought in British wartime units, receiving valuable military experience and weapons, which they often retained. But some extreme Revisionists continued to attack the British despite the ongoing war. Although victorious, Great Britain emerged in 1945 weakened and unable to hold on to its empire. Besides withdrawing from India (see Reading 16), Britain turned the Palestine question over to the United Nations, the organization that replaced the League of Nations.

The UN Special Commission on Palestine issued two sharply differing sets of recommendations. The majority called for partition into Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem as an international zone (see Map p. 190). The minority supported a federated state with autonomous Jewish and Palestinian areas. The Arabs rejected both, while the Zionists accepted the majority plan. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly approved this plan and Arab forces attacked almost immediately.

Some 50,000 Arab troops—ranging from the crack forces of Jordan's Arab Legion to volunteer irregulars from various Arab countries—faced 30,000 battle-seasoned Jewish fighters, augmented by 20,000 volunteer war veterans from the Diaspora. France and Czechoslovakia supplied the Jews with armaments. Indirect military aid came from Jordan's King Abdullah, who kept the Arab Legion out of major battles in exchange for control over the Jordan River's West Bank and Arab Jerusalem after the war. In wartime, Israel declared its statehood. Victory came to the Jews by 1949 because of better staff work, the efforts of skilled and dedicated fighters, and the *yishuv's* near total mobilization and unity of purpose. The full horror of the Holocaust also stirred worldwide support for the Zionists' victory.

Although few outside of the Middle East paid attention to the wartime exodus of Palestinian refugees, their situation eventually became a matter of contention. The official Zionist explanation concludes that Arab leaders encouraged their people to flee so that they could return after the expected Zionist defeat and resume their lives in Arab Palestine. By this account the Israelis bore no responsibility for Arab refugees, who by leaving forfeited their homes and property. A sharply divergent Palestinian view (shared in part by a new wave of Israeli scholars) argues that Israeli forces drove many of the 700,000 or more Palestinian refugees out of their country. The April 1948 slaughter by *Irgun* militias, operating with the approval and cooperation of *Haganah*, of the Arab residents of Deir Yasin, a village west of Jerusalem, not only impelled many Palestinians to flee, it seemed intended to do just that. Similar events, or threats, had the same effect of emptying many other Palestinian villages and towns.

Most Palestinians who fled their homes registered as refugees with the UN and found substandard housing in the crowded camps of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, or in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The UN General Assembly at the end of 1948 passed Resolution #194 (see Reading 21b), which called for the return of the Palestinians to their homes. Those deciding not to go back,



The Israeli-Arab Armistice Lines, 1949

the resolution added, should receive compensation for lost and damaged property. The problem remains unsettled.

Israel had a refugee problem of its own as displaced persons from Europe inundated the Jewish state. Zionists expected all or most Diaspora Jews to migrate to Israel, especially after the *Knesset* (Parliament) passed the 1950 Law of Return (Reading 21c), but this did not happen. Many Jews preferred living in North America or western Europe. The poorest, and most ideologically motivated, refugees, or those shut out of Western countries, moved to Israel. By 1951, 680,000 had arrived, most of them Ashkenazic Jews from Europe. Later Sephardic immigrants from North Africa and other Middle Eastern countries came in such large numbers that by 1961 they made up 45 percent of Israel's population. After the Israeli victory in the 1967 war even more Sephardic Jews flocked to Israel. Like Palestinian refugees, these Jewish migrants brought few possessions from their countries of origin. Those who arrived first took possession of Palestinian homes.

More War, More Suffering

Israel's next war, in 1956, resulted from the invasion of Egypt by British, French, and Israeli armies bent on punishing that country's leader, Jamal Abd al Nasser (1918–70) for nationalizing the Suez Canal and for presuming to seek regional and world leadership. Israel had some additional reasons—the closing of the straits leading to the Red Sea and Nasser's support for the Palestinians. The U.S. government, seizing an opportunity to diminish British and French influence in the Middle East, forced the invaders to withdraw, and Nasser emerged a hero of the Arab world.

Two major wars then followed. Disputes over Jordan River water inflamed Israeli-Syrian tensions, and the Syrians warned Nasser that they expected an Israeli attack. The Tel Aviv government confirmed these fears by announcing its intent to change the Syrian regime. When the Soviets signaled Israeli troop movements, Nasser, as the leader of the Arab world, felt that he had to act. After requesting the withdrawal of UN troops stationed in the Sinai, he closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, thereby provoking an Israeli attack. This 1967 war ended with a resounding Israeli victory over Egypt and Arab states allied with it. As a result Israel occupied Gaza, former Jordanian territory on the West Bank, and Syria's Golan Heights. Several hundred thousand more Palestinians came under Israeli control.

Another war broke out in 1973 when President Anwar al-Sadat (1918–81) ordered Egyptian armies to attack Israel, believing that after a cease-fire he could negotiate peace. Taken by surprise, the Israelis seemed headed toward defeat, until a massive U.S. airlift forced Egyptian troops to retreat. Sadat's scenario resulted in a bilateral treaty (Camp David I, brokered by U.S. president Jimmy

Clinton presidency drew to a close with one more attempt to revive the peace process, bringing Barak and Arafat again to Camp David. No authoritative text of these discussions exists, nor have the Israelis ever made clear precisely what territorial concessions they proposed there or at a follow-up meeting at Taba. One version suggests Barak made a generous offer that Arafat rejected. But since the Israeli leader had barely survived a no-confidence vote in the *Knesset*, and faced an impending election contest against Ariel Sharon, a formidable opponent pledged to overturn Oslo, Arafat had little incentive to make concessions. Nevertheless, he seemed ready to allow Israel to consolidate its West Bank settlements closest to the border and annex them to Israel. But time ran out in this hastily convened meeting before any definitive agreement could emerge.

A subsequent last-minute meeting between officials of Barak's government and the PLO took place at Taba (on the Egyptian-Israeli border) where a slightly more explicit (but still incomplete) blueprint for a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement did emerge. At Taba Israel apparently acknowledged some degree of responsibility for the creation—and therefore the solution—of the Palestinian refugee problem. But once Ariel Sharon took office all possibility of negotiated peace evaporated. Although no longer in play, the Taba negotiations (see Reading 25c) represent the closest the parties have come to a comprehensive agreement.

Any Way Out?

By the time of Taba Ariel Sharon had taken his provocative tour of the *Haram al-Sharif*, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which includes the Dome of the Rock sanctuary in Jerusalem, and the second *intifada* had broken out. Long in the making, this new uprising involved the dangerous adoption by PLO-linked organizations of the suicide-bombing tactics of *Hamas* and other Islamic radical groups. This brought down on the PLO, and Palestinians generally, fierce IDF responses—deadly tank and armored vehicle sweeps through Palestinian towns and refugee camps and targeted assassinations of Palestinian militants. The Sharon government held Arafat responsible for the new cycles of terror and counterterror, and has gained U.S. support for harsh crackdowns on Palestinians (see Reading 26f).

Persistently, Arafat holds on to his position despite heavy criticism even from some Palestinians impatient with his leadership or with his willingness to make concessions. As the interview with PLO official Marwan Barghouti (Reading 26c) demonstrates, no one credible will stand against him in elections.

Another solution proposed in early 2002 by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abd al-Aziz, and accepted by the Arab League (see Reading 26d), has all but disappeared in the present turmoil in Israel and in the current Bush administration's campaign for a global struggle against terrorism. It offered recognition of Israel by Arab countries in exchange for complete Israeli evacuation of the West

Bank and Gaza. Combined with Palestinian pressure to end suicide bombings (see Reading 26e), steps by the Palestinian Legislative Council to establish a government responsible to it, and a revival of something like the Taba negotiations, peace may again appear on the agenda.

18. Zionism and Its Early Arab Opponents

The secular Jewish Hungarian writer Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), reacting to heightened anti-Semitism in Europe, wrote a pamphlet titled *The Jewish State* in 1896, excerpted in part a of this reading. It served as a catalyst for the creation of the modern Zionist movement. As soon as it formed, Muslims responded negatively, as we see in two newspaper articles in parts b and c of this reading, by Rashid Rida (1865–1935), a leading Muslim reformer, and by an anonymous Ottoman official, who adopted the pseudonym "Tiberias."

A. Theodor Herzl, Zionism: The Vision of an Eventual Jewish State (1896)*

The Zionist movement that Herzl created differed from the Jewish religious tradition calling for the return of Jews to Zion (Israel) to await the appearance of the Messiah. Herzl proposed establishing a Jewish state wherever Jews could find sufficient land to accommodate those fleeing oppression and realized that in searching for such a site Zionists would have to get the backing of a great power. Requesting a home in Ottoman Palestine, Herzl heard directly from the sultan that European Jews could not reside there, where in 1890 some 500,000 Arabs already lived. Herzl then considered places in Latin America and Africa.

After he wrote *The Jewish State*, however, and after he had organized the World Zionist Organization, Herzl found that the largest group of his followers, those from eastern Europe, refused to consider any other site than Palestine. He acceded to these demands, and from then on the Zionist movement aimed at carving out a state in Palestine and nowhere else. During World War I the British, after having conquered Palestine, associated themselves with Zionism and supported the creation of a home there for the Jewish people—a promise enshrined in the Balfour Declaration (Reading 19a).

*From Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question* (New York: American Zionist Emergency Council, 1946), pp. 85–96.

* * *

No one can deny the gravity of the situation of the Jews. Wherever they live in perceptible numbers, they are more or less persecuted. Their equality before the law has become practically a dead letter. They are debarred from filling even moderately high positions, either in the army, or in any public or private capacity. And attempts are made to thrust them out of business also: "Don't buy from Jews!"

Attacks in Parliaments, in assemblies, in the press, in the pulpit, in the street, on journeys—for example, their exclusion from certain hotels—even in places of recreation, become daily more numerous. The forms of persecutions vary according to the countries and social circles in which they occur.

Let us first settle the point of staying where we are. Can we hope for better days. . . ? I say that we cannot hope for a change in the current of feeling. And why not? Even if we were as near to the hearts of princes as are their other subjects, they could not protect us. They would only feel popular hatred by showing us too much favor. . . . The nations in whose midst Jews live are all either covertly or openly Anti-Semitic.

The whole plan is in its essence perfectly simple.

Let the sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation; the rest we shall manage for ourselves.

The creation of a new State is neither ridiculous nor impossible. We have in our day witnessed the process in connection with nations which were not largely members of the middle class, but poorer, less educated, and consequently weaker than ourselves. The Governments of all countries scourged by Anti-Semitism will be keenly interested in assisting us to obtain the sovereignty we want.

The plan, simple in design, but complicated in execution, will be carried out by two agencies: The Society of Jews and the Jewish Company.

The Society of Jews will do the preparatory work in the domains of science and politics, which the Jewish Company will afterwards apply practically.

The Jewish Company will be the liquidating agent of the business interests of departing Jews, and will organize commerce and trade in the new country.

We must not imagine the departure of the Jews to be a sudden one. It will be gradual, continuous, and will cover many decades. The poorest will go first to cultivate the soil. In accordance with a preconceived plan, they will construct roads, bridges, railways and telegraph installations; regulate rivers; and build their own dwellings; their labor will create trade, trade will create markets and markets will attract new settlers, for every man will go voluntarily, at his own expense and his own risk. The labor expended on the land will enhance its value, and the Jews will soon perceive that a new and permanent sphere of operation is opening here for that spirit of enterprise which has heretofore met only with hatred and obloquy.

Let all who are willing to join us, fall in behind our banner and fight for our cause with voice and pen and deed.

Those Jews who agree with our idea of a State will attach themselves to the Society, which will thereby be authorized to confer and treat with Governments in the name of our people. The Society will thus be acknowledged in its relations with Governments as a State-creating power. This acknowledgment will practically create the State.

Should the Powers declare themselves willing to admit our sovereignty over a neutral piece of land, then the Society will enter into negotiations for the possession of this land. Here two territories come under consideration, Palestine and Argentine. In both countries important experiments in colonization have been made, though on the mistaken principle of a gradual infiltration of Jews. An infiltration is bound to end badly. It continues till the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened, and forces the Government to stop a further influx of Jews. Immigration is consequently futile unless we have the sovereign right to continue such immigration.

The Society of Jews will treat with the present masters of the land, putting itself under the protectorate of the European Powers. . . . We could offer the present possessors of the land enormous advantages, assume part of the public debt, build new roads . . . and do many other things. The creation of our State would be beneficial to adjacent countries, because the cultivation of a strip of land increases the value of its surrounding districts in innumerable ways.

Shall we choose Palestine or Argentine? We shall take what is given us, and what is selected by Jewish public opinion. The Society will determine both these points.

Argentine is one of the most fertile countries in the world, extends over a vast area, has a sparse population and a mild climate. The Argentine Republic would derive considerable profit from the cession of a portion of its territory to us. The present infiltration of Jews has certainly produced some discontent, and it would be necessary to enlighten the Republic on the intrinsic difference of our new movement.

Palestine is our ever-memorable historic home. The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvelous potency. If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should there form a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. We should as a neutral State remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence. The sanctuaries of Christendom would be safeguarded by assigning to them an extra-territorial status. . . . We should form a guard of honor about these sanctuaries, answering for the fulfillment of this duty with our existence. This guard of honor would be the great symbol of the solution of the Jewish Question after eighteen centuries of Jewish suffering.

B. Rashid Rida, Pay Attention to Zionist Encroachment (1898)*

Even before World War I Arab writers warned of Zionist aims to build a Jewish settler community in Palestine. The newcomers would purchase land, live in separate communities, replace Arabs with Jewish farm laborers, and reduce the Palestinians to a minority in their own land. We present here the viewpoint of Rida, who described Zionism as a form of European colonialism. This selection presents a portion of an article from Rida's influential Cairo newspaper, *al-Manar* (The Beacon), one of the earliest examinations of Zionism's impact on the Middle East.

Apathetic people, lift up your heads and see what is going on. Consider what [other] people and nations are doing. Pay attention to what is happening in your world. Does it please you that the newspapers around the globe are reporting that the impoverished of the most miserable people [the Jews], whom all governments are expelling from their countries, have so mastered [requisite] knowledge and civilization that they can come to your country, colonize it and transform its [former] masters into wage laborers and its affluent into paupers? . . . Think about this matter [of Zionist encroachment], and make it the subject of your conversations in order to find out whether it is just or unjust, true or false. If it becomes clear that you have neglected to defend the rights of your fatherland, and the interests of your nation and your religious community, reflect on and study, debate and examine the matter. It is more appropriate for contemplation than thinking about shortcomings, spreading slander, insulting those who are innocent. It is more worthy of discussion than making fun of and accusing your [Arab] brothers.

C. "Tiberias," Warning of Zionist Colonization (1910)**

In the years after Rashid Rida's warning (part b, this reading), Zionist settlements began appearing in Ottoman Palestine. The anonymous author of this article, who called himself "Tiberias" (the name of a city in Roman Palestine), may have been Shukri al-Asali, subgovernor of Nazareth.

No one doubts that Zionist colonization, in other words foreign seizure of the land of Palestine, is based on political and economic matters which cannot be

*From Rashid Rida, *Khabar wa itibar* (News and Viewpoints), *al-Manar* (April 9, 1898), p. 108. Translated from the Arabic by Stuart Schaar.

**From "Tiberias," "Zionist Colonization: The Local Government's Propagation of It. Its Harmfulness to the State and Nation," *al-ittihad al-uthmani* (Ottoman Unity), [Beirut] no. 559 (July 9, 1910), p. 2. Translated from the Arabic by Rashid Khalidi. Bracketed material inserted by editors. By permission of the translator.

hidden from those with eyes to see; this is an economic party whose aim is to take possession of these great lands by the force of wealth spent freely to further this vital economic desire, whose result will be the shattering of the unity of the native farmers who have been oppressed over time. If we look at what happened to the al-Dalaika and al-Sbeih tribes and to others after their lands had been taken over by those traitors among the government officials who were working for [the Zionists] by grace of the money they spend freely, and knowing the harm caused by this seizure: the inhabitants become slaves to those who have ambitions in this land and deceived the nation at the outset, saying that they came to this country to help its people achieve happiness, to bring progress to the country and to invest their wealth in modern ways. The trick worked and they gained possession via this subterfuge, with the help of these traitors among the government employees. They use tricks and intrigues to oppress the native population and take their rights, until they are forced to emigrate and leave the country. Thus do they poison things until they become masters of the country, and have effective control over it. The government loses loyal subjects willing to risk their lives for the glory of the state, just as it loses our country.

This was the situation in the land of Palestine under the past government [of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II], and it sadly continues in the Constitutional era [the early Young Turk period], with the government showing laxness towards these dangerous matters, which may bring great catastrophes on the state. Since silence about such economic wars does not fit in this age, but is rather a terrible crime against the nation and the homeland, we call for the attention of the *vali* [governor] of Beirut, whose job it is to look into these vital economic matters. And we warn the *qaymaqam* [subgovernor] of [the town of] Tiberias and those around him of these dangers, since the nation today is not like it was yesterday: it is lying in wait for those who betray the nation and the homeland, just as it is ready to fight this colonization with all its material and moral forces—and God favors goodness and integrity.

19. The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Period

A combination of strategic motives produced the Balfour Declaration, presented in part a of this reading. The war highlighted the importance of Palestine and some British politicians thought that backing the Zionist cause in Palestine would win support from Jewish populations in Russia and the United States for the war effort.

For reasons set forth in part b of this reading, Arabs opposed the declaration and Britain's League of Nations mandate for Palestine. Part c reproduces a let-

ter written by British Prime Minister MacDonald in 1931 to Chaim Weizmann that countermands earlier restrictions on Jewish immigration and reaffirms Britain's commitment to the Balfour Declaration. Part d offers Vladimir Jabotinsky's testimony before the 1937 British Peel Commission in which he argued for opening up both sides of the Jordan River to "many millions" of Jewish immigrants fleeing repression in Europe.

A. The Balfour Declaration: A Jewish Home in Palestine (1917)*

At the outset of World War I and continuing to 1917, France claimed possession of greater Syria, including Lebanon and Palestine. But when British troops defeated Ottoman forces there and occupied it in 1917, they effectively extinguished France's claims to Palestine, while recognizing French control over Syria and Lebanon.

Early in the war Zionist leaders approached British officials to get their support for their cause. At first the British paid scant attention, but by 1917 the London government approved the Balfour Declaration, which Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour sent as a letter to Zionist leader Lionel Walter Lord Rothschild (1868–1937). Great Britain's efforts to gain international support for its promise to the Zionists (and at the same time legitimize British control of Palestine) achieved success when the League of Nations approved the Palestine mandate.

The British also hoped that the declaration would bring approval from the United States and especially from Russian Jews who might influence the Bolsheviks, a Marxist party that had just won power on a platform of opposition to the war, not to abandon their allies. In March 1918, the Bolshevik government made a separate peace with Germany. But the Americans, having joined the war as Britain's ally, fulfilled London's expectations and approved the Balfour Declaration.

[London] 2 November 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

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

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

*From *Mandate for Palestine Together With the Balfour Declaration* (Jerusalem, 1938), facsimile text.

status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

B. The General Syrian Congress, Our Objections to Zionism and Western Imperialism (1919)*

Before the League of Nations endorsed the creation of mandate territories in the Middle East controlled by Britain and France, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson recommended sending a commission to survey Arab views on the question. Two prominent Americans, Harry C. King and Charles R. Crane, served on this commission. They arrived in Damascus on June 25, 1919. Their presence led the Syrians, provisionally ruled by the Hashemite *Amir* Faysal, son of the *Sharif* Husayn ibn Ali of Arabia, to convene a Congress in the Syrian capital to which the Syrians invited delegates from Lebanon and Palestine. The following document summarizes the Congress resolution adopted on July 2, which the Syrians presented to the King-Crane Commission. Although the commission issued a report favorable to Arab nationalism and to the Palestinian cause, its findings received scant attention. Despite Wilson's call for self-determination in some of his wartime utterances, he ignored the King-Crane report and accepted the Balfour Declaration (part a, this Reading) and the British/French imperial arrangements made in the Sykes-Picot agreement (see Reading 13c). Later developments would reveal that the Arabs misplaced their confidence in Wilson's "noble principles."

1. We ask . . . [for] complete political independence for [Greater] Syria . . . [encompassing Lebanon and Palestine].

2. We ask that the Government of this Syrian country should be a democratic civil constitutional Monarchy . . . safeguarding the rights of minorities, and that the King be the Emir Feisal, who carried on a glorious struggle in the cause of our liberation and merited our full confidence and entire reliance.

3. Considering the fact that the Arabs inhabiting the Syrian area are not naturally less gifted than other more advanced races and that they are by no means less developed than the Bulgarians, Serbians, Greeks, and Romanians at the beginning of their independence, we protest against Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, placing us among the nations in their middle stage of development which stand in need of a mandatory power.

*From the King-Crane Commission Report in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, 13 vols. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942–47), vol. 12, pp. 780–81. Bracketed material inserted by the editors.

4. In the event of the rejection by the Peace Conference of this just protest for certain considerations that we may not understand, we, relying on the declarations of President Wilson, that his object in waging war was to put an end to the ambition of conquest and colonization, can only regard the mandate mentioned in the Covenant of the League of Nations as equivalent to the rendering of economical and technical assistance that does not prejudice our complete independence. And desiring that our country should not fall prey to colonization and believing that the American Nation is farthest from any thought of colonization and has no political ambition in our country, we will seek the technical and economical assistance from the United States of America, provided that such assistance does not exceed twenty years.

5. In the event of America not finding herself in a position to accept our desire for assistance, we will seek this assistance from Great Britain, also provided that this assistance does not infringe on the complete independence and unity of our country and that the duration of such assistance does not exceed that mentioned in the previous article.

6. We do not acknowledge any right claimed by the French Government in any part whatsoever of our Syrian country and refuse that she should assist us or have a hand in our country under any circumstances and in any place.

7. We oppose the pretensions of the Zionists to create a Jewish commonwealth in the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, and oppose Zionist migration to any part of our country; for we do not acknowledge their title but consider them a grave peril for our people from the national, economical, and political points of view. Our Jewish compatriots shall enjoy our common rights and assume the common responsibilities.

8. We ask that there be no separation of the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, nor of the littoral western zone, which includes Lebanon, from the Syrian country. We desire that the unity of the country should be guaranteed against partition under whatever circumstances.

9. We ask for complete independence for emancipated Mesopotamia [Iraq] and that there should be no economical barriers between the two countries.

10. The fundamental principles laid down by President Wilson in condemnation of secret treaties impel us to protest most emphatically against any treaty that stipulates the partition of our Syrian country and against any private engagement aiming at the establishment of Zionism in the southern part of Syria; therefore we ask the annulment of these conventions and agreements.

The noble principles enunciated by President Wilson strengthen our confidence that our desires emanating from the depths of our hearts shall be the decisive factor in determining our future; and that President Wilson and the free American people will be our supporters for the realization of our hopes, thereby proving their sincerity and noble sympathy with the aspiration of the weaker nations in general and the Arab people in particular.

We also have the fullest confidence that the Peace Conference will realize that we would not have risen against the Turks, with whom we had participated

in all civil, political, and representative privileges, but for the violation of our national rights, and so will grant us our desires in full in order that our political rights may not be less after the war than they were before, since we have shed so much blood in the cause of our liberty and independence.

We request to be allowed to send a delegation to represent us at the Peace Conference to defend our rights and secure the realization of our aspirations.

C. James Ramsay MacDonald, Letter to Chaim Weizmann (1931)*

The introduction to this section has surely prepared readers for outbreaks of discord, conflicts, and inconsistencies in mandate Palestine. We document British wavering—sometimes leaning toward the Arabs, and at other times favoring the Zionists, especially on the issue of Jewish immigration. The 1930 White Paper took the former position, but when Socialist leader Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937) became prime minister, he backed the Zionists, to the dismay of Arabs, who labeled this communication the “Black Letter.”

[London] 13 February 1931

Dear Dr. Weizmann:

In order to remove certain misconceptions and misunderstandings, which have arisen as to the policy of his Majesty's Government with regard to Palestine . . . and also to meet certain criticisms put forward by the Jewish Agency . . . [we forward to you our] authoritative interpretation of the . . . White Paper of 1930 . . . [which] recognizes that the undertaking of the mandate is an undertaking to the Jewish people and not only to the Jewish population of Palestine. . . .

In carrying out the policy of the mandate the mandatory cannot ignore the existence of the differing interests and viewpoints. These, indeed, are not in themselves irreconcilable, but they can only be reconciled if there is a proper realization that the full solution of the problem depends upon an understanding between the Jews and the Arabs. Until that is reached, considerations of balance must inevitably enter into the definition of policy. . . .

[The] rights and position [of non-Jews] . . . are not to be prejudiced; that is, are not TO BE impaired or made worse. The effect of the policy of immigration and settlement on the economic position of the non-Jewish community cannot be excluded from consideration. But the words are not to

*From Great Britain, *Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], February 13, 1931, vol. 248, cols. 751–57. Bracketed material inserted by the editors.

be read as implying that existing economic conditions in Palestine should be crystallized. On the contrary, the obligation to facilitate Jewish Immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land remains a positive obligation of the mandate and it can be fulfilled without prejudice to the rights and position of other sections of the population of Palestine. . . .

D. Vladamir Jabotinsky, Let Us Settle Palestine and Transjordan (1937)*

Jabotinsky (1880–1940), the founder of the Zionist “Revisionist Movement,” evoked extreme hatred from his political foes and great devotion from his followers. The Revisionists separated from mainstream Zionism in 1935, arguing that the *yishuv* should not rely on the British to guarantee Jewish statehood in Palestine. Jabotinsky had earlier opposed Britain’s creation of a separate Transjordan, insisting on retaining the original mandate terms, which for a very short period encompassed both Palestine and Transjordan. He and his followers also favored massive legal or illegal immigration of European Jews into an enlarged Palestine and direct action by armed Jews to impose a Zionist state over Palestine and Transjordan. His followers founded extralegal militia groups, including the *Irgun*.

[T]he term “Palestine” when I employ it will mean the area on both sides of the Jordan, the area mentioned in the original Palestine Mandate. That area is about three times the size of . . . Belgium. We maintain that the absorptive capacity of a country depends . . . on the human factor; . . . on the quality of its people or of its colonizers, and on . . . the political régime under which that colonization is either encouraged or discouraged.

We maintain and claim that Palestine is at the cross-roads of the . . . main arteries of this hemisphere. The road from the Cape to Cairo, passing through the Suez Canal and going up to Vladivostok or Moscow . . . is the main artery of the future by land. The sea route from Liverpool to Adelaide and Bombay . . . is the main water artery, and . . . in future, the air arteries. . . .

An area of Palestine’s size populated at the rather modest density of . . . Wales, can hold eight million inhabitants; populated at the density of Sicily, it can hold twelve million . . . populated at the density of England . . . or of Belgium . . . it could hold eighteen million inhabitants. . . . Palestine on both sides of the Jordan today holds a population of about 1,600,000[;] the mar-

*From V. Jabotinsky, *Evidence Submitted to the PALESTINE ROYAL COMMISSION*, House of Lords, London, February 11, 1937 (London: New Zionist Press, 1937), pp. 9–13. American spellings adopted.

gin is rather very large, and the Zionist claim . . . that . . . Palestine is good for holding the 1,000,000 present Arab population, plus 1,000,000 . . . for their progeny, plus many millions of Jewish immigrants—and plus peace. . . . [W]e claim that area; and I think that disposes ultimately of any suspicion that, in our schemes, anybody of any Party dreams of displacing or of disturbing the present non-Jewish population.

We are facing an elemental calamity, a kind of social earthquake. Three generations of Jewish thinkers and Zionists . . . have come to the conclusion that the cause of our suffering is the very fact . . . that we are everywhere a minority. It is not the anti-Semitism of men; it is, above all, the anti-Semitism of things, the inherent xenophobia of the body social or the body economic under which we suffer.

[T]here are moments, there are whole periods in history when this “xenophobia of Life itself” takes dimensions which no people can stand, and that is what we are facing now. I do not mean to suggest that I would recognize that all the Governments concerned have done all they ought to have done; I would be the last man to concede that. I think many Governments, East and West, ought to do much more to protect the Jews than they do; but the best of Governments could perhaps only soften the calamity to quite an insignificant extent, but the core of the calamity is an earthquake which stands and remains.

We are not free agents. We cannot “concede” anything. Whenever I hear the Zionist[s], most often my own Party, accused of asking for too much—Gentlemen, I really cannot understand it. Yes, we do want a State; every nation on earth, every normal nation, beginning with the smallest and the humblest who do not claim any merit, any role in humanity’s development, they all have States of their own. That is the normal condition for a people. Yet, when we, the most abnormal of peoples and therefore the most unfortunate, ask only for the same condition as the Albanians enjoy, to say nothing of the French and the English, then it is called too much. I should understand it if the answer were, “It is impossible,” but when the answer is, “It is too much” I cannot understand it.

We have got to save millions, many *millions*. I do not know whether it is a question of re-housing one-third of the Jewish race, half of the Jewish race, or a quarter of the Jewish race; I do not know; but it is a question of millions. Certainly the way out is to evacuate those portions of the Diaspora which have become no good, which hold no promise of any possibility of a livelihood, and to concentrate all those refugees in some place which should *not* be Diaspora, not a repetition of the position where the Jews are an unabsorbed minority within a foreign social, or economic, or political organism. Naturally, if that process of evacuation is allowed to develop, as it ought to be allowed to develop, there will very soon be reached a moment when the Jews will become a majority in Palestine. I am going to make a “terrible” confession. Our demand for a Jewish majority is not our maximum—it is our minimum.

I have the profoundest feeling for the Arab case, in so far as that Arab case is not exaggerated. This Commission have already been able to make up their minds as to whether there is any individual hardship to the Arabs of Palestine as men, deriving from the Jewish colonization. We maintain unanimously that the economic position of the Palestinian Arabs, under the Jewish colonization and owing to the Jewish colonization, has become the object of envy in all the surrounding Arab countries, so that the Arabs from those countries show a clear tendency to immigrate into Palestine. I have also shown to you already that, in our submission, there is no question of ousting the Arabs. On the contrary, the idea is that Palestine on both sides of the Jordan should hold the Arabs, their progeny, *and* many millions of Jews. What I do not deny is that in that process the Arabs of Palestine will necessarily become a minority in the country of Palestine. What I do deny is that *that* is a hardship. It is not a hardship on any race, any nation, possessing so many National States now and so many more National States in the future. One fraction, one branch of that race, and not a big one, will have to live in someone else's State: well, that is the case with all the mightiest nations of the world. I could hardly mention one of the big nations, having their States, mighty and powerful, who had not one branch living in someone else's State. That is only normal and there is no "hardship" attached to that. So when we hear the Arab claim confronted with the Jewish claim; I fully understand that any minority would prefer to be a majority, it is quite understandable that the Arabs of Palestine would also prefer Palestine to be the Arab State No. 4, No. 5, or No. 6—that I quite understand; but when the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite versus the claims of starvation.

20. Palestine on the Eve of World War II

This reading contains four sections: part a, an essay by a modern scholar on the Palestinian Revolt (1936–39); part b, the negative reaction to the Peel Commission Report by Arab notables; part c, the British White Paper of 1939, which anticipated the war that Great Britain soon faced against Germany and its allies. Three years later, as World War II raged on several fronts and the Nazi massacres of the Jews had begun, a Zionist Congress convened in New York City to denounce the White Paper and demand unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine. The resolutions of this Congress make up part d of this reading.

A. Ted Swedenburg, *The Palestinian Revolt, 1936–39* (1988)*

A complicated movement, fomented by others than the traditional Palestinian notables, the Palestinian Revolt was led by a new generation of grassroots leaders. Swedenburg's essay, a preliminary version of his 1995 book *Memoirs of Revolt*, describes this leadership as well as the intertwining of class factors and militant nationalism in the revolt. After crushing it with the help of Zionist militias, the British killed or exiled Palestinian leaders and left behind a defeated, resentful Palestinian populace still hoping for an independent state as World War II began. The postwar period did little to relieve Arab grievances. In defeat, those who had revolted in 1936–39 bequeathed a political legacy to later generations of Palestinian nationalist militants, such as participants in later *intifadas* (uprisings), described in Readings 24b and 26c.

The spark that ignited the explosion came from an independent organization intimately connected to the peasantry and semi-proletariat created by the agrarian crisis . . . [and] founded by radical Islamic reformer *Shaykh* 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam [d. 1935]. A native of Jabla, Syria, and a key figure in the 1921 revolt against the French, al-Qassam took refuge in Haifa after fleeing Syria under sentence of death. A man of great religious learning who had studied at Cairo's al-Azhar, al-Qassam was associated with the Islamic reform (*Salafiya*) movement, as well as with certain *Sufi turuq* [mystical brotherhoods]. He quickly achieved prominence in Haifa as a preacher and teacher. Unlike other political activists in Palestine, al-Qassam concentrated his efforts exclusively on the lower classes with whom he lived. He set up a night school to combat illiteracy among the casual laborers (recent migrants from rural areas) of Haifa shantytowns and was a prominent member of the Young Men's Muslim Association. In 1929 al-Qassam was appointed marriage registrar of Haifa's *Shari'a* court. The duties of this office, which required that he tour northern villages, permitted him to extend his efforts to the peasantry, whom he encouraged to set up growing and distribution cooperatives.

Using his religious position, al-Qassam began to recruit followers from among the *fellahin* (peasants) and the laborers of Haifa, organizing them into clandestine cells of not more than five persons. By 1935 he had enlisted 200, perhaps even 800, men. Many received military training, carried out after dark; all were imbued with al-Qassam's message of strict piety, of struggle and sacrifice,

*From Ted Swedenburg, "The Role of the Palestinian Peasantry in the Great Revolt (1936–1939)," in Edmund Burke III and Ira Lapidus, eds., *Islam, Politics and Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 189–94. Notes deleted. Bracketed material added by the editors. Arabic words italicized. By permission.

of patriotism, the necessity for unity, and the need to emulate early Islamic heroes. . . . [His] political activities . . . paralleled those of Hasan al-Banna [1906–49], founder of the Muslim Brothers (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*) in Egypt [see Reading 32b]. . . . But while al-Banna attracted the new Egyptian petty bourgeoisie, al-Qassam focused on the recently dispossessed peasants working as casual laborers in the slums.

Al-Qassam's appeal to religious values was not simply a return to tradition or a retreat into the past, but instead represented a real transformation of traditional forms for revolutionary use in the present. He seized on popular memories of the Assassins [a violent *Shiite* organization that flourished between the late eleventh and mid-thirteenth centuries] and the wars against the Crusaders by invoking the tradition of the *fiḍa'iyyin* [individuals who sacrificed themselves for their faith by performing a violent act], the notion of struggle that involved sacrifice. His clandestine organization resembled that of a *Sufi* order: his followers grew their beards "wild" and called themselves *shaykhs*. . . .

[In] November 1935 . . . al-Qassam launch[ed] . . . a full-scale revolt. Accompanied by a small detachment of followers, he set out from Haifa with the aim of raising the peasantry in rebellion. An accidental encounter with the police led to a premature battle with the British military, however, and al-Qassam died before his rebellion could get off the ground.

Nonetheless, his example electrified the country. Independent radical organizations eulogized al-Qassam and gained new inspiration from his revolutionary project. Al-Qassam rapidly achieved the status of a popular hero, and his gravesite became a place of pilgrimage. His legacy also included the many Qassamites still at large and prepared for action, as well as militant nationalists who set up fresh political groupings in the towns and organized armed bands on the Qassam model. Urban radicals also redoubled their organizing in the villages in preparation for a new anti-British outbreak. In such a highly charged atmosphere, only a small event was needed to trigger an explosion. That incident occurred on 13 April 1936, when two Jews were murdered in the Nablus Mountains, perhaps by Qassamites. Following a wave of brutal reprisals and counter-reprisals, the government declared a state of emergency. In response, "national committees" led by various militant organizations sprang up in the towns and declared a general strike. The notables followed along, trying to retake control of the unruly movement. On 25 April all the Palestinian parties (including the Nashashibi's National Defense Party) met with the national committees and set up a coordinating body known as the Higher Arab Committee (H.A.C.), with Amin al-Husayni as its president. Although the H.A.C. grew out of the notables' move to regain their dominant position, nonetheless, as a merging of the independent radical groupings with the traditional leadership it was more representative than the old Arab Executive had been. The H.A.C. quickly declared that the general strike would continue until the British Government put an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine, and it restated the other basic national demands—the banning of land sales and the establishment of an independent national government.

[T]he revolt's focus rapidly shifted to the countryside. A conference of rural national committees convened in May and elaborated a specific peasant agenda, including a call for nonpayment of taxes and the denunciation of the establishment of police stations in villages at *fellahin* expense. . . . In mid-May, armed peasant bands in which Qassamites featured prominently appeared in the highlands. They were assisted by armed commandos in the towns and by peasant auxiliaries who fought part-time. Though connected to the urban national committees, in general these bands operated independently of the *mufti* and the H.A.C. From mountain hideouts they harassed British communications, attacked Zionist settlements, and even sabotaged the Iraq Petroleum Company oil pipelines of Haifa. This last activity posed a particular threat to British global hegemony, for in the 1930s Great Britain still controlled the bulk of Middle East oil and the Haifa pipeline was crucial to imperial naval strategy in the Mediterranean.

The towns, in a state of semi-insurrection, were finally brought under control by the British in July, which left the countryside as the undisputed center of revolt. In the following month Fawsi al-Qawuqji, hero of the Syrian Druze rebellion of 1925, resigned his commission in the Iraqi army and entered Palestine with an armed detachment of pan-Arab volunteers, declaring himself commander-in-chief of the revolt. Although the military effectiveness of the rebel movement was improved and al-Qawuqji was hailed as a popular hero throughout the country, he never managed to unite all the diverse bands under his command.

While popular forces fought the British in the countryside, the notables of the H.A.C.—only one of whom had been arrested—were negotiating with the enemy for a compromise to end the conflict. British authorities increased the pressure in late September by launching tough countermeasures—boosting their military force to 20,000, declaring martial law, and going on a new defensive. The H.A.C. was also constrained by the onset of the agricultural season: peasants wanted to resume work, but, more important, harvest season started in September on the plantations of wealthy citrus-growers. The H.A.C., preferring negotiations to mass mobilization, which threatened notable leadership, called off the six-month-old general strike on 10 October, with the understanding that the Arab kings (of Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) would intercede with the British Government on the Palestinians' behalf and that the government would act in good faith to work out new solutions. A long interim period ensued. While notables pinned their hopes on a Royal Commission of Inquiry, activists and rebel band leaders toured the villages and purchased weapons in preparation for a new round of fighting.

In July 1937, the British Peel Commission published its recommendations for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Arab reaction was universally hostile; even the Nashashibi faction that had defected from the H.A.C. condemned the partition proposal. Feelings ran especially high in the Galilee, a highland region with few Jewish residents, which the plan of partition included

in the proposed Jewish state. In September, following the assassination of the British district commissioner for Galilee (possibly by Qassamites), the second phase of the revolt erupted. British authorities responded by banning the H.A.C. and deporting or arresting hundreds of activists. The *mufti* managed to evade arrest by escaping to Lebanon in October. Shortly thereafter, fierce fighting broke out. With the notable leadership in exile or imprisoned, command now shifted decisively to the partisans in the countryside.

Rebel bands were most active in the Nablus and Galilee highlands, the areas of greatest popular resistance. The Jerusalem-Hebron region . . . was also an important center. In these districts the various bands set up their own court system, administrative offices, and intelligence networks. While peasants and ex-peasant migrants to the towns composed the vast majority of band leaders and fighters, young urban militants played important roles as commanders, advisers, arms transporters, instructors, and judges. Qassamites were particularly well represented at the leadership level. By taxing the peasantry, levying volunteers, and acquiring arms through the agency of experienced smugglers, the bands were able to operate autonomously from the rebel headquarters-in-exile set up by the notable leadership at Damascus. A network of militants in the towns, particularly from among the semi-proletariat, collected contributions, gathered intelligence, and carried out acts of terror against the British, the Zionists, and Arab *simsars* [intermediaries in trade] and collaborators.

In the summer and fall of 1938 the rebellion reached its peak. Some 10,000 persons had joined the insurgent bands, now sufficiently well organized for a handbook of instructions to be issued for their members. Commanders of the largest bands established a Higher Council of Command to enhance military coordination. Most of the Palestinian highlands were in rebel hands, and by September government control over the urban areas had virtually ceased.

Once rebels gained the upper hand in the towns, the peasant character of the revolt expressed itself even more clearly. Rebel commanders ordered all townsmen to take off the urban headgear, the fez, and to don the peasant head cloth, the *kafiya*; urban women were commanded to veil. This action was both practical, in that it protected rebels from arrest by the British when they entered the towns, and symbolic, in that it signified the countryside's hegemony over the city. Insurgents also instructed urban residents not to use electric power, which was produced by an Anglo-Jewish company. Few dared to disobey these orders. Large sums of money were extracted from wealthy city-dwellers as contributions to the revolt, and particularly large "contributions" were demanded from the big orange-growers and merchants at Jaffa who supported the Nashashibi opposition.

On 1 September, the joint rebel command issued a declaration that directly challenged the leading classes' dominance over the countryside. Although limited in scope, the declaration represented a social program that went beyond the merely "national" goals of the *a'yan* [notables]. In it the commanders declared a moratorium on all debts (which had so impoverished the peasantry and by

means of which notables controlled agricultural production) and warned both debt collectors and land agents not to visit the villages. Arab contractors, who hired work teams for the construction of police posts in the villages and roads to facilitate access to rebel strongholds, were also ordered to cease operations. In addition, the statement declared the cancellation of rents on urban apartments, which had risen to scandalously high levels. This item was particularly significant in that, by linking the needs of peasants and urban workers, it revealed the new class alliance underpinning the revolt.

The rebels' interference with landlord-usurer control over the countryside and their demands for contributions from the wealthy constituted a "revenge of the countryside," which prompted thousands of wealthy Palestinians to abandon their homes for other Arab countries. Well-off Palestinians tended to view the rebels as little better than bandits. In part this charge was justified, for there were serious discipline problems within the rebel camp, despite the considerable advances the bands achieved in coordination and unity of purpose. For instance, clan or family loyalties occasionally interfered with the class or national interests of certain rebel commanders, who carried out petty blood-feuds under cover of nationalist activity. Some peasants were alienated by the coercive manner employed by particular leaders to collect taxes and by their favoritism toward certain clans. Moreover, although class divisions among the peasants were not well developed, villagers were by no means homogeneous in their class interests.

Most accounts of the revolt stress the internal problems faced by the rebels. Although such criticisms are exaggerated and detract from the rebels' positive accomplishments, they cannot simply be dismissed. The British and the Nashashibis were able to exploit the contradictions within the rebel movement through such means as the formation of "peace bands" in late 1938 to do battle with the rebels. Although representative primarily of the interests of landlords and rural notables, the peace bands were manned by disaffected peasants.

More important for British strategy than the peace bands was the signing of the Munich Agreement on 30 September 1938. This allowed Britain to free one more army division for service in Palestine and to launch a military counter-offensive. Is it possible that British Prime Minister [Neville] Chamberlain [1869-1940] signed the Munich Agreement not merely to appease Hitler momentarily but also to protect Britain's oil supply in the Mediterranean from "backward" but dangerous bands of peasants? It would be difficult to chart a clear cause-effect relation, but it is evident at least that for the British chiefs of staff, Palestine was a crucial strategic buffer between the Suez Canal and potential enemies to the north (Germany, Soviet Union) and was an indispensable link in land communications. With war looming on the horizon in Europe, Britain was seeking desperately to end the disturbances in Palestine.

In any event, the Munich Agreement had disastrous consequences not just for Czechoslovakia but for the rebellion in Palestine as well. By 1939 the rebels were fighting a British military force of 20,000 men as well as the R.A.F. In addition,

Orde Wingate [1903–44], a British officer, organized a counterinsurgency force of Jewish fighters known as the Special Night Squads to terrorize villagers and to guard the oil pipeline. The British counteroffensive increased pressure on the rebels and prompted further internal problems, such as abuses in collecting taxes and contributions and an upsurge in political assassinations.

However, the intensified military offensive was still not enough to finish off the rebellion, so the British launched a diplomatic one as well. In March 1939 the government issued a White Paper (see part c, this Reading) declaring that it was opposed to Palestine becoming a Jewish state, that Jewish immigration would be limited to 75,000 over the next five years, that land sales would be strictly regulated, and that an independent Palestinian state would be set up in ten years with self-governing institutions to be established in the interim. Although both the notables and the rebels rejected the White Paper, the Palestinian populace responded to it more favorably. Clearly, while it did not satisfy the maximum national demands, the White Paper represented a concession wrung from the British by armed resistance. Zionist reaction against the White Paper, by contrast, was much more virulent.

The revolt was gradually crushed by extreme external pressures and the resultant internal fracturing of the movement. After over three years of fighting, the intervention of substantial British military forces aided by the Zionists, and nearly 20,000 Arab casualties (5,032 dead, 14,760 wounded), the rebellion was finally subdued. In July the last major rebel commander was captured; once the war with Germany began in September 1939, fighting ended altogether. An entirely new set of circumstances on the international scene was to determine subsequent events in Palestine.

B. The Arab Response to the Proposed Partition of Palestine (1938)*

At the height of the Palestinian Revolt leaders of the Arab world met in Cairo to express their opposition to the British Peel Commission Report (1937), which proposed partitioning Palestine into two states. They also agreed that the 400,000 Jewish people then living in Palestine could stay there, but they opposed any further Jewish immigration. Since Hitler's rise to power in 1933, and with Europe on the verge of a general war, Zionist leaders had organized both legal and illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine and had no intention of stopping this movement. The resolutions of this Congress helped convince the British government to issue the White Paper of 1939 (part c, this Reading). War intervened and this plan never materialized.

*From *Resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Congress*, Cairo, October 7–11, 1938, pp. 5–7. American spellings adopted. Bracketed material added by the editors.

* * *

The Congress declared that Jewish Immigration which flowed into the country as a result of the Balfour Declaration was one of the worst calamities that ever befell Palestine. Since this Declaration has already been shown to be null and void, it constitutes a clear violation of the rights of the Arabs and therefore justice demands that the status prior to the Balfour Declaration should be re-established and that the principle of Jewish Immigration be acknowledged as *ultra vires* [the British going beyond their legitimate powers].

Nevertheless, this Congress, actuated by a genuine desire to co-operate with the British Government for the solution of the Palestine problem and for the maintenance of good relations between Great Britain on the one hand and Arab and Muslim Countries on the other, recommends that the people of Palestine should make a sacrifice by agreeing to accept in their midst the Jews who are already in Palestine. This must be, however, on the condition that further Zionist Immigration is definitely prohibited, so that the difficulties resulting from this immigration, which has caused great harm to the country, may not be further aggravated.

This solution, so favorable to the Jews, should be acceptable to the British Government because . . . the solution proposed justifies the assumption that Great Britain has fulfilled her promise to the Jews by having facilitated their immigration into Palestine. The result of this immigration has been that there is, at present, in Palestine, a population of over 400,000 Jews, numbers which constitute a fulfillment of the "favorable view" of the British Government towards the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home.

Any other interpretation of the Balfour Declaration would mean that it was desired to make Palestine Jewish, which is contradictory even to the text of the Declaration itself (see Reading 19a). This attitude on the part of Great Britain would offend Christians and Muslims throughout the world, and would be resisted by the Arabs and the Muslims with all the power at their command.

The partition of Palestine is not less dangerous than Jewish immigration, nor is it compatible with the British Declaration that Great Britain entered the war in the East for the purpose of emancipating its peoples and the establishment of national governments in accordance with the wishes of the people. It is also inconsistent with the declaration that "the well-being and the development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization."

Partition would create in Palestine two neighboring hostile states between which it is impossible to imagine the possibility of an exchange of inhabitants, property and holy places, such as mosques, churches and cemeteries. Furthermore, partition would deprive the Arabs of their land, which constitutes the bulk of their wealth in the territory proposed to be ceded to the Jewish State. It would also deprive them of an outlet to the sea. The Jews, on the other hand, possess hardly any property of any value, and have no population, in the barren mountainous regions intended to form the Arab State.

In addition to what has been stated above, the Arabs do not recognize the legality of the Balfour Declaration, even if it only aimed at the establishment of a Spiritual Home for the Jews. How, then, would they acquiesce in the seizure by others of the best and the most fertile region of their country, while it is proposed that they themselves shall be relegated to the barren rocky regions where they would be starved and annihilated?

C. The British Government's White Paper on Palestine (1939)*

The British government issued this White Paper on the eve of World War II. It disavowed the Peel Commission's earlier recommendation of partition and called for eventual establishment of an independent and united Palestinian state. The Jewish Agency vehemently denounced and rejected this pronouncement on the grounds that it "denied the Jewish people the right to rebuild their national home in their ancestral country." The Arabs of Palestine, wishing for immediate independence, also denounced the 1939 White Paper.

The Royal Commission and previous Commissions . . . have drawn attention to the ambiguity of certain expressions in the Mandate, such as the expression "a National Home for the Jewish people," . . . [which are] a fundamental cause of unrest and hostility between Arabs and Jews. His Majesty's Government are convinced that . . . a clear definition of policy and objectives is essential. The proposal of partition recommended by the Royal Commission would have afforded such clarity, but the establishment of self-supporting independent Arab and Jewish States within Palestine has been found to be impracticable. It has therefore been necessary for His Majesty's Government to devise an alternative policy which will . . . meet the needs of the situation in Palestine. . . .

I. THE CONSTITUTION

. . . In light of these considerations His Majesty's Government make the following declaration of their intentions . . .

(1) The objective of His Majesty's Government is the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine State in such treaty relations with the United Kingdom as will provide satisfactorily for the commercial and strategic requirement of both countries in the future. This proposal for the establishment of the independent State would involve consultation with the Council of the League of Nations with a view to the termination of the Mandate.

*From the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1939*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 134-40. American spellings adopted. Bracketed material added by the editors.

(2) The independent State should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded.

(3) The establishment of the independent State will be preceded by a transitional period throughout which His Majesty's Government will retain responsibility for the government of the country. During the transitional period the people of Palestine will be given an increasing part in the government of their country. Both sections of the population will have an opportunity to participate in the machinery of government, and the process will be carried on whether or not they both avail themselves of it.

(4) As soon as peace and order have been sufficiently restored in Palestine steps will be taken to carry out this policy of giving the people of Palestine an increasing part in the government of their country, the objective being to place Palestinians in charge of all the Departments of Government, with the assistance of British advisers and subject to the control of the High Commissioner.

[We omit details of the projected machinery of government—eds.]

(6) At the end of five years from the restoration of peace and order, an appropriate body representative of the people of Palestine and of His Majesty's Government will be set up to review the working of the constitutional arrangements during the transitional period and to . . . make recommendations regarding the Constitution of the independent Palestine State.

(7) His Majesty's Government will require . . . that . . . adequate provision has been made for:

(a) the security of, and freedom of access to, the Holy Places, and the protection of the interests and property of the various religious bodies.

(b) the protection of the different communities in Palestine in accordance with the obligations of His Majesty's Government to both Arabs and Jews and for the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home. . . .

II. IMMIGRATION

. . . It has been urged that all further Jewish immigration into Palestine should be stopped forthwith. His Majesty's Government cannot accept such a proposal. It would change the whole of the financial and economic system of Palestine and thus affect adversely the interests of Arabs and Jews alike. Moreover, in the view of His Majesty's Government, abruptly to stop further immigration would be unjust to the Jewish National Home. But, above all, His Majesty's Government are conscious of the present unhappy plight of large numbers of Jews who seek a refuge from certain European countries, and they believe that Palestine can and should make a further contribution to the solution of this pressing world problem. . . . [The Government offers] the following proposals regarding immigration.

(1) Jewish immigration during the next five years will be at a rate which, if economic absorptive capacity permits, will bring the Jewish population up to approximately one-third of the total population of the country. Taking into

account the expected natural increase of the Arab and Jewish populations, and the number of illegal Jewish immigrants now in the country, this would allow of the admission, as from the beginning of April this year, of some 75,000 immigrants over the next five years . . . subject to the criterion of economic absorptive capacity.

[We omit details of the rate of permissible Jewish immigration—eds.]

His Majesty's Government are satisfied that, when the immigration over five years . . . has taken place, they will not be justified in facilitating, nor will they be under any obligation to facilitate, the further development of [t]he Jewish National Home by immigration regardless of the wishes of the Arab population.

III. LAND

The Administration of Palestine is required, under Article 6 of the Mandate, "while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced," to encourage "close settlement by Jews on the land," and no restriction has been imposed hitherto on the transfer of land from Arabs to Jews. The Reports of several expert Commissions have indicated that, owing to the natural growth of the Arab population and the steady sale in recent years of Arab land to Jews, there is now in certain areas no room for further transfers of Arab land, whilst in some other areas such transfers of land must be restricted if Arab cultivators are to maintain their existing standard of life and a considerable landless Arab population is not soon to be created. In these circumstances, the High Commissioner will be given general powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land. These powers will date from the publication of this Statement of Policy and the High Commissioner will retain them throughout the transitional period.

The policy of the Government will be directed toward the development of the land and the improvement, where possible, of methods of cultivation. In the light of such development it will be open to the High Commissioner, should he be satisfied that the "rights and position" of the Arab population will be duly preserved, to review and modify any orders passed relating to the prohibition or restriction of the transfer of land.

D. The Biltmore Program (1942)*

David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, on a visit to New York City during the war in May 1942 for a conference of American Zionists, acted as the driving force behind the meeting at New York City's Biltmore Hotel, which issued this declaration. It reflected world Jewry's opposition to the British White Paper of

*Declaration adopted by the Extraordinary Zionist Conference, Biltmore Hotel, New York City, May 11, 1942, in Aaron S. Klieman and Adrian S. Kleiman, eds., *American Zionism: A Documentary History*, 15 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1990–1991), vol. 9, pp. 14–5.

1939 (part c, this Reading). This program called for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and open immigration for Jewish refugees seeking a haven from Nazi persecution and mass murder.

1. American Zionists assembled in this Extraordinary Conference reaffirm their unequivocal devotion to the cause of democratic freedom and international justice to which the people of the United States, allied with the other United Nations, have dedicated themselves, and give expression to their faith in the ultimate victory of humanity and justice over lawlessness and brute force.

2. This Conference offers a message of hope and encouragement to their fellow Jews in the Ghettos and concentration camps of Hitler-dominated Europe and prays that their hour of liberation may not be far distant.

3. The Conference sends its warmest greetings to . . . the . . . *Yishuv* in Palestine, and expresses its profound admiration for their steadfastness and achievements in the face of peril and great difficulties. The Jewish men and women in field and factory, and the thousands of Jewish soldiers of Palestine . . . who have acquitted themselves with honor and distinction . . . on [wartime] . . . battlefields, have shown themselves . . . ready to assume the rights and responsibilities of nationhood.

4. . . . In the course of the past twenty years, the Jewish people have awakened and transformed their ancient homeland . . . [and] their numbers [there] have increased to more than 500,000. They have made the waste places to bear fruit and the desert to blossom. Their pioneering achievements in agriculture and in industry, embodying new patterns of cooperative endeavor, have written a notable page in the history of colonization.

5. In the new values thus created, their Arab neighbors in Palestine have shared. The Jewish people in its own work of national redemption welcomes the economic, agricultural and national development of the Arab peoples and states. The Conference reaffirms the stand previously adopted at Congresses of the World Zionist Organization, expressing the readiness and the desire of the Jewish people for full cooperation with their Arab neighbors.

6. The Conference calls for the fulfillment of the original purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate which "*recognizing the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine*" was to afford them the opportunity, as stated by President Wilson, to found there a Jewish Commonwealth.

The Conference affirms its unalterable rejection of the White Paper of May 1939 and denies its moral or legal validity. The White Paper seeks to limit, and in fact to nullify Jewish rights to immigration and settlement in Palestine, and, as stated by Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons in May 1939, constitutes "a breach and repudiation of the Balfour Declaration." The policy of the White Paper is cruel and indefensible in its denial of sanctuary to Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution; and at a time when Palestine has become a focal point in the war front of the United Nations, and Palestine Jewry must provide all available manpower for farm and factory and camp, it is in direct conflict with the interests of the allied war effort.

7. In the struggle against the forces of aggression and tyranny, of which Jews were the earliest victims, and which now menace the Jewish National Home, recognition must be given to the right of the Jews of Palestine to play their full part in the war effort and in the defense of their country, through a Jewish military force fighting under its own flag and under the high command of the United Nations.

8. The Conference declares that the new world order that will follow victory cannot be established on foundations of peace, justice and equality, unless the problem of Jewish homelessness is finally solved.

The Conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.

Then and only then will the age-old wrong to the Jewish people be righted.

21. The Creation of the State of Israel

The first two selections in this reading, both United Nations General Assembly documents, reflect the international organization's historic role as the successor to the League of Nations. Soon after the end of World War II the British evacuated Palestine and turned the question over to the United Nations. Part a gives the 1947 UN majority resolution #181 recommending partition of Palestine into two states, which Arabs rejected and Zionists accepted—although they wanted more than the 55 percent of the land allotted to them. War for control of Palestine then broke out, during which, in 1948, Israel declared its statehood. Its victory over the Arabs led to an influx of nearly 700,000 Jewish refugees from Europe and the Muslim world and an outflow of more than that number of fleeing Arab Palestinians.

A year after the General Assembly proposed its partition plan, the organization issued Resolution #194, which called for an Arab "Right of Return" to post-mandate Palestine (see part b). But the fledgling UN had no power to enforce either of these resolutions, especially since Israel had determined to prevent Arabs who fled the war zones to return to their homes. These unresolved problems remain among the key issues more than a half-century later. So far the UN has proved as incapable as had the League of Nations in handling the Palestine question.

In 1950, the Israeli *Knesset* (parliament) passed its own Law of Return, which we reproduce in part c of this Reading.

A. UN General Assembly, the Partition Plan: Resolution #181 (1947)*

A majority of states in the UN General Assembly voted for this partition plan for Palestine on November 29, 1947. The resolution called for termination of the British mandate and the creation of two states: one Arab, the other Jewish (see Map p. 190). The city of Jerusalem was to enjoy special status under an international administration. Thirty-one countries voted in favor of this resolution (including both the United States and the Soviet Union). Seven countries voted against and sixteen abstained. The Zionists accepted the majority resolution, while the Arabs, who wanted a single state in Palestine dominated by the Arab majority, rejected it. Iran, India, and Yugoslavia offered another alternative at the time: one state in Palestine with Arab and Jewish zones.

The Termination of Mandate

The Mandate for Palestine shall terminate as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

The armed forces of the mandatory Power shall be progressively withdrawn from Palestine, the withdrawal to be completed as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

The mandatory Power shall advise the Commission, as far in advance as possible, of its intention to terminate the Mandate and to evacuate each area.

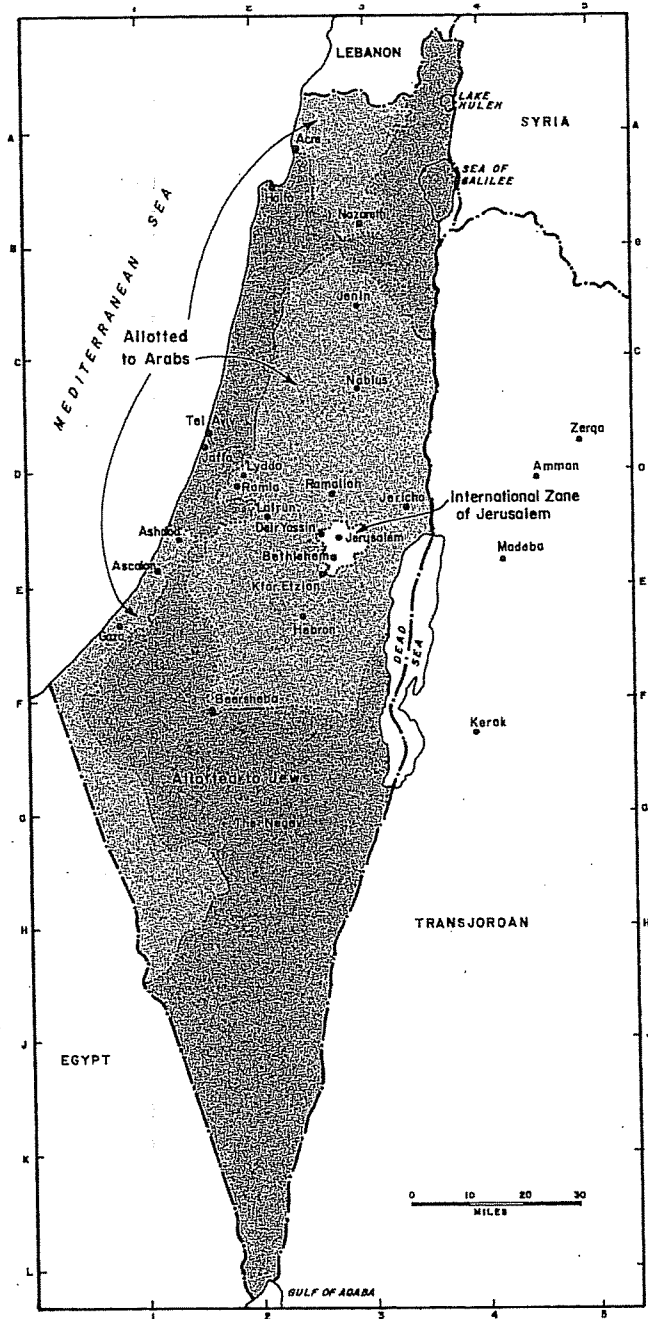
The mandatory Power shall use its best endeavors to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and in any event not later than 1 February 1948.

Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem . . . shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948. . . .

Jerusalem

The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* [separate body] under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority. . . . The City of Jerusalem shall include the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most southern, Bethlehem. . . .

*From United Nations General Assembly Resolution #181 (II) (November 29, 1947), *Official Records of the General Assembly*, Second Session, September/November, 1947. American spellings adopted.



United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, 1947

The Trusteeship Council shall, within five months of the approval of the present plan, elaborate and approve a detailed Statute of the City which shall contain *inter alia* the substance of the following provisions: *Government machinery; special objectives.* The Administering Authority in discharging its administrative obligations shall pursue the following special objectives:

(a) To protect and to preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the city of the three great monotheistic faiths throughout the world, Christian, Jewish and Muslim; to this end to ensure that order and peace, and especially religious peace, reign in Jerusalem;

(b) To foster cooperation among all the inhabitants of the city in their own interests as well as in order to encourage and support the peaceful development of the mutual relations between the two Palestinian peoples throughout the Holy Land; to promote the security, well-being and any constructive measures of development of the residents, having regard to the special circumstances [of the two] peoples and communities.

B. UN General Assembly, Palestinian Right of Return: Resolution #194 (1948)*

This reading presents portions of UN Resolution #194 that concern the Right of Return for Palestinians displaced from their residences after 1947, and omits sections dealing with Jerusalem and holy sites in Palestine. The portion retained here, along with a later UN Resolution on compensation for and resettlement of Palestinian refugees, has shaped all subsequent negotiations on the issue—as inconclusive as they have been.

Arabs and Israelis take sharply divergent positions on these matters. Palestinians wish to press these claims for compensation and resettlement, while every Israeli government until recently has rejected them on the grounds that the Jewish character of Israel would be undermined if they were to be granted. See part c of this Reading for the very different 1950 Jewish Law of Return.

The General Assembly, having considered . . . the situation in Palestine . . .

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with the neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

*From United Nations General Assembly Resolution #194 (III) (December 11, 1948), *Palestine: Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator*, UN Doc. A/810 (1948), pp. 21–25. American spellings adopted.

Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, and to maintain close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and, through him, with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations.

C. The Israeli *Knesset*, The Law of Return (1950, 1954, and 1970)*

Passed unanimously by the *Knesset* on July 5, 1950, and anticipated in the passage in the 1948 Proclamation of Independence stating that the "State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion," the Law of Return reflects the establishment of Israel as a sanctuary for Jews worldwide. The *Knesset* amended its original text in 1954 and again in 1970. We reproduce the latest version of the law.

Article 4B of this law has raised contention in Israel and in the Jewish Diaspora, for under the political arrangements of the new Jewish state responsibility for interpreting that portion of the law (who is a Jew?) has devolved upon the Orthodox rabbinate, who do not consider any conversions to Judaism as religiously valid unless done by them. This offended Jews of the Conservative and Reform persuasion in Israel and in the wider Diaspora, and especially in the United States. Israel's Supreme Court resolved part of the problem in February 2002 by ruling that the Israeli state must recognize conversions (and therefore accept immigrant converts under the Law of Return) supervised by Reform, Conservative, as well as Orthodox rabbis. Within Israel, however, the Orthodox establishment retains exclusive control over marriages, divorces, and burials, and still discriminates against non-Orthodox converts.

1. Every Jew has the right to immigrate to this country.
2. (a) Immigration shall be by immigrant's visa.
(b) An immigrant's visa shall be given to every Jew who has expressed his desire to settle in Israel, unless the Minister of Immigration is satisfied that the applicant:
 - (1) is engaged in an activity directed against the Jewish people; or
 - (2) is liable to endanger public health or the security of the State; or
 - (3) is a person with a criminal past liable to endanger public welfare.
3. (a) A Jew who comes to Israel and subsequently expresses his desire to settle may, whilst still in Israel, receive an immigrant's certificate. . .

*From John Norton Moore, ed., *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Readings and Documents*, abridged and revised ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 991-92, an unofficial translation. By permission.

4. Every Jew who migrated to this country before the commencement of this Law and every Jew born in the country, whether before or after the commencement of this Law, is in the same position as one who immigrated under this law.
- 4A. (a) The rights of a Jew under this Law, the rights of an immigrant under the Nationality Law, 1952 and the rights of an immigrant under any other legislation are also granted to the child and grandchild of a Jew and to the spouse of the child and grandchild of a Jew—with the exception of a person who was a Jew and willingly changed his religion.
(b) It makes no difference whether or not the Jew through whom a right is claimed under sub-section (a) is still alive or whether or not he has immigrated to this country. . .
- 4B. For the purpose of this Law, "a Jew" means a person born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion.
5. The Minister of Interior is charged with the implementation of this Law and may make regulations as to any matter relating to its implementation and as to the grant of immigrant's visas and certificates to minors up to the age of 18.

~~22. Arab Assertions: Out of Despair Revived Nationalism~~

~~The Arabs' catastrophic military defeat in 1967 sent shock waves through the Middle East. The following decade, filled with political upheavals, also opened a period of unprecedented self-criticism and the call for radical change in the Arab world. Nizar Qabbani (1923-98) from Damascus, one of the most revered Arab poets, led the way, holding nothing back in scathing condemnation of past Arab errors in part a of this Reading. Three years prior to the 1967 war, the Palestine National Council (PNC), which for decades has served as the Palestinian parliament in exile, first adopted the document in part b of this Reading, the Palestine National Charter. As a body the PNC incorporated representatives from various sectors of Palestinian society, armed groups, and the political and civic organizations, which constitute the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PNC amended this charter once in 1968 before its 1996 special meeting in which more than five hundred delegates by more than a two-thirds vote opted to change the charter at a future date to include a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.~~