

Canada's Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israel Conflict

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By

Kamaran M.K. Mondal

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PREFACE

Canada is a liberal democratic country. Promoting and working through international organisations and protecting human rights and values abroad are the guiding principles of Canada's foreign policy. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is revered for many reasons. His acceptance of refugees and other humanitarian activities are well known but at the same time he has been criticised over some other issues, particularly the issue of the Arab-Israel conflict. It is notable that during his tenure Canada has abstained from voting in UN resolutions favouring Palestinian rights, or declaring Israeli settlement as a violation of international law.

The present monograph is a modest attempt to describe and analyse Canada's evolving foreign policy towards the Arab-Israel conflict. Evidently, both external and domestic factors have shaped Canada's approach, and these include, for instance, Canada's status as the British dominion, alliance relationship within NATO and, among domestic factors, religio-cultural understanding of Canadian political elite and the influence of its Jewish population on public opinion and policy formulation, etc. This book focusses on Canada's understanding, perception and foreign policy behavior in particular towards the creation of the state of Israel, Arab-Israel wars and various Arab-Israel peace processes.

This book is organised into six chapters: (i) Canada and History of the Arab-Israel Conflict; (ii) Canada and the War and Conflict between Arabs and Israel; (iii) Canada and the Arab-Israel Peace Process; (iv) A Stateless People: The Palestinian Refugees and the Refugee Policy of Canada; (v) Canadian Foreign Policy in the Middle East: A Twisted History; and (vi) Canada's Middle Power Position in the Arab-Israel Conflict: Acting Mid-wife to Israel and a Nurse to Palestine.

Chapter I delineates, in two separate sections, the historical background of the Arab-Israel conflict; and Canada's involvement in the conflict ever since the Palestine issue came before the United Nations. For the purpose of a better comprehension, the first section is sub-divided into three subsections: (i) Balfour Declaration as a bone of contention between Arabs and Jews; (ii) Jewish immigration and land acquisition in Palestine; and (iii) British partition plan and Second World War as another factor of the Arab-Israel conflict. The second section deals with Canada's role in the Arab-Israel conflict. Canada, as a member of the 11-member United

Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), voted to support the majority report for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, which ultimately led to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. The existence of the state of Israel in the midst of surrounding Arab states became the major source of conflict between the Arabs and the Jews.

Chapter II discusses Canada's support to the UN General Assembly resolution on the First Arab-Israel War of 1948. In 1948, Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq invaded Israel, and were defeated by a militarily superior Israel. The chapter also describes in a separate section Canada's support to the 1949 Armistice agreement, which was a temporary ceasefire agreement, and not a final peace agreement, that occurred among Israel and its four Arab neighbours. The Chapter continues to describe and analyse the genesis and nature of the Suez Canal crisis of 1956 and the development of the UN peace-keeping force, which allowed Canadian diplomacy a chance to resolve the conflict resulting from the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression of the Suez Canal.

While building an understanding and analysis of Canada's support to Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israel wars, a separate section identifies the changes and shifts, and the reasons thereof in Canada's policy towards the Arab-Israel conflict. This chapter also looks at the role of Canada in UN Peace-keeping process in the Middle East.

While looking at Canadian perception, policy, and initiatives like peace-keeping, the chapter also looks into military and strategic dimensions of the state of Israel; its military programme based on a reserve system, which permits a reduction of armed forces during normal time and rapid expansion through popular mobilisation at the time of emergency; and the annexation of West Bank, Jerusalem, Sinai Peninsula and Syrian Gola Heights after the 1967 war and its demographic consequence in the form of a large Arab population that came to live under Israeli sovereignty. The resultant demographic change raised the question about the multiethnic character of Israel as a nation, and the nature of Jewish nationalism and its religious orientation.

Chapter III examines aspects of the peace process in the Middle East and the challenges and hurdles in the path of an enduring peace. Spread over seven sections, some of the issues the chapter discusses are: Arab-Israel peace negotiations and agreements; Palestine-Israel peace process in the 1990s and Canada's role in it especially in the Refugee Working Group (RWG) as well as Canada's 'Track -II' initiative; and Canada's response to the Arab-Israel peace process in late 1990s and 2000s. The chapter discusses and briefly describes the Arab-Israel peace process from the period of Armistice Agreements of 1949 to the first

Egypt-Israel treaty at Camp David in 1979. Camp David has generally been construed as the milestone in building peace in the Middle East: Egypt was the first Arab country to recognise Israel, and it opened the path for the establishment of relations between Israel and many other countries. The more contemporaneous Arab-Israel peace process of the 1990s like, the Oslo I and II Accords, was also historic in terms of its consequences; the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the first time recognised the state of Israel, albeit in its pre-1967 form. In turn, Israel and the Western world recognised the PLO as the only representative of the Palestinians. In consequence, a Palestinian Authority came to be established in 1994. But a sovereign Palestine state, with international recognition, is yet to be established.

Canada's direct contribution to the Arab-Israel peace process was limited; but the country has been more active and influential through multilateral process, especially through the Refugee Working Group (RWG). It indicates that Canada remains engaged in the Arab-Israel peace process, because, the Palestinian refugees are the direct product of the Palestine-Israel conflict in particular and Arab-Israel conflict in general, and the RWG has emerged as a part of the broad Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). Canada's role in the RWG has been discussed in detail, which includes humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees who are living in the refugee camps. The second significant issue the chapter highlights is Canada's 'Track II' Initiative in 1997, the activities of which are collectively known as the 'Ottawa Process'. During the period from 1995 to 2000, Canada supported a very broad and extensive range of research and dialogue projects on the refugee issue, be it through IDRC, CIDA, or through dialogue funds controlled by Canadian diplomatic missions in the region. Despite its drawbacks, the Ottawa process had the greatest impact on the official Arab-Israel negotiation process. Canada's views on the so-called 'apartheid wall' or Israel's disengagement policy and Palestinian factions have also been discussed.

The next chapter, Chapter IV, deals mainly with Canada's refugee policy. After a brief discussion of the issue of Palestinian refugees under the international law and their conditions in refugee camps, run by the UNRWA, a whole section has been dedicated to Canada's refugee policy. Canada has a robust immigration policy and programme; the country needs immigrants to work the economy and fill its demographic needs. Refugee policy is part of the larger immigration policy and outlook, and admittedly, has gone through various phases and preferences for refugees from different countries and regions. A policy of refugee intake per year as a separate category along with immigrants was created formally only since

the Immigration Act of 1976. Before that, Canada's continuing and sometimes intense involvement with persons who immigrate as refugees required the special action of the federal government. Such political urgencies were considered as non-recurring issues.

The present policy is based on the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) of 2002 that introduced a private sponsorship system. Canada's refugee policy is determined by the recommendations of international agencies like the UNHCR, federal provinces capacity to accept the refugees, and private sponsorship system. The Middle East countries are the major producers of refugees, although their number in Canada is not significant. Various issues and challenges of their inland claimant process and settlement in Canada have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter V focusses on various dimensions of Canada's foreign policy towards the Middle East. Divided into five parts, the first section examines the influence of the Canadian Jewish community on the government's policy perception and choices, along with whatever limited influence Canadian Arabs have been able to exercise. The second part discusses Canada's economic and commercial interests in the Middle East, and the discernible shift in its policy that came in the wake of the Arab oil embargo in 1973. It is also argued that Canada's economic and political compulsions made it reverse the decision to shift its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. A separate section discusses Canada's arms sale to Israel, while another section looks into the changing foreign policy dynamics towards the Middle East. The final section describes Justin Trudeau's policy approach towards Palestine and Israel, including Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA).

A key aspect of the present study is that it describes Canadian policy as much more nuanced and balanced during the period between the 1980s and the early 2000s. Canada was among those countries that championed the resolution of the conflict. This reflected a change in Canadian perception in as much as it was the recognition of the heightened activism on the part of the Palestinian movements, and the Arab world in general. The shift was more noticeable under the Liberal governments of Jean Chretien and Paul Martin. Canada tilted away greatly in favour of Israel under the Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006-15) who subscribed to 'neo-Conservatism'. Canada sided with Israel when the latter invaded Lebanon in 2006, and explained away the bombing of the civilian population as 'collateral' damage. Further, Canada was one of the first countries to cut its aid to the Palestine Authority after *Hamas* won the local legislative elections in 2006.

The study employs an eclectic approach focussing in particular on historical and comparative methodologies for studying and developing this subject. For the sake of uniformity, the term Middle East, rather than West Asia or the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), has been used throughout the book.

At the outset, I would like to express my profound sense of gratitude to Prof. Abdul Nafey (M.Phil & Ph.D Supervisor, Jawaharlal Nehru University) for his affectionate guidance. Writing a book is a long journey, and without his constant encouragement, dedicated effort, and morale-boosting, this work would not have attained its final shape. I am immensely grateful to him. I am obliged to thank Professor Harish C. Mehta (Canada), Dr. Archana Ojha (Delhi University), Dr. Sheetal Sharma (Jawaharlal Nehru University), and my friend Professor Afroz Alam (Moulana Azad National Urdu University), who are always with me in every moment, with their moral support.

My wife Israt Jahan Islam and our daughter Rifa Najnin Mondal and son Rayan Mondal are my major source of inspiration to keep me continuing in this work. Nothing would have been possible without the sacrifices of my parents. They went through very tough times to get me educated. My father, Moulana Forkan Ahmed Mondal, who is no more, had always wanted me to excel in education. My mother, Rajia Bibi brought me up so that I could be a good human being and a devout person. This book is a humble dedication to my parents.

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CHAPTER I

CANADA AND HISTORY OF THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT

The introductory chapter focuses on, in a sense, the basic framework of the entire research monograph. It is all about Canada's historical understanding and perception of the creation of Israel and the genesis of the Arab-Israel conflict; more important, the monograph examines Canadian engagements with the conflict in terms of its foreign policy principles and practices as well as domestic societal and political dynamics such as the presence of an active and vocal Jewish community in Canada. The chapter presents a larger framework of research that includes research objectives; hypotheses; research methodology and the organisational schema of the chapters.

Canada's involvement in the Middle East¹ can be found in particular since the UN decision to partition Palestine in 1947 into a separate state of Israel and another for the Palestinian Arabs. Canada, as a member of the 11-member United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), had voted to support the majority report for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states that ultimately led to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

Canada's engagement in the Middle East has been political, humanitarian and military in character; and became particularly prominent especially since the Suez Canal crisis of 1956. In the years following the Madrid peace conference of 1991, Canada has played a more notable role in the Refugee Working Group (RWG). Canada is better known for its humanitarian activities in the refugee camps in the Middle East, where more than 5 million refugees live in. Canada has also resettled Palestinian refugees in Canada, though their number is very less, within the framework of Canada's refugee policy.

1 Middle East, West Asia and Arab-Israel region are used interchangeably to denote Palestine and its neighbouring area.

The UN resolution that partitioned Palestine and created a 'homeland' for the Jews of the world sowed the seeds of one of the most enduring and violent conflict that still defies any settlement. The state of Israel was created in 1948, when 56 per cent of the territory was given to the Jews who constituted 37 per cent of the population. The majority Arab population understandably rejected it, and an independent Palestine state never came into existence. The creation of the State of Israel in the midst of large Arab, dominantly of Muslim populations, which became states, has left several issues unresolved till date. Thus, at the initial level, it is necessary to deal with the history of the Arab-Israel conflict.

Palestine and the Genesis of the Arab-Israel Conflict

What one understands of the state of Palestine today is West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is about 5,997 square kilometers (2,315 square miles) which are not contiguous. It is surrounded and tightly contained by Israel from both the sea and the land, and remains largely under Israel's direct military control. There have been several numerous clashes, conflicts, violence, and even wars and massacre of civilians in this territory.

These particular territories were under the Ottoman Empire; and during the First World War, they fell under British rule which controlled these territories till the Second World War. After the Second World War, this area was partitioned through the United Nations partition plan between Jews and Arabs. The UN partition plan of 1947, particularly the UN General Assembly Resolution 181, was accepted by the Jews, and on that basis the UN created a state of Israel for the Jews (Hibbard 2012: 2). For this purpose, Israel fought against its Arab neighbours and in this process, seven hundred thousand Palestinians fled or were expelled; and they scattered as refugees. The Arabs did not accept the UN partition plan. In the conflict with Israel, the Arabs lost their land and became refugees mostly surviving even today in the refugee camps. In other words, for the Arabs, it is *Al-Nakba*.² It means the catastrophe and the end of the homeland. They use the word *Al-Nakba* to express their sense of bottomless loss (Shabaneh 2012: 21).

Israel gradually occupied most of the Palestinian areas during the creation of the state of Israel, and further during the 1948 war with its

2 The term *Al-Nakba* ("the catastrophe") was first coined by Constantine Zurayk, a Syrian scholar, who published his well-known book *The Meaning of the Disaster* (1956) after the Arab defeat in 1948. *Al-Nakba* has been used since to refer to the exodus of more than 700,000 refugees in 1948 as a result of the creation of the State of Israel.

Arab neighbours. Israel also occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights during the Six-Day War in 1967. Israel began building settlements in the occupied territories, which are regarded as illegal under international law. In sum, Palestinian Arabs have been marginalized and confined in their own lands where they had been residing for centuries. The Jewish settlements, and Israel's control over the roads and lands that strategically connect them have left Palestinians into a painful position in which normal life and travel are restricted and sometimes rendered impossible.

In response to the sufferings they were passing through, the most eventful was the Palestinian uprising, which became known as the *Intifada* or 'uprising' that started in 1987 and lasted till 1992. On the Palestinian side, the first *Intifada* was more of a civilian disobedience and, at worst, stone-throwing than any armed uprising. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) used cannon fire, missiles and aerial bombs in the densely packed towns and refugee camps. Palestinian orchards and agricultural lands were dug up, and settlers damaged olive groves. Palestinians were collectively subjected to long periods of military quarantine in their villages and homes. They were poured into jail where they were kept indefinitely without charge or trial. Again, the second Palestinian *Intifada* began in September 2000 which lasted till January 2007; and the IDF also suppressed that. This time, more than five thousand Palestinians and Israelis died, and thousands more were wounded (Martin 2010: 197).

Israel began building a 703 kilometre barrier³ in and around the Occupied West Bank in 2002 as the only way to defend against suicide bombings by Palestinians which shook the country in the years of the *Intifada*, which began in 2000. After years of unrelenting bloodshed and extensive reporting by the international media, Israel unilaterally evacuated its settlements from the Gaza Strip and four more small towns in the northern West Bank in 2005. Israel may not regard the unilateral Gaza pullout and the wall or fence as a perfect solution, but saw the moves as the beginning of a vital separation from the Palestinians. The disengagement, however, did not bring peace; Palestinian suicide bombings and rocket attacks and Israeli military incursions and assassinations continued to claim lives. There have been several attempts to have peace between Israel and Palestinians as well as among Israel and its neighbouring states. For instance, the Oslo accord in the 1990s was important because it was for the

3 In July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared that the barrier was illegal and construction should be immediately halted, but Israel said it would not abide by what was an advisory ruling by the ICJ.

first time Israel and Palestinians signed this accord. But all the accords or peace processes have failed to bring permanent peace in the region.

Internal political dynamics within the Palestinians are also complex and conflictual. These are beside the Palestine-Israel conflict and the larger Arab-Israel conflict. Since the post-Oslo accord of the early 1990s, Palestine was controlled by the largest of the Palestinian representative political organisation i.e. *Al-Fatah*. But in January 2006, the more radical and Islamist party, the *Hamas*, which is not recognized by the International community, got the majority in Palestinian parliamentary elections. Both *Hamas* and *Fatah* formed the Unity government. The US, the European Union, and Israel tried to force the collapse of the Unity government by imposing crippling sanctions on the Palestinian Authority (PA) making it impossible for the PA to pay the salaries of teachers, health workers and other civil servants. The sanctions worsened poverty and aggravated the internal political crisis. Palestine hovered on the edge of civil war. In the end, *Hamas* controlled Gaza Strip, and *Fatah* controlled West Bank. Beneath the destabilizing chaos of 2006 and 2007, however, fundamental facts had not changed. Israel did not stop its settlement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Extremist elements on both sides claimed title to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (Winslow 2007: xiv-xv).

The conflict has been described variously as the 'Jewish-Arab' conflict, the 'Zionist-Arab' conflict, or the 'Arab-Israeli' conflict. When one is calling the 'Jewish-Arab' conflict, one is mentioning the Jewish people as a whole against the Arab people. When one refers to the term Zionist, it refers to belief in and support to the quest by Jews to return to Zion (i.e., Jerusalem and the Holy Land) and it also implies the support for the creation of a Jewish state over those territories. Applying this definition, before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the present book is dealing with the 'Zionist-Arab' or 'Zionist-Palestinian' conflict. Discussions from 1948 to 1973 are about the wider 'Arab-Israeli' conflict. In the period since 1973, and more so since 1993, the conflict is seen as a narrower 'Israeli-Palestinian' (Arabs of Palestine) conflict for sovereignty and self-determination on the same territory.

Scholars refer to Jews as a people comprising many ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups, but having a common identity characterised by features such as, belief in Judaism, a monotheistic faith harking back to the Biblical land of Israel; a biological lineage, i.e., being born to a Jewish mother; and/or unifying socio-cultural sentiment of sharing a common ancestry, traditions, customs, heritage and future. Given these complexities, even the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) could not establish a universally

accepted simple definition of ‘Who is a Jew?’. In 2008, there were an estimated 13.2 million Jews in the world, of whom 5.4 million lived in Israel, 5.3 million in the USA and between 1 and 1.5 million in Europe (Caplan 2010: 17-18). Arabs can be defined as an ethno-national group with common cultural and linguistic roots emanating from ancient tribes in Arabian Peninsula. They are mostly Muslims. According to 2006-07 estimate, there were some 8 million Palestinians spread out in the region. 1.4 million inhabitants of Gaza (of whom 1 million are registered refugees) and 2.5 million inhabitants of the West Bank (of whom 760,000 are registered refugees), constitute the population of the Palestinian National Authority or Palestinian Authority (PA). Besides, there are 2.83 million refugees in 31 camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and also dispersed throughout the cities of the Middle East. Further, there are 1.45 million citizens of the state of Israel, descendants of those Palestinians who resided in the areas that became the Jewish state in 1948 (Caplan 2010: 4-5, 19).

However, the conflict between Arabs and Jews is a prolonged one, and there are several events that caused the conflict. The history of the Arab-Israel conflict can be divided into three parts: (i) Balfour Declaration as a bone of contention between the Arabs and the Jews; (ii) Jewish immigration, land acquisition in Palestine and communal factor as the root cause of conflict; and (iii) British partition plan and the Second World War as another factor behind the Arab-Israel conflict.

(i) Balfour Declaration and a “National Home” for the Jewish People

When the Ottoman Empire decided to enter the First World War, as an ally of the Axis power like German, it prompted Britain, France, and Russia to plan for the partition of Ottoman territories in the event of an Allied victory. When the Ottoman Empire⁴ was defeated during the First World War, the area known as Palestine fell under the British rule. During the Ottoman era, the Palestinian area was regarded as part of southern Syria and divided between the provinces of Beirut and Damascus, and the special administrative unit of Jerusalem. The British captured Jerusalem in December 1917, detached the Palestinian area from Ottoman rule, and placed it under British military occupation from 1917 to 1920. After two

4 The British pledge to Sharif Husayn of Mecca and the Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain and France constituted two of the principal proposals for dividing the Ottoman Empire among the Allies.

years it was replaced by a British civilian administration that continued till the end of the Second World War, when Britain handed over the Palestinian issue to the United Nations for a solution (Cleveland 2009: 243 and Shatara 1932: 181).

How did it come to the British mind that this British mandated Palestine will be the home for the Jews and ultimately be a 'State of Israel'? Several factors brought the question of Zionism⁵ to the attention of the British cabinet.

It is argued that the Jewish cause was aided not only by the institutions established within the mandate system but also by political and financial support from individuals and organisations operating outside Palestine. The most influential contacts between Zionism and the British officials were those maintained by Chaim Weizmann, who became the president of the World Zionist Organization⁶ (WZO) in 1920. The First Zionist Congress was convened in Basel in 1897 and attended by over 200 delegates who established the World Zionist Organization as the central administrative organ of the Zionist movement.

Another source of outside support was provided by elements of the Jewish community in the US. The Zionist Organization of America was founded in 1917, under the leadership of Louis Brandeis, a noted lawyer who later became an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the

5 Modern political Zionism focussing on Palestine originated in Russia. The scattered Jewish groups in Palestine were organised under a central coordinating agency and took the name the Lovers of Zion. During the 1880s and 1890s, the Lovers of Zion sponsored small agricultural settlements in Palestine, but it suffered from lack of funds and the settlements were not very successful. Yet it has assumed a prominent place in the historical consciousness of modern Israelis, and is regarded as the first of several waves of settlement that contributed to the eventual creation of the state of Israel. In his booklet *Auto-emancipation* (1891), Leo Pinsker argued that anti-Semitism was so deeply embedded in European society that Jews would never be treated as equals. His call for action was appealing to young Russian Jews, and in the 1890s, a variety of Zionist organisations emerged, each with its own solution to the problems of Jewish identity and persecution. At that stage Zionism was an uncoordinated movement without direction.

6 Theodor Herzl's experience as a journalist and correspondent in various Western European cities convinced him that anti-Semitism was such a deeply rooted prejudice that it could never be eliminated by legislation. Driven by this belief, Herzl wrote *The Jewish State* (1896) which provided the ideological basis for political Zionism. *The Jewish State* had an electrifying effect on East European Jewry and provided Zionism with a clearly stated political objective, which led to the establishment of WZO.

United States. After this event, the Zionists became a factor in the US political life. In the late 1930s, US representatives played an important role in the deliberations of the World Zionist Organization, and private contributions from the United States made up a significant portion of the funds donated to the Zionist cause. With the rise of the United States to global power during the Second World War, American Jews played a vital role in shaping the outcome of the Palestine conflict (Wilson 1972:65).

The existence of a certain and deliberate sympathy within the cabinet towards the religious and humanitarian aspects of Zionism and the chance to secure British strategic interests interacted to produce a British declaration in support of Zionist objectives in Palestine. On 2 November 1917, the British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a letter to Lord Rothschild, a prominent figure in British Zionist circles⁷, to inform the latter that the cabinet had approved the following declaration of sympathy for Jewish Zionist aspirations:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country (Stein 1961, cited in Newport 2014: 58).

The Zionists interpreted the term 'National Home' to mean a Jewish state, and they expected the British administration to cooperate in the creation of such a state. In the Balfour Declaration, Britain had also pledged to uphold the rights and privileges of the 'existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine', referring to the 668,258 Arab inhabitants who constituted over 85 per cent of the population by that time. This was the duty of equal obligation, and later it became the insoluble contradiction between the Arabs and the Jews (Cleveland 2009: 245).

The San Remo Conference awarded Britain the Class 'A' Mandate over Palestine⁸, and the British military administration was

7 The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was a letter from the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland which stated that statement.

8 Since the Mandates differed according to the stage of the development of the people, the physical situation of the territory, its economic conditions, and other similar circumstances, three categories of Mandates were established. Class 'A' Mandates included the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire — Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq. 'Class 'B' Mandates, which referred to

replaced by a civilian administration in July 1920. Two years later, the newly created League of Nations provided formal sanction to the Mandate, and the terms of the League mandate incorporated the Balfour Declaration and recognised Hebrew as an official language in Palestine. Strictly speaking, it was a Mandate for Palestine and Trans-Jordan where the British Government separated the administration of Palestine from that of Trans-Jordan which made the Jordan River the effective eastern boundary of modern Palestine. The Class 'A' Mandate for Palestine made Britain legally responsible for developing Palestine economically, socially, and politically to the point where sovereignty could be handed over to its people and the country could gain its independence⁹ (Biger 1981: 158-59 and Hadawi 1991: 46).

During those years, bloody clashes periodically erupted between the Arabs and the Jews. Britain sought to reconcile the conflicting aspirations of Zionists and Arabs and facilitated discussions between Weizmann and Faysal of Syria, a leading Arab personality. In an agreement in 1919, Weizmann pledged that the Jewish community would cooperate with the Arabs in the economic development of Palestine. In return, Faysal would recognise the Balfour Declaration and consent to Jewish immigration, provided that the rights of the Palestinian Arabs were protected, and the Arab demands for the independence of Greater Syria including Palestine were recognised. The agreement was nullified by the fact that Faysal did not achieve the independence he sought, and the

former African colonies of the German Empire, included: Cameroon, Togoland, the Tanganyika territory, and Ruanda-Urundi. Class 'C' Mandates referred to Far East territories, which included the islands of Nauru, New Guinea, and Western Samoa.

9 There was no formally recognised body of Arab representatives empowered to present the Palestinian Arab case to the high commissioner, whereas Zionist access to British authority was sanctioned by the terms of the mandate which authorised the formation of a public body to consult with the mandatory government on matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish national home. To fulfill this function, the World Zionist Organization created the Palestine Zionist Executive in 1921, and was reorganised as the Jewish Agency in 1929. The chairman of the Jewish Agency had regular access to the high commissioner and other British officials. Jewish communal affairs were conducted through a hierarchy of representative organisations. The national assembly constituted in 1920 was an elected body of some 300 delegates, who selected from among themselves the members of the national council or Vaad Leumi. The council was empowered to make administrative decisions on behalf of the Jewish community, and was treated by the mandate government as the legitimate representative of Palestinian Jewish.

Palestinian Arab peasants and tenant farmers were not protected in their rights as the agreement stipulated.

Sir Herbert Samuel, who himself was a Jew and was appointed as Britain's first High Commissioner to Palestine, asked the Colonial Office to issue a statement clarifying the intent of the Balfour Declaration. Samuel believed that the Arab unrest and their opposition to the Balfour Declaration were based upon a misunderstanding of its implications (MacCallum 1929: 278, cited in Newport 2014: 115-16). On 3 June 1922, responding to Samuel's request and in an attempt to clarify Britain's plans in Palestine, Winston Churchill, the colonial secretary, outlined to the House of Commons, his ministry's policy regarding the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate. Churchill's memorandum, commonly referred to as the Churchill White Paper of 1922, served as the basis for Britain's Palestine policy during most of the 1920s. To placate the Arab community, the White Paper stated that the development of a Jewish national home did not mean the imposition of Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole. However, it also conceded certain Zionist demands by declaring that the Jewish people had a right to be in Palestine. In other words, Palestine as a whole should not be converted into a Jewish national home, but such a home should be founded in Palestine. The White Paper intended to remove the ambiguities contained in the Balfour Declaration; it failed to do so. The High Commissioner Samuel also proposed several schemes for the development of a unitary state, but they went in vain¹⁰ (Hadawi 1991: 16, 51).

Talat (1981), the Crown Prince of Jordan, argued that when the Balfour declaration was announced on 2 November 1917, Palestine was not under the British control. It was the moment when it became apparent that the British invasion of Palestine looked like being successful. It was only at the San Remo meeting of the Supreme War Council in April 1920 that the mandate for Palestine was allocated to 'His Britannic Majesty'. The Palestine mandate was confirmed by the League of Nations which came into force in September 1922 (Talat 1981: 28). Caplan (2010) has also mentioned the problematic aspects of the Balfour Declaration. In the Balfour Declaration, a positive commitment to the Zionist state was

10 One of his proposals was to create a legislative council composed of elected Muslim, Christian and Jewish representatives along with eleven members nominated by the high commissioner. The Arab leaders rejected the plan as they would not serve in any constitutional government that did not annul the Balfour Declaration. Samuel then attempted to form an advisory council consisting of ten Arab and two Jewish representatives nominated by the high commissioner. This proposal also failed, as the Arab nominees were pressured into refusing to serve.

conditioned by a negative injunction, not to harm the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population of Palestine. He also pointed out that the resident population was not referred to as Arabs or as Palestinians, but rather as non-Jewish, and that only their civil and religious rights, not the political or national rights, would be safeguarded.

In trying to administer Palestine, Britain was caught between the rising ambitions and expectations of the Zionists who claimed Palestine as theirs by historical right and Balfour's pledge¹¹, and the Arabs of Palestine and Syria, who claimed Palestine by right of possession and Mc Mohan's promise¹² - two rival peoples and nationalisms. The British Mandatory authorities had an impossible task before them: to reconcile two apparently opposed movements and to govern, in one territory, two disparate communities bitterly distrustful of each other. Caplan (2010) argued that the British commitment to the Jews as well as to the Arabs was inconsistent with each other (Caplan 2010: 57-58).

(ii) The Jewish Immigration to Palestine and the Question of Land Acquisition

Jewish immigration and land acquisition in Palestine was an important reason contributing to the Arab-Israel conflict. The first wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine took place before the First World War. Later, from 1919 to 1923, about 30,000 immigrants, mainly from Eastern Europe; and, from 1924 to 1926, an additional 50,000 immigrants, mostly from Poland, landed in Palestine. The number of immigrants increased in

11 In November 1917 in an effort to win favour among Zionists in Britain, the US and perhaps even in Germany, the British Cabinet issued the Balfour Declaration. This was part of a letter written by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild in which Balfour declared that British policy aimed at "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". This support was given with the qualification that nothing would be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

12 In an attempt to gain Arab support for the war against Turkey – an ally of Germany and Austria – Britain had made promises to the Arabs in the fall of 1915, which aimed to fulfill Arab demands for independence. The pledges were made in a series of letters between Sharif Hussain of Mecca and Sir Henry Mc Mohan, the British High Commissioner in Egypt. Mc Mohan acting for the British government, tried to persuade Hussain to lead his Arab followers in a revolt against the Turks. Hussain was willing as long as Britain guaranteed independence to the Arabs after the Turks had been defeated. He sought British guarantee and it was given.

1933 when the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party forced many Jews to leave Germany and central Europe. From 1933 to 1937, a huge influx of about 170,000 Jews came to Palestine – suddenly doubling the size of the Jews (Caplan 2010: 24-25).

Table 1.1. The Population of Palestine by Ethnic Group, 1931–1946

Year	Arab	%	Jewish	%	Other	%	Total
1931	864,806	82	174,139	16	18,269	2	1,057,601
1936	983,244	71	382,857	28	22,751	2	1,388,852
1941	1,123,168	68	489,830	30	26,758	2	1,639,756
1946	1,310,866	67	599,922	31	31,562	2	1,942,350

(Source: Cleveland William L. and Martin Bunton (2009), *A History of the Modern Middle East, Fourth Edition*, USA: Westview Press, p. 255).

Table 1.1 shows that from 1931 to 1946, the Arab population grew from around 864,806 to 1,310,866. Still, the Arabs constituted two-thirds majority when the UN was called upon to recommend a plan for the future of the contested lands. During the same period, the size of the Jewish community increased in Palestine from 174,139 in 1931 to 599,922 in 1946. By 1947, there were between 600,000 and 650,000 Jews in the country, representing a ten-fold increase from the pre-World War I total. In a region of limited agricultural potential, the ownership of arable land became a matter of contention and survival (Caplan 2010: 26).

To settle the Jewish immigrants, it was necessary to acquire as much cultivable land as possible. Organisations like the Jewish National Fund¹³ usually acquired land by purchasing it from absentee Arab owners. The first and largest such purchase under the ‘Mandate’ was from the *Sursock* family of Beirut which sold 50,000 acres of land in the fertile Jezreel Valley to the Jewish National Fund in 1920. But even leading Palestinian families, attracted by the high prices the Zionists were willing to pay, sold cultivable land to agents of the Jewish National Fund or other Zionist purchasing organisations. By 1939, some 5 per cent of the total land area under the Mandate, which made up approximately 10 per cent of the total cultivable land, was Jewish-owned¹⁴ (Cleveland 2009: 255).

13 The Jewish National Fund leased the purchased land exclusively to Jews at a nominal rate. It also provided capital for improvements and equipment, a practice that enabled impoverished immigrants to engage in agricultural pursuits immediately upon arriving in Palestine.

14 Of the various organisations formed to generate self-sufficiency within the Yishuv (the name of the Jewish community in Palestine before 1948) the most

British taxation policy, which required direct cash payments in place of the customary Ottoman payment in kind, forced peasant farmers to borrow funds at high rates of interest from local moneylenders who were frequently the large landholders. Sometimes they were compelled to sell their lands to the Zionists to pay tax to the British authorities. In one instance, the Jewish land broker stepped in and over 40,000 acres, comprising 18 villages were sold, resulting in the eviction of 688 Arab agricultural families. The cumulative effect of land transfers, British policy and the attitude of the Arab landholders was the increasing impoverishment and marginalisation of the Palestinian Arab peasantry who expressed their discontent in outbreaks of violence against all the three parties (Hadawi 1991: 48).

Communal violence like the Wailing Wall disturbance of 1929 and the great revolt of 1936–1939 were directly related to the dislocations caused by the Jewish immigration and land acquisition by the Jews in Palestine. In 1929, violence revolved around a dispute over the Jewish right of access to the remains of the Western, or Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Jews regarded the Wall as a holy site and had gone there for centuries to pray. Muslims also had deep religious attachments to the Wall and its immediate surroundings, as it formed the western abutment of the *Haram al-Sharif* (the holy sanctuary) that contained the Dome of the Rock and *Al-Aqsa* mosque, which was associated with the Islamic belief of Prophet Muhammad's journey to the heaven. At the time of the Mandate, the Wall was designated as *Waqf* and was thus under the Muslim jurisdiction. A year of claims and counterclaims over the status of the Wall led to violent confrontations in August 1929, during which Arab mobs, provoked by Jewish demonstrations, attacked two Jewish quarters in Jerusalem, and killed Jews in the towns of Hebron and Safad. By the time the British forces quelled the riots, 133 Jews and 116 Arabs had lost their lives (Fraser 1995: 11).

important was Histadrut, the Federation of Jewish Labour. Founded in 1920 to promote Jewish trade unionism, Histadrut gradually expanded its role during the interwar years and came to engage in an extensive range of entrepreneurial activities and to exercise a decisive influence on the ideology and politics of both the Yishuv and the future State of Israel. Histadrut had interlocking ties with the kibbutz workers in the agricultural sector. The kibbutzim were collective agricultural settlements in which all property belonged to the community and all responsibilities were shared equally by the members. They became a symbol of the cooperative communal order that many of the early Zionists hoped to build in Palestine. Together, Histadrut and the kibbutz movement also represented the ideal of Jewish rejuvenation through the dignity of labour and working the land.

In September 1929, Britain dispatched the first Royal Commission on Palestine headed by Sir Walter Shaw¹⁵. The Shaw Commission believed that Jewish immigration had been overly excessive, and it had resulted in acute land shortages. Eviction of Arab tenants, as a result of land sales to Jews, would constitute a danger to public order. The Commission recommended a suspension of Jewish immigration until a more comprehensive investigation of its effects on Arab farmers was completed (Newport 2014: 118-19). To defer a final verdict on the question of Jewish immigration and land transfers, the British Prime Minister MacDonald proposed another commission to study the rate at which Palestine was able to absorb Jewish settlers without causing unemployment problems, and the possibilities of Jewish settlement without evicting Arab cultivators (MacCallum 1934: 161, cited in Newport 2014: 120-21).

Thus, instead of dealing with the Shaw Commission's report, the British sent another commission. John Hope Simpson, a former administrator in India and known for his work on the question of refugees, was selected to head the one-man commission. In 1930, the Simpson report, officially known as the "Report on Immigration, Land Settlement, and Development", was incorporated into a statement of British policy known as the Passfield White Paper (1930). It declared that Palestine had a limited economic absorptive capacity, and proposed that restrictions on Jewish immigration be introduced. The Zionists rejected it; and due to the Zionist pressure¹⁶, in February 1931 Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald read to the House of Commons a personal letter, which is known to the Arabs as 'Black Letter'. MacDonald had written to Weizmann in which the Passfield White Paper was effectively repudiated¹⁷ (MacCallum 1934: 164, cited in Newport 2014: 125).

The first organised Palestinian Arab response to the post-World War I settlement came with the formation of the Palestinian Arab

15 Sir Walter Shaw reported that Jewish immigration should be brought directly under the British control and the practice of evicting Arab tenants following land transfers should cease.

16 Weizmann, joined by prominent members of the British and US Jewish communities and by British opposition politicians, put tremendous pressure on the government to rescind the policy. It confirmed the Arabs belief in the ability of Zionist pressure groups to influence the decisions of the British government.

17 Weizmann noted in his memoir, *Trial and Error*, that as a response to MacDonald's letter, Jewish legal immigration into Palestine was permitted to reach 40,004 in 1934 and 62,000 for 1935. MacCallum mentioned Jewish immigration rose from approximately 7,000 in 1932 to 33,000 in 1933.

Congress in 1919 at Jerusalem. The Congress met annually, and at the Third Congress, held in 1920, a standing Arab Executive was created under the presidency of Musa Kazim al-Husayni, a former mayor of Jerusalem. Within the Arab Executive, there was a rivalry between two of the leading Muslim notable families of Jerusalem, the Nashashibis and the al-Husaynis¹⁸. The British, aware of the rivalry, used their power over appointments to maintain the divisions between the two families. Thus, in 1920, Raghib Nashashibi replaced al-Husayni as the mayor of Jerusalem. In the following year, the British counter-balanced this Nashashibi gain by securing the selection of Hajj Amin al-Husayni as the *Mufti* of Jerusalem. Despite his opposition to the Balfour Declaration, Hajj Amin al-Husayni appeared willing to cooperate with the British administration in preventing acts of violence (Fraser 1995: 10-11).

The *Mufti*'s authority was expanded by the High Commissioner Samuel's creation of the Supreme Muslim Council in 1921, which was an autonomous body charged with the management of the entire range of Islamic institutions within the Mandate. Hajj Amin was elected president of the Council in 1922. In his twin capacities as the *Mufti* of Jerusalem and the president of the Supreme Muslim Council, he acquired control of a vast patronage network. Gradually, the *Mufti* was able to transform his religious authority into a political authority in Palestine. He continued in office upon the British goodwill until the outbreak of violence in 1936 (Cleveland 2009: 250).

Within the Arab community, there was growing disenchantment with the moderate leadership of Hajj Amin and the Supreme Muslim Council. The *Mufti*'s pre-eminent political position was challenged by a new party, the *Istiqlal*, composed of young Palestinian notables, which advocated direct action against Britain and endorsed the development of strong ties with other Arab countries. The violence that swept through Palestine in 1936 was a spontaneous popular reaction against Zionism, British Imperial Mandate, and the entrenched Arab leadership. In an attempt to channelise the popular discontent into mass demonstrations against Britain and the Zionists, local Arab resistance committees declared a general strike on 19 April 1936 (Bercuson 1985: 6).

On 25 April 1936, the Arab leaders formed a national organisation, the Arab Higher Committee, under the presidency of the *Mufti*, which included Christians, Muslims, Nashashibis, al-Husaynis, and prominent members of *Istiqlal*. The Arab Higher Committee was a belated attempt to

18 They were local urban notables whose power and prestige were based on their ownership of land and their domination of religious and municipal offices.

unify the factions within the Palestinian elite. Although the committee attempted to coordinate the strike, it lagged behind popular opinion and tended to respond to events rather than creating them. The strike spread rapidly, and was accompanied by attacks on Jews and Jewish property and the destruction of British transport. When various attempts of mediation failed, Britain made a determined effort to crush the rebellion. In October 1936, after the death of 1,000 Arabs and 80 Jews, the strike was terminated by order of the Arab Higher Committee. The events of the strike revealed the depth of Palestinian Arab resentment against the British and the Jews (Cleveland 2009: 258 and Caplan 2010: 82-83).

(iii) British Plan to Partition Palestine; ‘Al Nakba’ & the Creation of the State of Israel

When the Arab leadership called off the strike, Britain sent another investigation commission to Palestine. This commission, chaired by Lord Peel, issued its report in July 1937. According to the report:

It is manifest that the Mandate cannot be fully or honourably implemented unless by some means or other the antagonism between Arabs and Jews can be composed. But it is the Mandate which created that antagonism and keeps it alive and as long as the Mandate exists we cannot honestly hold out the expectation that Arabs or Jews will be able to set aside their national hopes or fears or sink their differences in the common service of Palestine.

On the basis of its findings, the Peel Commission proposed that the mandate be terminated and that Palestine be partitioned into separate Arab and Jewish states. The Arab Higher Committee opposed the partition proposal as a violation of the rights of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. The Zionist leaders favoured the principle of partition but regarded the territory planned to allocate to the Jewish state as inadequate. This position was adopted by the World Zionist Congress in 1937 and amounted to a Zionist rejection of the Peel Commission’s report. Britain’s efforts to find a way out of Palestine collapsed in the face of opposition from both the Arabs and the Jews (Newport 2014: 135 and Caplan 2010: 84-87).

After the announcement of the Peel Commission’s proposals in July 1937, Arab violence was renewed. When the British district commissioner for Galilee was murdered in October, Britain responded by dissolving the Arab Higher Committee, along with arrest and deportation of its members. The *Mufti* escaped to Damascus, where he attempted to reconstitute the committee but did not succeed. The Arab rebel groups,

composed mainly of peasants, concentrated their attacks on railway, roads, bridges, and British police stations. They also destroyed Jewish property and killed Jewish settlers. They were supported by the bulk of the rural population, and by 1938 they had established their control over much of the countryside and several of the major towns. Government services came to a virtual halt, and even portions of Jerusalem fell under their control¹⁹ (Cleveland 2009: 259).

In an attempt to put down the uprising, Britain sent 20,000 troops to Palestine and adopted harsh measures of collective punishment on villages suspected of harbouring rebels. The revolt took a heavy toll, and more than 3,000 Arabs, 2,000 Jews, and 600 British were killed. The economy of Palestine was in a vulnerable state, and the Arab leaders were in exile or under arrest. The revolt failed to dislodge Britain from the Mandate, but it forced the British to make one more re-assessment of its Palestine policy (Bercuson 1985: 7).

Britain recognised that if a conflict should erupt between Britain and Germany, British interests in the Middle East, particularly the oilfields of Iraq and the Suez Canal Zone, had to be protected, and this job would be much easier with the Arab support. So, Arab states had to be placated. Against this backdrop, Britain formulated a policy announced in the White Paper of 1939. The White Paper stated: "His Majesty's Government therefore now declares unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State." The document further stated that "Jewish immigration was to be limited to 15,000 a year over the next five years, at which point it would cease altogether unless the Arab community consented to its continuation; land transfers to Jews were to be restricted to certain specified areas; and in ten years, Palestine would be granted independence" (Bercuson 1985: 8). The Jews unanimously rejected and condemned the White Paper. A general strike was called, and in Jerusalem, Arab shops were looted, the police were stoned, and a British constable was shot. Most of other Palestinian Arab leaders regarded it as a victory of sorts. But the *Mufti* in exile in Baghdad rejected the White Paper for not granting immediate independence. To prevent another outbreak of violence like the revolt of 1936, the British administration placed restrictions on Arab political activity and refused to allow the exiled Arab leaders to return (Hadawi 1991: 53-54).

19 In villages under rebel control, rents were canceled, debt collectors were denied entry and wealthy landlords were coerced into making 'donations' to the rebel cause. Local resistance committees banned the *tarbush*, the headgear of the Ottoman administrative elite and insisted that men should instead wear the *kaffiya*, the checkered head cloth that has become a symbol of Palestinian national identity.

During the Second World War, German policies and programmes under Hitler led to the extermination of approximately six million Jews. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were also forced to flee from their homes, and many of them began to fill refugee camps in Central and Western Europe in 1945-46. Most of them were unable or unwilling to return home due to security reasons. Most of the Jews wanted to go to Palestine, and the Palestinian Jews were desperate to bring them into the country. Thus, the Holocaust, the systematic murder of millions of European Jews in Hitler's death camps and the displacement of Jews from their homes influenced the future status of the troubled British Mandate (Fraser 1995: 14-17).

In 1944, at a conference in Alexandria, Egypt, the foundation of the League of Arab States were laid, and resolutions in support of the Palestinians were passed, repeating earlier Arab calls for the cessation of Jewish immigration, the preservation of Arab lands, and the achievement of independence for Palestine. Further, it was stated that there could be no greater injustice and aggression than solving the problem of the Jews of Europe by another injustice, i.e., by inflicting injustice on the Arabs of Palestine. At another point in time, Saudi King Ibn Saud insisted stiffly that the European Jewish tragedy would have to be solved by the nations of Christian Europe (Caplan 2010: 105).

On their part, the Jews attempted to subvert the White Paper of 1939. The most forceful public expression of their position was contained in the Biltmore Programme, a set of resolutions adopted at a meeting of the US Zionists²⁰ in 1942 calling for open immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine (Wilson 1972: 65-66 and Newport 2014: 190). The Jews responded to the circumstances of the War with two conflicting policies. On the one hand, they committed themselves to the British war efforts against Hitler; on the other hand, they prepared for an armed confrontation with Britain once Germany was defeated. In support of the Allied cause, thousands of Jewish volunteers joined the British forces, eventually forming a Jewish Brigade that fought as a unit of the British army in Italy. The combat experience they gathered during the war helped them to fight against Britain in Palestine after 1945.

There were three underground military organisations in Palestine, the *Haganah*, the *Irgun* and the *Lehi*. While the *Haganah* concentrated on

20 The United States became the centre of international Zionist activity from 1940, when the centre of world-wide Zionist activity was transferred from London to Washington and New York.

defying the White Paper, the *Irgun*²¹ and the *Lehi* intensified their military operations against the British in Palestine²². The *Haganah*²³, although technically illegal, was allowed by the British administration to acquire weapons openly and to participate with the British forces in preparations for the defense of Palestine against an anticipated Axis invasion. When the Axis threat subsided after 1942, the *Haganah* members retained their arms as well as their intimate knowledge of the British military network in Palestine (Cleveland 2009: 262 and Fraser 1995: 17).

The *Irgun* consisted of a dedicated core of militant Zionists who advocated a policy of reprisal against Arab civilians and British personnel. A segment of the Jewish community believed that any action taken in the cause of the creation of a Jewish state was justified. In 1943, the *Irgun* came under the command of Menachem Begin, an immigrant from Poland, who led the organisation until its dissolution in 1948. The other dissident military unit *Lehi* (often called the *Stern Gang* after its founder Abraham Stern who was also a Polish Jew) was much smaller, and less effective as a combat force, but was still capable of isolated acts of terror, such as the 1944 assassination of Lord Moyne, the British minister of state for the Middle East (Fraser 1995: 17-18 and MacQueen 2013: 77-78).

In October 1945, Britain formally invited the US to join the effort of finding a solution to the Palestine question; and thus, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was established²⁴. The Committee, jointly

21 During the mandate period when the creation of a Jewish state was in doubt, most of the Zionists accepted Weizmann's strategy of relying on Britain to bring about the fulfillment of Zionist objectives. However, a splinter group eventually called the Revisionists, condemned Weizmann's approach as too dependent on Britain. In 1933, the Revisionists formed a separate movement within Zionism and shortly thereafter they set up their own military force in Palestine, the *Irgun*, which operated independently. The founder and leading spokesman of Revisionism was a Russian Zionist named Vladimir Jabotinsky.

22 In January 1946, the *Irgun* penetrated Aqir air base to steal arms, while *Lehi* killed seven British soldiers. In July 1946, the *Irgun* bombed the mandate offices at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. The British responded with wholesale arrests, floggings, curfews, roadblocks, martial law and hangings. By late 1946 there was one British soldier or policeman for every five Jews in Palestine, while the anti-British terror continued.

23 Formed in 1920 in response to the Arab riots of that year, *Haganah* gradually evolved into a permanent underground reserve army with a command structure that was fully integrated into the political institutions of the Jewish community as a whole.

24 In 1945, the new Labour government in Britain headed by Clement Attlee and with Ernest Bevin as foreign secretary, stepped up its efforts to find a solution to